

Human Rights Council appoints Special Rapporteur on Eritrea

Written by Administrator

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Human Rights Council
MORNING

5 July 2012

Adopts Resolutions on Syria, Mali, Nelson Mandela International Day and Arbitrary Detention

The Human Rights Council this morning appointed a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, extended the mandates of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire and the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, and adopted texts on the human rights situations in Mali and Syria, arbitrary detention and on Nelson Mandela international day.

The Council adopted a resolution in which it strongly condemned the continued widespread and systematic violations of human rights committed by the Eritrean authorities, the severe restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, and the forced conscription of citizens for indefinite periods. It decided to appoint a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea.

Concerning technical assistance to Côte d'Ivoire in the area of human rights, the Council strongly condemned the attacks on the civilian population and personnel of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, in particular the killing of seven United Nations peacekeepers on 8 June 2012. The Council decided to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire for a period of one year.

With regards to technical assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights, the Council strongly condemned the grave and systematic human rights abuses perpetrated against the civilian population. It decided to extend the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia for one year in order to support the efforts of the Transitional Federal Government and Somali sub-national authorities to ensure respect for human rights in preparation for the end of the transitional period on 20 August 2012.

Concerning the situation of human rights in Syria, the Council adopted by a vote of 41 votes in favour, three against and three abstentions a resolution that strongly condemned the widespread, systematic and gross violations of human rights and the continued extrajudicial killings and killings and prosecution of protestors, human rights defenders and journalists. The Council reiterated the importance of bringing to justice those responsible for the widespread and systematic use of violence against the Syrian people and encouraged the international community to ensure that there was no impunity for such crimes, stressing that the Syrian authorities had failed to prosecute alleged perpetrators. The Council rejected proposed amendments to the resolution by a vote of 33 against, eight for and six abstentions.

With regards to human rights in Mali, the Council condemned the human rights violations and acts of violence committed in northern Mali, in particular by the rebels, terrorist groups and other

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organized transnational crime networks. It expressed support for current efforts by the African Union and ECOWAS to settle the crisis and invited the High Commissioner for Human Rights to monitor the human rights situation in the north of the Republic of Mali and to report thereon to the Council at its twenty-first session.

Concerning arbitrary detention, the Council requested the Working Group on arbitrary detention to prepare draft basic principles and guidelines on remedies and procedures on the right to anyone deprived of his or her liberty, to submit a specific report to the Council on national, regional and international laws, regulations and practices; and to hold subsequently a stakeholders consultation in relation to the preparation of the draft basic principles and guidelines, and to present the draft basic principles and guidelines to the Human Rights Council before the end of 2015.

On Nelson Mandela International Day, the Council decided to hold a high-level panel discussion on how the values of reconciliation, peace, freedom and racial equality can contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights at its twenty-first session.

The Council also adopted a presidential statement regarding the reports of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review in which it decided to increase the word limit for all reports of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on each State reviewed from 9,630 words to 10,700 words.

The Russian Federation introduced an amendment to the resolution on Syria. United States, Austria, China, Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Qatar, Uruguay and Uganda made general comments on the amendment. India, Angola, Russian Federation spoke in explanation of the vote before and after the vote on this amendment.

Introducing draft resolutions were France, Senegal on behalf of the African Group, South Africa on behalf of the African Group, Senegal, Djibouti and Turkey.

Speaking in general comments were United States, Austria, China, Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Qatar, Uruguay and Uganda.

Thailand, Russian Federation, Cuba, China, India, Angola, Ecuador and Uruguay spoke in explanation of the vote before the vote and explanation of the vote after the vote.

Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea and Somalia spoke as concerned countries.

The Council will resume its work this afternoon, at 3 p.m., to announce the appointment of the Independent Expert on human rights and the environment and members of the fact finding mission on Israeli settlements, to hear concluding statements and to conclude its twentieth regular session.

