

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (EAFORD)**



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**38th Session of the UN Human Rights Council  
18 June 2018 to 6 July 2018**

**SUMMARY REPORT OF EAFORD'S INTERVENTIONS**

**EAFORD's Interventions during the 38th Session of the Human Rights Council**



## **Introduction**

The Thirty-Eighth Regular Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) was held at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland from 18 June to 6 July 2018. The Council addressed numerous grave human rights situations in various regions and on a number of issues and specific situations. These were delivered by 24 independent human rights experts, working groups and investigative bodies, and 105 reports addressing 36 themes and 44 country situations. Additionally, four panel discussions were held and 11 oral updates were heard; the Universal Periodic Review outcomes of 14 states were adopted and statements by six high-level dignitaries were heard. In all, representatives from 147 states, 260 non-governmental organizations and 16 national human rights institutions (NHRIs) participated in this Council's Session.



UN Photo / Jean-Marc Ferré

In his last global update before the HRC, the **United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein** brought to attention the universality of human rights. He noted with great concern the growing attacks against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that the United Nations was conceived to prevent the rebirth of chauvinistic nationalism that imperiled the world. He emphasized that peace could only be attained if states work for the human rights of all people and this can be achieved when decisions to cooperate with the international human rights system are made, which will lead to the creation of openings towards a harmonious society. He recognized human rights as the most constructive

movement in the era and that he leaves a strong Office that is committed to a gargantuan task that faced heavy headwinds yet made progress.



On 19 June, the United States of America officially announced its membership withdrawal from the Human Rights Council. The US Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, announced that the United States will withdraw from the Human Rights Council, calling the UN's top human rights body "a hypocritical and self-serving organization that makes a mockery of human rights", and accusing it of "chronic bias" against Israel's violations in the occupied Palestinian territories. The United States, she said, will no longer participate in the ongoing HRC

session or in future sessions, meaning that it will not serve out the remainder of its term in the Council.

EAFORD regrets this American withdrawal from the UN's human rights body, which was set up to protect and monitor human rights situations around the world. In a Press statement by the President of the Human Rights Council, Vojislav Šuc recognized the United States as being a very active participant at the Council in a constructive manner. He highlighted the Council's efforts to tackle the most serious of human rights issues across the world. The Council "provides a unique setting" to hear the views and opinions which other organizations are either unwilling or unable to tackle. It is the only intergovernmental body that responds to the most serious human rights issues worldwide with the active participation of civil society.

*"In times when the value and strength of multilateralism and human rights are being challenged on a daily basis, it is essential that we uphold a strong and vibrant Council recognizing it as a central part of the United Nations for the 21st century."*

He made similar remarks the following day while addressing the Council on the decision by the United States to withdraw from the Council adding that there is little chance that human rights issues are discussed elsewhere. Additionally, he said the Council serves as an early warning system "ahead of impending or worsening crises". The significant role of the Council is evidenced by the dozens of independent human rights experts and investigative bodies including the High Commissioner of Human Rights and other relevant participants who assess numerous human rights situations

across the globe to the international community.



UN Photo / Jean-Marc Ferré

The **Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson** applauded the High Commissioner for Human Rights (HC), Al Hussein, for his tireless service and that he gave a voice to people who would have otherwise suffered in silence and through him the Council exposed grave human rights violations in specific countries. However, he also said that Britain remained critical of Agenda

Item 7 and that it would vote against all resolutions concerning Israel's violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory introduced under this agenda item unless things changed.

EAFORD also delivered a statement expressing its regret that the United States withdrew its membership from the Human Rights Council and noted its contributions to the Council and most importantly its international responsibilities and commitments towards conflict resolution and addressing chronic issues. EAFORD critically denounced Ambassador Nikki Haley's reasoning for the US's withdrawal from the Council and highlighted the serious human rights violations committed by the United States including unilaterally declaring Jerusalem the Capital of Israel, as well as, the Vietnam War, the Invasion of Afghanistan, and the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq. To this end, EAFORD believes that if the United States is really willing to play a 'leading' and 'honest' role in human rights, it should strive to do so from inside, rather than away from the Council's human rights mechanisms.

The Council adopted 20 resolutions on a variety of issues and extended several country mandates, dispatched two international human rights experts to the Democratic Republic of Congo, called on all parties in Syria to work towards a genuine political transition, and appointed five Special Procedure Mandate holders.

