

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



Human Rights Council 33rd Regular Session 13 - 30 September 2016

EAFORD delivered several oral interventions during the 33rd session of the UN Human Rights Council under items 2, 3, 4, 7, 9 and 10 of the agenda of the Council, focusing on issues of racism and racial discrimination across different parts of the world, as well as, the grave human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Iraq and Yemen. EAFORD also participated in the high-level panel discussion on the 5th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, and the interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as, the interactive dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, and the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent. The following is the summary of those interventions:

[Human Rights Violations are Increasing Rather than Diminishing](#)

General debate on the oral update by the High Commissioner under 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

EAFORD's statement(s) with Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) Delivered by Ms. Alessia Vedano

Thank you Mr. President,

We would like to thank the High Commissioner for his report and join his urgent appeals to Member States to grant access to the OHCHR over their territories. We believe this is essential for the protection and promotion of human rights.

However, even where the access is granted, a mere "UN presence" is not enough. All countries need to engage with the mechanism in a genuine, impartial manner and in the best interest for human rights.

Unfortunately, we have witnessed many instances in which this does not occur. Iraq is perhaps a striking example of this. Despite that the country formally cooperates with the UN, the human rights violations occurring on ground are increasing rather than diminishing.

Although the UN has welcomed the establishment of an Iraqi commission of inquiry regarding the grave violations committed in Fallujah by state-affiliated militias, mainly Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi, so far, these investigations have led to nothing. We therefore demand the Human Rights Council to establish an independent commission of inquiry and the Iraqi Government to fully cooperate with this without further delay.

Moreover, we are concerned with the increasingly worrying issues of racism across the world, and, at the meantime, with the decreased attention of the UN on this matter.

We are worried for the reduction of resources for the anti-racism activities of the OHCHR, and believe that it was inappropriate of the Office to remain silent on the 15th Anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA).

The silence around important international instruments for the protection against all forms of racism and xenophobia means depriving many victims of the protection they need during this time of crisis. We call on the OHCHR to help prepare a multiyear outreach programme for the DDPA mobilization to be adopted by the Council and to commemorate the 15th Anniversary of the DDPA with the high visibility it deserves.

Thank you.

[High-Level Panel Discussion on the 5th Anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training](#)

Interactive dialogue under agenda Item 3 - High-level panel discussion on the 5th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training

Joint Statement with International Organization for the Right to Education & Freedom of Education (OIDEL)
Delivered by Ms. Claire de Lavernette

Thank you, Mr. President

I speak on behalf of 16 organizations. Since its creation ten years ago, and with appreciation to the Platform comprising now nine States¹, the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning has been continuously advocating to give Human Rights Education its full place in the work of the Council.

So, the holding of this panel to mark the 5th anniversary of the UN Declaration is very welcome. Indeed, human rights education plays a key role in building inclusive societies and a sustainable future, especially by strengthening social cohesion and preventing violence in all its forms, even the most extreme.

Human rights education is part of international law. Its concept has been clearly defined by the UN Declaration but the challenges of its implementation and follow-up remain. The adoption a year ago of the Sustainable Development Goals² (SDGs) and of the Education 2030, Framework for Action³ opens up new opportunities for implementation at all levels.

We would like to insist, though, on the need for States to include Human Rights Education in all their reports to United Nations human rights treaty bodies and agencies.

We would also recommend the following:

1. Focus on implementation of human rights education within other global education initiatives such as Education First or Global Citizenship Education, among others. It is essential to clarify the linkages between human rights education and all new initiatives so as to allow better implementation without loss of energy, time or resources.
2. Reinforce an existing entity, in a view to obtain stronger synergy among initiatives of UN agencies, intergovernmental entities and governments. Complementary and coordinated efforts at all levels are key in this respect.

¹ Platform for Human Rights Education and Training comprising 9 States: Brazil, Costa Rica, Italy, Morocco, The Philippines, Senegal, Slovenia, Switzerland and Thailand

²Doc. A/RES/70/1

³ Doc. ED-2015/Education 2030/1

Lastly, Mr. President, we would encourage those interested to read our joint written statement to this session, which develop this crucial issue of the implementation of human rights education.

I thank you.

[Preventive and Corrective Actions for the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order](#)

Interactive dialogue under agenda item 3 - Report of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order

Delivered by Ms. Alessia Vedano

Thank you Mr. Vice-President,

We would like first of all to thank the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order for his report. Our organizations are extremely supportive of the preventive and corrective actions recommended in the report, especially with regards to the use of trade to promote human rights and social development.

The past decades have witnessed a rapid increase of adverse human rights impact following the growing number of international investment agreements, bilateral investment treaties and multilateral free trade agreements. Too often these have led to the privatization of gains and the socialization of losses (to use Mr. De Zayas' formulation), as well as, more serious consequences, including the loss of lives and properties, irreparable harm from displacement, and environmental damage. These crimes are grave and serious and shall bear penal responsibility.

Our organizations are also concerned, as the Independent Expert has diligently pointed out, with the threat to the international order posed by foreign intervention in the internal affairs of States. The 2005 concept of "Responsibility to Protect" must not be used as a pretext to circumvent the prohibition of the use of force stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations.

In this regard, we welcome the invitation of the Independent Expert to reformulate the doctrine so that it reflects a broader duty to protect the populations from structural violence and avoid its misuse.

