

Human Rights Council – 26th session (10-27 June 2014)

**Statement by Ireland under agenda item 4 –
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention
19 June 2014**

Mr. President,

Ireland welcomes the opportunity to address some of the human rights situations that require the Council's attention, in addition to the remarks made on our behalf in the European Union statement, and our statements during interactive dialogues under this agenda item on the human rights situations in **Belarus**, the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**, **Eritrea** and the **Syrian Arab Republic**.

We are very concerned about the deteriorating situation in **Iraq**. We condemn all terrorist attacks, which have caused many casualties and forced scores of thousands to flee. The brutal actions of the armed groups are abhorrent and unacceptable. We call for the immediate release of all prisoners held by them, and for all Iraqi democratic forces to work together against sectarianism and to ensure the security, sovereignty and unity of Iraq and the safety of its citizens.

Regarding the terrible violence in the **Central African Republic**, addressed by this Council in a Special Session in January, we wish to highlight in particular its continued effect on children. Of more than half a million internally displaced persons, at least half are children. Out of another 347,000 people who have fled the country and now live as refugees, two thirds are children. We call on all parties to cease recruiting and using children in armed groups.

We are appalled by the many violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law during the conflict in **South Sudan**. We condemn in particular recent attacks on humanitarian agencies and call on all parties to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access to the most vulnerable communities. We look forward to having a chance to address this situation in more detail later in the current Council session.

We continue to be extremely worried by events in **Ukraine**. The rights of all citizens, including persons belonging to minorities, in all parts of Ukraine, including Crimea, should be fully respected and protected. In that regard, we note that the UN human rights monitoring mission, to which we express our appreciation and full support for its work, has documented a deterioration in the human rights situation in Crimea since its illegal purported annexation by the Russian Federation in March.

We are concerned about growing restrictions on civil society in the **Russian Federation** as a consequence of the "Foreign Agents" law, including recent amendments to it which allow the Ministry of Justice to designate NGOs as "foreign agents" without a court order, and also at the targeting for unannounced inspections of several NGOs. We continue to have serious concerns about recent legislation discriminating against LGBTI persons.

Finally, we wish to highlight the severe difficulties faced by many women and girls in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of **Pakistan**, in particular the campaign of violence against organisations attempting to provide education to women and girls. We call on the

relevant authorities to take measures to guarantee the rights of women and girls to education, and to prevent attacks on those working in support of these ends.

I thank you, Mr. President.