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ORAL STATEMENT  
Item 2: General Debate

## ACTION NEEDED TO ADDRESS CRIMES UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW IN AFGHANISTAN AND CHINA

UN Human Rights Council  
Forty-ninth regular session  
28 February – 1 April 2022

Mr President,

We share the High Commissioner's deep concerns over the human rights crisis in Afghanistan, where all meaningful avenues to exercise freedom of expression and peaceful assembly have now effectively been removed. Arbitrary arrests, detention and enforced disappearances of human rights defenders, journalists, academics and critics have become commonplace. Reprisals against [individuals](#) associated with the former administration and security forces continue to be reported [across the country](#).

Women and girls' participation in political and public life has largely ceased, with new restrictions on their right to education and freedom of movement, while [protection systems for survivors of gender-based violence have been dismantled](#) and women's rights activists targeted and subjected to enforced disappearance.

Impunity continues for crimes under international law committed in the run up to and following the Taliban takeover – including [unlawful killings, arbitrary detentions, torture and ill-treatment, and massacres of ethnic Hazaras committed by the Taliban](#); and killings of civilians by US military airstrikes and Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANSDF) ground operations.

As millions face poverty and famine in Afghanistan, the US decision to divert \$3.5 billion in frozen Afghan foreign currency away from those that need it the most is unconscionable.

We urge this Council to do all it can to address the overwhelming impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity that continues to fuel the ongoing human rights crisis in Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

We remain alarmed by the human rights situation in China – including the ongoing crackdown in Hong Kong and grave human rights violations amounting to crimes against humanity being committed against Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang). We urge this Council to take overdue action to address the situation, in line with consistent calls from civil society and Special Procedures. We are concerned by the continued delays in the publication of the OHCHR report on the situation in Xinjiang and join other organisations in calling for its release in the course of the current session.

Thank you.