Action on Resolution under the Agenda Item on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

Action on Resolution on Arbitrary Detention

In a resolution ((A/HRC/20/L.5)) on arbitrary detention, adopted without a vote as orally revised, the Council encourages all States to give due consideration to the recommendations of the Working Group on arbitrary detention; to respect and promote the right of anyone arrested to be brought promptly before a judge, and to be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or released; to respect and promote the right of anyone deprived of his or her liberty by arrest or detention to bring proceedings before court and to ensure that anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge has adequate time and facilities for the preparation of his or her defence, and to ensure that the conditions of pretrial detention do not undermine the fairness of the trial; requests the Working Group to prepare draft basic principles and guidelines on remedies and procedures on the right to anyone deprived of his or her liberty, with the aim of assisting Member States; to submit a specific report to the Council on national, regional and international laws, regulations and practices; to hold subsequently a stakeholders consultation in relation to the preparation of the draft basic principles and guidelines; and to present the draft basic principles and guidelines to the Human Rights Council before the end of 2015.

France, introducing draft resolution A/HRC/20/L.5, said that the draft resolution first of all took into account the achievements of the Working Group on arbitrary detention since September 2010, when the Council adopted the last resolution on the issue. The draft resolution also had the objective to entrust the Working Group to prepare draft basic principles and guidelines related to remedies and procedures related to the right of anyone deprived of his or her liberty to bring the proceedings before court so that a judge could decide on the legality of his or her detention. The Working Group would work in stages and seek the views of all stakeholders before preparing a report and proceeding with consultations on the issue. It would consult, among others, States and seek the views of the relevant United Nations agencies, international organizations, United Nations treaty bodies and in particular the Human Rights Committee, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Thailand, in a comment on conscientious objection to military service at the end of consideration of resolutions under agenda item 3, said that the sovereign rights of States to security and self-defence should be taken into consideration. Under the constitution of Thailand military service was obligatory but there were also exceptions. Thailand reaffirmed its commitment to all human rights instruments and would consider the resolution that was adopted by consensus in relation to the country's constitution.

Action on Resolutions under the Agenda Item on Human Rights Situations that Require the Council's Attention

Action on Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in Mali

In a resolution (A/HRC/20/L.20) regarding the situation of human rights in the Republic of Mali, adopted without a vote as orally revised, the Council condemns the human rights violations and acts of violence committed in northern Mali, in particular by the rebels, terrorist groups and other organized transnational crime networks, including violence against women, the killings, hostage-takings, pillaging, theft and destruction of cultural and religious, including the recruitment of child soldiers and calls, in this regard, to bring perpetrators to justice. The Council calls for an immediate halt to all these human rights violations and acts of violence, and

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for strict respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms; supports current efforts by the African Union and ECOWAS to settle the crisis in Mali and bring about a definitive return to constitutional order, peace and security in Mali; emphasizes the need to facilitate access by the population to humanitarian aid and expresses appreciation for the humanitarian aid already supplied to needy population groups; urges the international community, in conjunction with the Malian transitional authorities and the neighbouring countries concerned, to continue to deliver appropriate humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons and respond to the challenges that the humanitarian crisis in the Sahel poses; and invites the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to monitor the human rights situation in the north of the Republic of Mali and to report thereon to the Council at its twenty-first session.

Senegal, introducing draft resolution A/HRC/20/L.20 on behalf of the African Group, said that through the draft resolution the Human Rights Council endorsed the decisions taken by the African Union and ECOWAS in condemnation of human rights violations in the aftermath of the coup d'état in Mali. The resolution referred to the destruction of cultural and religious sites that had been strongly condemned by the international community. It also called for an immediate end to human rights violations and acts of violence, as well as the continuation of efforts aimed at ensuring the return to peace and security. It further called for additional support to Mali in the face of the worsening humanitarian situation, also in connection with people movements from Mali.

United States, in a general comment on resolution A/HRC/20/L.20, said that the resolution should not have only focused on the situation in the North of Mali. Nevertheless, the United States was pleased to join consensus on the resolution.

