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ORAL STATEMENT
Item 4: General Debate

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL MUST ADDRESS HUMAN RIGHTS CRISES IN INDIA, CHINA, THE PHILIPPINES, IRAN AND EGYPT

UN Human Rights Council
Forty-fifth session
14 September – 7 October 2020

Madam President,

We remain alarmed by the deteriorating human rights situation in **India** including the ongoing crackdown on civic space and freedom of expression¹; the use of draconian laws like the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) to target activists and peaceful protestors,² and their ongoing arbitrary detention in overcrowded prisons as COVID-19 cases surge, which puts their health and lives at risk. Also, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which the High Commissioner has described as “fundamentally discriminatory in nature,”³ which pushes minorities – particularly Muslims – towards detention and statelessness when combined with the National Register of Citizenship (NRC) process.⁴

Amnesty International India has documented how, during the Delhi riots in February, the Delhi police participated in the violence, and used torture, and excessive force against protesters.⁵ Their actions have not been formally investigated. The reality of the human rights situation in India can no longer be ignored, and we urge states at this Council to hold India to its human

¹ See for example: Amnesty International India, India: No Country For Young Peaceful Protesters, 14 August 2020, available at: <https://amnesty.org.in/news-update/india-no-country-for-young-peaceful-protesters/>.

² Joint statement by Amnesty International India, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, FORUM-ASIA and FIDH, India: International Community Must Condemn Crimes Against Those Protesting Peacefully Against Discriminatory Law, 2 March 2020, available at: <https://amnesty.org.in/news-update/india-international-community-must-condemn-crimes-against-those-protesting-peacefully-against-discriminatory-law/>.

³ OHCHR, Press briefing on India, Geneva, 13 December 2019: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25425&LangID=E#:~:text=OHCHR%20%7C%20Press%20Briefing%20on%20India&text=We%20are%20concerned%20that%20India's,is%20fundamentally%20discriminatory%20in%20nature.&text=Although%20India's%20broader%20naturalization%20laws,on%20people's%20access%20to%20nationality>.

⁴ Amnesty International India, Citizenship (Amendment) Bill: A Bigoted Law That Must Be Immediately Repealed, 12 December 2019, available at: <https://amnesty.org.in/news-update/citizenship-amendment-bill-a-bigoted-law-that-must-be-immediately-repealed/>.

⁵ Amnesty International India, New Delhi/Bengaluru, 28 August 2020, Investigative Briefing, available at: https://amnesty.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Final-Delhi-Report_Amnesty-International-India-2.pdf.

rights obligations and commitments.

In **Iran**, authorities have extended their crackdown sparked by the protests of November 2019. In addition to the deliberate killing of hundreds of unarmed protesters and bystanders,⁶ the authorities have also relied on tools such as arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances. We have documented the widespread use of torture since last November, including beatings, floggings, electric shocks, stress positions, mock executions, waterboarding, sexual violence, forced administration of chemical substances, and deprivation of medical care.⁷ We are also witnessing abusive criminal proceedings and sentencing. The death penalty is being wielded as a weapon of political repression – against protesters, dissidents, and members of minority groups.⁸ We see not just impunity through denial; top officials have praised intelligence and security forces as heroes for their role in this crackdown. We reiterate our call for the establishment of an international investigation into these violations and urge states to work towards it as a matter of priority. We also remain deeply concerned about a judicial system that executes children and amputates fingers.⁹ In this context, we welcome today's Joint Statement under Item 4 by a group of states.

In **Egypt**, the government has targeted women social media influencers and survivors, witnesses and activists speaking out against rape and other sexual violence. Several face criminal prosecutions on vague and discriminatory charges related to “morality” and “debauchery”.¹⁰ At the same time, human rights defenders, politicians, journalists and health care workers remain in arbitrary detention on the basis of unfounded "terrorism" related charges solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, including criticizing the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹ The conditions of detention in Egypt's overcrowded and unhygienic prisons are dire.¹² Inadequate medical care to prisoners in custody has led to multiple deaths in custody this year alone. We urge the Council to give the situation in Egypt the systematic scrutiny that it deserves.

