

**AMNESTY  
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UN Human Rights Council  
Twenty-sixth Session  
10 – 27 June 2014

**Item 8:** Follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action  
*General debate*

Delivered by Patrizia Scannella – **Video link:** <http://goo.gl/vtSLFW> (statement number 29)

Madam President,

Amnesty International is concerned that an initiative on 'protection of the family' that is purported to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Year of the Family through a panel discussion, will undermine the human rights of individual family members<sup>1</sup>. If this is to be avoided any such resolution must be consistent with the Human Rights Council's mandate, which is to promote and protect human rights of all persons.

Madam President,

Various forms of the family exist in all contexts. States have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of all individuals belonging to the various forms of family. It would be totally inconsistent with human rights principles to suggest that the human rights of some persons should not be protected because they belong to particular family configurations. Any eventual resolution must recognise the existence of diverse forms of family, including by reaffirming that "in different cultural, social and political systems, various forms of family exist" as the Council unanimously asserted in its resolution on the rights of the child.<sup>2</sup>

Failure to address the importance of promoting and protecting the human rights of individual family members could result in a resolution that lends itself to undermining the Council's work on a number of relevant issues such as the prevention of child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, and sexual abuse of children.

Madam President,

A Human Rights Council initiative about the family must put human rights front and centre. Human rights adhere to individual persons; the family, as a grouping, in and of itself does not have human rights. This must be reflected clearly in the text of any resolution, its title, and operative provisions.

Amnesty International urges all Council member and observer States to ensure that any Human Rights Council resolution on the family is firmly based on and promotes international human rights law.

Thank you Madam President.

<sup>1</sup> See also 'HRC resolution on family must not undermine the human rights of individual family members': <http://www.amnesty.org/fr/library/info/IOR41/016/2014/en>

<sup>2</sup> Resolution A/HRC/RES/7/29