In conclusion, our organizations wish to join the recommendations made by Mr. De Zayas and reiterate the importance for States, governments and other entities to guarantee the protection of human rights as well as environmental safeguard at all circumstances. In this context, the Human Rights Council should encourage all States to amend existing trade agreements to adhere with human rights treaty obligations and ensure the protection of all people from politically and economically-motivated violence. The achievement of such goals would represent a milestone towards the establishment of a genuinely equitable international order.

Thank you.

[Policies of Denials and Lies: The Lack of Accountability Sets Dangerous Precedents](#)

General debate under agenda item 3 - Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

EAFORD's statement(s) with GICJ Delivered by Ms. Iman Abu Zueiter

Thank you Mr. President,

It is clear from the reports submitted to the Human Rights Council 33rd Session that human rights violations are widespread, violence has become intrinsic to the system and the lack of justice has become widely accepted. Not to mention the right to reparation, which appears to be a utopia for the majority of the victims.

The ongoing decades-long conflict in Palestine is a striking example of this. Countless human rights abuses are taking place on a daily basis. These include: house demolitions, demolition of internationally funded community projects, forced evictions, illegal arbitrary detentions, restrictions of all sorts, including denied access to water. These are clear features of an apartheid system steeped in policies of denials and lies.

Iraq is another case to suffer the same fate. Until today, the Iraqi population is still facing the consequences of the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of the country which has caused over two million victims and led to the total collapse of the Iraqi state. Countless human rights violations including a collapse in the educational and health sectors, debilitating generations that will suffer the consequences. The establishment of a pro-invasion administration which incorporated the militias into the regular armed forces has created the basis for the highly explosive environment that provokes lawlessness. Militias are responsible for horrible crimes against civilians, such as enforced disappearance, torture, massive destruction and forced displacement, among others.

We believe in the importance of pursuing accountability for these grave human rights violations. If those committing crimes against humanity and war crimes were to be brought to justice, the world would be perhaps a little safer today. On the contrary, the lack of accountability sets dangerous precedents and legitimizes the excessive use of force.

Therefore, we urge the international community to take all the appropriate measures in order to ensure that justice is finally achieved.

Thank you.

Interactive dialogue under agenda item 3 - Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence

EA Ford's statement with GICJ

Thank you Mr. President,

Our organizations would like to thank the Special Rapporteur on truth, justice and reparation for his report. The values that the Special Rapporteur seeks to preserve are indeed fundamental principles for the advancement of all societies and should be regarded as pillars for the safeguarding of peace and stability.

Yet, in 2016, even after all the lessons that history provided us with, it is clear that injustice and double-standards still dominate modern society. Human rights violations are widespread, violence has become intrinsic to the system and the lack of justice has become widely accepted. Not to mention the right to reparation, which appears to be a utopia for the majority of the victims.

The case of Iraq is one striking example of this. The 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of the country has resulted in over two million victims and led to the total collapse of the Iraqi state. The establishment of a pro-invasion administration in the aftermath set the foundations for the corrupted mockery of a state we see today. Yet, after 13 years Iraqis have not even received an official apology.

Palestinians are suffering the same fate: the decades-long conflict with Israel which has resulted in the displacement of an entire population as well as countless human rights abuses, including house demolitions and forced evictions, is far from being over and justice even further from being achieved.

Pursuing accountability for these actions would translate in the non-recurrence of events as such. If those committing crimes against humanity and war crimes were to be brought to justice, the world would perhaps be a little safer today. On the contrary, the lack of accountability sets dangerous precedents and legitimizes the excessive use of force.

Therefore, we believe in the necessity of tackling these issues in your future reports, since it is a shared responsibility of the international community to take the appropriate measures in order to ensure that justice is finally done.

Thank you.

[Injustice and Double-Standards Still Dominate Modern Society](#)

General debate under agenda item 4 - Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Delivered by Ms. Alessia Vedano

Thank you Mr. Vice-President,

Our organizations would like to draw the Council's attention to the dangerous threat that the lack of accountability and justice pose on international peace and stability. After all the hard lessons from history, in 2016 injustice and double-standards still dominate modern society.

Israel's occupation of Palestine is a glaring case in question. How long will the Palestinian people continue to wait for the international community to take the required measures to end Israeli policies of racism which have resulted in the displacement of an entire population as well as countless human rights abuses, including house demolitions and forced evictions?

The situation in Iraq is not less grave: the illegal 2003 US-led invasion and occupation of the country has resulted in over two million victims and led to the total collapse of the state. The establishment of a sectarian pro-invasion administration set the foundations for the current proliferation of criminal militias and terrorist groups. Yet, after 13 years Iraqis have not even received an official apology!

On the contrary, today innocent civilians are paying the price of interest-driven Western policies. Pro-government militias are allowed – actually encouraged- to carry out policies of ethnic cleansing against the Sunni population.

Likewise, the situation in Yemen is just as astonishing: The Houthi militias, who refuse all initiatives for a peaceful settlement of the conflict, would not be able to sustain the ongoing war, if it wasn't for Iran's support. Yet again, Iran can sponsor murderous militias facing no consequences whatsoever.

Impunity for the perpetrators of these heinous crimes, whose violence seems to have somehow been legitimized, is undermining the authority of international law, corrupting the culture of human right and shaming the struggle against racism.

