

Interactive debate with the Independent Expert on Côte d'Ivoire

Tuesday, 25 June, 2014, Geneva

Statement by Ireland

Ireland welcomes the Independent Expert on Côte d'Ivoire and thanks him for the presentation of his report to the Council today.

Ireland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and wishes to make the following remarks.

Ireland notes positive developments in the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire, as outlined in the Independent Expert's current report, such as improvements in the security situation and in re-establishing the rule of law, as well as the ratification of the Rome Statute to the International Criminal Court in 2013. We welcome the publication of the National Commission of Inquiry's report and the recent decision by the President to extend the mandate of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Despite these developments, we fully agree with the concerns expressed by the Independent Expert as to persisting accountability gaps in addressing both serious human rights abuses committed during the post-election crisis in 2010 and those which continue to take place in Côte d'Ivoire today, in particular acts of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated against women and girls. Ireland fully agrees that addressing such questions of impunity and equitable justice are central to national reconciliation and to restoring confidence in the judicial system.

Ireland would also like to express its concern in relation to attempts to constrain freedom of expression and association in Côte d'Ivoire, as outlined in the report of the Independent Expert. We refer in particular to decisions by the National Press Council to suspend the publication of opposition media on the occasions listed in the report, the disruption by security forces of a seminar of the Civil Society Convention of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as reports of attacks on civil society organisations advocating for the human rights of LGBTI persons and persons living with HIV and AIDS in Côte d'Ivoire. *We would like to ask the Independent Expert for his thoughts on how the effective participation of civil society can be ensured to enhance both the national reconciliation and democratic process in Côte d'Ivoire.*