Mali, speaking as the concerned country, said that the occupation of two thirds of its territory by armed groups and terrorist organizations had led to the worst humanitarian and human rights crisis it had gone through since independence. Armed groups were engaging in serious violations of human rights along the following lines; rape, theft, pillaging, summary killings, torture, cruel inhuman and degrading treatment, hostage taking, and slavery-like practices, among others. The destruction of Timbuktu mausoleums classified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as world heritage in danger sites came on top of the trauma. Rape was becoming a weapon of war. Since April 2012, armed groups had been recruiting and using child soldiers. By adopting the draft resolution, the Council would have its voice heard on serious affronts to human rights. The international community was obliged to act quickly. The climate of terror and violence, introduced and fed by armed groups, had given rise to indescribable suffering for the people. Mali fervently appealed to the international community to mobilize and protect the afflicted people of Mali and the Sahel.

Action on Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea

In a resolution (A/HRC/20/L19) regarding the situation of human rights in Eritrea, adopted without a vote as orally revised, the Council strongly condemns the continued widespread and systematic violations of human rights committed by the Eritrean authorities, including arbitrary executions, enforced disappearances and systematic use of torture; the severe restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression; the forced conscription of citizens for indefinite periods and

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the shoot-to-kill practice employed on the borders of Eritrea to stop Eritrean citizens seeking to flee their country. The Council calls upon the Government of Eritrea to end its use of arbitrary detention and torture; to release all political prisoners, including the “G-11”; to allow regular access to all prisoners; to put an end to the policy of indefinite military service; to allow humanitarian organizations to operate; to end ‘guilt-by-association’ policies that target family members of those who evade national service or seek to flee Eritrea; to cooperate fully with the United Nations, in accordance to international human rights obligations; urges Eritrea to make available information pertaining to Djiboutian combatants missing in action since the clashes of 10 to 12 June 2008 so that those concerned may ascertain the presence and condition of Djiboutian prisoners of war. The Council decides to appoint a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, to report to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly; and requests the Secretary-General to provide the Special Rapporteur with the resources necessary to fulfil the mandate.

Djibouti, introducing draft resolution A/HRC/20/L.19/Rev.1 on behalf of the Core Group, said that the draft resolution called for the creation and appointment of a Special Rapporteur to report on the human rights situation in Eritrea. Unfortunately, despite all appeals launched, no tangible steps had been taken by the Government of Eritrea to honor its commitments. It had hit a wall of denial and had not provided information on the identification, safety and health situation of detained persons. Through this resolution, a strong signal would be sent to the international community that the situation could no longer be tolerated and inaction was no longer admissible. The Core Group expressed its wish that Eritrea fully cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and allow a visit, and provide all the information necessary for the fulfillment of the mandate. It requested the Human Rights Council to support the resolution.

Eritrea, speaking as the concerned country, said that the amendments had not changed fundamentally the unfounded allegations contained in the previous version of the draft resolution. As a small, least developed country, Eritrea had a limited capacity and faced protracted hostilities aimed at destabilizing its Government. It believed that the international community had failed to contribute to the peace and stability of Eritrea. Despite facing significant challenges, there were no human rights violations in Eritrea. More specifically, there was no forced labour in Eritrea; the participation of Eritrean diaspora in efforts to liberate their country had been a voluntary act inspired by patriotism and courage; the issue of the missing persons from Djibouti would be settled under the supervision of Qatar. The aim of the draft resolution was to pursue a politically motivated strategy to destabilize Eritrea. Eritrea therefore strongly rejected the draft resolution in its entirety and called upon the Council’s members to reject it too.

Russia, in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said that it was against the adoption by the Council of politicized country resolutions, especially those that were submitted against the will of the concerned country. In this respect, the Russian Federation disassociated itself from Council consensus on this resolution and asked that its position be reflected in the report of the meeting.

Cuba, in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said that it would not support the draft resolution, which was against the will of the concerned country. Cuba stressed the need to

avoid politicization and selectivity in its Council's work.

China, in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said that it maintained its consistent position on country specific human rights issues. China was in favour of constructive dialogue and opposed the politicization of human rights. China also hoped the Council would conduct its work impartially. It disassociated itself from the consensus on the draft resolution.

