



**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL SUPPORTING
FAIR TRIAL & HUMAN RIGHTS** Registration No. 2795/2012

OFFICIAL LETTER HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION

GENERAL DEBATE ITEM 4

**SUMMARY REPORT OF ICSFT'S ACTIVITY AT THE HUMAN
RIGHTS COUNCIL, 39TH SESSION**

10 Sep – 28 Sep 2018

Palais des Nations

Geneva, Switzerland



Human Right Council 39th Session from 10-28 September 2018

Geneva, Switzerland – From 10 September to 28 September 2018, International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights(ICSFT) participated in the 39th Session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) and

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addressed the current human rights situations that needs the council's attention in Yemen, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States. ICSFT delivered 13 oral interventions, hosted four side events, and held several bilateral and multilateral meetings with stakeholders.

The following were the resolutions presented at the conclusion of weeks of dialogue and negotiation that were relevant to the ICSFT's advocacy work in the middle east;

The safety of journalists- tabled by Austria, Brazil, France, [A HRC 39 L.7](#) Greece, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia, and adopted without a vote

Local government and human rights- tabled by Chile, Egypt, [A HRC 39 L.8](#) Republic of Korea, Romania, and adopted without a vote

Preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and [A HRC 39 L.13 Rev.1](#) human rights in humanitarian settings- tabled by Burkina Faso, Colombia, Estonia, New Zealand, and adopted without a vote

The human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic- tabled [A HRC 39 L.20](#) by France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Netherlands, Qatar, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and adopted by vote: 27-4-16¹

Human rights situation in Yemen- tabled by Belgium, Canada, [A HRC 39 L.21](#) Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and adopted by 21-8-18²

ICSFT president Dr. Abdulhameed Dashti delivered an oral intervention under Item 2 General Debate on 11 September highlighting the negative impacts of unilateral coercive measures for international solidarity in particular, USA's interventionist foreign policy in Palestine and Syria, and the ongoing human

¹ <http://www.icsft.net/13112/>

² <http://www.icsft.net/13122/>



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rights crisis in Palestine, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Western Sahara, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.



Dr Abdulhameed Dashti, delivering oral intervention at HRC 39th session

On 17 September Dr Dashti delivered another oral intervention during General Debate Item 3 and Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Syria under Item 4. During his intervention under Item 4 ID with the COI on Syria he said “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”



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The next day, ICSFT Deputy- president Dr. Fouad Ibrahim delivered an oral intervention during Item 4 General Debate calling attention to the deteriorating human rights situation in Saudi Arabia and fake claims of reform by the Saudi government, noting the proliferation of institutions empowered to restrict rights and enable oppression, while also calling attention to continued attacks on women's rights defenders and the targeting of human rights organizations.



Dr Fouad Ibrahim delivering an oral intervention on the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia

The following day, ICSFT in cooperation with Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture hosted a side event on the human rights situation the Gulf Countries.

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Panelists at ICSFT and Khiam Center side event on Bahrain

The discussion focused on the increasing crackdown against human rights defenders and civil society organization in countries like Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and UAE, and the lack of international accountability mechanism to hold these regimes accountable for their repressive laws and practices. Mr. Sayed Yousif al-Muhafadha, vice-president of Salam for Democracy and Human Rights highlighted the abuses and cruel conditions in Jau Prison, as well as the continued suppression of the right to free expression, assembly, and association in Bahrain, especially the lack of an independent political party in the context of the upcoming election.

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The next day, ICSFT held another side event titled the human rights situation in Yemen that featured 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. Dr. Fouad Ibrahim, deputy -president of ICSFT, moderated the event. The focus of discussion was the ongoing genocidal war on Yemen by the Saudi-led coalition and impunity. The panelists denounced the failure of the UK government to investigate and stop weapons sales to Saudi Arabia who's committing war crimes in Yemen, and called for the extension of the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts(GEE) whose initial report called attention to the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Saudi-led coalition.



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Participants discussing the dire human rights and humanitarian situation in Yemen

"There are 250 UK military personnel actively serving in the Saudi coalition militaries. 6000 UK civilian personnel are helping to make sure these planes can fly." Said Sam Walton explaining the depth of UK complicity in war-crimes in Yemen.

On 21 September, Dr Fouad delivered an oral intervention during Item 5 General Debate and raised the issue of non-compliance and cooperation with the UN human rights mechanisms by GCC countries including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and UAE, and further discussed their membership and/or bid for a seat at the Council, calling attention to their poor human rights record and terrible record of cooperation with the Council and its mechanisms.





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Dr Fouad delivering an oral intervention under Item 5 General Debate

On the same day, ICSFT hosted another side event concerning the protection of Minority Groups in the Gulf Region and Nigeria, with specific attention on the situation of Bidoon minority in Kuwait and Muslim Shia minority in Nigeria.



The panelists discussing the situation of Minority Groups in the GCC and Nigeria

The systemic and administrative oppression of Palestinians, Bidoon minority in Kuwait, and Shia Muslims in Nigeria, and the international legal frameworks that protect and promote minority rights were discussed at this event.

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The next day, Dr Dashti delivered an oral intervention during Item 6 General Debate. ICSFT welcomed the efforts made by the Government of the Russian Federation to improve the human rights situation and fulfill its obligations to the international community despite economic challenges caused by USA's unilateral measure through imposing economic embargo. During the intervention Dr dashti raised the repressive laws against human rights defenders in Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and UAE, including the imprisonment of Kuwaiti activist Anwar Al-Rasheed following his advocacy work at the 39th HRC as part of ICSFT's delegation. In this intervention, ICSFT urged the HRC to hold these governments accountable for these human rights violations through the UPR mechanism. The intervention also highlighted these GCC countries refusal to implement UPR recommendations in particular, in regards to cases of widespread human rights violations, free expression, minority rights, and torture.