We therefore believe that the time has come for the international community to address these serious concerns and take the appropriate measures in order to ensure accountability and justice.

Thank you.

[Palestinians Need More Than Humanitarian Assistance, They Need to Live in Dignity and Without Fear](#)

General debate under agenda item 7 - Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

Delivered by Ms. Iman Abu Zueiter

Thank you Mr. President,

The ongoing decades-long conflict in Palestine is a source for systematic and widespread human rights violations against the Palestinian people. For more than half a century, Palestinians have been heavily suffering from grave human rights abuses as a result of the Israeli occupation's oppressive and unjust policies.

Israel keeps confiscating more and more land to build unlawful settlements and facilitate the transfer of Israelis while imposing restrictions of all sorts against the occupied population making their lives even harder.

Arbitrary detention is a common phenomenon in the West Bank. Under the cover of "administrative detention", Israel is holding high numbers of Palestinians in custody for extended periods of time, without upper time limit, without trials, and without informing them or their lawyers of the charges against them, in an obvious misuse of the concept and a breach of International law.

Human rights defenders in Palestine are also systematically targeted under old and exaggerated charges. One example is the case of Issa Amro who is facing a trial on trumped up charges since September 2015 that put him under imminent risk of imprisonment.

Collective Punishment is a regular practice against Palestinians as well. In the West Bank, this takes the form of demolitions of the family houses of the accused or suspected in carrying out attacks against Israelis, causing harm to those who have nothing to do with the allegedly committed attacks.

In the Gaza strip this takes the form of a ten year-long blockade. Besides the severe restrictions imposed on civilians' movement, people are also deprived of their basic daily needs; such as goods, clean water, fossil fuels, building materials, and electricity. Obviously this has horrible consequences and constitutes a serious breach of the fundamental human rights of the 1.8 million inhabitants.

The international community has a duty towards the Palestinian population to put an end to the ongoing collective punishment of civilians. People in Palestine need more than mere humanitarian assistance, they need to live in dignity in their recognized Palestinian territories and without fear.

Therefore, we urge the international community to take immediate action to stop these grave human rights violations. Achieving this will bring us a step closer to the long awaited peace.

Thank you.

[Commemoration of the Historic Importance of the 15th Anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action \(DDPA\)](#)

General debate under agenda item 9 - Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Joint Statement with International Youth & Student Movement for the UN (ISMUN) delivered by Mr. Jan Lönn

Mr. President,

I speak on behalf of 12 NGOs who wish to express their grave concern over the absence of the Human Rights Council's engagement against racism at this session.

It is inexplicable that the Council will not adopt any annual resolution in 2016 on combating racism and implementing the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) despite that the General Assembly has specifically entrusted the Human Rights Council with the responsibility to guide the implementation of the DDPA.

This silence of the OHCHR on the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the DDPA is deeply alarming as it sends a dangerous message to Member States and the global public that the implementation of the DDPA is of little importance. It is a devastating message to the victims of racism and xenophobia in this year of crisis and needs to be urgently corrected.

The Intergovernmental Working Group for DDPA Implementation made a series of recommendations to the OHCHR for the commemoration of the 15th Anniversary with high visibility. Not a single of those recommendations has been implemented.

The General Assembly has repeatedly requested the Human Rights Council to adopt a multi-year outreach programme to inform and mobilize the global public in support of the DDPA. We call on the Council to adopt their requested programme as a priority matter at its 34th session, and we assure the Council of our determination to contribute to that process.

We call on the OHCHR to mount a year-end publicity campaign to sensitize the global public on the historic importance of the DDPA and commemorate its 15th anniversary with high visibility.

I thank you.

[Policies on Race Remain a Serious Challenge in Many Countries](#)

Interactive dialogue under agenda item 9 - Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Delivered by Ms. Alessia Vedano

Thank you Mr. Vice-President,

We would like to thank the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent for their detailed report. Indeed, we share their concerns with regards to the increasingly worrying "Afrophobic" sentiment spreading around the world, and in particular in those Western countries which have for centuries exploited these very same people for their own economic gains.

As the Working Group has put it, colonial history, the legacies of enslavement, racial subordination and segregation, and policies on race remain a serious challenge in many countries. We strongly agree with the Experts that addressing those forms of bias requires the adoption of regional and national laws to create the potential for restitution, compensation and satisfaction for those affected.

In addition, our organizations would like to highlight the danger posed by the spreading of Islamophobic ideologies across Europe following the latest waves of migration. In these regards, a worrying number of radical political parties that promote hatred against Arab Muslims have gained wide consensus in the European political scene and overseas. These are only likely to increase racial discrimination and racism, which, as history teaches, can lead to catastrophic consequences. We therefore suggest that the Working Group takes this into careful account in their future reports.

Furthermore, we deeply regret that the UN is dedicating less and less attention to this important matter and certainly less resources to the anti-racism activities of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). We believe that the Working Group should enhance its cooperation with civil society, as it represents an important asset in the promotion and protection of principles of equality and tolerance for diversity.

During this time of crisis, instruments to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia should be created instead of being reduced. We therefore call on the Human Rights Council to adopt a multiyear outreach programme for the DDPA mobilization, because, to quote Martin Luther King "our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Thank you.