## Opening Statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

His Excellency, the High Commissioner for Human Rights Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, began the opening statement and global update of human rights at the 38th session of the Human rights Council with drawing on some "final reflections". How could the same political leaders who negotiated the most translated document in the world, pouring the universal values into that Charter, say that universal human rights were picked from a Western imagination? Why other countries didn't withdraw from the UN, if they think that the UN is a solo tune from a Western instrument? His Excellency responded to his own reflections by saying that human memory is weak and to many people history matters only when it can be unsheathed and flung into political battle.



Photo source: voanews

According to his Excellency, chauvinistic nationalism is the most destructive force to imperil the world and it's the exact opposite and enemy of the UN. The *raison d'être* of the UN is rights, justice, the protection of peace and social progress and only when States cooperate, peace can be attainable. The High Commissioner said that refusals of access constitute a serious affront to their work and that the government should give them

access to see the situation on the ground. The situation in Syria is due to the leadership's contempt and disregard for Human Rights. These acts made by the government, its allies and extremists have totally destroyed the country. "We will continue our extensive remote in monitoring of human rights violations in Syria" said his Excellency. In Myanmar the situation is still being against the human rights of the Rohingyas in Rakhine State; enforced disappearances, torture and inhuman treatment, rape, forced labour, recruitment of children into armed forces. The High Commissioner said that he reiterates that no repatriation should occur in the absence of sustained human rights monitoring on the ground, in the areas concerned. His Excellency encourages the Council to establish a commission of inquiry for more comprehensive investigation of the human rights situation in Kashmir.



*Photo source: UN Geneva*

Israel is denying any access to the Occupied Palestinian Territory by Special Rapporteurs or by the Commission of Inquiry. So, his Excellency urges Israel to provide access to all human rights mechanisms. He also encouraged the Chinese authorities to enable all actors to contribute to the international human rights mechanisms, and to cooperate with them in a spirit of open and mutual partnership, to improve respect for the rights and freedoms of China's people. Turkey received many visits, in 2016, relating to freedom of expression, torture and enforced disappearances, but the High commissioner encourage the State to allow more visits in the future. There are 15 States that have more than five pending visits such as Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Yemen and Zimbabwe. These countries must cooperate with the mechanisms. Mr Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called on the United States to immediately end the practice of forcible separation of children and encouraged the Government to at last ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to ensure that the fundamental rights of all children, whatever their administrative status, will be at the centre of all domestic laws and policies.





*Photo source: UN Geneva*

*“I am convinced that the human rights ideal has been the most constructive movement of ideas in our era – and among the most successful.” Mr. Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein*

## **Participation by EAFORD**

The 38th Session of the Human Rights Council included various thematic issues such as 'violence against women', 'right to education', 'peaceful assembly and association', 'summary executions', 'freedom of expression', 'extreme poverty', 'internally displaced persons' etc., which EAFORD followed, as well as country-specific situations such as Belarus, Burundi, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Israel, Mali, Myanmar, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine among others.

*“if Myanmar, a member state of this organization can force out 700,000 in almost three weeks with practically minimal response by the international community how many others in this chamber are beginning to entertain something similar, how much of an invitation it is to them to try something similar? I appeal to the Human Rights Council to think very seriously about this.” Zeid Ra’ad al Hussein*

During its participation in the 38th session of the Human Rights Council, EAFORD, jointly with other organizations, delivered 11 oral statements, submitted 8 written statements, and co-organized 2 side events. The official copies of the written reports submitted to the Human Rights Council are available to download at the bottom of the page, along with the summaries of the side events.



## EAFORD's Joint Oral Statements

### **Agenda Item 2: Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

#### ***General Debate on the Oral Update by the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights worldwide and on the activities of his office.***

19 June 2018

Delivered by: Mr. Konstantinos Kakavoulis

*Mr. President,*

*We welcome the report of the High Commissioner and his oral update on the human rights situations worldwide.*

*We remain deeply concerned regarding several violations in Europe.*

*The emerging number of refugees and asylum seekers has not been adequately treated. Asylum seekers find themselves trapped in South-Eastern Europe, constantly facing the threat of being deported back to their country of origin or Turkey, which cannot always be considered as a safe third country.*



*While expecting the outcome of their asylum applications, they are subject to very poor reception conditions, while their integration in local societies is far from having been achieved.*

*EAFORD and Geneva International Centre for Justice stress that the great flux of asylum seekers, as well as the economic and political crises of the past decade, have increased racism and xenophobia. Despite several instruments in place, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), discrimination persists within home and destination countries.*

*We should always bear in mind that “no one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark.” The Human Rights Council and the international community should work towards ensuring that long-suffering people find -at least- a hospitable ambient, when they reach Europe.*

*Life is a miracle which has been gifted to all of us. We should always remember that everyone has the right to live, not just to survive.*

