



Amnesty International's wrap-up statement on some of the developments at the 21st session of the UN Human Rights Council (10-28 September 2012) (*Not delivered*)

AI Index: IOR 41/025/2012
28 September 2012

Item 1: Organizational and procedural matters *General comments from stakeholders*

Madam President,

This session has seen numerous positive developments, including in connection with the safety of journalists, human rights and preventable maternal mortality and morbidity, human rights and extreme poverty, and Syria.

Amnesty International welcomes the Council's decision to provide for public follow-up to its consideration of Eritrea under the confidential Complaint Procedure. This is an important example of how the Council can fulfill its mandate to follow methods of work that 'allow for subsequent follow-up discussions to recommendations and their implementation'.

Tentative efforts were made to address recent despicable instances of deliberately provocative vilifications of Islam and Muslims. However, the social, political and legal issues raised by such acts and deliberately violent responses to them are too important to be addressed in haste. Time must be made to address those issues calmly, deliberately and with determination in an effort to find effective and lasting responses.

Amnesty International welcomes, inter alia, that for the first time no delegation opposed the reaffirmation of the right to sanitation and the reaffirmation that the right to safe drinking water and sanitation is derived from the right to an adequate standard of living. We regret, however, that countries most supportive of these rights allowed the negotiation of the resolution to be dominated by the countries that have only recently recognised them. The latecomers managed to ensure the exclusion of important elements from the resolution, such as the specification of the elements of the rights to water and sanitation and recommendations relating to the provision of water and sanitation to informal settlements. Amnesty International urges State supporters of the rights to water and sanitation to be vigilant and actively counter future attempts to restrict the scope of these rights.

Madam President,

At this session one delegation urged that the distinction between a country situation under item 4 and item 10 be kept clear as that distinction is essential for building trust and confidence among States for enhancing the Council's work on technical assistance and capacity building.

Amnesty International agrees. Item 10 should be used for countries that would do better but need help. Using it to deal with situations where the government deliberately commits gross and systematic human rights violations abuses this Council and is a further affront to the dignity of the persons suffering the violations.

For example, civilians suffering deliberate ongoing indiscriminate aerial bombardments by the security forces of their own government and humanitarian workers in those areas would surely wonder whether talk of technical assistance to protect them is a sick joke.

Those persons would wonder how this Council could yet again reward a government that has already been given many chances to prove its stated readiness to improve the country's human rights situation and fulfill its human rights obligation, but continues to engage in deliberate human rights violations, has refused to undertake essential human rights reforms and has even gone as far as preventing the Council from being kept informed of the human rights situation.

They would wonder why this Council has yet again given an Independent Expert the impossible task of having assisting a government to end human rights violations that it has manifestly no will to stop.

Yes the government of Sudan fooled the Commission on Human Rights in 2003, and shame on Sudan. Sudan continues to fool this Council in 2012, and shame on this Council.

Thank you Madam President.