[Reforming the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent to Return to Its Meaningful Role](#)

Interactive dialogue with the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent under agenda item 9 - Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Joint Statement with ISMUN delivered by Ms. Helen Weldu

Mr. President,

As longstanding supporters of the Working Group we are saddened over the drastic decline of the Working Group under its previous Chair and which continued until the most recent session. The last session of the Working Group was the least attended ever in the history of the Working Group. Only one single NGO or organization of People of African Descent from outside Geneva attended. The OHCHR had not sent out any information on the holding of the Working Group to NGOs as was done in the past. On the website of the OHCHR three different competing dates appeared during the month prior to the session. We raised the problem of lack of information in the intervention at the September 2015 interactive dialogue with the Working Group Chair but no attention was paid to the NGOs plea for improvement. Regrettably there were no apologies presented to civil society at the last session. Instead civil society was blamed for not coming.

Mr. President, we have the unfortunate impression that most of the Working Group has little interest in the contributions from civil society partners who contributed to the standing of the Working Group when it was at its best. At the last session not a single of many constructive proposals that were made by civil society networks was even discussed or considered by the Working Group.

It is obvious that deep-going reflection is needed with the Working Group and serious reform be considered in order for the Working Group to return to a meaningful role. The Working Group also needs to clarify if it will respect and adhere to its original mandate as determined by the DDPA or if the deviation that was announced in 2015 is still maintained.

In this respect we would like to draw attention to the longstanding proposal from NGOs and Member States to transform the Working Group of Experts into a Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, which would be in accordance with the hopes of People of African Descent at the outset of the International Decade.

Thank you, Mr. President.

[Apartheid Systems: Leaping from One Fight into Another](#)

General debate under agenda item 9 - Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Delivered by Ms. Iman Abu Zueiter

Thank you Mr. President,

Discrimination and racism are among the ongoing threats that overwhelm our modern world. People in different parts of the world are heavily suffering from various forms of discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance.

On the other hand, the cut in the resources of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) for fighting racism may negatively affect its work on issues safeguarded by the Durban Declaration and Program of Action (DDPA) and as a result may undermine the effectiveness of the protection provided to the victims of racism during this time of crisis.

In particular, more attention should be paid to flagrant cases as the apartheid system practiced against the ethnic and religious minorities living in Israel as well as Palestinians in the occupied territories. Arabs in Israel are living in impoverished communities surrounded by the Jews who are benefiting from most of the public resources. There are at least 50 discriminatory laws in Israel which either directly or indirectly, discriminate against Palestinians in different aspects of life.

One of such is the discrimination by Israeli Prison Service (IPS) in their treatment of Palestinian prisoners categorizing them as "security prisoners" even in cases with no apparent charge, or minor offenses. This discriminatory policy deprives Palestinian prisoners of their rights even as simple as making a telephone call. Moreover, while non-Arabs are tried before civilian courts, Palestinian civilians are tried before Israeli Military Courts for the same offenses in a clear form of discrimination.

Confiscation of Palestinian lands is a common practice as well that would not hold up in any international court. The new built Jewish-only settlements inside the occupied territories are sealed off by Israeli soldiers, and most of the resources and access to roads are for the use of Jews only.

These forms of discrimination practiced for decades cannot be tolerated anymore. The international community has to give greater attention and higher priority to the implementation of the DDPA in order to provide protection and legal assistance for all the victims of discrimination.

Thank you.

[Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building in Yemen](#)

General debate under agenda item 10 – Technical assistance and capacity-building (including on SG/HC Reports on Cambodia and Yemen)

Delivered by Ms. Alessia Vedano

Thank you Mr. Vice-President,

As the High Commissioner for Human Rights well expressed in his update report yesterday afternoon, the situation of Yemen has become a truly dramatic one. Since 2011, Yemen has been the theatre of a number of simultaneous and overlapping armed conflicts which have been tearing the country apart.

The Houthi-Saleh militias have been authors of grave violations against innocent civilians. In particular we are extremely concerned with the persistent attacks on highly populated areas, including on residential buildings, public and private infrastructures, historic or cultural sites and places of worship. In addition, the brutal militias have harassed and killed journalists and human rights defenders to undermine their freedom of expression.

We are acutely distressed by all cases of arbitrary deprivation of liberty, unlawful detention, enforced disappearance, intimidation, unlawful killing as well as sieges and blockades that have been committed at the hands of the same actors. How can Yemenis live even a resemblance of normal life when all of this occurs in total impunity?

The perpetuation of the conflict is having devastating consequences on the innocent population in Yemen, including women and children, who are trying to live a dignified life without fear and violence.

States are responsible for promoting and protecting the human rights of all persons who are in their territory. However, whereas such protection is not ensured the international community has a duty to support national institutions in the implementation of human rights standards. Such interference should be in accordance with the principles states sovereignty and always respectful of human rights law and international law.

In this context, we urge this council to announce technical assistance and capacity-building and fully support the Yemeni National Commission of Inquiry established to investigate the heinous crimes against humanity and war crimes committed against civilians, so that justice for Yemenis can finally be achieved and the perpetrators of the crimes stopped once and for all.

Thank you.

