

## **Third Committee Approves 6 Drafts on Human Rights in Iran, Syria, Ukraine amid Separate Calls to Abolish Country-Specific Texts, Uphold Rule of Law**

### **‘We Are Fighting for Justice,’ Says Myanmar’s Representative in Appeal for Global Support Following February Coup**

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) approved six draft resolutions today, five of which focused on country-specific situations, while the last drew attention to the precarious conditions of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa.

A draft resolution on human rights conditions in Myanmar — approved by consensus — would have the Assembly call on the country’s security and armed forces to respect people’s democratic aspirations, to allow the democratic transition, fully respect the rule of law and end the state of emergency declared on 1 February.

Myanmar’s delegate said it cannot be denied that all people in his country are suffering from the atrocities committed by the military, especially after the February coup. He drew attention to arbitrary arrests, torture, terrorist acts and crimes against humanity, committed by the military before and after the coup. Such terrorizing actions have been widely reported and documented by the Special Rapporteur and the Special Envoy on the situation in Myanmar, he stressed,

The entire civilian population has been targeted by the military, he warned. Conditions are worsening by the day, with hundreds of thousands of civilians fleeing their homes. “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,” he said, recalling the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. “We are fighting for justice,” which he said must prevail for everyone in Myanmar.

A draft resolution on human rights in Iran — approved by a recorded vote of 79 in favour to 30 against, with 71 abstentions — would express the Assembly’s serious concern at the alarmingly frequent use of the death penalty, including against minors. Among other provisions, it would urge Iran to end its use and commute the sentences for child offenders on death row.

Iran's delegate called the draft an "insincere political move" that exposes a deliberate policy of incitement to "Iranophobia". She denounced that the cosponsors — Canada, the United States and "the child killer Israeli regime", the main proponents of racism, occupation and abhorrent treatment of indigenous peoples — have come together to lecture others on human rights.

Canada's delegate, in response, acknowledged crimes committed against indigenous peoples in Canada and that there is systemic discrimination ongoing against them. He pointed to Canada's establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, led by indigenous peoples themselves, underscoring the importance of collective learning and collective wisdom.

Several countries broadly rejected the use of country-specific resolutions, with Cuba's delegate noting that the politicization of human rights destabilizes Governments. Along similar lines, Venezuela's delegate rejected such texts as they do not contribute to constructive dialogue. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said texts that target specific countries are typical examples of politicization and double standards. Similarly, Syria's delegate called for respecting the territorial integrity of countries. The representative of the Russian Federation also opposed the counter-productive nature of country-specific resolutions. Such drafts have nothing to do with the protection of human rights but rather demonize countries for political purposes.

In other action, the Committee focused on the human rights situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, approving the draft resolution by a recorded vote of 64 in favour to 20 against, with 93 abstentions. By its terms, the Assembly would condemn efforts by the Russian Federation to legitimize its attempted annexation of Crimea, through the automatic imposition of Russian citizenship, illegal election campaigns and suppression of national identity.

Ukraine's delegate said the draft specifically calls on the occupying Power to supply fresh water, ensure the safety of journalists and release political hostages, claims which his counterpart from the Russian Federation countered by stressing that it is, in fact, Ukraine that has blocked the water supply through the Crimea canal, a body that serves 85 per cent of the area.

In other notable action, the Committee approved a draft on the human rights situation in Syria by a recorded vote of 95 in favour to 13 against, with 66 abstentions. Under its terms, the Assembly would demand that Syria's regime and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) immediately desist from any further chemical weapons use and attacks on civilians.

Syria's delegate accused the United States of flagrantly violating international humanitarian law by occupying Syrian territories, bombing civilians, destroying the city of Raqqa and depriving Syrians of their basic needs, through the imposition of inhumane coercive measures. "This year's resolution has nothing to do with the situation on the ground but aims to vilify Syria," she said.

The Committee also approved by consensus a draft on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which would have the Assembly urge the country to immediately stop its use of torture, close political prison camps, release all political prisoners and ensure the immediate return of all abductees.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea rejected the draft, criticizing the United States and the European Union for attempting to give lessons on human rights.

Also today, the Committee approved a consensus draft resolution on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa.

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) will reconvene at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 18 November, to take action on draft resolutions.

### **Action**

The Third Committee began the day by taking up draft resolutions on the human rights situations in several countries.

The representative of Azerbaijan, speaking for the Non-Aligned Movement on the human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives, said that during the eighteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in October 2019, the group emphasized the responsibility of the Human Rights Council regarding the consideration of such situations in all countries, in the context of the universal periodic review. She expressed concern over the selective adoption of country-specific resolutions in the Third Committee, as well as in the Human Rights Council, underscoring the need to promote greater coherence and complementarity between the two bodies to avoid unnecessary duplication of work. The universal periodic review is the main inter-governmental mechanism to review human rights issues at the national level, in all countries without distinction, and with the full involvement of the country concerned. She rejected the Security Council's practice of addressing human rights issues in pursuit of certain States' political objectives. It is important to ensure that the universal periodic review remains an action-oriented, cooperative mechanism, based on objective and reliable information, and interactive dialogue with the countries under review.

The Committee first considered the draft resolution titled, "Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" (document A/C.3/76/L.27).

