



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SECOND WEEK OF THE 39TH SESSION OF THE HRC



39th Session of the Human Rights Council at Room XX of the United Nations Office in Geneva

During the second week of the [39th Session of the Human Rights Council](#) (HRC), 17-21 September, the following events took place that are of relevancy to ICSFT's thrust. The interactive dialogue (ID) with the Commission of Inquiry on Syria, General debate on Item 4 and 5, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Russian Federation, and ICSFT side events and relevant oral interventions.

ID with the Commission of Inquiry on Syria

On 17 September, the HRC held an ID with the [Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic](#).

After the Chair of the Commission of Inquiry (COI), [Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro](#), presented his biased and unfounded [report](#) – which completely ignored the crimes committed by terrorist groups and



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present in the Syrian territory and unilateral aggressions by USA, UK, France, Israel, and Turkey– Syria was given the floor as the concerned country.

H.E. Ambassador Hussam Edin Aala, Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office at Geneva and specialized institutions in Switzerland,

said that once the external "factors" on the ground are eliminated, that he is sure that it won't be difficult for Syrians to agree.. and it is only the Syrians who should decide the future of their country.

Syria noted that the COI's latest report was characterized by double standards and contradictory accusations that had nothing to do with reality. Moreover, it stressed that the report confined itself to a certain narrative, adopting the opinion of countries that sponsored terrorism and encouraged terrorists to continue their crimes and lengthen the war that plagued Syria.

As such, Syria condemned the biased treatment of war crimes committed by Turkish forces and by the illegal US-led coalition forces fighting against Syria, violating international law and the [United Nations Charter](#). Syria also denied accusations of the use of chemical weapons which was alleged by the Commission.

The Syrian Government stressed its respect for [international humanitarian law](#) and ensured the council that the government is taking all necessary measures to protect civilians in conflict areas. It also remarked its determination to recover all of its sovereign territory and to eliminate terrorism within its borders. As such, contrary to distortionary campaigns, protectionism¹ was at

¹ For example, Syria tried to ensure safe corridors and provide for the basic needs of its citizens in cooperation with humanitarian agencies.



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the centre of Syria's initiatives, where in fact, the Syrian Government is implicated in reconciliation efforts.

Discussion

In the ensuing discussion, the Russian Federation said that the report was not objective and that it sought to promote the political views of certain countries, noting that it was strange that the Commission continued to speak about the evacuation of fighters as forced displacement. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that genuine dialogue and cooperation should be pursued for the promotion and protection of human rights, and accusations based upon incorrect information must be rejected. Belarus argued that the Council has to end the practice of one-sided accusations against the Syrian government.

Concluding Remarks

Syria welcoming that the Commission had finally acknowledged the [negative impact of unilateral coercive measures](#) asked for concrete, impartial, and non-politicised recommendations while condemning countries that impose such unethical coercive measures like USA.

ICSFT presented a joint statement with Khiam Rehabilitation centre which was followed by another individual oral intervention read by Dr. Abdulhameed Dashti, president of ICSFT.

Part of the joint statement read as follows "Khiam Center and ICSFT deeply regret the COI's continued disregard to terrorism and unilateral coercive measures which are fundamental to the suffering of Syrian citizens. The Syrian government's priority is liberation of the country from terrorist groups and protection of civilians. Therefore we urge this council and states to provide support based on constructive cooperation and respect for its national sovereignty and territorial integrity.



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

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We must not let biased and unilateral international political rhetoric overwhelm our responsibility to the ongoing illegal and unilateral attacks on the people of Syria and their sovereign country.”

Dr. Dashti said that “Russia, its allies and the Syrian Government had unveiled the truth. Continuing, he said the United States, Israel and other allies supported terrorism in Syria and sought chemical weapons. He also called for an end to sanctions against Syria.”²



Dr. Abdulhameed Dashti, ICSFT president

2

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UPR of the Russian Federation

H.E. Mr. [Konovalov](#), Russian Minister of Justice, addressing the HRC during the adoption of the outcome of the UPR of the Russian Federation, highlighted his country's willingness to protect and promote human rights in accordance with international laws and standards.

Egypt applauded Russia's positive engagement with UN human rights mechanisms including special procedures mandate holders, wishing Russia success in implementing the accepted UPR recommendations. Democratic People's Republic of Korea noted Russia's commitment to promote and protect human rights despite several challenges faced, and welcomed the acceptance of the majority of the recommendations.

China as well commented Russia's positive measures to promote human rights, including protection of minorities and migrants, calling for the consensual adoption of the 3rd UPR document. Botswana highlighted the Russia's commitment to implement previously given recommendations in particular the convention for the protection of sexual violence against women calling for the adoption of the outcome document of UPR.