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



**Human Rights Council
32nd Regular Session
13 June - 1 July 2016**

EAFORD delivered several oral statements during the 32nd session of the UN Human Rights Council under items 2, 3, 4, 7 and 9 of the agenda of the Council, focusing on issues of racism and racial discrimination across different parts of the world, the dramatic increase of violence against migrants occurring in Europe, as well as, the grave human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Iraq. EAFORD also participated in the interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and the interactive dialogue with the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent. The following is the summary of those interventions:

[The Other Face of Terrorism](#)

Interactive dialogue under agenda item 2 - (Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)

Delivered by Ms. Alessia Vedano

Thank you Mr. President,

We would like first of all to thank the High Commissioner for his report. We regret that in 2016 is indeed witnessing dramatic human rights violations across the globe.

In particular, we would like to express our deep distress in regards to the persistent human rights violations occurring in Iraq. For years the Iraqi authorities have been complicit in abusing the people of this afflicted and stricken country through their policies of absolute disregard.

The violations committed, especially those within the framework of the “fight against terrorism” are a cause of great concern for us, and so should be for the whole international community. Through what the Iraqi authorities define as “liberation campaigns” of territories which are claimed to be under control of ISIS, various militias as well as the security forces are able to carry out policies of ethnic cleansing against the population, and in particular, against the Sunni component of society.

This is the tragic case of the ongoing battle in Fallujah, where thousands of people have fallen victims of the destructive indiscriminate shelling by the so-called US-led International Coalition, the Iraqi military and the militia units as well as of the abductions of such units.

We have received countless testimonies of arbitrary detentions, disturbing practices of torture and slaughtering, including hundreds of summary executions taking place at the hands of these actors. In this regard, we want to highlight that it is impossible for the government not to be held responsible on the basis of its argument that abuses by certain individuals or groups have not been orchestrated by the State, but are instead isolated incidents, when evidence shows it has been part of a systematic pattern in place for years! We therefore demand urgent action to bring peace and justice back to Iraq.

Thank you.

[The Rule of Law Not the Law of Rulers](#) – [\(Original in French\)](#)

General debate under agenda Item 3 - Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

EAFORD's statement(s) with GICJ Delivered by Ms. Julie Gorzkowski

Merci M. le Président,

Lors de cette session, de nombreux rapports ont dénoncé les principales violations des droits de l'Homme commises à travers le monde. A notre tour, nous aimerions exprimer notre inquiétude concernant la Palestine où la situation ne cesse de s'aggraver.

Le peuple palestinien se voit rapidement être dépossédé de ses droits fondamentaux, conséquence directe des politiques mises en place par les forces d'occupation israéliennes. Des terres confisquées, des biens détruits; un accès restreint aux installations essentielles et des persécutions physiques, notamment des emprisonnements arbitraires et dans certains cas des meurtres : voilà autant de violations qui demeurent monnaie courante.

En outre, les nouvelles colonies israéliennes, et les abus qui en découlent, interdisent aux Palestiniens l'accès à des conditions de vie minimales. Aujourd'hui encore, ils subissent des déplacements forcés et sont privés du droit de retourner chez eux, voire de se déplacer librement à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur des territoires.

Nos organisations sont également très préoccupées par les violations incessantes des droits de l'Homme en Irak.

Nos sources nous ont notamment fait part d'une augmentation dramatique des exécutions sommaires et des disparitions ainsi que de centaines de cas de détentions arbitraires, de tortures et d'autres traitements dégradants perpétrés par le gouvernement et par ses milices. Nous aimerions tout particulièrement souligner la nature sectaire de ces violations systématiques qui visent majoritairement la communauté sunnite iraquienne.

Notre autre sujet d'inquiétude concerne la campagne de bombardements à l'aveugle menée par les forces iraqiennes et par la coalition dirigée par les Etats-Unis. En effet, elle touche de manière dramatique la population civile et provoque une destruction massive des principales infrastructures.

Par conséquent nous demandons instamment que soient menées des actions pour que la responsabilité de ces violations soit reconnue et que la paix et la justice soient installées durablement en Palestine et en Irak.

Merci.

[They Lie, We Die: Indiscriminate Shelling & Killing of Civilians](#)

General debate under agenda item 4 - Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Delivered by Ms. Alessia Vedano

Thank you Mr. Vice-President,

We would like to bring to the Council's attention the dramatic human rights violations occurring in Iraq, and, in particular inside and outside Fallujah, following the launch of the military operation aimed at liberating the city from ISIS.

Such campaign of indiscriminate shelling, carried out by the Iraqi army, its affiliated militia units as well as U.S. air forces and Iranian military advisors, is causing a huge number of civilian casualties and a monumental degree of destruction.

Extremely concerning for us are also the appalling violations committed by militia units and security forces against civilians fleeing the fighting in Fallujah. Among them, we have documented widespread cases of arbitrary detention and verbal and physical abuse, including torture and other degrading and inhuman treatment. Too often such practices are only the preannouncement to a violent death.

This was the case of the recent massacres in al-Karmah, Saqlawiya and al-Zrakiya, where at least 352 civilians were executed by the militias while hundreds of others have disappeared, probably still hanging between life and death.

We want to express clear and well that such actions are not isolated incidents, as the Iraqi authorities claim, but are instead violations of a systematic nature, occurring on a regular basis and perpetrated in the name of purely sectarian ideologies. Testimonies from those who were released in fact confirmed that militias were targeting them because of their religious background, and that also emerged from their interrogations.