The representative of Slovenia, on behalf of the European Union, introduced the draft resolution, expressing concern about the lack of improvement in the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. He also pointed to the lack of positive developments in discussions with the Republic of Korea and the reunion of separated families, urging the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take action on these issues.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea rejected the draft resolution, considering it an intolerable act that threatens the integrity of his country. He criticized the United States and the European Union for attempting to give lessons on human rights, suggesting that today's meeting should discuss human rights in the United States instead. He rejected any interference in his country's internal affairs, calling the draft a manifestation of the politicization in the Third Committee.

The representative of Venezuela, speaking in explanation of vote on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, stressed that the draft resolution is contrary to the principles of the Charter. He reiterated concerns about the implementation of unilateral mechanisms, which represent a violation of these principles. Rather, the universal periodic review is the right way to promote dialogue and mutual respect in efforts to uphold human rights, while promoting multilateralism.

The representative of the Russian Federation endorsed the statement made by Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, indicating that selective one-sided draft resolutions are not the right approach, as

they exacerbate confrontation between Member States. The universal periodic review within the Human Rights Council is the appropriate platform to promote such dialogue, he said, disassociating himself from consensus on the draft.

The representative of the United Kingdom expressed regret that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea did not allow the High Commissioner for Human Rights to enter the country, calling for an end to persistent abuses. He recalled that COVID-19 measures should be proportionate and should not be used to restrict individual freedoms. He also challenged the idea that human rights scrutiny affects the sovereignty of countries, expressing support for the draft and emphasizing the need for the Committee to hear about violations.

The representative of Japan pointed to the abduction of Japanese citizens by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the past, calling for the immediate release of all abductees.

The representative of Singapore stressed that her delegation does not support country-specific resolutions, which should be considered under the universal periodic review mechanism. As such, Singapore will abstain from the vote, pinpointing that this decision should not be understood as a stance on the substance of the draft resolution.

The representative of Syria, aligning herself with the Non-Aligned Movement, said the draft resolution should not target countries or promote double standards. Approving such texts leads to confrontation and fails to promote dialogue, in violation of United Nations Charter principles, she stated.

The representative of the United States drew attention to the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, referring to reports on human rights violations including extermination, murder, rape, forced abortion and others. His delegation condemns these crimes, requesting full compliance with international human rights.

The representative of Iran underlined that the draft resolution violates the United Nations principles of non-selectivity and impartiality, undermining cooperation and dialogue on human rights. She therefore disassociated her delegation from the text.

The representative of Trinidad and Tobago condemned human rights violations, while recalling that the Human Rights Council was set up to assess such abuses, and expressing concern about selectivity related to human rights violations.

The representative of China denounced the use of human rights to serve political motivations. She urged States to respect the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's efforts to promote human rights and cautioned them to stop interfering in its internal affairs. She disassociated from the draft resolution.

The representative of Cuba indicated that his delegation does not support politically motivated mechanisms and disassociated from the vote. He declared that Cuba cannot join consensus, due to the nature of the draft resolution, underlining the need for dialogue, impartiality and objectivity when promoting human rights for everyone.

The representative of Nigeria raised concerns about the politicization of the draft resolution, which targets countries in a selective manner. Country-specific texts demonstrate a lack of confidence in human rights treaty bodies, he said, justifying his delegation's abstention.

The representative of Eritrea endorsed the statement by the Non-Aligned Movement, expressing concerns about country-specific measures which are counter-productive to the promotion of human rights. Human rights should be assessed in a fair manner, within the framework of the universal periodic review, she said, disassociating herself from the draft resolution.

The Committee then approved draft "L.27" without a vote.

By its terms, the Assembly would condemn in the strongest terms the long-standing systematic and widespread violations of human rights in and by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including those that may amount to crimes against humanity, and the persistence of impunity. Citing findings by the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Assembly would condemn the systematic abduction, denial of repatriation and subsequent enforced disappearance of persons — including those from other countries — on a large scale and as a matter of State policy.

In this context, it would strongly call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to ensure the immediate return of all abductees, strongly urging it to immediately close political prison camps, release all political prisoners unconditionally without delay and take steps to ensure that conditions in those facilities comply with commitments relating to the humane treatment of detainees. By other terms, the Assembly would strongly urge the country immediately cease the use of torture and other cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment or punishment; ensure that citizens who are expelled or returned to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are able to return in safety and dignity; and express concern at the failure of authorities to prosecute those responsible for violations, including those which the commission of inquiry has said may amount to crimes against humanity.

The representative of Algeria reiterated support for the principles of non-selectivity and impartiality, inviting the international community to allocate more resources towards the promotion of human rights. Algeria considers the universal periodic review to be the right platform for addressing these issues, she said, cautioning that country-selective resolutions should be avoided.

The representative of Belarus, associating himself with the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement, rejected country-specific resolutions, as they only exacerbate confrontation and create artificial barriers to equal and respectful dialogue. He pointed to the universal periodic review as an instrument that allows for a balanced examination of human rights, as he disassociated Belarus from the draft resolution.

The representative of the Philippines disassociated from operative paragraph 12 as it refers to the International Criminal Court, noting that the Philippines withdrew from the Rome Statute in 2019. Notwithstanding that fact, she reaffirmed her country's commitment to fight impunity, underlining that States have the first responsibility to prosecute national crimes. Her delegation does not accept the International Criminal Court's mandate over national jurisdiction.