*Thank you.*

## **Annual Full-Day Discussion on the Human Rights of Women**

### **Panel 2: Advancing women’s rights in the economic sphere through access and participation in information and communication technologies (ICTs)**

22 June 2018

Delivered by: Ms. Sheefa Afath Shaik

*Mr. President,*

*We thank the council for holding an annual panel discussion on women’s rights and we thank the panelists for their insightful discussions.*

*Mr. President,*

*While women still struggle to fight against discrimination from domestic places to working places even after a long struggle for gender equality, we are in an era where women and girls must fight for equality, non-violence, and against discrimination in digital spaces. With the increasing role of information and communication technologies (ICTs), there is a need to increase the role of women in this field, and women should be able to equally enjoy the advantages of the information and communication technologies as men without any digital gender divide.*

*EAFORD and Geneva International Centre for Justice acknowledge the lack of access of information and communication technologies for women, but we are equally concerned about women and girls who do not even have access to basic education, let alone the access to information and communication technologies.*



*We also raise the concern about those women and girls who are the victims of armed conflicts such as in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and occupied Palestine and who suffer from extreme poverty. Today, having access to education is far from reality for these women and girls, how would they enjoy the right to access to information and communication technologies?*

*In many developing and least-developed countries, the majority of people do not enjoy access to internet, how would this become a reality to those millions who do not have a clue about the role of internet and the knowledge about information and communication technologies.*

*While access to information and communication technologies has its advantages from the economic to social perspective, we strongly agree that it should be provided and accessible to everyone, without being gender-biased, and we draw the council's attention toward those women and girls who need to have basic education to access to the information and communication technologies.*

*Thank you.*

### **Agenda Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development**

#### ***General Debate under Item: 3***

*25 June 2018*

Delivered by: Ms. Sheefa Afath Shaik

*Mr. President,*

*The Yemeni population has been living in an ongoing civil war for more than four years now and is suffering from a grave humanitarian crisis, in which children are a category of the population that is most vulnerable. Besides being directly or indirectly affected by violations of international humanitarian law, minors are also facing several violations of their most basic human rights.*

*A high number of children are not going to school and do not have access to clean water or adequate sanitation. Furthermore, the food security crisis is highly alarming, with wide spread of malnutrition. As a result, minors are weaker and more vulnerable when affected by different diseases present in the country, such as cholera.*



*We are particularly concerned by the humanitarian situation the population is living in, and we want to stress the importance and urgency to establish a ceasefire agreement until a political solution is reached. This is essential in order to protect and save the lives of many innocent children.*

*EAFORD and Geneva International Centre for Justice call on all parties to the conflict to respect human rights and international humanitarian law obligations. Furthermore, all forms of violence and human rights*



*violations against civilians should be halted. In order to alleviate the great civilians' suffering, it is of vital importance that all parties to the conflict ensure secure access and safe working conditions to humanitarian aid-workers, as should be guaranteed according to international humanitarian law.*

*Thank you.*

#### **Agenda Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**

##### ***Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi ([A/HRC/38/10](#))***

26 June 2018

Delivered by: Mr. Mutua K. Kobia

*Mr. President,*

*We would like to thank the Commission of Inquiry (COI) for their latest oral update and are looking forward to reading their full report when finalized. It is regrettable, however, that Burundi has continuously refused to fully cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry (COI) on Burundi and has not implemented recommendations relevant to the promotion and protection of human rights.*

*EAFORD and Geneva International Centre for Justice remain deeply concerned with the overall humanitarian situation in Burundi and especially with the deadly massacre that took place earlier this year in May where women and children were among the victims. This incident is but a small reflection of the overall seriousness of the human rights situation in Burundi where fundamental freedoms are denied for much of the population and hundreds of thousands have been displaced. Furthermore, grave human rights violations including torture, extrajudicial killings and forced detentions persist without accountability of the perpetrators. Moreover, human rights defenders and journalists are no longer able to perform their duties due to deadly consequences as freedom of expression and association is restricted.*



*Mr. President,*

*We continue to call on the international community, and particularly the African Union and the East African Community to build solidarity and encourage Burundi to fully cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi and to implement recommendations that will protect the human rights of the people of Burundi.*

*To this end, we ask the Commission of Inquiry for an update on the status of Burundi with the International Criminal Court, as well as, what direct or indirect measures are being taken to address root causes and what*

*steps if any are in place to include the full and effective participation of women and grass roots organizations towards solidarity and durable solutions in Burundi?*

