



GENERAL ASSEMBLY » **THIRD**
COMMITTEE
MEETINGS COVERAGE

United Nations

SEVENTY-FIFTH SESSION,
12TH & 13TH MEETINGS (AM & PM)

GA/SHC/4312
18 NOVEMBER 2020

Third Committee Approves 7 Drafts on Human Rights in Myanmar, Iran, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as Delegates Denounce 'Intrusive' Demands

Representatives of Syria, Russian Federation Stress Country-Specific Focus Does Nothing to Advance Conditions on Ground

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) sent seven draft resolutions to the General Assembly today, five of which were focused on country-specific situations and subject to heated debate.

A draft resolution on human rights in Iran — approved by a recorded vote of 79 in favour to 32 against, with 64 abstentions — would have the General Assembly express serious concern at the alarmingly high frequency of death penalty imposition, particularly against minors. It would call on Iran to ensure that no one is subjected to torture — or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment — and to end the widespread and systematic use of arbitrary arrests and detention, including the practice of enforced disappearance.

Iran's representative said that tabling a politically motivated draft resolution reflects the destructive behaviour of those who manipulate human rights issues. "These false preachers" are acting as willing accomplices to economic terrorism waged by the United States against civilians in Iran, he said, denouncing the unlawful unilateral coercive measures imposed on his country.

In their explanations of position on the text — and throughout the day — many delegations broadly rejected the use of country-specific resolutions, with Cuba's representative noting that they are "only used against developing countries." This punitive approach does nothing to advance human rights. In a similar vein, the representative of the Russian Federation said country-specific resolutions "have nothing to do with the protection of human rights" and only undermine the principle of State sovereignty. Burundi's representative likewise characterized them as "counterproductive".

After a contentious debate on the draft resolution concerning human rights in Syria, the Committee approved the text by a recorded vote of 99 in favour to 13 against, with 61 abstentions.

By its terms, the Assembly would strongly condemn the systematic, widespread and gross violations of international human rights law in Syria and indiscriminate attacks against civilians. It would condemn, in the strongest terms, violence by the Syrian regime against the Syrian people since the beginning of peaceful protests in 2011, demanding that it implement Security Council resolutions 2254 (2015), 2258 (2015) and 2286 (2016). The Assembly also would urge Member States to create conditions for a political solution, under United Nations auspices, by working towards a nationwide ceasefire.

Speaking out against the draft, Syria's delegate said the United States "has neither the legal nor moral authority" to put forward a draft supposedly on human rights while taking measures — such as the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act — that deprive Syrians of food and medicine. The United States has spent billions of dollars training and sheltering extremist groups, which "kill anything that moves" and plunder Syrian natural resources. He also pointed to Turkey's exploitation of other Muslim countries in the region, and Saudi Arabia's leadership of a coalition that violates the human rights of Yemenis.

In other action, the Committee turned to human rights conditions in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, approving the draft resolution by a recorded vote of 63 in favour to 22 against, with 85 abstentions.

By its terms, the Assembly would condemn all attempts by the Russian Federation to legitimize or normalize its attempted annexation of Crimea, including the automatic imposition of Russian citizenship on protected persons and changes to the democratic structure of the population. It would also strongly condemn the Russian Federation's disregard for its legal responsibility for the occupied territory, including to respect Ukrainian law.

Ukraine's delegate urged the Russian Federation to end prosecutions and other reprisals against Crimean residents for peaceful manifestations of their religious beliefs, and to allow the Monitoring Mission access to Crimea. The Russian Federation's representative meanwhile called those comments defamatory and "based on fantasy". The people of Crimea exercised their right to self-determination with a free election that respected international standards, he said, recalling Kiev's halt to energy supplies to 175 settlements, where almost half the population lives, during the winter of 2015.

Turning to Myanmar, the Committee approved the draft resolution on human rights conditions there by a recorded vote of 131 in favour to 9 against (Belarus, Cambodia, China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Philippines, Russian Federation, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe), with 31 abstentions.

By its terms, the Assembly would express grave concern at reports of serious rights violations by the military and security forces against the Rohingya, notably in Kachin, Rakhine, southern Chin and Shan States, leading to the forced displacement of more than 860,000 Rohingya and other minorities to Bangladesh.

In response, Myanmar's delegate called the draft "intrusive" in pushing his country to follow "illegitimate demands". Its sponsors "conveniently ignore" coordinated attacks perpetrated by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army. He denounced the illegitimate pressure exerted on Myanmar and accused the penholders of "fanning the flames".

In one of only two displays of consensus, the Committee approved a draft resolution on human rights conditions in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, by which the Assembly would condemn, in the strongest terms, the systematic, widespread and gross violations by its authorities. Among other abuses, it would express very serious concern about persistent reports of torture and sexual and gender-based violence.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea categorically rejected the draft as "cooked-up political slander" written by "hostile forces". The "forcible adoption of this resolution constitutes a hostile policy aimed at overthrowing our system," he warned.