The representative of Viet Nam reiterated support for the universal periodic review, sharing concerns about abductions, while expressing support for dialogue between countries.

The Committee then considered the draft resolution titled, “Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran” (document A/C.3/76/L.28), which the Chair noted contained no program budget implications.

The representative of Canada, introducing the draft resolution, called it “balanced”, as it recognizes the progress made by Iran and establishes that more must be done. The draft recognizes efforts by Iran to host Afghan refugees, address violence against women and tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. It also expresses collective concern, calling on Iran to address the high rate of executions, improve prison conditions, cease restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly, both offline and online, to end persecution of religious minorities and to investigate and ensure accountability for human rights violations. The rate of executions for child offenders is disturbing, he warned, adding that over 70 per cent of executions of child offenders worldwide are carried out in Iran, including through the use of torture. He called on Iran to abolish the death penalty for child offenders.

A recorded vote was requested by the Committee.

The representative of Iran described the biased and non-constructive draft as an “insincere political move”. Containing factual errors, it represents a selective and politicized distortion of the realities on the ground, exposing the deliberate policy of incitement to “Iranophobia”. Iran has rejected this draft resolution since it was first introduced, she said, adding that the cosponsors — Canada, the United States and “the child killer Israeli regime”, the main proponents of racism, occupation and abhorrent treatment of indigenous people — have come together to lecture others on human rights. The West has chosen silence on Canada’s horrendous crimes. In the “land of the free”, thousands of indigenous children were sexually abused, killed and dumped in mass graves. In the United States, she pointed to systematic attacks on people of African descent, Muslims and Asian Americans, stressing that police in the United States strangle African Americans in broad daylight.

She questioned how the draft can be taken seriously when the “child killer Israeli regime” continues to commit international crimes, urging the international community to hold it accountable for shedding the blood of countless Palestinians. Stressing that most States have rejected the manipulation of human rights for political objectives, she said Iran has repeatedly called for engaging in respectful dialogue. Yet, the sponsors seem to be more interested in scoring political points by instrumentalizing human rights. Iran has taken all measures to promote and protect human rights, she said, reiterating that the draft has nothing to do with her country and that Member States should vote against it.

The representative of Brazil pointed to Iran’s progress, providing the growing refugee population with basic services, including the COVID-19 vaccine. However, there are still key areas of concern, such as protection of the right to peaceful assembly, which must be strengthened. He encouraged Iran to collaborate with the Special Rapporteur and noted that his delegation will abstain from the vote.

The representative of Cuba opposed targeted resolutions that are only carried out against developing countries and upon which universal coercive measures are applied. Cuba will never support the politicisation of human rights which discredit and destabilize Governments. Therefore, it will vote against the draft.

The representative of Venezuela reiterated his country's endorsement of the declaration of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of Friends in defence of the United Nations Charter, which rejects the mandates on the human rights situations in specific countries, since they do not contribute to constructive dialogue with States. Venezuela will vote against the draft, he added.

The representative of the United Kingdom urged Iran to improve its human rights record and expressed deep concern about the deteriorating human rights situation over the last year. The authorities have repeatedly violated the rights to the freedom of expression and use excessive force against peaceful protesters. Unfair trials, arbitrary detentions, mistreatment of detainees, and persecution of religious and ethnic minorities remain prevalent, he warned. In response to the Iranian delegate, he suggested that the alleged factual errors in the resolutions may result from the denied access and Iran could have addressed them by allowing the Special Rapporteur in.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, associating with the Non-Aligned movement and the Group of Friends, reiterated his country's consistent position against country-specific resolutions, which are a typical example of politicization and double-standards. He noted that his delegation will vote against the draft.

The representative of Syria rejected attempts to politicize human rights. He called on States to safeguard the United Nations Charter, respect territorial integrity and adhere to international treaties. Supporting Iran's approach to constructive cooperation with United Nations bodies, she noted her delegation will vote against the draft.

The representative of the Russian Federation opposed the counter-productive nature of country-specific resolutions. Such drafts have nothing to do with the protection of human rights but rather demonize countries for political purposes, he said, adding that Iran demonstrated its readiness to cooperate with United Nations human rights bodies. He noted that his delegation will vote against the draft.

The representative of China called for constructive dialogue and opposed politicization, double-standards and pressuring countries on the pretext of human rights. Stressing the need to view human rights situations in an objective manner, she called on States to stop interfering in Iran's internal affairs. She noted her delegation will vote against the draft.

The representative of the United States voiced deep concern over the human rights situation in Iran. Two years ago, the Iranian regime killed hundreds of protesters and tortured and imprisoned thousands more, he recalled. He also expressed concern with regards to reports of death sentences imposed following unfair trials, and reports of false confessions obtained via the use of torture, and condemned the recent internal exile method of transferring individuals to prison. The United States remains particularly concerned with journalist and human rights advocates who remain detained on national security charges, reporting on issues concerning the rights of women. The Iranian regime continues to refuse access to the Special Rapporteur, he noted, urging Iran to allow country visits as soon as possible.