*Thank you.*

#### ***General Debate under Item 4***

*27 June 2018*

*Delivered by: Ms. Sheefa Shaik*

*Mr. President,*

*Unjustifiable acts around the globe, many of which infringe upon human rights, are carried out under the pretext of combating terrorism. In today's world, the fight against terrorism is of the utmost importance. However, we should never allow a fight to condone infringements on human rights. This would mean we are fighting against humanity.*

*In Iraq specifically, systematic and grave human rights violations are committed against civilians. The authorities justify these actions by accusing the citizens of being terrorists or related to terror activities, whereas the reality is entirely unlike. Examples of these violations include mass campaigns of arbitrary arrests, disproportional violence against peaceful protesters, lack of fair trials, and the retrieval of confessions under torture.*



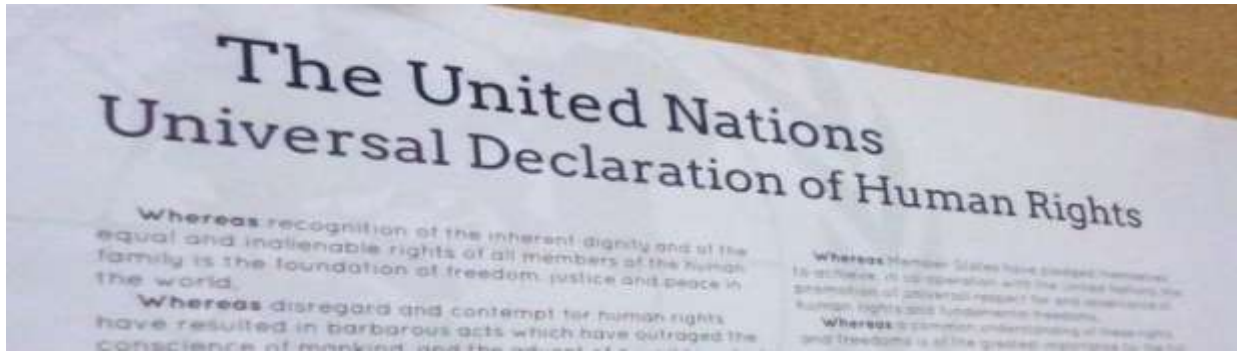
*The fight against terrorism has egregiously overlooked international human rights law. New policies aimed at countering terrorism are worded vaguely, and ultimately work against the people who they are designed to protect. Nations should be able to follow an anti-terrorism agenda to protect their populations, but their counter-terrorist measures need to comply with fundamental international principles.*

*Distinguished delegates,*

*We come here together to stress the importance of human rights, each one of your countries is party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

*Isn't it time to hold true to your word?*

*Isn't it time we begin to recognize the fundamental human rights of those living in conflict affected areas? The fight against terrorism is tremendously important, but it will be impossible to succeed if the governments themselves disregard international human rights standards.*



## Agenda Item 5: Human rights bodies and mechanisms

### Report of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights ([A/HRC/38/48](#))

28 June 2018

Delivered by: Mr. Mutua K. Kobia

Mr. President,

*EAFORD and Geneva International Centre for Justice welcome the report of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, and especially welcome the urgent discussion held on an international legally binding agreement and for civil liability in home countries of transnational companies. To date, there has been a serious lack of regulation and accountability with regard to grave violations by transnational corporations (TNCs), and worse still numerous documented incidents where TNCs have exercised their powers to attack, threaten, and eliminate actors, including human rights defenders, who promote and protect the human rights of victims and who are also now seeing their access to justice disappear.*

*Furthermore, transnational corporations who commit atrocities on the environment, civilians, and human rights defenders with impunity have put in place schemes to win time and that is costly to victims and defenders at the judiciary level.*



Mr. President,

*Considering these circumstances access to judicial remedies under the Guiding Principles is no longer a long-standing solution due to various legal and non-legal barriers, numerous legal loopholes, and corporate power. In addition, there needs to be a reversal of burden of proof where it should be the legal obligation of*

*businesses, companies, and TNCs to demonstrate and prove their innocence. International human rights law must by all means remain above economic and business law.*

*To this end, we call for the protection of human rights and the need for an international legally binding agreement and to end corporate impunity.*

*Thank you.*

### **Agenda Item 6: Universal Periodic Review**

#### **Consideration of the Universal Periodic Review outcome of Mali ([A/HRC/38/7](#))**

28 June 2018

Delivered by: Mr. Mutua K. Kobia

*Mr. President,*

*EAFORD and Geneva International Centre for Justice welcome the UPR report on Mali and commend the State on maintaining a moratorium on the death penalty and encourage the continual action to combat impunity and the worst forms of child labor. Additionally, we congratulate Mali for its endorsement of Security Council resolution 1325 relating to women's participation in conflict management, the prevention and resolution of conflicts and the commitment to protect human rights defenders including specific protections for women human rights defenders. We encourage and support Mali to fully implement these measures at all levels.*