Action on Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in Syria

In a resolution (A/HRC/20/L.22) regarding the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, adopted by 41 votes in favour, three against and three abstentions as orally revised, the Council strongly condemns the widespread, systematic and gross violations of human rights and strongly condemns the continued extrajudicial killings and killings and prosecution of protestors, human rights defenders and journalists. The Council demands that the Syrian authorities release all persons arbitrarily detained, and immediately allow access of independent human rights monitors to all detention facilities; and deplores the alarming humanitarian and human rights consequences of the lack of implementation of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States six-point plan. The Council reiterates the importance of bringing to justice those responsible for the widespread and systematic use of violence against the Syrian people, underscores the importance of the recommendation of the Commission of Inquiry that the Syrian people should determine, within the framework provided by international law, the process and mechanisms to achieve reconciliation, truth and accountability for gross violations; emphasized the continued importance of the efforts of the Commission of Inquiry to conduct international, transparent, independent and unfettered investigations into alleged violations of international human rights law with a view to hold to account those responsible for those violations; and encourages the international community to ensure that there was no impunity for such crimes, stressing that the Syrian authorities have failed to prosecute alleged perpetrators. The Council calls upon Syrian authorities to cooperate fully with the Commission of Inquiry by granting it immediate, full and unfettered access throughout the Syrian Arab Republic; and decides to transmit all reports and oral updates by the Commission of Inquiry to all relevant bodies of the United Nations and the Secretary-General for appropriate action.

The Council first voted on a proposed amendment by the Russian Federation. The amendment was defeated by a vote of eight for, 33 against and six abstentions. The results of the vote are as follows:

The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour (8): Angola, China, Cuba, Ecuador, India, Russian Federation, Thailand, and Uganda.

Against (33): Austria, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Djibouti, Guatemala, Hungary, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saudi Arabia., Senegal, Spain, Switzerland, , United States, and Uruguay.

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Abstentions (6): Bangladesh, Cameroon, Congo, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, and Philippines.

The Council approved the draft resolution by a vote of 41 in favour, three against and three abstentions.

The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour (41): Angola, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chile , Cameroon, Congo, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Djibouti, Ecuador, Guatemala, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, United States, and Uruguay.

Against (3): China, Cuba, and Russian.

Abstentions (3): India, Philippines, and Uganda.

Turkey, introducing resolution A/HRC/20/L.22/Rev.1, said that the violence and human rights violations had escalated in Syria. The draft resolution aimed at drawing the attention of the international community to the sufferings of the Syrian people and to remind Syria of its responsibility to protect its population and bring to justice those responsible for the violence systematically exercised against a large number of persons. Given the gravity of the situation, Turkey expected the resolution to be adopted by consensus.

United States, also introducing draft resolution A/HRC/20/L.22 Rev 1, said the Council had to continue to speak out clearly and forcefully on the gross human rights violations and atrocities being carried out by President Assad's Government, which had made no serious efforts to comply with its commitment to the Annan six-point proposal and with United Nations Security Council resolutions 2042 and 2043. President Assad continued to use heavy weapons against civilians. As long as President Assad continued to attack the Syrian people, the international community had to keep ratcheting up the pressure on the regime to halt the violence and do more to allow access for humanitarian assistance to civilians in need. The resolution reaffirmed the international community's full commitment to supporting the Joint Special Envoy and his efforts on the implementation of the six-point plan. The resolution appropriately called for continued support and immediate, full, unfettered and secure access on the ground for the Commission of Inquiry. It rightly emphasized the need for accountability for the atrocities and gross human rights violations being committed against the Syrian people. The actions of President Assad's Government were contrary to the principles and values that the Human Rights Council was founded upon. No State that engaged in such actions should serve on the Council.

Russian Federation, in a general comment, proposed an oral amendment to the draft resolution

and informed the Council that as the Council was in session another terrorist act had occurred in Syria.

