



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 46th SESSION

From 22 to 24 February 2021, the Geneva Centre monitored the Human Rights Council (HRC) 46th session's High-level segment (HLS). As for the HRC43rd session's HLS, the Centre focused on statements delivered by dignitaries from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

High-Level Segment: MENA Region Dignitaries

22-24 February 2021

Morocco: H.E. Mr. Mustafa Al Ramid - Minister of State for Human Rights and Relations with Parliament

To combat the COVID-19 pandemic, Morocco has adopted a comprehensive national approach, which responds to domestic economics needs while upholding human rights (with focus on the right to health). Since January 2021, Morocco has also implemented a free-of-charge COVID vaccination campaign, for Moroccan people and residents in Morocco. Other initiatives undertaken by Morocco include the provision of aid to other African states in the fight against the pandemic, the collaboration with the CEDAW, and the issue of an invitation to the SR on the human rights to drinking water. Morocco solicits the strengthening of international cooperation to counter regional conflicts.

State of Palestine: H.E. Mr Riad Al-Malki - Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine

Notwithstanding the health crisis, human rights violations continue to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The State of Palestine hence requests that the Israeli occupation forces be held accountable and the HRC agenda item 7 maintained until the situation is resolved. In addition, the State of Palestine welcomes the confirmation of the ICJ jurisdiction over the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as a means of obtaining justice for the Palestinian people.

Syrian Arab Republic: H.E. Mr Fayssal Mekdad - Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic

Syria denounces the spread of misinformation and the unilateral coercive measures imposed on the country. On the other hand, it reiterates its efforts to counter terrorist groups, who, together with other occupation forces, continue to violate Syrian people's human rights. While the government is committed to create the proper environment for the refugee return, the Syrian people still suffer from food insecurity. As for the international agenda, Syria expresses its full support for the maintenance of the HRC agenda item 7.

Qatar: H.E. Ms Lolwah Rashid Al-Khater - Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Qatar has implemented a range of policies, which include the protection of citizens and residents, the support for the economy, and the aid for countries in need. To better safeguard workers' rights, Qatar has adopted institutional reforms to establish a minimum wage and ensure a safe working environment. Despite the still numerous challenges faced by the Arab region, Qatar is committed to achieve peace through constructive dialogue (e.g., the 41st GCC Summit declaration). Worldwide, some human rights situations for consideration are those of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Libya, and Yemen.

Tunisia: H.E. Mr Othman Jerandi - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia

Tunisia has been developing its legislation in full respect of human rights. Tunisia states that women are central to achieve democracy and ensures the inclusion of civil society and national human rights bodies. In addition, it recalls the importance of multinational cooperation to combat the current health crisis. As to the international framework, Tunisia urges that the right of self-determination of Palestinian people be guaranteed.

Iraq: H.E. Mr Fuad Mohammad Hussein - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on Iraq's economy and infrastructure. To ensure the wellbeing of its people, Iraq has developed a national plan. While striving to reduce unemployment, Iraq has also promoted women's participation in all sectors, particularly in the field of security. About the rights of the child, relevant



authorities have developed a bill, which will be put to Parliament. To achieve a peaceful transition process, a new electoral law has been adopted. As to the use of the death penalty as deterrent, Iraq ensures that it will be applied only with due diligence to the right to fair trial. On the other hand, the government commits to assist the safe return of displaced people.

Saudi Arabia: H.E. Mr. Awwad bin Saleh Al-Awwad - Head of the Human Rights Commission of Saudi Arabia

Over the last few years, to uphold human rights, Saudi Arabia has implemented 90 reforms. Among others, there has been progress for the rule of law and the rights of women, and the juvenile criminal code has been amended. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Saudi Arabia has supported the private sector with financial aid and ensured that infected people be treated. In addition, Saudi Arabia states the importance to achieve peace in Yemen, reiterates its support for the Palestinian people, denounces human rights violations against the Rohingya, and rejects human rights politicization.

Egypt: H.E. Mr Alaa Roushdy - Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt

Egypt reiterates its commitment towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, through the development of measures that respect fundamental rights such as the right to work and the protection of the family. In addition, Egypt remains committed to combating terrorism and protecting freedom of religion and belief. Through legislative and institutional reforms, the country has promoted and protected the right to life, the right to personal freedom and the right to physical security. The rights of women, children and persons with disabilities have also been upheld. Egypt confirms its support to the Palestinian people, underlines that human sufferings should be alleviated in Syria, Libya, and Yemen, and condemns human rights violations against the Rohingya.

Organization of Islamic Cooperation: H.E. Mr Yousef Al Othaimeen - Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

The OIC reiterates its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. It then condemns human rights violations against the Palestinian people, the Muslim Rohingya people and the Muslims in Sri Lanka, denounces the human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir, and confirms its support of Azerbaijan in the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. As for freedom of religion, the OIC supports the battle against religious intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief. To foster tolerance, the OIC has thus launched several inter-religious dialogues. On the other hand, as for terrorism, the OIC urges the international community to address extremism's root causes.

Libya: H.E. Mr Mohamed T. H. Siala - Minister for Foreign Affairs of Libya

To bring perpetrators of human rights violations to justice, Libya calls the international community for the establishment of a domestic COI. As to the COVID-19 pandemic, to guarantee the right to public health, Libya will strive to ensure equal access to vaccines. Notwithstanding a positive development at political level, Libya recalls that its own stability depends on regional balance, and vice versa, hence soliciting the international community's assistance. It also addresses the issue of stolen Libyan antiquities, which have symbolic and cultural value. To combat unlawful migration and cross-border crimes, particular attention should be paid to borders security, through the establishment of international partnerships. In this regard, Libya emphasizes that the migration issue should be considered from a human rights perspective.

Iran (Islamic Republic of): H.E. Mr Ali Bagheri Kani - Deputy of International Affairs of the Judiciary of Iran and Secretary of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Iran welcomes the international community's efforts to combat racism and structural discrimination, worldwide. On the other hand, it denounces that the rights to health, to food and of access to humanitarian aid of the Iranian people have been constantly violated by terrorism and sanctions.