*We acknowledge the challenges faced in the fight against terrorism and security concerns especially in the Sahel region. While the implementation of Resolution 2391 has been swift, there are unfortunately serious concerns over allegations of human rights abuses and violations related to the Joint Force of the Group of Five, which deserves investigation and justice towards the victims. On that note, the established military court in response to the allegations must uphold international human rights standards in compliance with human rights law.*



*To this end, and in addressing and combatting terrorism, transnational crimes, and internal conflicts, we urge the government of Mali to commit to dialogue in pursuit of peaceful resolutions. With regard to increasing security measures, we call for enhanced, constructive collaboration and solidarity with the international community and all relevant UN bodies.*

*In conclusion, Mr. President, we appreciate the efforts and commitments of Mali to the universal periodic review.*

*Thank you.*

## **Agenda Item 7: Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories**

### ***General Debate under Item: 7***

*2 July 2018*

Delivered by: Ms. Sheefa Afath Shaik

*Mr. President,*

*Despite all efforts by the international community to halt the relocation of the US Embassy from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem, this relocation took place on 14 May 2018. To choose 14 May as the day for the official opening of the Embassy shows a complete lack of respect and empathy towards the plight of the Palestinian people, who honor the more than 700.000 Palestinians who fled or were expelled from their homes in the 1948 war on 15 May.*

*Even though the US might have recognized Jerusalem as the official capital of Israel and thus further distancing Palestine's historical connection to Jerusalem, in direct violation of several UN resolutions with regard to the City of Jerusalem, its move does not change the internationally recognized status of Jerusalem. EAFORD and Geneva International Centre for Justice believe that the United States is no longer, or never have been an honest peace broker in the Israel/Palestine conflict.*



*While the deteriorating situation of human rights in Palestine persists over the decades there is little to no accountability whatsoever against the perpetrators and no justice for the victims under the occupation. This includes continuous demolitions and punitive demolitions, serious human rights abuses and grave occupation-related violence, and deprivation of basic rights and dignity.*

*Israel maintains entrenched discriminatory systems that treat Palestinians unequally. Its prolonged occupation of the West Bank and Gaza involves systematic rights abuses, including collective punishment, routine use of excessive lethal force, and prolonged administrative detention without charge or trial for hundreds. We urge the U.N. to ensure protection for the Palestinian people, and to take all necessary measures to finally bring an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine*

*Thank you.*

## **Agenda Item 8: Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action**

### ***General Debate under Item: 8***

2 July 2018

Delivered by: Mr. Konstantinos Kakavoulis

*Mr. President.*

*Unfortunately, States and stakeholders seem to disregard the significance of the correct implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA).*

*While the VDPA calls for increased coordination on human rights within the UN system, States have shown a tendency to participate less in the activities of this Council –to even withdraw from it in certain cases.*

*The VDPA also reminds that “Special emphasis should be given to (...) strengthening of a pluralistic civil society”.*

*EAFORD and Geneva International Centre for Justice stress that civil society reflects the plurality of voices that is the bedrock for any open and democratic society. The VDPA puts emphasis on the indispensable role played by civil society to remind governments of their human rights obligations, to highlight violations of human rights and to support them in their implementation.*



*To this end, we are particularly concerned regarding the shrinking NGO space within the UN system.*

*Mr. President,*

*The VDPA calls for enhanced cooperation between all relevant stakeholders if it is to achieve its objective. However, nowadays States seem to draw in on their national problems, to isolate themselves from the international community.*

*We wish to remind them that with the adoption of the VDPA, all States reaffirmed that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.*

*Let us always remember Helen Keller’s famous words: “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”*

*Thank you.*

## **Agenda Item 10: Technical assistance and capacity-building**

### ***Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic (oral update)***

4 July 2018

Delivered by: Mr. Mutua K. Kobia

*Mr. President,*

*We welcome the oral update by the Independent Expert on Central African Republic (CAR) and look forward to reading her full report when finalized. EAFORD and Geneva International Centre for Justice remain concerned about the human rights situation in CAR as recent reports have illustrated continued grave violations including gender-based violence, child combatants, and attacks and killings on civilians some of which have been attributed to intercommunal violence. We are also concerned about attacks on peacekeepers and the continued cross-border trafficking of weapons.*

