

DRAFT EU Statement under item 4.

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

[Alignment paragraph.]

No regions or countries are exempt of human rights problems. The EU pays tribute to States across the world that are engaged in improving their human rights records, and stands ready to support their endeavours. Yet, there are human rights situations that call for special attention because of their seriousness, the extent of the violations committed, the urgent need to act on behalf of the victims, or the lack of cooperation with UN mechanisms. In this sense the EU would like to highlight certain particularly worrying situations:

The EU condemns in the strongest terms the ongoing repression in **Syria** and the unacceptable violence used by the military and security forces against peaceful protestors which have led to hundreds of fatalities and many more people being injured. The EU is dismayed at reports of deaths in custody under torture, including minors. Those responsible, at all levels, for the alleged violations should be held accountable. The EU deplors that Syria has not yet granted access to a mission of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The EU also calls for the immediate release of all those arrested for their participation in peaceful protests, as well as of all political prisoners and human rights defenders. It condemns the arrests and intimidations of Syrian journalists. The EU urges the Syrian authorities to respond to the legitimate demands of the Syrian people by launching an inclusive and genuine national dialogue and by implementing without delay and through a concrete timetable, meaningful political reforms. The EU supports the joint statement on Syria.

The EU is also deeply concerned by the human rights situation in **Belarus** which has continued to deteriorate since the presidential elections of 19 December 2010. The EU reiterates its demand for the immediate release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners. It calls on the Belarusian authorities to immediately end the persecution of democratic forces, independent media, representatives of civil society, student, etc. The EU is also worried by reports of torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners. We regret that despite the efforts made by the international community, the government of Belarus has demonstrated a lack of will to cooperate with international and regional mechanisms. This situation constitutes a serious violation of numerous international commitments taken by Belarus and requires the Council's urgent action.

The EU deplores the human rights situation in **Bahrain**. The EU is concerned by the alleged cases of torture and ill-treatment, as well as by the reported deaths in custody. Repression against medical personnel is a matter of particular concern. Bahraini authorities have an obligation to ensure independent investigations into these cases, as well as into all human rights violations. The EU calls for a fair and transparent administration of justice. Trials have to be open to all, including diplomats. A meaningful dialogue with the political opposition, rather than repression, should be the right way out of the current crisis. The EU further condemns the use of the death penalty, and calls on the authorities to reinstate the de facto moratorium on capital punishment that prevailed until 2006. The EU also urges the Bahraini Government to grant immediate access to OHCHR for a mission leading to a report, with the hope that positive developments can be discussed during an Interactive Dialogue at HRC18.

With regard to **Yemen**, the EU condemns in the strongest terms the continued use of violence against peaceful protestors, which must stop immediately. Reports of grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law against civilians, among others through attacks on medical facilities, cannot be accepted. The EU fully supports the proposed visit of the Office of the High Commissioner which should serve as a first step towards independently assessing the situation ensuring that perpetrators of abuses will be held accountable. We take note of Yemen's agreement to participate in an Interactive Dialogue during HRC18. The EU urges the Yemeni authorities to address the legitimate demands of the Yemeni people regarding political transition, which must happen now. The EU supports the joint statement on Yemen.

The EU already had the opportunity to express its views on the situation in Libya. We deem it important to reiterate that investigations and monitoring need to continue. We therefore fully support the resolution extending the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry.

The Interim report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in **Iran** clearly indicated that the crackdown on human right defenders, women's rights activists, journalists and members of the opposition has been intensified. Serious concerns have been raised by UN mechanisms about torture, arbitrary detention and unfair trials. There has been a significant increase in the application of the death penalty, including cases of political prisoners, since the beginning of 2011. Discrimination persists against minority groups, in some cases amounting to persecution. We call on Iran to cooperate with the recently established special rapporteur.

We take note of the recent adoption of the outcome report of the UPR review of **Burma/Myanmar**. The Government must now assume responsibility for the peaceful transition to democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The EU remains committed to supporting the people of Burma/Myanmar in this regard and reiterates its call for the unconditional release of all those detained for their political convictions. Furthermore we urge the authorities of Burma/Myanmar to grant access to the Special Rapporteur.

The EU considers that the publication of the report of the UN Secretary-General Panel of Experts on accountability in **Sri Lanka** is an important development. The EU reiterates its view that a credible, independent process should address the extremely serious allegations contained in this document, so as to contribute to strengthening the process of reconciliation and ensuring lasting peace and security in Sri Lanka. The EU hopes that the Government of Sri Lanka will engage with the UN Secretary General on the report .

The EU has been deeply disturbed at reports on the use of force against **Camp Ashraf** residents, resulting in casualties; we deplore the loss of lives and call for their human rights to be fully respected.

Finally, the EU is deeply concerned at the deterioration in the human rights situation in **China**. In recent weeks, a large number of lawyers, writers, journalists, petitioners, artists and bloggers have been subject to arbitrary arrest and other forms of harassment or have simply disappeared. New restrictions have been introduced on the work of foreign journalists. The EU is particularly alarmed at the arrest of Ai Wei Wei. The EU calls on the Chinese authorities to immediately end arbitrary arrests and disappearances, to clarify the whereabouts of all disappeared persons and to release all of those who have been detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression. The EU also calls on the Chinese authorities to refrain from the use of force in dealing with the situation at the Kirti monastery, and to allow independent observers to the site.