

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

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

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Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item: Item 2 – General Debate on the High Commissioner's Oral Update
Date: 7 June 2017
Speaker: Ms. Renée Mulligan

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

Mr. President:

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada appreciates the High Commissioner's oral report. We agree with the High Commissioner about the urgency of eradicating extremist violence. We welcome his insistence that in doing so, States are obligated to preserve international human rights law for all. This includes ensuring access to effective remedies for human rights violations and protection for human rights defenders. Civil society participation in decision-making that includes the right of peaceful dissent¹ is crucial to achieving these and other United Nations goals.

LRWC is dismayed that some members of this Council continue to violate internationally protected rights by misusing domestic laws and legal systems to arbitrarily punish and imprison human rights defenders and other critics. We welcome the High Commissioner's emphatic reminder that General Assembly Resolution 60/251² requires all Council members to uphold the "highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights" and "fully cooperate with the Council." We invite Council to persuade China, Egypt, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia and other non-cooperating states to comply fully with this essential duty, including full cooperation with the Council's mandate holders.

Thank you.

¹ LRWC, *The Right to Dissent: International law obligations to respect, protect and fulfill the right to participate in public affairs by engaging in criticism, opposition and dissent*. Vancouver: LRWC, 2016, www.lrwc.org/?p=11003

² UN General Assembly, *Human Rights Council: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly*, 3 April 2006, A/RES/60/251, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/502/66/PDF/N0550266.pdf>