*As noted by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, and the independent expert, Ms. Bocoum, hate speech and the incitement of violence has provoked and sparked numerous instances of violence against particular groups on the basis of ethnicity and religion and to manipulate and deceive the population. Such issues in consideration of addressing root causes must be seriously looked into and concrete measures must be put into place to combat hate speech and the incitement of violence. In addition, practical steps and examples of best practices towards the promotion and protection of human rights and solidarity require the assistance and support of this Council and the international community.*



*Mr. President,*

*In light of the deteriorating situation in CAR impunity persists and efforts to provide adequate protection and justice for the victims is much too slow. To this end, victim and witness protection strategies, disarmament, truth and reconciliation initiatives, and peace and security measures urgently require technical assistance and the full and effective participation of women and the voices of grass roots organizations.*

*In conclusion, we would like to ask the independent expert what specific measures towards combatting hate speech and incitement to hatred and violence would be most effective in Central African Republic and what assistance can the international community provide towards achieving positive results in this regard?*

*Thank you.*

**General Debate under Item: 10**

5 July 2018

Delivered by: Ms. Sheefa Afath Shaik

*Mr. President,*

*We would like to call on the Council's attention again the potentially one of the worst humanitarian crises since 2015, which continues to crop up in Yemen while utterly affecting the welfare of the Yemeni people. We maintain that the imposition and constant renewal of the sanctions has brought devastating effects on the human rights fulfillment of Yemeni people, it has debilitated the already torn up country, and has altogether aggravated the humanitarian crisis in terms of access to food and medical supplies.*

*EAFORD and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) believe that efforts made by the international community for lifting the blockade, while addressing the causes of the ongoing civil war through peace negotiations and providing protection to civilians' human rights to restore their dignity is the best approach for starting the process of ameliorating the unfortunate plight of Yemeni People.*



*People are internally displaced. However, humanitarian aid can only temporarily ease the desperate situation in Yemen. Only a peace-reaching approach can lead to a definite solution. We thus urge the international community to intensify the efforts aimed at achieving lasting peace in the country.*

*We hold that a peace-reaching approach will lead to a definite solution for the current plight in Yemen, but we note that increased efforts for humanitarian assistance are urgently needed until definite solutions are reached for Yemenis' survival, welfare, restoration and human rights protection.*

*Thank you.*



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## EAFORD's Joint Written Statements

### Children in Yemen: The Future of a Whole Generation is under Threat



The Yemeni population has been living in an ongoing civil war for more than four years now and it is experiencing a grave humanitarian crisis. At the center of this, children are one category of the population that is most vulnerable and affected by this ongoing conflict. In fact, they are facing several violations of their most basic human rights and are victims of different forms of violence. In addition, they are equally directly or indirectly affected by numerous violations of international humanitarian law which have been committed from all parties to

the conflict. This statement wants to illustrate some of the ways in which this war is affecting basic human rights, such as the right to education and health. The statement also outlines two worrisome practices that are taking place in this context: child marriage and child recruitment.

[Link to full Written Statement](#)

### Cancer: The Public Health Challenge for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon



Since the outbreak of the civil war in Syria in March 2011, over 11 million Syrians fled their homes. The majority have sought refuge in neighboring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Over one million refugees have settled in Lebanon since the outbreak of the war, making it the country with the highest per capita concentration of refugees in the world. This large influx of refugees has exacerbated the political, economic and security challenges of the country. Furthermore, it has placed a considerable burden on the Lebanese health system. Due to irregular funding, some Syrian refugees died prematurely of cancer before receiving any course of

medical intervention. This statement aims to illustrate some of the main challenges Syrian refugees are facing in relation with access to health care, such as lack of legal status and financial hardship.

[Link to full Written Statement](#)

## Death Penalty and Summary Executions in Iraq



In Iraq, the number of executions continues to rise, even though article 15 of the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 featured the right to life. With the adoption of the Anti-Terrorism law No.13 of 2005, Iraqi officials have a broad justification for implementing the death penalty and this resulted in the perpetration of numerous human rights violations, all under the pretext of combating terrorism. Furthermore, trials in Iraq are failing to respect international fair trial standards. The country has a weak judicial system, plagued by corruption, which frequently bases convictions on coerced confessions. This means that trial proceedings fail to meet international standards, allowing these executions to be based on

discriminatory and sectarian motives – putting the lives of many innocent people under threat. The death penalty and extrajudicial executions in Iraq are used as tools of political repression, to eliminate political opponents, and to maintain a reign of terror over the Iraqi population at large.