Amnesty International supports the [statement](#) delivered by Human Rights Watch on behalf of

⁶ Amnesty International, Iran: Details released of 304 deaths during protests six months after security forces' killing spree, 20 May 2020, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/05/iran-details-released-of-304-deaths-during-protests-six-months-after-security-forces-killing-spreed/>.

⁷ Amnesty International, Iran: Trampling Humanity – Mass Arrests, Disappearances, and Torture since Iran's 2019 November Protests, 2 September 2020, Index number: MDE 13/2891/2020, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/2891/2020/en/>; see also Iran: Detainees Flogged Sexually Abused and Given Electric Shocks in Gruesome Post Protest Crackdown, 2 September 2020, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/09/iran-detainees-flogged-sexually-abused-and-given-electric-shocks-in-gruesome-post-protest-crackdown-new-report/>.

⁸ Amnesty International, Iran : Two Kurds Executed Amid Increasing Use of Death Penalty as a Weapon of Repression, 15 July 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/07/iran-two-kurds-executed-amid-increasing-use-of-death-penalty-as-weapon-of-repression/>; see also Iran: Secret Execution of Wrestler Navid Afkari a Tragedy of Justice, 12 September 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/09/iran-secret-execution-of-wrestler-navid-afkari-a-tragedy-of-justice/>.

⁹ Amnesty International, Iran: Horrifying plan to amputate fingers of four men convicted of robbery must be stopped, 24 September 2020, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/09/iran-horrifying-plan-to-amputate-fingers-of-four-men-convicted-of-robbery-must-be-stopped/>.

¹⁰ Amnesty International, Egypt: Survivors of Sexual Violence and Online Abuse among Prosecuted Women Tiktok Influencers, 13 August 2020, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/08/egypt-survivors-of-sexual-violence-and-online-abuse-among-prosecuted-women-tiktok-influencers/>.

¹¹ Amnesty International, Egypt: Politician and Human Rights Lawyer sentenced to a Year in Prison for BBC Interview, 10 March 2020, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/03/egypt-politician-and-human-rights-lawyer-sentenced-to-year-in-prison-for-bbc-interview/>; Egypt: End Relentless Attacks on Journalists and Other Media Workers, 5 May 2020, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/05/egypt-end-relentless-attacks-on-journalists-and-other-media-workers/>; Egypt: Court arbitrarily extends the pre-trial detention of over 1,600 defendants, 7 May 2020 available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/05/egypt-court-arbitrarily-extends-the-pretrial-detention-of-over-1600-defendants/>; Egypt: Health Care Workers Forced to Make Impossible Choice Between Death or Jail, 18 June 2020, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/06/egypt-health-care-workers-forced-to-make-impossible-choice-between-death-or-jail/>; Egypt: Human Rights Activist Arrested Outside Public Prosecutor's Office, 23 June 2020, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/06/egypt-human-rights-activist-arrested-outside-public-prosecutors-office/>.

¹² Amnesty International, Egypt: Release prisoners of conscience and other prisoners at risk amid coronavirus outbreak, 20 March 2020, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/03/egypt-release-prisoners-of-conscience-and-other-prisoners-at-risk-amid-coronavirus-outbreak/>.

the global coalition calling for urgent UN action on **China**. In addition to concerns raised in that statement, we are alarmed by the detention of 12 Hongkongers, including 1 child, for allegedly crossing the border between mainland China and Hong Kong in an unlawful manner being held incommunicado, without access to their family or family-appointed lawyers.¹³ China must respect the provisions of ICCPR which apply to Hong Kong.

We also support the [joint statement](#) delivered by OMCT on the **Philippines**.

Thank you.

¹³ Amnesty International, Amnesty International Urgent Action: 12 Hongkongers held incommunicado in China, 17 September 2020, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ASA1730752020ENGLISH.pdf>.