The second oral intervention that ICSFT delivered that day was during Item 7 ID with Commission of inquiry on Occupied Palestinian Territory. In the intervention, Dr Dashti raised the issue of the significant suffering of the Palestinian people who have been systematically, and unilaterally attacked in gross violation of international norms and laws by Israeli occupiers. The intervention further stated, despite several call by the international community and relevant stakeholders urging Israel to refrain from using excessive force against unarmed protesters, Israel continues to act with complete impunity with the support of its allies. What we are witnessing today is a massacre, highlighting while Israel holds the ultimate responsibility, blame also lies with all governments that do not take action to stop the killings, in particular Israeli's long standing ally USA.

The third intervention of the day was made under Item 7 General debate which reiterated the urgent need to stop Israeli illegal occupation and settlement in Gaza and West Bank. Following this, Dr Dashti made the final oral intervention of the

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day during the Annual Discussion on the Integration of a Gender Perspective. In this intervention, ICSFT called attention to the disproportional suffering of Yemeni women and children by Saudi-led coalition indiscriminate air bombardment, and additionally raised the continued attacks on women's rights defenders and the targeting of human rights organizations in Saudi Arabia.

On 25 September, Dr Fouad, deputy-president of ICSFT, delivered his third oral intervention during Item 8 General Debate raising the disregard of Vienna Declaration by Saudi Arabia and ally GCC countries, and called for effective follow up mechanisms to ensure implementation. The intervention addressed concerns over States' violations of the Declaration relating to impunity and failure to prosecute state actors who violate the Declaration, in particular Saudi Arabia and Bahraini security forces, who rarely face negative consequences for torture and extrajudicial violence.

ICSFT hosted its fourth and last side event discussing the abysmal humanitarian and human rights situation in Yemen.





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The panelists of the side event titled “the way in Yemen-secret prisons”

Prof. Fermon illustrated the illegal detentions, torture, and enforced disappearances committed by Saudi led coalition in Yemen which is in violation of Article 9 of ICCPR, further emphasized the legal justification that equates the Saudi led coalition crimes in Yemen as a war crime as per international law. Additionally, he highlighted this widespread systemic practice of mass killing, enforced disappearance and torture is defined as a crime against humanity as per Rome statute.

Mr. Al-washali , Yemeni human rights activist, described how the Saudi-led coalition carries out enforced disappearances in Yemen, imprisoning Yemeni citizens in secret prisons in complete violation of international norms and standards. He said these secret prisons are set up to silence dissent in particular, human rights activists. Mr Al-washali stated the systemic discrimination and repression against the people of Yemen is not getting the proper international attention and response. Corruption and political game are costing the lives of innocent Yemeni civilians.

Meanwhile Dr Dashti said “ the report of the international inquiry is rejected by the Saudi led coalition because it exposes the war crimes of the coalition, we want to thank the committee for exposing this truth.” Dr Dashti also called for the extension of the mandate of the commission of inquiry on Yemen in order to follow up the criminal investigation and hold the violators of these crimes accountable, and ultimately end the war on the innocent people of Yemen. Finally he remarked the secret prisons and elaborate war crimes perpetrated by the Saudi



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led coalition should not be forgotten and hidden under politically motivated international diplomacy.

Mr Al-Nomani, Yemeni human rights activist, also echoed the points raised by the panelists and called for an end of impunity and Saudi led war on Yemen.

The following day Dr Dashti, ICSFT president, delivered another oral intervention during Item 9 General Debate. In this intervention, ICSFT called attention to some GCC member states' continued disrespect of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and additionally raised the Saudi government continued discrimination against its Shia minority community in education, employment, law, culture, and religion. "Since last year in the Shia-majority city of Awamiyah, security forces have forcefully evicted hundreds of Shia residents with no evidence of any compensation to those displaced." The intervention also highlighted Bahrain's continued targeting of Shiite clerics and Shiite civil and political societies with, persecution, deportation and denaturalization, and called on these governments' to stop judicial harassment, reinstate their citizenship, and immediately drop politically motivated charges against prisoners of conscience.

On the same day, Dr Dashti made another oral intervention during the ID with IE on Sudan under Item 10 and raised concerns about the ongoing human rights violations against rights groups and activists including, in Darfur, South Kordofan, the Blue Nile, by Sudanese government and forces loyal to the government .

The next day, on 27 September, ICSFT delivered its final oral intervention during Item 10 General Debate which called on the Council to remind the Moroccan Government to support the Sahrawi people's struggle for freedom and national independence. The intervention addressed the Moroccan presence in some parts of Western Sahara as an occupying power in accordance with General



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Assembly resolution 37/34 and 19/35, urging the council provide technical assistance to the Sahrawi National Committee for Human Rights. ICSFT also called on the Council that the issue of human rights in Yemen be kept on the agenda of the Council, and that the mandate of the Group of Experts be renewed for another year.

On 28 September the HRC adopted the a resolution calling for an extension of the mandate of the GEE in Yemen for an additional year, the resolution also requests the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to provide substantive capacity-building and technical assistance to the National Commission of Inquiry, and for the High Commissioner to present an oral update at the 40th session of the HRC in March 2019 which ensures that Yemen will remain on the agenda of the HRC.

In conclusion, ICSFT welcomes positive development regarding Yemen at the 39th HRC session, and also recalls the obligation of all states, particularly GCC Council members and observers, to cooperate fully with HRC and relevant Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies. It remains crucial that the Council keeps the situation in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, and Yemen high on its agenda, even more so now following the dramatic and rapid deterioration of the human right, in particular cases of reprisal against civil society and human rights defenders.

For more information on these events please visit our website. All ICSFT statements and interventions at HRC 39 can also be found on our website.