Belarus welcomed the Russian delegation and congratulated them for the highly professional 3rd national report and acceptance of the majority of the UPR recommendations. Algeria congratulated Russia for ratifying several international human rights instruments and accepting the majority of recommendations, in particular its inclusive approach towards minorities.

During item 6 general debate Dr. Dashti also congratulated Russia for yet another successful UPR session and successful implementation of the majority of the recommendations despite challenges faced in the economic sector. "efforts made by Russia to fulfill recommendations stemming from the Universal Periodic Review were welcomed. This was occurring in spite of the economic targeting of Russia and the universal coercive measures led by some



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Registration No. 2795/2012

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countries. Russia was making sacrifices in Syria to assist their friends and defend human rights.”³

ICSFT side events

On 19, 20 and 21 September ICSFT held a series of side events during the 39th Session of the HRC about the human rights situation in the Gulf Region, the human rights situation in Yemen and protection of minority rights, respectively.

Human rights situation in the Gulf Region



Mr. Sayed Yousif al-Muhafadha, Dr. Fouad Ibrahim, Mr. Anwar al-Rasheed, Mr. Mohammad Safa, Dr. Abdul Hameed Dashti, Mr. Ahmad Omar (from right to left)

3

[https://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/74513A1725E6897BC12583120038C15D?OpenDocument](https://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/74513A1725E6897BC12583120038C15D?OpenDocument)

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INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

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On 19 September ICSFT co-organized a side event “Human Rights in the Arab Region – Gulf as an Example” in room XXIV of the UN Office in Geneva. The event was chaired by Mr. Mohammad Safa, Khiam center Secretary General. The panel of experts included, Dr. Abdul Hameed Dashti, ICSFT President, Dr. Fouad Ibrahim, ICSFT deputy President, Mr. Anwar al-Rasheed, President of the Kuwaiti Liberal Movement, Mr. Sayed Yousif al-Muhafadha, Vice president of Salam for Democracy and Human rights, and Mr. Ahmad Omar, director of the International Center for Supporting Rights and Freedoms.

The focus of discussions were the human rights situation in the Arab Region, especially human rights violations and ongoing repression against human rights defenders and political oppositions in Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and the ongoing war crime waged by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.

Dr Fouad said the political repression in Saudi Arabia is accompanied by economic deprivation and pointed out that this is unusual for the political repression is usually replaced by economic welfare.

"Today, the economic deprivation meets with the political repression and this will be part of the destroying elements of the Saudi regime and stability in the country," He added that this repression has an international cover, and specifically American cover, and pointed that the violations record in the Saudi Kingdom is well known and all international human rights organizations, foreign media, and American media are talking about it.

"Every week we witness there articles that are written about violations and most important death sentences issued against activists, and still we witness European silence on these violations and this shows that the international law and even the Human Rights Council are unjust."



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Mr Al-Rasheed said there are continued violation of rights that will lead to more sorrow for the peoples of the region adding that the region today is moving in the opposite direction with regard to human nature, such as the matters of freedom and democracy. Following his remarks regarding the lack of due process of law and impartial judiciary in Kuwait, he remarked "We ask the Kuwaiti parliament to rescue Kuwaiti families who were displaced and destroyed by the laws passed by the Kuwaiti parliament."

Dr Dashti stressed that all countries of the Arab region are suffering from violations. "The human rights record in the Arab region needs to be reformed in addition to the need to shed light on abuses in the region as most regimes do not believe in democracy and human rights." He welcomed the demands of the Sahara people in Western Sahara, and hoped that the Moroccan government will exercise the right of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara, which the Moroccan government ignores.

Mr Omar "the most prominent violations being carried out in Bahrain are depriving children of Bahraini nationality because of the political positions of their parents in addition to continuing the crime of torture against human rights defenders to force them to stop their human rights work." Mr Omar added that Bahrain has continued to block the websites of human rights organizations and digital media that reveal violations, adding that true human rights defenders are still working in the midst of illegal campaigns, distortion, Persecution, and fabricated news.

The Saudi-led coalition war crimes in Yemen

On 20 September in room XXII, ICSFT held the side event called "Four years of aggression: absence of justice emboldens impunity". The event was moderated by Dr. Fouad Ibrahim – deputy president of ICSFT. The discussion included the participation of Samuel Walton, British human rights activist, Ayesh Al-Sanadi, Insan Organization for Human rights and Peace, and Yemeni human rights experts who joined the conversation via pre-recorded video message.