Finally, such violations occur under the tacit support of the Iraqi authorities. Despite the promises of the government for a fair and impartial investigation to bring those responsible for the crimes to justice, little has been done and, in any case, it has led to no reliable outcome. We thus demand the Council to dispatch an independent commission of inquiry and appoint a Special Rapporteur on Iraq.

Thank you.

[Diplomacy at a Dead End](#)

General debate under agenda item 7 - Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

Delivered by Ms. Alessia Vedano

Thank you Mr. President,

For over half a century, Palestinians have been tirelessly waiting for somewhere to call “homeland” again. Who is going to be there to preserve their culture, their traditions, their lands, if generations after generations are forced to live in overcrowded IDP camps, in decadent tents showing a dusty UN logo almost there as a mockery to remind them of the vain presence of a UN which is not truly there?

The right to a homeland is universal and sacrosanct. Yet, apparently this does not seem to apply to Palestinians.

Violence against this afflicted population has been regular and systemic since 1948. Over the past six months, around 200 Palestinians have been killed and over a thousand have been incarcerated by Israeli armed forces without due process, among them 400 children.

Furthermore, a new wave of settlement projects in the OPTs has been approved by the Israeli authorities. We all know well that this will translate in renewed abuses for Palestinians who are progressively being pushed from every side and displaced, without hope for returning to their long-lost homes.

The war crimes as well as all the human rights violations committed by the Occupying Power until present are a result of a systemic policy of impunity that enjoys the support of many international actors, and in particular of the U.S., which in light of its 68-years alliance with Israel, has vetoed resolution after resolution, largely contributing in maintaining the current status quo. What is going on in Palestine is no less than Apartheid, and, as such, must be deplored by the Human Rights Council and the international community.

As Archbishop Desmond Tutu once affirmed: “Those who turn a blind eye to injustice actually perpetuate injustice. If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.”

Thank you.

[Across A Hostile Planet: Masses of Migrants Flee the Carnage of War Profiteering](#)

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance under agenda item 9 - Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

EAFORD’s statement(s) with GICJ Delivered by Ms. Anne Béatrice de Gressot

We would like to thank the Special Rapporteur for his report. We are currently witnessing a massive and unprecedented migration crisis due to the proliferation of conflicts throughout the world.

Those people fleeing for their life and in search for a safer place to bring their children escaped the hell of combat zones to come face to face with a widespread xenophobia. In a world where mobility is increasing, the fear for the foreigners becomes a common thing and a political argument for a few of our governments.

Last Friday, the United Kingdom voted out of the European Union through a referendum. One of the main causes of this so-called Brexit was the migration, suggesting it was a social and economic threat to the British citizens. Whereas a high concentration of migrants certainly poses a greater amount of financial pressure on certain hosting

countries, this must not become a pretext for spreading dangerous xenophobic ideologies. The United Kingdom is not an isolated example in Europe. Indeed, our organizations are especially concerned by the rise of extremist ideological movements, taking form into radical political parties.

The recent terrorist attacks in Europe and the rising threat of terrorism have been used as a tool to diabolize Muslims and demonize Arabs. As stressed out by the Special Rapporteur, xenophobia is a multiform phenomenon and thus has the power to infiltrate every layer of our societies in very insidious ways. Despite the fact that the reasons behind xenophobia and its subsequent manifestations are not the same depending on the generation, we can still trace this behavior back to a basic feeling of intolerance and hate.

Based on the conclusions of the Special Rapporteur in its report, we call upon the Human Rights Council to undertake a holistic approach to combat xenophobia, based on new educational programmes promoting the fundamental principles of tolerance and respect for ethnic, religious and cultural diversity in order to counter extremist ideologies while preserving and consolidating the values of democracy.

[NGOs Call for a Permanent Forum on People of African Descent](#)

Interactive dialogue with the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent under agenda item 9 - Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Joint statement with ISMUN delivered by Mr. Boris Blasberg

Mr. President,

I am speaking on behalf of 17 organizations in this joint statement to express our grave concern over the failure to implement General Assembly resolutions regarding the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International Decade for People of African Descent.

We had expected that high priority and great visibility be given during 2016 to the commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the DDPA by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and that the Council would have acted on the recommendations of its Intergovernmental Working Group for the Effective Implementation of the DDPA presented at its last session.

We cannot accept silence on the importance of the DDPA which implementation is more needed than ever in the alarming situation of escalating racism, xenophobia, islamophobia and afrophobia that the world is experiencing.

We call on the Human Rights Council to decide at its organizational meeting prior to the 33rd session to hold a full day discussion at its 33rd session in September on commemorating and implementing the DDPA and the programme of the International Decade for People of African Descent.

We call on the Human Rights Council at its 33rd session to do what the General Assembly has repeatedly asked it to do, namely to develop and adopt a multi-year programme of activities to provide for the renewed and strengthened outreach activities needed to inform and mobilize the global public in support of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

We strongly deplore the decline of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent which at its last session had practically no participation of People of African Descent and civil society from outside Geneva as a result of no information provided to those most concerned.

We reiterate the call on the Human Rights Council to discontinue and transform the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent into a Permanent Forum on People of African Descent as has been repeatedly proposed

by many NGOs and Member States since 2008.

We call on the High Commissioner for Human Rights to respect the decision by the General Assembly to strengthen the anti-racial discrimination work at the Office by three additional staff members to which funding was provided when the programme of activities for the International Decade was adopted in November 2014. The structures for fighting racism must not be weakened at the UN, but instead strengthened as called for by the General Assembly.

