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***NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations***

*Check against delivery*

Organization: Lawyers’ Rights Watch Canada

Item: Item 4 – General Debate: Human rights situations that require the Council’s attention

Date: 15 June 2017

Speaker: Mr. Joseph Doyle

**Oral Statement to the 35th Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers’ Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), NGO in special consultative status**

**Pakistan and Cameroon: Systematic failure to ensure protection of lawyers and defenders**

Mr. President:

Lawyers’ Rights Watch Canada is gravely concerned about situations in Pakistan and Cameroon requiring the Council’s attention due to systematic failure to ensure protection of lawyers and human rights defenders.

In Pakistan, hundreds of jurists, court officials and defenders have been attacked and summarily executed by armed non-state individuals or mobs over the past decade including dozens killed in the past year alone. Pakistan has failed to exercise its duty to investigate and remedy these attacks and has failed to provide effective protective measures.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In Cameroon, dozens of civilians, including jurists, academics, journalists and other defenders are being taken before a military tribunal in violation of international human rights law. Denied fair trial rights, they face capital charges for exercising rights to freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and political participation.[[2]](#footnote-2)

For defenders in both Pakistan and Cameroon, there has been no access to effective remedies for these violations. Also, within existing mechanisms of the UN human rights system there appears to be no means by which victims or their advocates can obtain recommendations for protective or remedial measures[[3]](#footnote-3) on an urgent basis.

We ask Council to study and develop means by which treaty bodies and mandate holders can urgently recommend protective and remedial measures when the life or liberty of one or more defenders may be at risk for exercising rights guaranteed under international law.

Thank you.

1. # Lawyers’ Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), Pakistan: Investigate and Remedy Murder of Lawyer Bilal Anwar Kasi and Sandeman Civil Hospital Quetta Bomb Attack, Letter, 9 December 2016, <http://www.lrwc.org/pakistan-investigate-and-remedy-murder-of-lawyer-bilal-anwar-kasi-and-sandeman-civil-hospital-quetta-bomb-attack-letter/>; LRWC, Pakistan: Investigate and Remedy Murder of Mohammad Jan Gigyani and Implement Measures to Protect Jurists, Letter, 15 March 2017, <http://www.lrwc.org/pakistan-investigate-and-remedy-murder-of-mohammad-jan-gigyani-and-implement-measures-to-protect-jurists/>; LRWC, Pakistan: LRWC Renews Call to Investigate and Remedy Murder of Rashid Rehman Khan, Letter, 25 October 2016, <http://www.lrwc.org/ws/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Rashid.Rehman.Khan_.25.Oct_.2016.pdf> ; Human Rights Watch, World Report 2017, January 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/pakistan>; Human Rights Watch, Pakistan: Government Fails to Ensure Rule of Law, 12 January 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/12/pakistan-government-fails-ensure-rule-law>.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. LRWC, Cameroon: Immediately Release and Remedy Arbitrary Detentions of Anglophone Rights Advocates, Letter, 13 March 2017, <http://www.lrwc.org/cameroon-immediately-release-and-remedy-arbitrary-detentions-of-anglophone-rights-advocates-letter/> ; CIVICUS, Cameroon's crackdown continues as journalist convicted on terrorism charges, 21 April 2017, <https://monitor.civicus.org/newsfeed/2017/04/21/cameroon-citizens-rights-not-protected/> ; [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Referred to as “precautionary measures” in the Inter-American human rights system. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)