United States, speaking in a general comment, said that the crisis in Syria was the most pressing human rights situation faced today and elected Members of the Council had a responsibility to condemn human rights atrocities and use collective voices to bring as much pressure as it could to put this situation to an end. The United States and the delegations represented in the room had been working around the clock to find a way to bring the violence and crisis in Syria to an end. In respect to the proposed amendment, everyone in the room was well aware of the extensive public and private consultations undertaken to try to reflect views of as many delegations as possible to bring consensus and a delicate balance of views had been achieved. The amendment as proposed sounded reasonable and unobjectionable. However, in the context of this negotiation, the move to make the amendment had a different meaning and threatened the delicate balance that had been found. The United States respectfully asked delegations to vote against the amendment.

Austria, speaking on behalf of the European Union in a general comment, said that as a general principle the European Union condemned all terrorist acts. In the context of this draft resolution it condemned the fact that the Syrian population continued to suffer and that Syria had failed to protect its population. The European Union supported the resolution in its original form.

China, speaking in a general comment, said that it was of the view that terrorist activities no matter when and where should be condemned by the international community. China supported the amendment put forward by the Russian delegation.

Saudi Arabia, speaking in a general comment, said that Saudi Arabia did not support the amendment to the resolution proposed by the Russian Federation and urged all members to vote for the resolution in its original form.

Cuba, speaking in a general comment, said Cuba shared the concern about terrorism and supported the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation. Cuba regretted that the main sponsors did not express willingness to accept this amendment even though this proposal had been made during the consultations. Cuba rejected terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and deplored the hundreds of deaths and injuries inflicted by acts of terrorism on the Syrian people. Little had been seen about some of these attacks in the politicised discussion on the situation in Syria. The consultations had not been as transparent as Cuba would have wished. The true aim of this resolution was to undermine the independence and sovereignty of Syria and to impose on the Syrian people a regime change. Cuba hoped for a political solution in full respect for the independence and sovereignty of Syria, and did not support the focus of this resolution and would vote against it. Cuba would continue to work to promote and protect human rights for all and to ensure that genuine dialogue reigned.

Qatar, speaking in a general comment, said that it refused the amendment made by the Russian delegation. The current suffering in Syria required that all should shoulder their responsibility vis-à-vis a resolution that condemned the gross violations of human rights perpetrated by the Syrian Government against its people. Qatar called on delegations to vote

against the amendment.

Uruguay, speaking on behalf of a group of States in a general comment on resolution A/HRC/20/L.22/Rev.1, said that they condemned terrorism in all its forms and violence in the field exercised by all the sides involved in the conflict. The group of States would vote against the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation.

Uganda, speaking in a general comment, said that it understood the need to maintain a balanced consideration of the language in a resolution. Uganda supported the amendment made by the Russian delegation.

Syria, speaking as the concerned country, said it was not surprised vis-à-vis the co-sponsors of this biased resolution. There was no justification for its submission in these circumstances, in particular after the Geneva meeting. How could Member States support a subjective resolution which ran counter to commitments in the Charter and to support peaceful dialogue and cooperation? How could these countries support an insidious resolution against Syria which condemned the Syrian Government and did not even make a reference to the armed groups and did not request that they joined the negotiating table? Syria had hoped that objective and friendly countries would call for a balanced text and for a paragraph that would call for countries which ignited the conflict through mass media, mercenaries and arms to refrain from playing this catastrophic role against the Syrian people. Surprisingly, the United States which had suffered from terrorism now refused to support a clause condemning terrorism. Apparently the United States considered that there were forms of terrorism which could be accepted and others on which the international community should be silent. Syria refused the draft resolution as a whole for it went counter to the rules and mandate of this Council. Such politicised resolutions prejudiced other objective resolutions, undermined the plan of the Joint Special Envoy, encouraged violence and killing, and impeded the cooperation and openness recently displayed by Syria.

India, in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said that India had given its full support to the Special Envoy Mr. Kofi Annan and condemned violations of human rights from all sides in Syria. In the case of the draft resolution India expressed concern at the one-sided condemnation of the violation of human rights in Syria. It noted that the Council should always act with complete impartiality and objectivity. The proposed amendment by the Russian Federation addressed only in part India's concern about the one-sidedness of the resolution. Therefore India would abstain from the vote on the amendment to the resolution.