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

The human rights violations of the Saudi -led coalition that amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes as per international law were the centre of discussion.



ICSFT Deputy president Dr. Fouad, the moderator of the side event, introduced the current situation of the war in Yemen and the UN inaction, and urged relevant stake holders to put an end to the Saudi -led genocidal war in Yemen.

Mr Walton said Yemenis on Yemeni soil are facing fierce attacks, and there are some British activists working actively there." He further denounced the failure of the UK government to investigate and stop weapons sales to Saudi Arabia who's committing war crimes in Yemen. "Investigations in Yemen have not taken place and we are asking the Un and relevant responsible oragans to open investigations," Walton said.



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION



Samuel Walton, Dr Fouad Ibrahim, Ayesha Al-Sanadi (from right to left)

"We demand sanctions against British officials, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and anyone involved in the crimes in Yemen," he said.

Mr Al-Sanadi called for the end of embargo and blockade, and an international investigation of war crimes committed by the Saudi-led coalition, including indiscriminate attacks against civilians and rape.

The participants and panelists further discussed the need for an immediate legal accountability and end of impunity for the aggression committed against the territorial integrity of the sovereign state of Yemen by the Saudi-led coalition which is a grave violation of international law including the Geneva Convention.



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Registration No. 2795/2012

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Minority Rights

On 21 September the side event titled “Minority Rights” was held at room XXIII by ICSFT. The panellists were Dr Abdulhameed dashti, Prof Rudolf El-Kareh, ICSFT representative at EU, Prof. Hasan Jouni, International Law professor, Prof. Elias Khouri, President of Union Arab Jurists, and Suhalia El-zakzaky, human rights activist and daughter of the leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, IMN, Sheik Ibrahim El-zakzaky who has been arbitrarily detained by the Nigerian government since 2015. The side event was moderated by Prof. Jan Fermon, Chairman of the panel of experts of ICSFT.



*Prof. Elias Khouri, Prof Rudolf El-Kareh, Prof. Jan Fermon, Dr Abdulhameed dashti, Prof. Hasan Jouni
(from right to left)*

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INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Registration No. 2795/2012

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Prof. Fermon, gave an introductory remark about Minority rights in the gulf region and Nigeria, “Minority rights should be respected without any preconditions.”

The panellists discussed the human rights violations and discriminations involving minorities in the Middle East –the situation of the bidoon population in Kuwait, and also highlighted the injustice faced by the Shia Muslim population in Nigeria which was presented by a pre-recorded video intervention by Ms El-zakzaky.



Prof. El-Kareh addressed the issue of minorities in the gulf with specific reference to the Israeli occupation and marginalization of Palestinians. Prof El-Kareh further pointed out the negative socio- economic impact of the marginalization of minorities in the GCC. He remarked the root causes for such discrimination in the GCC must be assessed and the UN and international



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Registration No. 2795/2012

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community must provide long lasting, context specific, and efficient recommendations to remedy the situation. Prof. Jouni on the other hand highlighted the legal implications of the marginalization of Minority rights, including the very definition of minorities in different legal contexts. He said the international convention on the elimination of discrimination should be respected across the board, including the right to education and basic public service. However Minorities' in the gulf are denied of these basic rights.

Prof Khouri, said as per UN charter everyone has equal rights and states are responsible for its implementation without any discrimination. As such minority rights should be respected and implemented without any exception, international community should harness resources and hold governments responsible to adhere to relevant international laws in this regard.

Following this Dr Dashti, ICSFT president, covers the Situation of #Bidoon in #Kuwait, more than 100, 000 bidoon are living as second class citizens with little to no human rights. He said Kuwait has ratified international conventions with respect to rights of minorities, however till now there is no functional organ at the parliament to implement these conventions and protect the rights of minorities. Dr Dashti urged the participants and UN to pressure Kuwait to respect minority rights, and also urged the human rights council to hold a special session addressing the issue of minorities in Kuwait.

Oral interventions at the HRC

During the second week of the 39th Session of the HRC ICSFT made several oral statements, both at interactive dialogues and general debates.

On 17 September, Dr. Dashti made [ICSFT oral intervention](#) on item 3 general debate raising the issue of enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Dr Dashti also addressed the council under item 4 ID with the COI on Syria.



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INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS

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Dr. Fouad Ibrahim read [ICSFT statement](#) under item 4 and 5 general debate highlighting the human rights issues that needs the council's attention in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Yemen.

We publish our statements as they are published in our advocacy document archive.

For more information, have a look at the HRC calendar on our website www.icsft.net

For live updates, follow us on Twitter @icsft #39hrc