The representative of Pakistan stressed the need for non-selectivity and non-politicization around the world. Despite the unilateral measures imposed on Iran, it strives to protect the rights of its citizens, he said, adding that States have primary responsibility for promotion and protection of human rights. He noted that his delegation will vote against the draft.

The Committee then approved draft resolution “L.28” by a recorded vote of 79 in favour to 30 against, with 71 abstentions.

By the text, the Assembly, welcoming Iran’s efforts to host one of the world’s largest refugee populations, adoption of a bill to protect children and adolescents, and engagement with human rights treaty bodies through its reports, would, at the same time, express serious concern at the alarmingly high frequency of the imposition of the death penalty, including against minors. It would urge Iran to cease that penalty and commute the sentences for child offenders on death row.

By other terms, the Assembly would call on Iran to ensure, in law and in practice, that no one is subjected to torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as to cease the systematic use of arbitrary arrests and to release persons detained for the exercise of their fundamental freedoms. It would further express serious concern at the restrictions on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and the use of excessive force related to the peaceful protests against water shortages in July 2021, and labour rights between March 2020 and July 2021. Further, the Assembly would urge Iran to eliminate all discrimination against women and girls, calling for the release of women human rights defenders for exercising their rights.

The representative of Israel, describing the human rights situation in Iran as “very troubling”, recalled the broader context in which these violations take place. Iran’s current regime, now headed by the “Butcher from Teheran”, has long based itself as a destabilizing entity whose trademark is chaos and civil war. Yemen, Syria and Lebanon serve as examples of Iran’s involvement, he said, pointing to a direct correlation between the way a country treats its citizens and its aggression towards other countries.

The representative of Canada, in response to Iran’s representative, acknowledged crimes committed against indigenous peoples in Canada and that there is systemic discrimination ongoing against them. “We are trying to do better”, he said, adding that, in response to these abhorrent acts, Canada established victim-centred approaches. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was led by indigenous peoples themselves, he added, underscoring that Canada believes in collective learning and collective wisdom.

The representative of Mexico recognized the commitment made by Iran’s authorities to host refugees from Afghanistan. The United Nations reports present a worrying situation, marked by torture, sexual violence and disproportionate responses by the criminal justice system. Expressing concern over use of the death penalty, especially the execution of juvenile offenders, he urged the Government to improve its cooperation with the Special Rapporteur and the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Mexico abstained from the vote, he noted.

The representative of Japan, recalling that Iran hosts the largest population of Afghan refugees and provides them with basic services, called for broad improvements, notably in the investigation processes. Japan voted in favour of the draft, he noted.

The representative of Belarus drew attention to the unacceptable approach of country-specific resolutions and called for equitable dialogue. The proposed approach in these drafts reflects nothing more than the imposition of views on sovereign States, he asserted, adding that Belarus voted against the draft.

The representative of Australia expressed concern that no meaningful efforts have been made by Iran to improve compliance with international human rights law. Australia remains deeply troubled by continued



executions, including of juvenile offenders, as well as the fact that Iranian women and girls continue to face significant discrimination, she said, urging Iran to end discrimination against minorities, and the targeting of human rights defenders and lawyers.

The Committee then considered the draft resolution titled, "Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine" (document A/C.3/76/L.29), which the Chair said contains no programme budget implications.

The representative of Ukraine, introducing the draft, said the basis of the text is the Secretary-General's latest report on the human rights situation in Crimea. Noting that the Russian Federation prosecutes Crimean residents for the reprinting of that same report, he said Ukraine, by contrast, is willing to resolve the conflict in the occupied Crimea peacefully. He questioned how to force the occupying Power to enforce the draft resolutions approved by the Third Committee, which is why this draft specifically calls on the occupying Power to supply fresh water, ensure the safety of journalists and release political hostages. These issues have been addressed by the Committee with overwhelming support. In a few minutes, the representative of the Russian Federation will say that the Crimea matter is closed, however the General Assembly does not agree with this assessment, he said.

A recorded vote was requested on "L.29".

The representative of the Russian Federation said that, on the basis of the draft resolution, it is impossible to discuss the human rights situation in Crimea. Unlike Ukraine, Crimea does not shell residential neighbourhoods, kill journalists, hold Nazi marches or forbid people from speaking their native languages. Kiev's aggressive behaviour is increasing and authorities are being pumped with weapons from Western sponsors. He cited a new passage in the draft that indicates Ukraine's savagery: It outlines that the Russian Federation must provide all Crimean residents with affordable drinking water, when in fact, it is Ukraine that blocked the water supply through the Crimea canal, which provides 85 per cent of the area's drinking water.

The representative of the United States said the occupying authorities continue to subject Crimeans to human rights abuses with no accountability. She cited a growing number of political prisoners and extrajudicial killings, with the occupying authorities subjecting ethnic Crimeans, ethnic Tatars and members of religious minorities, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, to abuse. The international community is united against the Russian Federation's illegal seizure of the territory, she asserted.

The representative of Venezuela said the Charter of the United Nations rejects resolutions on specific countries, as they contravene the spirit in which the Organization was created. Human rights should be evaluated through the universal periodic review, he said, explaining that Venezuela will vote against the draft resolution.

The representative of Azerbaijan said her country condemns extremism and radicalism, and formally opposes territorial occupation through the use of force. She expressed support for Ukraine's full territorial integrity and internationally recognized borders.