Angola, in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said the delegation found it difficult not to accept the amendment made by Russia, which was very specific. It was difficult to understand how such a simple amendment, that would only strengthen the text, could not be accepted. Angola would vote in favour of the amendment.

Russian Federation, speaking in an explanation of vote after the vote, said that it was important to maintain a constructive atmosphere with all sides in Syria. The Russian Federation was ready to engage in constructive work on the resolution and had proposed an amendment which would have given the text a more balanced character. The text did not contain any condemnation of violence or acts of terrorism by the opposition, and those elements had been

deliberately overlooked. The Russian Federation wondered what the added value of the resolution was, since, as it stood, it would only exacerbate the suffering of civilians and lead to more loss of civilian lives. The Russian Federation could not find any justification for the countries that had voted against the amendment which mentioned acts of terrorism by the opposition in Syria.

Ecuador, speaking in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said that it had watched with concern the deterioration of the human rights situation to the detriment of the Syrian people who had seen tens of thousands dying. Ecuador had condemned the acts of violence and called on all parties to put an end to the violence. Ecuador voiced its solidarity with the Syrian people and supported the Joint Special Envoy's six-point plan. Ecuador was confident that they could and had to work against impunity in the context of this conflict. It called on the international community to continue its efforts in seeking a peaceful solution. It would vote in favour of the resolution.

Uruguay, speaking in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said that it would vote in favour of the resolution on Syria. There must be respect for the human rights and freedoms of all. The six point plan proposed by Mr. Kofi Annan was the only way to move forward and preserve peace and political stability in Syria.

China, in an explanation of the vote before the vote, said that the Geneva Meeting's outcome had shown that so long as all parties were patient and adequate equal-footing consultations took place, consensus could be reached. The Human Rights Council should exercise caution on the issue and desist from unduly influencing overall diplomatic efforts. The draft resolution was neither balanced nor objective, containing many elements aimed at exerting unilateral pressure on the Syrian Government. It might only exacerbate tensions and undermine the mediation efforts of the Joint Special Envoy. Ultimately the Syrian people would bear the brunt. China would vote against the draft resolution and appealed to all Council Member States to bear in mind the long-term interests of the Syrian people by adopting a cautious attitude to the draft resolution.

Presidential Statement on Reports of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

In presidential statement ((A/HRC/20/L.23) regarding the reports of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, adopted without a vote, the Council decides to increase the word limit for all reports of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on each State reviewed from 9,630 words to 10,700 words.

Action on Resolution Under the Agenda Item on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Forms of Intolerance

In a resolution ((A/HRC/20/L.3) regarding a Nelson Mandela International Day Panel, adopted without a vote, the Council decides to hold, at its twenty-first session, a high-level panel discussion on how the values of reconciliation, peace, freedom and racial equality can contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights; requests the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to take the measures necessary to observe

Nelson Mandela International Day and requests the Office of the High Commissioner to compile a summary of the outcome of the discussions and present it to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-third session.

South Africa, speaking on behalf of the African Group to introduce resolution A/HRC/20/L.3, called on States to observe 18 July as Nelson Mandela Day in an appropriate manner. The Nelson Mandela International Day Panel would discuss how Mr. Mandela's values of peace, freedom and racial equality could contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights and how the human rights system could benefit from Mr. Mandela's approach.

Action on Resolutions under the Agenda Item on Technical Assistance and Capacity-Building

Action on Resolution on Technical Assistance to Côte d'Ivoire in the Field of Human Rights

