

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PUBLIC STATEMENT

3 November 2010

AI Index: IOR 41/031/2010

Amnesty International urges UN General Assembly's Third Committee to consider country situations on merit and vote against 'No-Action Motions'

The Third Committee of the General Assembly is about to consider the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Myanmar (draft resolutions A/C.3/65/L.49, A/C.3/65/L.47 and A/C.3/65/L.48, respectively). Amnesty International appeals to all Member States to consider country situations on their merits.

No country has a perfect human rights record and no country should be shielded from public scrutiny of its human rights record. Amnesty International therefore strongly opposes any procedural device, such as 'No-Action Motions', aimed at preventing the Third Committee from taking specific action to promote and encourage respect for human rights, one of the "Purposes and Principles" of the UN Charter.

Acting under Rule 116 of the General Assembly's Rules of Procedure, Member States have in the past brought 'No-Action Motions' in order to compel the Third Committee to adjourn debate on the situations in specific countries.

Some states argue that the General Assembly should cease adopting resolutions on country-specific human rights situations because all countries are now covered by the system of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council.

But the UPR, a cooperative mechanism based on interactive dialogue intended to assess how each state fulfils its human rights obligations and commitments, was not designed to address gross and systematic or chronic violations of human rights like those in the country situations that have been considered by the General Assembly.

Furthermore, the UPR considers any state's human rights record in a four-year cycle, a period that is totally insufficient to address gross and systematic violations or ongoing situations of a chronic nature.

Last year, no Member State called for a 'No Action Motion' on any country resolution. Amnesty International welcomed this, and hopes that this year 'No-Action Motions' will once again not be brought in the Third Committee. If they are brought, Amnesty International urges all UN Member States to vote against 'No-Action Motions'.

End/