[Link to full Written Statement](#)

## Freedom of Expression and Association in Iraq



Freedom of expression and association are vital in any well-functioning political system and should therefore be protected at all costs. These rights are established in article 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights. Both of these treaties are signed and ratified by the Iraqi government and thus the country has an international obligation to comply with these rights. However, these freedoms are often not respected. There are numerous cases of violence used against peaceful protestors and kidnapping of Iraqi activists and journalists. During and after the occupation of Iraq, Iraq became the most dangerous place for journalists. But even the

defeat of ISIS does not keep journalists of fearing for their lives. Furthermore, it has become a trend that every protest will end in violence. Ruthless attacks by government forces against peaceful civilian protestors, is a serious violation of a number of fundamental human rights. The Iraqi government has proved unable, or unwilling, to ensure protection and to respect the fundamental rights of its citizens. The climate of impunity surrounding these illegal practices, including attacks against civilian properties and abduction of journalists and human rights defenders, perpetrated by governmental forces must end. [Link to full Written Statement](#)

## South-Eastern Mediterranean: Incorporation of the EU Asylum Directives in the South-Eastern EU Countries



EAFORD jointly with other organizations submitted a written statement on the incorporation of the EU Asylum Directives in Greece, Italy, Malta and Cyprus, namely the countries which constitute the main points of entry of asylum seekers in Europe. The two EU Directives aim at establishing common procedures for the reception of applicants for international protection and for granting and withdrawing international protection.

The full and correct incorporation of the Directives in the national legal orders of the South-Eastern EU Member States constitutes an imperative need and the undersigning organizations urge that more action is taken immediately towards this direction. To this end, the signing organizations made recommendations to the Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants as well as the States concerned.

[Link to full Written Statement](#)

## Myanmar: Freedom of the Press should be Urgently Restored



EAFORD jointly with other civil society organizations brought the topic of freedom of the press in Myanmar to the attention of the Human Rights Council. The Myanmar government maintains tight control over the media sector through the use of harsh defamation and other laws. Authorities are increasingly abusing various draconian colonial and military era laws to repress reporting on a widening range of topics. The media landscape is marked by the delay of legislative reforms, and the increasing use of litigious tactics to hamper media freedom, while journalists are constantly being arrested and prosecuted.

The government's repressive focus now is on censoring coverage of western Rakhine State, where over 680,000 Rohingya Muslim refugees have fled military violence into neighboring Bangladesh since August last year. Most –if not all- journalists feel discouraged to remain in the country and continue reporting on the ethnic cleansing taking place against the Rohingya minority.

The prosecution and threats against journalists hampers the unveiling of the truth regarding the Rohingya crisis and the transition of Myanmar to democracy. There is an imperative need for freedom of the press to be restored immediately in order for journalists to have the opportunity to investigate the crimes taking place.

[Link to full Written Statement](#)

### **Palestine | Decades of Israeli Occupation with No End in Sight**



In recent years, the human rights situation in Palestine and other Occupied Territories have continued to deteriorate. The dual system of discriminatory laws and other repressive measures deliberately taken against Palestinians indicate that a peaceful resolution to end this oppressive occupation is slipping away.

The grave situation of human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is long-standing and the highly combustible reality of recent attacks against Palestinian protesters continues. While it should not be

taken lightly and is another serious assault by Israel, it sheds light on the stifling and humiliating occupation as a whole. The treatment and denial of rights such as the right to life, right to health, right to peaceful assembly and association, and the right to a nationality, among numerous others, deserves the full attention of the Human Rights Council and the international community at large.

[Link to full Written Statement](#)

### **Growing Racism and Xenophobia in Europe**



In the past decade Europe has undergone economic and political crises and has experienced significant increases in migrants, especially refugees and asylum seekers. Blame for these crises and ensuing situations unjustly fall on minority groups. Hostile extremists who are on the rise have committed acts of violence, disturbance, and unrest in societies seeking peaceful well-being in equality and in rejection of all forms of racism and discrimination. However, some responses to the phenomenon of global migration have been

regrettably misdirected by both civilians and politicians alike resulting in unfortunate circumstances and negative stereotypes.

In addition to race-based violent attacks, hate speech and verbal slurs, discrimination is still a serious issue in the economic, social and political fields such as housing, employment, health services, education, political participation and criminal justice among others. Moreover, the media is continuously being exploited to spread

xenophobia, stereotypes, and untrue claims. Politicians, journalists, and opinion-makers have a crucial part to play not only in exposing racial hatred and discrimination, but also in promoting diversity and respect for human rights against racism as emphasized under several existing conventions and resolutions.

[Link to full Written Statement](#)



## IAFORC's Co-Sponsored Side-Events

### “Health of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon”

The 38<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council  
International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

**Health of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon**  
**SIDE EVENT**  
Palais des Nations 28 June 2018 Room XXVI  
From: 14:30 to 16:00

**Speakers**

**Kristi Krittmaa:**  
Migrant Health Assistance Programme Coordinator at the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

**Dr. Mélanie Samson:**  
Senior Manager in the Capacity Building team at the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).