In a resolution (A/HRC/20/L.21) on technical assistance to Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights, adopted without a vote as orally amended, the Council strongly condemns the attacks on the civilian population and personnel of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire; and condemns and deplores in particular the killing of seven United Nations peacekeepers on 8 June 2012 in the town of Para while they were assisting the civilian population under attack by unidentified armed elements. The Council welcomes the cooperation of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire with the United Nations human rights machinery and its commitment to promote and protect human rights; and commends the establishment on 13 July 2011 of a Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Côte d'Ivoire. The Council encourages the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to continue to ratify and implement international and regional human rights instruments; and calls on United Nations agencies and other relevant actors to continue to cooperate with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to provide assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons. The Council calls upon the international community to support the national efforts made by Côte d'Ivoire and its institutions to improve the human rights situation in the country, and to respond to its requests for technical assistance. The Council decides therefore to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire for a period of one year, from the twentieth to the twenty-third session of the Human Rights Council; and asks the Independent Expert to submit his report at the twenty-second session and his recommendations at the twenty-third session of the Human Rights Council.

Senegal, introducing draft resolution A/HRC/20/L.21, said that the draft resolution had as its objective to invite the Council to proceed with the renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire was committed to improving the human rights situation in the country. There had been visible achievements, despite existing challenges. The draft resolution also asked the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to provide technical assistance and work with Côte d'Ivoire in the implementation of all its obligations in the area of human rights.

Côte d'Ivoire, speaking as the concerned country, said that it was grateful for the assistance and support of the international community during and after the crisis in the country. Particular reference was made to the United Nations staff who had lost their lives near the border with

Liberia. Côte d'Ivoire condemned and deplored those barbaric acts and noted the efforts made by the Government after the hostilities to restore peace. It called upon the international community to continue to provide Côte d'Ivoire with the necessary technical assistance in the field of human rights.

Action on Resolution on Assistance to Somalia in the Field of Human Rights

In a resolution (A/HRC/20/L2.Rev1 only available in French) regarding assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights, adopted without a vote, the Council expresses its continued serious concern at the human rights and humanitarian situation in Somalia; strongly condemns the grave and systematic human rights abuses perpetrated against the civilian population, in particular by Al-Shabaab and its affiliates, and calls for their immediate cessation; urges all parties to facilitate rapid and unhindered humanitarian access, and urges Member States to support tangibly the Somali authorities; urges all parties to take immediate steps to protect women and children and calls in particular for an immediate end to the unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers; expresses deep concern about continuing attacks against journalists in Somalia; decides to extend the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia for one year, from September 2012, in order to support the efforts of the Transitional Federal Government and Somali sub-national authorities to ensure respect for human rights in preparation for the end of the transitional period on 20 August 2012; requests the Independent Expert to report to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-fourth session; and calls on all parties to ensure that the progress made at the London Conference on Somalia is consolidated through effective action, and to redouble their efforts to support the people of Somalia in their search for a better future for their country.

Turkey, introducing resolution A/HRC/20/L.2/Rev.1, said that Somalia had shown willingness to protect human rights. The transitional period in Somalia would be ending in 2012, so the draft resolution would serve to reiterate the support of the Council to Somalia during the last stages of the ongoing political process. The resolution welcomed the efforts towards the participation of women in the political process. Turkey hosted last month a conference on Somalia's future with participation from the business sector, civil society, women's groups and the diaspora. The conference reiterated that respect for human rights must be at the heart of the peace process.

Somalia, speaking as a concerned country and also introducing draft resolution A/HRC/20/L.2/Rev.1, said that Somalia was entering a crucial phase as it moved towards the end of the transition period. At this important time it reminded the international community of the challenges faced in moving from traditional structures into modern statehood. If Somalia was to rebuild and recover, it needed to focus inwards and rely on itself. Somalia had to fix Somalia. This had guided its approach through the transitional period and would continue to guide it as it moved into the post-transitional period. The immediate challenge that would be faced by the new Government and the main international stakeholders in the post-transitional phase would be the provision of basic social services, recovery in the areas where it was needed, and development. Regional integration would be crucial and the best way to achieve this would be to adopt an open foreign policy that welcomed the support and friendship of all countries. The Prime Minister had said that the following three principles should guide the way forward: legitimacy, accountability, and commitment. Today's resolution would help Somalia

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follow those guidelines. It would also be a sign of commitment by Somalia and the international community. The resolution coincided with the International Contact Group meeting that had successfully concluded in Rome three days ago.

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