The representative of Iran said country-specific resolutions and exploitation of the Third Committee for political ends contravene the Charter of the United Nations.

The representative of Syria rejected the draft resolution as a political tool and “cheap attempt” to target the Russian Federation. Any texts against specific countries will lead to negative results. The tabling of the draft is a waste of the Committee’s resources, he said, stressing that human rights evaluations should be carried out through the universal periodic review, without exception or selectiveness.

The representative of the United Kingdom said his delegation supports the draft and welcomes the significant number of co-sponsoring States. Contrary to what Syria’s representative said, this is about people, not politics, he explained. The Russian Federation is conducting a systematic campaign of abuses that are disproportionately directed at minorities, including ethnic Tatars. If the Russian Federation is indeed in compliance, why not allow United Nations human rights access, he wondered.

The representative of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, since the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has received information on torture and enforced disappearances by Russian security forces and police. There is no will to ensure accountability for these acts. The bloc supports the territorial integrity of Ukraine and its internationally recognized borders. Residents of the peninsula face restrictions to their freedoms of expression, religion and belief, he said, as well as to peaceful assembly. The Crimean Tatars are unacceptably prosecuted and have their rights gravely violated.

The representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea rejected politically motivated draft resolutions, including this one, which has nothing to do with the protection of human rights, but rather, causes mistrust between Member States. Human rights should never be used as an excuse to interfere with the sovereignty of States, he said.

The representative of Georgia, endorsing the draft, reiterated support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including Crimea and Sevastopol, noting his condemnation of the illegal occupation by the Russian Federation. Extrajudicial killings, politically motivated prosecutions, arbitrary detentions, torture and other serious violations are all documented in the High Commissioner’s report, which indicates the continued failure of the Russian Federation, as the occupying Power, to protect human rights.

The Committee then approved “L.29” by a recorded vote of 64 in favour, to 20 against, with 93 abstentions.

By the text, the Assembly would deplore the failure of the Russian Federation to comply with the repeated requests and demands of the General Assembly, as well as with the order of the International Court of Justice of 19 April 2017. Strongly condemning attempts by the Russian Federation to legitimize or normalize its attempted annexation of Crimea — notably through the automatic imposition of Russian citizenship, illegal election campaigns and voting, population census, forcible change of the demographic structure of the population of Crimea and suppression of national identity — the Assembly would urge it take all measures to bring an immediate end to all violations against residents of Crimea.

Among other provisions, the Assembly would urge the Russian Federation to respect the laws in force in Ukraine and repeal laws imposed by itself in Crimea that allow for forced evictions, as well as to uphold the rights of Ukrainian prisoners and detainees in Crimea, and in the Russian Federation. It would urge the Russian Federation to respect the right to freedom of religion or belief, and guarantee its enjoyment by all residents of Crimea, and to lift discriminatory regulatory barriers prohibiting or limiting the activities of religious groups in

Crimea. Further, it would request the Secretary-General to continue to seek ways and means to ensure safe and unfettered access to Crimea by established regional and international monitoring mechanisms.

The representative of Belarus opposed country-specific resolutions on human rights issues, due to their politicization, stressing that even the title of the today's text proves its non-objectivity. Such drafts only exacerbate confrontation. Settling the conflict in the east of Crimea is important for regional security. Belarus is interested in peaceful resolution of the crisis, with a key role played in this regard by the Minsk Agreements.

The representative of Singapore said her country will abstain on all country-specific resolutions, stressing that this should not be understood as taking a position on the human rights issues outlined in these texts.

The representative of China said any differences should be addressed with respect, expressing his country's opposition to politicization, the use of human rights to exert pressure on other States and country-specific resolutions in general. For such reasons, China voted against the draft resolution.

The representative of Mexico said the draft highlights grave violations of the right of movement, including for those who have been arbitrarily detained and have served sentences on politically motivated charges. She expressed concern over reports of the training of children for armed groups in Crimea. Mexico abstained from the vote because the text contains elements of a political nature.

Next, the Committee considered the draft resolution titled, "Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar" (document A/C.3/76/L.30/Rev.1).

The representative of Saudi Arabia, speaking for the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), deplored that over 1 million Muslims have fled Myanmar and were unable to return to their home country. He called on Myanmar to uphold its international obligations, including for the protection of its Muslim minorities, thanking delegations for their constructive approach, which led to a balanced text.

The representative of Myanmar said the draft resolution explains well the situation of Rohingyas in his country, requesting support from the international community. He emphasized the need for a holistic and timely response to address the suffering of the Myanmar people, following the military coup. He echoed the Special Rapporteur's assessment of the violence against civilians as crimes against humanity. While the draft resolution focuses on the Rohingyas and other minorities, it should not ignore what happened to the broader population. Perpetrators must be held accountable, he said, inviting the international community to support the transition of power to democratically elected representatives.

The representative of Indonesia called for an immediate cessation of violence to resolve the Rohingya crisis. He urged Myanmar to provide lasting solutions for the safe return of Rohingyas and minorities, indicating that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) would continue to provide humanitarian assistance, adhering to the principles of impartiality and objectivity. He invited Member States to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

The representative of Iran raised concerns about the tragic situation in Myanmar, which resulted in a significant loss of life, urging authorities to assist all internally displaced people with dignity. She called for an immediate end to the violence and for pursuit of lasting solutions to the conflict, while underlining that Iran would vote in favour of the draft resolution.

