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**ORAL STATEMENT**  
**General debate on ITEM 2**  
UN Human Rights Council  
52<sup>nd</sup> session  
27 February 2023 – 4 April 2023

High Commissioner,

During your tenure, we hope to see you use the full range of tools at your disposal to draw attention to a broad range of human rights situations, including situations that are forgotten or entrenched, with victims always at the center.

We look forward to your leadership in ensuring that this year of human rights anniversaries (the 75th anniversary of the UDHR, the 30th anniversary of the VDPA and the 25th anniversary of the Human Right Defenders Declaration) is celebrated not just with platitudes, but with concrete proposals and pledges to reinforce and rejuvenate the human rights architecture.

We welcome your concerns on Xinjiang and reiterate our call for an independent international investigation to address serious concerns, including the recent findings by your office that crimes against humanity may have taken place. We call on you to continue the work of your office on Xinjiang and present this Council with concrete options for accountability. It is imperative that any measures for engagement with the government should focus on efforts to release individuals who had been arbitrarily deprived of their liberty and to clarify the whereabouts of missing and disappeared people.

We welcome your reports on Guatemala and Honduras. In Guatemala, human rights defenders, journalists and justice operators face unfounded criminal charges in retaliation for their work against impunity and corruption. In Honduras, killings of activists, particularly environmental defenders, are rising at an alarming rate.

We call on Peru to engage with your office and conduct independent and transparent investigations on widespread attacks committed with a marked racist bias against people taking part in protests since December 2022, especially Indigenous people and campesinos.

Lastly, we welcome the serious concerns on Afghanistan highlighted by you and the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan. Continuing gender persecution, ongoing crimes under international law and a long history of impunity add to the urgent need for an independent investigative mechanism to complement the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. Such a mechanism should have the mandate to establish the facts and circumstances relating to allegations of crimes under international law, as well as to collect, consolidate, preserve, and analyse evidence for future international justice.

Thank you.