**Nour Hamada:**  
Pharmacist and Researcher in international public health, focusing on access to medicines in humanitarian crisis.

**Moderator:**

**Ahmed Quraishi:** Policy analyst, researcher and writer. He is currently associated with an independent, Islamabad-based think tank [projectpakistan21.org](http://projectpakistan21.org).

**Organizers:**  
International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (IAFORC),  
[International-Lawyers.Org](http://International-Lawyers.Org) and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) [www.gicj.ch](http://www.gicj.ch)

Logos for IANLawyers, IAFORC, and GICJ are shown at the bottom.

The purpose of the event was to tackle some of the issues faced by refugees and more precisely it focused on the current situation and health challenges of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Indeed, Lebanon is one of the top host countries with about one million Syrian refugees. According to our speakers, a large number of them are faced with health issues and are unable to access medical care for various reasons such as the lack of legal status or because they cannot afford to pay for the medical attention or the unavailability of medical facilities. There is no doubt today the right to health is universal and part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development “Goal 3: Good health and well-being”.



*Syrian Refugees Camp | Guardian Witness*



The right to health is interlinked with other human rights and the principle of non-discrimination. There is a need to develop more effective approaches to respond to the health needs of refugees in host countries. As the global community moves towards its ambitious goals in the post-2015 sustainable development era, serious consideration should be given to the right of refugees to access timely, appropriate, and quality health-care services.

This side-event was co-sponsored by the International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD), International-Lawyers.Org, and Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ). It was moderated by policy analyst, researcher and writer, **Mr. Ahmed Quraishi** - The panel of speakers included: **Kelsi Kriitmaa** a Migrant Health Assistance Programme Coordinator at the International Organization for Migration; **Dr. Melanie Samson** who is a Senior Manager in the Capacity Building team at the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC); and **Nour Hamada** a Pharmacist and Researcher in international public health, focusing on access to medicines in humanitarian crises.



[Click here for the full summary](#)

## “Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Systemic Violations with Impunity”



Israel's prolonged occupation of the Palestinian territory involves systematic human rights abuses, including collective punishment, routine use of excessive lethal force, and prolonged administrative detention without charge or trial. It builds and supports illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank, expropriating Palestinian land and imposing burdens on Palestinians but not on settlers, restricting their access to basic services and making it nearly impossible for them to build in much of the West Bank without risking demolition. Israel's decade-long closure of Gaza has made the lives of 1,9 million Palestinians living there unbearable. For that Gaza is described as the world's largest open-air prison.



This side event aims to bring to light the atrocities of the occupation, characterized by horrendous and unending human rights violations resulting in the continuous suffering of the Palestinian people. Through its constant non-cooperation with the United Nations System in general and international human rights mechanisms in particular, Israel has not only robbed the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination,

but also repeatedly implements new and improved measures to deepen the oppression of the Palestinians. Our organizations thus call upon the international community to take a stand against this blatant and long-standing human rights catastrophe.

This side-event was co-sponsored by the International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD) with Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ), International-Lawyers.Org, and Euro-Med Monitor and had the exceptional honor to have the contributions of special guest, **Mr. Michael Lynk** who is the current Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967. He joined the discussion via Skype and made his presentation based on the question, “*Can an Occupying Power become an Illegal Occupant if it abuses the Fundamental Principles that underlie the modern Laws on Occupation?*” The other distinguished panelists included: -**Ms. Aroub Soubh** who is a TV program presenter, as well as, the official Media Spokesperson for the Jordanian coalition “My Nationality is the Right of My Family”, and Consultant at the Euro-Mid Human Rights Monitor, speaking on “*The Blockade of Gaza as a Form of Apartheid.*” -**Ms. Daniela Donges** who is a civil peace worker for Palestine and a former member of GICJ, actively following on-the-ground information concerning the situation in Palestine and speaking on, “*Observations of the Human Rights Situation on the Ground and Laws that Entrench the Occupation.*” -**Ms. Eman Zuiter** who is a Human Rights Researcher with Geneva International Centre for Justice since 2016 as well as with the Euro-Med Monitor since 2015 speaking on the “*Excessive Use of Force against Peaceful Protestors*”.



[Click here for the full summary](#)



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[Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 - A/72/556](#) In the present report, the Special Rapporteur considers whether Israel's role as an entrenched and defiant occupant of the Palestinian territory has now reached the point of illegality under international law.



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