

Item 4 – General Debate

Intervention by the Czech Republic

Mr President,

We remain deeply concerned about the increasing number of human rights abuses in Crimea and the Eastern regions of **Ukraine**, namely killing of civilians, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, and physical and psychological torture. We are mostly worried about targeting civilians by armed groups, which left behind hundreds of deaths and hundreds of thousands of displaced people in urgent need of humanitarian aid. We urge all involved parties to find peaceful solution, end the violence and ensure the protection of civilians in the areas of conflict. At that, all the allegations of human rights abuses and violations must be fully investigated in accordance with international human rights norms and standards.

The Czech Republic remains deeply concerned with the overall human rights situation in **Libya**. We hope that newly elected Parliament and the new government will be respected by all the elements of the Libyan society. That will enable the necessary national reconciliation and will consequently improve human rights situation. We urge all parties to the conflict to respect the competence of the legitimate Libyan institutions.

At the Council's special session on 1st September we strongly condemned human rights violations and abuses in **Iraq**. Once again, we feel compelled to express our concerns over the appalling abuses committed by ISIL and we call on the Government of Iraq to do everything in its power that human rights are guaranteed and all perpetrators brought to justice. We welcome the recent decision of the Council to dispatch an OHCHR mission to investigate all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law.

Mr President,

The Czech Republic is worried about numerous cases of violation of the right to freedom of expression, about abuses of media outlets for propaganda purposes, and shrinking space for civil society. We had appreciated the engagement of the **Iranian** Government with the international community. Nevertheless, we are concerned about the recent worrying trend of arresting and sentencing journalists, bloggers and filmmakers, who are often also human rights activists, for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and opinion. Since May 2014, at least 36 of them have been arrested or sentenced from six-month to over twenty-year prison terms. In **Russia**, we remain concerned about the continuing harassment of human rights defenders, activists, non-governmental organizations and representatives of sexual, religion or ethnic minorities. Regrettably, civil society continues to be stigmatized under the "foreign agent" law and often faces retaliatory administrative pressure. We are also concerned about the deterioration of the freedom of the media and state-sponsored propaganda campaigns in Russia. In **China**, while appreciating expressions of willingness of the Government to discuss human rights issues and improvements in the quality of life of individuals, we still follow with concern reports of persecution of those who are not afraid to express dissenting or critical opinions, including activists connected with the New Citizens' Movement and lawyers defending human rights activists. The voice of civil society is a vital means for any government to reflect upon concerns of its citizens in all parts of a country. The same respect and attention should be paid to religious and ethnic minorities as far as practising their faith and customs is concerned.

We remain gravely concerned about the systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations in **DPRK**. We continue to urge the Government to take immediate steps to halt such violations, to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, and to close all political prisoner camps and release unconditionally and without delay all political prisoners. The Czech Republic recalls the protracted crisis situation in **Syria**, which we commented in our statement during the previous dialogue. Under Item Agenda 10 we will further comment the human rights situations in **Sudan, South Sudan** and the **CAR**.

I thank you.