The representative of Malaysia reiterated the call to end the violence in Myanmar and to repatriate the Rohingyas. He noted the lack of progress in implementing the ASEAN 5-point consensus, underscoring that Malaysia will continue to support the return of Rohingyas to Myanmar, and calling on delegates to approve the text by consensus.

The Committee then approved draft “L.30/Rev.1” without a vote.

By the text, the Assembly would express grave concern at reports of serious human rights violations by the military and security forces, notably against Rohingya, including arbitrary arrests, deaths in detention, torture, deliberate killing and maiming of children, recruitment and use of children for forced labour, and attacks on schools and hospitals. It would strongly condemn all such violations, including, related to, and following the declaration of the state of emergency on 1 February, emphasizing the importance of conducting independent, fair and transparent investigations into sexual and gender-based violence, among other actions.

By other terms, the Assembly would call on Myanmar’s security and armed forces to respect the democratic aspirations of the people by allowing for the democratic transition, ending the violence, fully respecting the rule of law and ending the state of emergency declared on 1 February. Reiterating the urgent call on authorities to ensure the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return and reintegration of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, notably by creating conditions to do so, the Assembly would also call on them to build trust among Rohingya Muslims in camps in Bangladesh through confidence-building measures, including by arranging “go and see” visits to Rakhine State by Rohingya representatives. It would also request the Secretary-General to pursue a series of actions, including providing his good offices to pursue related discussions.

The representative of Bangladesh welcomed the draft’s approval, recalling that her country has been hosting a great number of Myanmar refugees. In 2017, Bangladesh opened its borders and concluded agreements for the safe return of refugees, she said, expressing regret that Myanmar did not deliver on its commitments. She drew attention to the limited resources in Bangladesh and growing security concerns, which threaten regional stability. She encouraged recognition of ASEAN’s role in addressing the crisis.

The representative of Liechtenstein welcomed the draft’s approval, describing its focus on the Rohingyas as a positive step. However, the systematic attacks on Myanmar’s people, following the military coup, should have been reflected. He also expressed regret that the call on Member States to prevent the flow of arms into the country was not introduced. Liechtenstein would have preferred more comprehensive language around holding the military accountable and bringing justice to the population.

The representative of Slovenia, on behalf of the European Union and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, welcomed the draft’s approval by consensus. Drawing attention to violations committed by the military junta, he said the perpetrators must be brought to justice and expressed support for the democratic aspirations of Myanmar’s people. He also called for an immediate halt to violence and application of the ASEAN 5-point consensus.

The representative of the Philippines joined consensus on the draft but disassociated from paragraphs referring to the International Criminal Court, as her delegation does not recognize its jurisdiction.

The representative of Viet Nam pointed to the difficulties faced by Bangladesh in hosting Rohingyas, noting nonetheless that country-specific resolutions should be avoided. A constructive dialogue involving Myanmar, Bangladesh and ASEAN should be upheld. For its part, Viet Nam has been working closely with other ASEAN members to bring about peace in Myanmar.

The representative of Switzerland expressed concern over the continuous violations and number of displaced persons. Expressing regret that the draft resolution did not address the most recent developments in the country, she noted that it would limit the mandate of the United Nations representative. Switzerland will continue to support all efforts to bring about peace and stability in the country.

The representative of New Zealand welcomed the draft's approval and called for upholding the rule of law. Her delegation would have preferred stronger language to condemn the military coup. New Zealand will continue to call for the return of democratic representatives and Rohingyas.

The representative of Canada, expressing regret that the aspirations of Myanmar's people have been violated by the military coup, welcomed the language around an international mechanism. She commended ASEAN's efforts to implement the 5-point consensus, requesting unconditional and unrestricted access to humanitarian aid.

The representative of Belarus expressed concern about the situation of the Rohingyas, while rejecting the imposition of political pressure on a sovereign State. Belarus thus disassociates from the consensus.

The representative of the United States said the situation in Myanmar has worsened considerably since the military coup and cited a range of violations in that context. He called on Member states to impose economic sanctions, prevent the transfer of arms to Myanmar authorities and to collaborate with the United Nations Special representative, welcoming the draft's approval by consensus.

The representative of the Czech Republic, aligning himself with the European Union, condemned the military coup and expressed unequivocal support to the people of Myanmar, including Rohingyas and other minorities. The persecution of independent journalists and others who stood against the coup is unacceptable, he stressed, calling for meaningful dialogue involving all relevant stakeholders. He urged the international community to closely monitor the situation.

The representative of Singapore underscored the urgent need for reconciliation among all parties involved, stressing that many challenges remain. She commended efforts by Bangladesh and civil society groups, and requested Myanmar to comply with the ASEAN 5-point consensus for the return of Rohingyas. ASEAN and Singapore are committed to bring about stability and reconciliation in Myanmar, as well as a lasting political solution.

The representative of Norway praised the consensual approval of the draft, noting that dialogue should not be limited to the universal periodic review. She expressed regret that the text does not reflect developments stemming from the military coup, noting that civilians suffer the most. She called for an immediate halt to attacks against civilians and for the safe return of the Rohingyas.

