

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 49th SESSION

### Interactive dialogue on the report of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan

7 March 2022

In her opening remarks, **Ms. Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights** mentioned that from 15 August 2021 to 15 February 2022 the UNAMA and OHCHR had documented 1,153 civilian casualties, including 397 deaths in Afghanistan as well as several suicide and non-suicide attacks perpetrated by ISKP against Shi'a Muslims, mostly from the Hazara ethnic group. The High Commissioner said the extra-judicial killings of individuals suspected to be linked to the ISKP extremist group continued and that the Afghan people face a devastating crisis that affects their enjoyment of the full range of economic, social and cultural rights. There has also been an increase in child labour, child marriage and the sale of children as well as an increase in violations of women's fundamental rights and freedoms. She voiced her concern over the high level of concern for the killings of human rights defenders, enforced disappearances and a progressive erosion of civic space.

**Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to UNOG (Country Concerned), H.E. Mr. Nasir Ahmad Andisha**, expressed that the Taliban has put Afghanistan on a downward trajectory of rapid reversal of rights and liberties. In addition, the Taliban has resumed a cycle of retribution and violence where the voices of women, education of girls, and avenues for redressing the acts of gender-based violence and discrimination have been taken away. He further emphasized that the Taliban is a terrorist group and that recognizing their rule was akin to a "carte blanche" for all similar groups to commit violence with impunity, and this is a dangerous precedent that has to be collectively prevented. The Council should fully equip and enable the SR and the team to robustly pursue their mandate.

Majority of the countries showed their concern for the erosion of the enjoyment of the rights of women and girls, in particular their access to education, and the exclusion of women from political, social and economic spheres. Many additionally condemned the extra-judicial killings being carried out and called on the authorities to ensure the substantive participation of all women and girls in public life. The **United States** called on the Taliban and all Afghan parties to allow unhindered humanitarian access, cease retaliations and detentions, and establish an inclusive government. **Qatar** and **Saudi Arabia**, among others called not to politicize humanitarian aid and warned that the continued deterioration of economic and social conditions would greatly affect the implementation of many human rights. They urged the international community to provide humanitarian aid and support development in a way that contributes to Afghanistan's stability and security. **Kazakhstan** highlighted that they decided to provide a transit corridor for Afghan female judges and members of parliament and their families. The **UAE** called to maintain open channels of communication with the ruling authority in Afghanistan for realistic and practical considerations.

**Russia, China and Venezuela** called the **U.S.** responsible for the grave situation in Afghanistan and urged all countries to lift their UCMs in order to end the humanitarian and economic crisis in the country. Venezuela said that the situation faced by Afghanistan was a direct consequence of the failure of the warlike policy of the U.S. **Pakistan** said that a coercive approach was not the way forward and that the OHCHR's report wrongly evidenced a primacy of civil and political rights over economic, social and cultural rights.

**NGOs** condemned the systematic persecution faced by the thousands of Afghans belonging to religious and belief minorities, including particularly Christian converts and atheists, who remain stranded in the country under constant fear of death. Some called on the international community to help Afghanistan build a sustainable future by unfreezing its assets and restoring the banking system. Some others denounced continued extrajudicial killings and the erosion of the rights of women. One NGO said that Pakistan helped the Taliban by keeping them afloat with the provision of oil and arms.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (43 country delegations):

*Afghanistan, European Union, Pakistan (on behalf of the OIC), Mexico (on behalf of a group of countries), Iceland (on behalf of a group of countries), Australia (on behalf of a group of countries), Liechtenstein, Germany, Qatar, Canada, United Arab Emirates, Sierra Leone, Montenegro, Luxembourg, India, France, Venezuela, Ecuador, China, Pakistan, Egypt, Spain, Saudi Arabia, Netherlands, Switzerland, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Australia, Ireland, United States of America, Belgium, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Greece, Albania, Malta, Croatia, Turkey, Italy, New Zealand, Malawi, Iran, Kazakhstan, Japan.*

NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (10):

*EMERGENCY - Life Support for Civilian War Victims, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Freedom Now, International Federation for Human Rights Leagues, Save the Children International, World Evangelical Alliance, The Organization for Poverty Alleviation and Development, Alliance Defending Freedom, British Humanist Association, International Commission of Jurists.*

**National Human Rights Institutions (2):** Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Law Council of Australia. **International Organisations (1):** UN Women

To watch full meeting please refer to [UN Web TV](#).