

Human Rights Council – 27th session

Interactive dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner on implementation of resolution 26/30 on cooperation and assistance to Ukraine in the field of human rights

Statement by Ireland

24 September 2014

Mr. President,

Ireland would like to add some remarks to those made on our behalf in the statement of the European Union.

We thank the High Commissioner for his report on the implementation of the resolution adopted in June, and for the invaluable regular reporting of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission since its establishment in March.

The crisis in Ukraine has many dimensions, and is being rightly paid attention in other UN bodies, including the General Assembly and the Security Council. It is clear, however, that human rights issues were central to its origin and deterioration, and will need to be just as central to its solution. We therefore welcome today's discussion.

The period since last November has seen an extensive catalogue of human rights violations and abuses, from the initial dispersal of a peaceful protest on the Maidan in Kiev on 30 November, through the violence and deaths which occurred there early this year and in Odessa in May, to the activities of illegal armed groups in Crimea and in the East of the country, and the recent extensive hostilities which have had a terrible impact on the civilian population.

We are deeply concerned at the situation in eastern Ukraine, as documented in the report, which describes a "reign of fear and intimidation" by illegal armed groups, including an increasing number of foreign fighters.

It is imperative that all human rights violations and abuses be thoroughly investigated and accountability ensured. The UN human rights monitoring mission has an important role to play, in support of the ongoing efforts of the Ukrainian authorities, which we welcome and encourage. We also wish to commend the work of the OSCE

and its Swiss Chairmanship.

We deplore the denial to the UN human rights monitoring mission of access to the Crimean peninsula, following its illegal purported annexation by the Russian Federation in March on the basis of a referendum which the General Assembly has concluded had no validity. We commend the mission's efforts to report on the human rights situation in Crimea despite the lack of access, and are extremely concerned at the deterioration which it has documented, particularly in relation to the treatment of persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, such as the Crimean Tatars.

Representatives of the media have both contributed to and been victims of the crisis. It is important to ensure that the public can benefit from pluralistic information, to take action against hate speech and calls for violence, and to ensure that journalists are able to carry out their work free from intimidation and violence.

We are somewhat encouraged by recent developments, which have secured a more or less complete halt to hostilities. A sustainable solution to the crisis, however, will require the establishment of the rule of law throughout the country and full respect for the rights of all of its inhabitants. In closing, I wish to stress again the importance of ensuring accountability for all violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law.

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