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**Mr Micheál Martin TD, Tánaiste,
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for
Defence**

52nd session of the Human Rights Council

High Level Segment

27 February 2023

High Commissioner, Mr President,

It is a privilege to address this 52nd session of the Human Rights Council.

The illegal and unjustifiable actions of Russia in the past year have demonstrated the need for an effective multilateral system and of upholding the rules-based international order.

The Commission of Inquiry established by this Council has found that violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as war crimes, have been committed during the conduct of hostilities in Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

The international community must continue to condemn such actions and progress efforts to hold those who breach international law to account.

We will continue to call for an end to the conflict and the horrendous violations of international law that have occurred.

We must work with others to achieve justice for the civilians who are bearing its brunt, including through the actions of this Council.

Mr. President,

As we commemorate and celebrate 75 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there is no better time to remind ourselves of the principles of universality, inalienability, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights.

All people have the right to live in dignity and to have their human rights and fundamental freedoms respected.

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And yet we see worrying trends across all regions:

Civil society space is under pressure across the globe.

Human Rights Defenders continue to endure reprehensible attacks.

Acts of intimidation and reprisal against those seeking to engage with the UN continue to rise.

Violence against women and girls remains pervasive.

Gender equality gains are being eroded.

And climate change threatens us all, with the most vulnerable at most risk.

We have a collective obligation to do better, to take meaningful action and address these human rights issues.

Mr President,

Commitment to human rights is a central pillar of Ireland's foreign policy.

We take very seriously our obligation to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, and we are strong advocates for the promotion of human rights internationally.

Ireland is a long-standing champion of the role of civil society, in Geneva, in New York and across communities globally.

We are gravely concerned by the pressures being experienced by civil society worldwide, and in particular, by reports of actions that prevent civil society actors and human rights defenders from carrying out their work.

Russian authorities continue to crack down on civil society, liquidating yet another prominent human rights organisation, Moscow Helsinki Group, in recent months.

Just this month in Algeria, we saw the dissolution of LADDH and RAJ, two of the most important human rights organisations in Algeria.

In Cambodia, one of the last independent media outlets in the country, Voice of Democracy, was recently stripped of its license to broadcast. And in Iran, we have witnessed the repression of young women and their supporters, prevented from protesting peacefully for their rights, and the application of the death penalty to citizens who were exercising their right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to peaceful assembly and association.

Civil society organisations play an essential role in promoting international law, peace, human rights and democratic values and should have our unwavering, vocal support.

Mr President,

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We are increasingly concerned by the rollback of progress on the rights of women and of LGBTI+ persons in recent years.

While the erosion of the human rights of women is perhaps most starkly represented by the situation in Afghanistan, gender equality is facing challenges in many countries across the world.

I am also concerned to hear that 2022 was the most violent year for LGBTI+ persons in Europe in the past decade.

The rights of women and LGBTI+ persons are human rights, and therefore must enjoy the principles of universality, inalienability, indivisibility and interdependence.

Mr President,

We continue to witness the tragic impact of conflict resulting in human rights abuses and violations of the most vulnerable.

In Ukraine, Myanmar, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere, staggeringly high number of civilians, especially women and children, continue to suffer the devastating impacts of conflict.

The independent mechanisms established for Ukraine, Myanmar and Syria are doing important work in collecting and preserving evidence to further efforts on accountability and justice.

We deeply regret, however, that there is no mandate to monitor the human rights situation in Yemen. The people of Yemen deserve sustainable peace, this will not be possible without justice and accountability.

Mr President,

In recent years the Human Rights Council has taken important and principled action to respond to human rights crises in Ukraine, Iran, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Sudan and Ethiopia, amongst others.

While each of these situations is distinct, the Council has responded – mandating human rights monitoring, seeking to progress accountability and addressing impunity.

The Human Rights Council must continue to respond, even in the most challenging of situations.

Over the past two years, Ireland has had its third Universal Periodic Review, and reviews under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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We welcomed the opportunity to engage with these vital human rights processes, to hear the recommendations of other States and human rights experts, and to reflect on our own human rights record.

The UN human rights system enables us to hold ourselves, and each other, to account, and to ensure that the international community plays its part in ensuring all individuals can enjoy their rights.

In playing its part, Ireland will seek membership of the Human Rights Council for the period 2027-2029.

We will continue to be a strong voice championing human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons across the globe.

Thank you.