

Human Rights Council – 29th session (15 June – 3 July 2015)

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

24 June 2015

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

Ireland expressed its views during interactive dialogues under this agenda item on the human rights situations in **Belarus, Eritrea, and the Syrian Arab Republic.**

Ireland is concerned at increasing restrictions on civil society space in many countries.

The new legislation on 'foreign undesirable organisations' in **Russia** represents a further narrowing of the space for NGOs and will add to the fear and uncertainty felt by such groups.

Ireland calls on **Bahrain** to protect freedom of expression and assembly and to reconsider charges against citizens accused or convicted as a result of the peaceful expression of their opinion.

In **Ethiopia**, the legislation in relation to civil society and freedom of expression and association is severe. We call on Ethiopia to ensure that any limitations on the right to freedom of expression, online and offline, are in full compliance with Article 19 of the ICCPR, and that the detention and trial of journalists and other media professionals meet international standards.

Ireland is concerned by the increasing threat to freedom of religion or belief in many States and strongly condemns the barbaric attacks by extremist militant groups, including Boko Haram in **Nigeria** and ISIS in **Syria** and **Iraq**. We reiterate our call on all States to stop acts of violence committed in the name of religion against individuals, groups and places of worship.

Ireland is concerned about the Religious Conversion Bill in **Myanmar**, which establishes a State-regulated system on religious conversion which could be used to discriminate against persons from religious minorities.

We are appalled by reports of horrific violence perpetrated against children in **South Sudan**, and the recruitment of child soldiers. We call on armed forces in the country to comply with international human rights and humanitarian law and to practise zero tolerance with regard to violence against children.

The reports of systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights perpetrated in the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea** are of serious concern. Ireland calls on DPRK to enter into active dialogue with the Human Rights Council to address the matters of concern raised in the Commission of Inquiry report of February 2014.

The situation in the **occupied Palestinian territory** remains a matter of serious concern, and in particular the continuing policies designed illegally to force Palestinians in wide areas from their homes and off their land. This session of the Council will also examine the events of last summer's conflict in and around Gaza, in the context of the report of the Commission of Inquiry.

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