The representative of Timor-Leste expressed deep concern over the use of lethal forces and arbitrary detention against the Rohingyas, minorities and civilians. He requested the immediate release of people who have been arbitrarily detained, referring to the ASEAN 5-point consensus discussions earlier this year.

The representative of Australia condemned human rights abuses by the regime, advocating for conditions that enable the safe return of the Rohingyas and implementation of the ASEAN 5-point consensus. She welcomed the draft's recognition of civil society but expressed regret over the lack of a reference to the military coup. Preventing arms flow to the country would be a good step forward, she stressed, underlining the Third Committee's duty to discuss human rights violations.

The representative of China indicated that her delegation engaged with all parties in Myanmar to effectively address the situation, based on the ASEAN's 5-point consensus. China respects the sovereignty of Myanmar, she said, emphasizing that it supported the population by providing vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her delegation opposes the use of human rights for political purposes and disassociates from the draft resolution.

The representative of Thailand said an inclusive dialogue with Myanmar's authorities is essential for resolving the situation in line with the ASEAN five-point consensus. He underscored Thailand's commitment to continue these discussions.

The representative of the Russian Federation praised the draft's approval by consensus, calling on all stakeholders to seek a peaceful solution through constructive dialogue. The Russian Federation does not support the practice of selective, subjective and one-sided resolutions on countries, he explained, and therefore it disassociates from the text.

The Committee then considered the draft resolution titled, "Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic" (document A/C.3/76/L.31/Rev.1) which the Chair said contained programme budget implications.

The representative of the United States, introducing the draft, said it accurately reflects the horrors of the last decade by the Assad regime. It calls for the intensification of the release of arbitrarily detained and missing persons, he said, reiterating support to the Syrian people and requesting accountability for those who use chemical weapons.

The representative of Syria rejected the reference to her country as "a regime", recalling the need to comply with United Nations rules. She expressed regret that the Third Committee continues to consider a draft resolution on the situation in Syria, pointing to the role of the United States. She noted that the draft was discussed behind closed doors, preventing other delegations from contributing in a meaningful way. The text promotes a non-consensual approach, infringing on the mandate of other human rights bodies, disregarding Syria's efforts to counter terrorism and end chemical weapons use. At the same time, the draft also ignores the crimes committed by its co-sponsors, such as Turkey's use of water as a weapon against the Syrian people. Syria therefore requests a recorded vote on the text.

The representative of the United Kingdom, in explanation of vote, urged Syria to improve its human rights record, pointing to the decade of horrors across the country and use of chemical weapons. Country-specific resolutions are essential to promote human rights obligations for the most serious violations, he emphasized.

The representative of Qatar, citing reports of chemical weapons use, noted that millions of Syrians continue to suffer from their impact. He called on parties to reach a political solution, in line with the aspirations of the Syrian people, while protecting Syria's sovereignty. He also called for compliance with international and humanitarian law.

The representative of Switzerland underscored the need to hold the perpetrators of human rights violations accountable, adding that her country will vote in favour of the draft. More transparency in the negotiation process is needed. As well, a reflection of international human rights obligations in the text would have been welcome.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea denounced the politicization and double standards within the Committee, stressing that the draft infringes on Syria's sovereignty. His delegation will reject the draft.

The representative of Iran denounced the politicization of human rights issues that subvert the principles set by the founders of the United Nations, citing progress in the situation in Syria. Sanctions have worsened the suffering of the most vulnerable Syrians and disrupted the fight against COVID-19. He called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces in Syria, indicating that Iran will vote against the draft resolution.

The representative of Venezuela rejected the politicization of human rights and draft resolutions, similarly denouncing the absence of consent by the countries targeted. The draft therefore violates the principles of impartiality and non-selectiveness. He drew attention to the important role of the universal periodic review in this context.

The representative of Cuba said his delegation will vote against the draft, due to its politicized nature, which is only directed against developing countries and prevents a coordinated approach. The draft also does not foster a political solution to the conflict and he urged the Third Committee to facilitate cooperation and dialogue to that end.

The representative of Saudi Arabia said the conflict has had severe effects on Syrians. He expressed concern about the number of casualties outlined in the Human Rights Council report, adding that Saudi Arabia co-sponsored today's draft resolution, alongside forty other countries, as a way to help the Syrian people meet their aspirations.

The representative of the Russian Federation will vote against the draft, claiming that the situation on the ground is different from what was reported. Syria's recovery has been slowed because of the presence of military troops on its territory. This illegitimate presence should be addressed by the Committee, he said, urging States that aim to stabilize Syria to vote against the text.

The representative of China opposes the politicization of human rights and interference into internal affairs. Seeking a political solution is the only realistic way out, she stressed, explaining that China will vote against the draft.

The representative of the United States introduced an oral revision to the text's paragraph 64.

The Committee then approved draft "L.31/Rev.1" by a recorded vote of 95 in favour, 13 against, with 66 abstentions.

By the text, the Assembly would demand that Syria's regime and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) immediately desist from any further use of chemical weapons. It would also demand that Syria's regime adheres fully to its international obligations, including the requirement that it declare in full its chemical weapons programme.