Let us use the opportunity of the 15th anniversary of the DDPA to strengthen our resolve and take concrete action for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

I thank you.

[Uniting Against Racism](#)

General debate under agenda item 9 - Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Delivered by Ms. Julie Gorzkowski

Thank you Mr. President,

We are outraged by the dramatic increase of violence against migrants occurring in Europe, and the rise of islamophobic speeches used by extreme political parties.

Our organizations are also particularly concerned with the situation of Palestinians who are continuously deprived of their basic fundamental rights due to Israeli policies of segregation and apartheid in the occupied territories. The Occupying Power is regularly confiscating their lands, destroying their private properties, denying them access to basic resources on purely ethnic basis. Victims of the appalling practices include innocent children, who are frequently imprisoned without due process for their guilty verdict of being Palestinians.

In the context of the 15th Anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, we would like to stress the importance of never ignoring the danger of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance because as we witnessed through history they can bring catastrophic results.

We find it unacceptable that additional funding provided by the General Assembly specifically for combating racism is diverted to other priority areas in the OHCHR.

There has to be an end to the undermining of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and we ask the Council to develop and adopt a multiyear outreach programme for information and campaigning in support of the DDPA as requested by the General Assembly.

We call for a review of the activities against racism at the Council and particularly the OHCHR and that a full day discussion to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the DDPA be held at the 33rd session of the HRC. Thank you.

Also: **General debate under agenda item 4 - Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**

Joint statement delivered by Mr. Jan Lönn: [The Seed and the Sower of Chaos in Iraq](#)

Interactive dialogue under agenda item 2 - (Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)

Joint statement delivered by Mr. Naji Haraj: [Fallujah: War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity \(Original in Arabic\)](#)

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



Human Rights Council 31st Regular Session 29 February - 24 March 2016

EAFORD delivered several oral statements during the 31st session of the UN Human Rights Council under items 2, 3, 4, 7, and 9 of the agenda of the Council, focusing on issues of racism and racial discrimination across different parts of the world, human rights education as part of the sustainable development goals, as well as, the grave human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Iraq and Syria. EAFORD also participated in the interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on sale of children, and the annual discussion on technical cooperation – capacity building for the protection of the rights of all migrants, including women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities (HRC res. 18/18 and 30/21). The following is the summary of those interventions:

[The Escalation in Islamophobia and Afrophobia](#)

Interactive dialogue under agenda item 2 - (Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)

Joint Statement with ISMUN delivered by Mr. Boris Blasberg

2015 was an unfortunate year of escalated racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, and in particular islamophobia and afrophobia. We had expected the OHCHR to do more and would like to know your plans for implementing the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in view of the fifteenth anniversary of its adoption in 2016.

In 2015 the OHCHR decided to eliminate three staff positions from the Anti-Racial-Discrimination-Section that were in the UN General Assembly approved programme budget for 2015 and transfer those resources to other priorities in the office. How would you explain this drastic action by your office in contravention of the General Assembly?

We call on your office to launch a global information campaign on the achievements and urgency of implementing the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and to positively assist the Human Rights Council to develop and adopt the multiyear outreach programme for the DDPA as has been requested by the General Assembly.

I thank you.

[The Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography](#)

Clustered Interactive dialogue with SRSs, SR on torture, and SR on sale of children under agenda Item 3 - Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Delivered by Mr. Boris Blasberg

Firstly, we would like to thank the Special Representative for her work in preparing this report.

Our organizations have been deeply shocked and saddened to hear about the ongoing sale of children in many parts of the world, particularly in areas of conflict such as Syria, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of Congo just to name a few. The usage of children the most innocent and fragile individuals of human society, as objects to be abused and harmed is shocking. This particular tragedy has only been made possible at this scale as a result of ongoing lawlessness and conflict leaving a vacuum in security for criminal elements to take advantage of children. The recent events showed the sale of children in the Levant to become brides and slaves, is truly shocking to anybody with a conscience.

Whilst most of us would view the constant and ongoing improvement in technology as a positive advancement in improving our lives, it is sadly also being exploited by criminals to facilitate their trade in children through the online advertising of child prostitution to the sharing and distribution of child pornography. The internet has sadly made it easier to attain these illegal services, and thus has also had the adverse effect of increasing the demand.

We thus agree with the report for both an increase in the efforts of cyber security and the security organs of various states to act upon any leads to crimes of this nature; this being the best short-term solution in combating this problem. We wish to stress that we fully support the reports call for self-identified pedophiles to come forth and seek help with professionals. As mentioned in the report this should go hand in hand with a media campaign, that both discourages people from engaging in pedophilia, as well as raise awareness to the fact that this is a serious issue.

This is another issue where we see children falling victim to criminals that take advantage of a demand. This demand leaves children with permanent psychological and physical scars that ruin their entire childhood, and haunt them into their adult life. The main cause for the existence of this exploitation is undoubtedly poverty.

The International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and Geneva International Centre for Justice would like to highlight the fact that poverty is the source of many evils. Poverty often increases corruption amongst individuals tasked with upholding and enforcing the law, which in turn allows for criminals to act with impunity in luring children to their criminal schemes of child prostitution and pornography. We recommend the international community come together and develop a joint universal campaign of awareness against child sex tourism and pedophilia and increased monitoring of child pornography online. Once again we wish to thank the Special Representative for drafting this report.

