



32nd Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 2: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention – General Debate

Oral Statement Delivered by R. Iniyang Ilango
On behalf of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Thursday, 23 June 2016

Mr. President, we draw the Council's attention to several deteriorating human rights situations in Asia.

As Cambodia approaches the 25th anniversary of the 1991 Paris Peace Accords, commitments made on human rights, the rule of law and democracy, remain unfulfilled. As the successor to the Commission on Human Rights, the Council has an obligation to closely monitor the human rights situation in Cambodia, as per the Accords. The recent escalation in attacks against civil society groups is an indication of sharp deterioration in the human rights situation in Cambodia, ahead of elections in 2017 and 2018. We call on the Council to work preventively towards arresting any further deterioration. The Council must call on Cambodia to restore the freedom of assembly and association and release all human rights defenders currently detained in the country.

In Thailand people are scheduled to vote in a referendum on a new draft constitution on 7 August 2016. We note with concern that public debate on the draft constitution has been forbidden by law. Free and fair debate on the draft of the constitution is vital. The referendum process is a key indicator of the direction Thailand takes towards the restoration of democracy. At this pivotal juncture it is critical for the Council and its member states to urge Thailand to ensure that the constitution making process is open, participatory, inclusive and in line with international norms and standards.

Lastly, we are alarmed by the spike in targeted attacks and murder of writers, bloggers, LGBTI activists and minorities by non-state actors in Bangladesh. We note that these attacks are taking place in an environment where the government has heavily cracked down on civil society actors with trumped up criminal charges and has liberally used sedition and other restrictive legal provisions to silence journalists and dissenters. The Council should take note of the continuing steady deterioration in the overall human rights situation in Bangladesh and take action urgently.

Thank you.