

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Amnesty International urges members of the General Assembly's Third Committee to consider country situations on merit and vote against any 'No Action Motions'

The Third Committee of the General Assembly is about to consider human rights situations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Myanmar (draft resolutions A/C.3/64/L.37, A/C.3/64/L.35 and A/C.3/64/L.36 respectively). Amnesty International appeals to all Member States to consider country situations on their merits in the Third Committee. In doing so, committee members should take full account of the seriousness of the situation and whether the country concerned effectively cooperates with the UN's country and thematic procedures.

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 in principle any procedural devices such as 'No Action Motions' that prevent human rights situations from being considered on their merits. Last year, 'No Action Motions' on Iran and Myanmar were not passed. Amnesty International hopes that such 'No Action Motions' will not be brought in the Third Committee this year. However, should this happen, Amnesty International urges all UN Member States to vote against any 'No Action Motions'.

Adopting a motion to adjourn debate on a country under Rule 116 of the General Assembly's Rules of Procedure, a 'No Action Motion', halts discussion on the human rights situation in that country. It prevents the Third Committee of the General Assembly from taking specific action to promote and encourage respect for human rights, one of the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter. Procedural maneuvering designed to prevent serious human rights situations from being considered on their merits should have no place in a Committee charged with promoting and protecting human rights.

Some states argue that the General Assembly should cease adopting resolutions on country specific human rights situations, because all countries are now being reviewed under the system of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) established by the Human Rights Council. However, the UPR is a cooperative mechanism, based on interactive dialogue, intended to address the fulfillment by each state of its human rights obligations and commitments in a manner that ensures universality of coverage and equal treatment with respect to all states (A/RES/60/251, OP5(e)). It 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.