

**Human Rights Council – 28<sup>th</sup> session (2-27 March 2015)**

**Statement by Ireland under agenda item 4 –  
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**

**17 March 2015**

Ireland aligns itself with the remarks made on our behalf by the European Union and adds the following remarks.

In addition to the States mentioned in this statement, Ireland has expressed its views during interactive dialogues under this agenda item on the human rights situations in the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Myanmar** and the **Syrian Arab Republic**.

Ireland continues to be seriously concerned about the human rights situation in **Egypt**. We reiterate our deep concern in relation to the arbitrary and indiscriminate detention without trial of protestors, as well as the use of mass trials and disproportionate sentencing, including the sentencing of protestors to death. Ireland calls on the authorities to investigate and address reports of violence and sexual abuse of detainees. We share the view of the High Commissioner for Human Rights that 'the long term stability of Egypt is only possible if fundamental human rights are respected'.

While we welcome positive steps taken by the Government of **Bahrain**, the human rights situation remains a matter of concern. The detention or persecution of civil society actors for peacefully exercising their rights, whether in Bahrain or elsewhere, is simply unacceptable.

We are deeply concerned by the appalling human cost of the conflict in **Libya**, evident in the mass displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians. The UN-facilitated talks process represents a fresh opportunity to agree an inclusive political solution to Libya's internal conflict.

Ireland reiterates that the occupation of **Palestinian territory** by Israel, and the practices needed to sustain that occupation, give rise to continuing violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people.

We are deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation of human rights in **Azerbaijan**. We call upon the Azerbaijani authorities to release imprisoned human rights defenders and civil society activists, and to adopt legislation allowing for the transparent and unhindered funding and functioning of NGOs.

We remain concerned about the lack of improvement in the situation of human rights, democracy and rule of law in **Belarus**. We urge the relevant authorities to arrange for the immediate and unconditional release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners, and to ensure that elections are conducted in accordance with international standards.

Finally, Ireland is concerned by the increasing threat to freedom of religion or belief in many States. We condemn in the strongest terms the savage attacks, including on religious communities, by extremist militant groups, including by Boko Haram in **Nigeria**, and by ISIS in **Syria** and **Iraq**. We reiterate our call on all States to act swiftly to end violence committed in the name of religion against individuals, groups and places of worship.

ENDS