[Ethnic Cleansing Ignored and Overshadowed](#)

General debate under agenda Item 3 - Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

EAFORD's Statement with GICJ Delivered by Mr. Boris Blasberg

Thank you Mr. President,

The last years have seen no hold up to the brutal violence and absolute disregard for human rights in the world. We are alarmed by these developments and the further lack of tangible actions to remedy any of the situations. Geopolitical interests of regional and global powers have sadly forced the issues and regards for human rights to be ignored and overshadowed.

Israel's unhindered occupation of Palestine and its continuing violations of the rights of the Palestinians constitute grave crimes against humanity and absolute disregard for international law.

Recent senseless sectarian violence that has become a part of daily life in many parts of the Middle East from the

area of the Mashriq to Yemen is alarming. Syria and Yemen have also borne the brunt of the subversive actions of certain states in the region, in fomenting sectarian divisions and its accompanying violence.

Iraq is a country that has enjoyed a history of general peace and prosperity. However, since the illegal US led invasion and its following occupation we have seen a deterioration of the social fabric of the country.

The year 2016 began with actions of deplorable ethnic cleansing and forced displacement of certain ethnic and religious populations, especially in Diyala province. These actions of the militias were made possible through the corporation of the militias and government forces with the support of foreign state actors.

Unfortunately, certain countries in the region are deeply involved in supporting militias and their actions well outside their own borders. We call on all parties to refrain from targeting civilians and creating societal divisions that only fan the flames of hatred. Furthermore, we are calling on all combatant parties to ensure the safety and well-being of the civilian populations.

I thank you.

[Human Rights Education is a Human Right in Itself](#)

General debate under agenda Item 3 - Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Joint statement with the International Federation of University Women delivered by Ms. Auy Paunila

Thank you Mr. President. I speak on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning.

We find it significant that Human Rights Education is part of the 2030 Agenda and brought to the highest level of policy making through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and of the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for action.

We want to reaffirm that Human Rights Education is a human right in itself. International instruments acknowledge the right to an education that promotes human rights and they assert that education for human rights is essential for sustainable development.

Review and monitoring at the national level can ensure that a State is meeting its obligations on Human Rights Education. We welcome the report of the OHCHR on the Evaluation of the implementation of the second phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education and we encourage States that have not yet done so to implement action plans and to send their national reports to the OHCHR as only 30 states submitted their reports in 2015.

The year 2016 will mark the fifth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, and with appreciation for the States Platform for Human Rights Education and Training, we would welcome a follow-up resolution at the 33rd session of the Human Rights Council in order to give Human Rights Education the place it should have in the work of the Council.

Civil society plays an important role in the implementation of the right to education. The NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning remains committed to working in this direction.

Thank you Mr. President.

[Is Inhumanity Legal?](#) Analyzing the legality of the Israeli blockade against Gaza under International Customary Law

General debate under Agenda Item 7 - Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

Delivered by Ms. Janie Abiharb

Mr. President,

Gaza's humanitarian crisis is reaching heights beyond repair, as Israel continues its air, land, and sea blockade, in retaliation to its conflict with Hamas. Since the land crossings were deployed in 2007, and the naval blockade was instigated in 2009, Gaza has been barred from receiving goods that are necessary for the sustenance of human life.

The scope of effect the blockade has is not isolated to the civilians of Gaza alone. Vessels attempting to deliver aid to Gaza have been caught in the crossfire of this blockade, for example, the tragedy involving the Mavi Marmara vessel which cost the lives of nine Turkish nationals, and injured many others.

In light of the increasing deterioration of Gaza, it is more imperative than ever to condemn the illegality of Israel's blockade. As stipulated by the San Remo Manual, a codified guide to International Customary Law, the blockade is not classifiably an international armed conflict, as Hamas is not officially recognized as a government.

Secondly, regardless of Israel's intentions, it has not executed the blockade in accordance with the principles of humanity, another requirement stipulated by the manual. It is incontrovertible that Israel's blockade against Gaza is unlawful. The United Nations is plagued with the responsibilities to uphold the goals set out by its charter, that being, to "establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained". Failing to ensure Israel is adhering to International Law points to a fundamental breach of the Rule of Law by its subjective application.

Thus, we call on the Human Rights Council to take the necessary measures towards denouncing and ending this illegal blockade. Without defending the defenseless, the international community's respect for international law is greatly compromised. Palestinians already question its double standards that render it impractical and useless to many, with severe ramifications for certain oppressed people that continue to suffer as a result, as has been in this brutal case of the blockade against Gaza.

Thank you.

Also: **General debate under agenda item 9 - Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**
EAFORD's Statement with GICJ Delivered by Mr. Mourad Khatib: [Is Israel a Racist State?](#)

ANNUAL DISCUSSION ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION – CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF ALL MIGRANTS, INCLUDING WOMEN, CHILDREN, OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (HRC RES. 18/18 AND 30/21) Delivered by Mr. Boris Blasberg: [Migration in the Current State of Global Affairs](#)

General debate under agenda item 4 - Human rights situations that require the Council's attention
EAFORD's Joint Statement Delivered by Ms. Lamia Fadla: [IRAQ: Sectarian Cleansing in Diyala \(Original in Arabic\)](#)