By other terms, the Assembly would request that the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) consider additional procedures for stringent verification to ensure the complete destruction of Syria's chemical weapons programme. At the same time, the Assembly would demand that Syria's regime and all other parties to the conflict not hinder humanitarian access, calling for the continuation of cross-border humanitarian support beyond July 2022. In addition, it would request that Syria's regime immediately cease any attacks on civilians, recalling the obligation to respect international humanitarian law in all circumstances.

In an explanation of the vote, the representative of Slovenia, on behalf of the European Union, reiterated its call on the Syrian regime to engage with all stakeholders involved for a political solution. He expressed concerns about the situation in the Northwest and Northeast Syria, as well as reports of crimes against humanity. The European Union condemns the systemic use of disappearance and arbitrary detention. He underlined that accountability remains of utmost importance, referring to the role of the International Criminal Court. The European Union stands ready to support the reconstruction of Syria, once the political transition is initiated.

The representative of Armenia condemned crimes against minorities in Syria, pointing to the impact of foreign fighters in the region, including in his country. Perpetrators of such heinous crimes must be held accountable.

The representative of Belarus objected to the consideration of country-specific resolutions which exacerbate tensions. He criticized the use of United Nations resources, explaining his delegation's vote against the draft resolution.

The representative of Zimbabwe, aligning himself with other delegations that are against country-specific resolutions, stressed that his country promotes dialogue and mutual respect for human rights principles.

The representative of Argentina reiterated support for Syria's integrity and sovereignty, cautioning against any escalation in tensions. She recognized the importance of the Astana agreement, while reaffirming support for international diplomacy that goes beyond existing disagreements.

The representative of Turkey stressed that the draft resolution reflects the violation of humanitarian law by Syria's regime, adding that the recent escalation in the north-west is a concern for Turkey, and that her delegation supports the draft resolution. She refuted comments made by Armenia against her country.

The representative of Japan said his delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution, expressing hope that the Secretary-General will provide a report on the situation in Syria.

The representative of Iran, speaking in exercise of the right of reply in response to the statements made by the representatives of United Kingdom and Canada, said that human rights have once again been abused by those who supported colonialism, slavery and apartheid. She underscored the hardship of innocent civilians in Iran during the pandemic, due to the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States. The draft



resolution cherishes recrimination and ignores the facts on the ground, but cannot dissuade Iran from protecting the human rights of its people.

The representative of Syria said that if an international inquiry is needed, it should look into who facilitated and financed the terrorists, and those who benefited from the trafficking of oil and Syrian monuments that go to black markets all around the world.

The representative of Azerbaijan, responding to Armenia's delegate on "31/Rev.1", denounced that country's baseless accusations of the use of mercenaries by her country. In September-November 2020, Azerbaijan took all necessary measures to defend its sovereignty. Armenia had transferred mercenaries to the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The representative of Armenia in response to Azerbaijan's delegate, said that country continues to deny the people of Nagorno-Karabakh their ancestral homeland. The United Nations Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries said there were widespread reports that the Government of Azerbaijan used Syrian fighters. Referring to the words of Azerbaijan's delegate that Nagorno-Karabakh does not exist, he said "it is not by denying the existence of something that it will cease to exist". There is no room for censorship in the Third Committee.

The representative of Azerbaijan, taking the floor a second time, said references to territory in Azerbaijan under fake names are invalid. The so-called Nagorno-Karabakh has ceased to exist as a territorial unit.

The representative of Armenia reiterated that the Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries stated that fighters near Nagorno-Karabakh appeared to be motivated by private gain. In case of death, their relatives were reportedly promised financial gain and Turkish nationality.

The Committee then took up the draft resolution titled, "Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa" (document A/C.3/76/L.60).

The representative of Nigeria, speaking for the African Group, introduced the draft, noting that it focuses on the needs of refugees and returnees, and the efforts to assist them. He expressed concern about the rights and number of refugees displaced throughout the continent due to poverty, violent extremism and conflict. The draft contains three new paragraphs related to the pandemic.

The Committee then approved the resolution without a vote.

By the text, the Assembly would call on African States that have not yet signed or ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa to consider doing so, as early as possible, to ensure its wider implementation. Noting with great concern that the situation remains precarious, and that the number of refugees and internally displaced persons has dramatically increased, the Assembly would call on States, and other parties to armed conflict, to scrupulously observe international humanitarian law. It would condemn the refoulement, unlawful expulsion and physical attacks against refugees and asylum seekers, and call on States to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection.

In addition, the Assembly would call on the international community to contribute to projects and programmes aimed at alleviating the plight of refugees, returnees and displaced persons. The High Commissioner for Refugees, among others, would be called on to intensify support to African Governments through capacity-

building activities, with the Assembly appealing to the international community to respond positively to the third-country resettlement needs of African refugees, in the spirit of burden- and responsibility-sharing.

The representative of Mexico said that, in previous years, his delegation has underscored the need for transparency on the draft resolution. It would have been desirable to have more time to achieve a strong and updated document, but haste prevented that from happening. The text contains many good elements, but Mexico has reservations on operative paragraph 14. Haste should not mean that the document's veracity is compromised.

The representative of Hungary said his delegation joined consensus. However, Hungary did not endorse the Global Compact on Refugees and therefore disassociates from operative paragraphs 4 and 15.