Also approved by consensus was a draft on the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The draft resolution on combating glorification of Nazism and neo-Nazism was approved by a recorded vote of 122 in favour to 2 against (United States, Ukraine), with 53 abstentions.

The Third Committee will reconvene at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 19 November, to continue its work.

Action

The Committee first took up the draft resolution titled "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fueling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" (document A/C.3/75/L.49).

The representative of the Russian Federation, introducing the text, said 2020 marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the victory over Nazism, a momentous point in history. Yet, it is possible to forget about the millions of victims, amid the glorification of the Nazi movement and whitewashing of the SS, with monuments erected and marches held in their honour. There is a growing intolerance of migrants and refugees, while aggressive nationalism is being considered as an attribute of election campaigns. The goal of the draft resolution is not to call States to account. Rather, the text is thematic, seeking to foster cooperation and dialogue.

A recorded vote was requested.

The representative of the United States, noting that his country condemns Nazism and all forms of racism, nonetheless opposed the draft resolution because of the Russian Federation's thinly veiled attempts to denigrate neighbouring nations. He defends the rights of those who express strong opposition to the odious Nazi creed. Because the concerns expressed and revisions proposed by the United States have been ignored, his delegation will vote "no" on the draft.

The representative of Ukraine, recalling that Ukrainians sacrificed themselves and made enormous contributions to the fight against Nazism, condemned all forms of Nazism and racism. The draft has nothing in common with its title, he said, noting that the Russian Federation has introduced new language that interferes with the internal affairs of States.

The representative of the Russian Federation said it is his understanding that the representatives of the United States and Ukraine have asked for a vote. Noting that the Chair had stated that the United States had requested it, he expressed surprise that the United States delegation would request a vote on a draft resolution condemning Nazism and called on that country to reconsider its request.

The Committee then approved draft resolution "L.49" by a recorded vote of 122 in favour to 2 against (United States, Ukraine), with 53 abstentions.

The representative of Germany, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said his country is strongly committed to the fight against racism. Countering contemporary forms of extremist ideologies — including neo-Nazism — must be a priority for the international community. Welcoming efforts by the main sponsor to organize consultations and discussions, he noted that some changes made to the text were partly based on suggestions by the European Union. However, significant concerns remain, including the fact that politicized language was negatively reinforced.

The representative of Belarus expressed regret that the draft resolution was put to a vote, adding that he does not understand the reasoning of those who spoke out against it. The need to combat the glorification of Nazism is not one that can be questioned.

The representative of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, condemned any form of racism and xenophobia. Stressing that racial discrimination is incompatible with respect for human rights, she said far too many people continue to be denied their rights because of the colour of their skin or their ethnic background. She expressed regret that changes proposed throughout the negotiations to broaden the scope of the draft resolution were not sufficiently addressed.

The representative of Nigeria said racism is not only inhumane but also against the will of God. When Nigeria declared its independence, it stated that its independence was tied to the liberation of all black people around the world. He said he is "taken aback" by the call for a vote.

By the terms of the text, the Assembly would express deep concern about the glorification of the Nazi movement, neo-Nazism and former members of the Waffen SS organization — including by erecting monuments and memorials; holding public demonstrations glorifying the Nazi past, the Nazi movement and neo-Nazism; and by declaring or attempting to declare those who fought against the anti-Hitler coalition, collaborated with the Nazi movement and committed war crimes and crimes against humanity "participants in national liberation movements".

By other terms, it would call for the universal ratification and implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and firmly condemn incidents involving pro-Nazi graffiti and paintings, including on monuments dedicated to victims of the Second World War. It would express alarm over the use by neo-Nazi groups and other extremists espousing ideologies of hatred, of information technologies, the Internet and social media to recruit new members, especially children and young people. Further, the Assembly would urge States to fully comply with their obligations under article 34 of Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

The Committee then turned to the draft resolution on the “Situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea” (document A/C.3/75/L.30), which contains no programme budget implications.

The representative of Nicaragua, speaking in general statement, expressed regret about the continued use of draft resolutions on country-specific human rights situations. She stressed that the right to development, as well as all human rights, are inalienable and interrelated, and must be addressed in a comprehensive manner, which respects national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The representative of Azerbaijan, speaking in general statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, expressed regret about the proliferation of country-specific resolutions in the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, as they use human rights as a tool for political ends and undermine cooperation as an essential principle to promote human rights for all. Unnecessary duplication of work must be avoided between the Third Committee and the Human Rights Council. Moreover, the universal periodic review is the appropriate forum to discuss such issues, with due attention paid to countries’ capacity-building needs. She called for dialogue with concerned States in a non-politicized manner, which affirms respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The representative of Germany, speaking for the European Union, said the bloc abstained from voting on the draft resolution on Nazism. Turning to draft resolution “L.30”, on the human rights situation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, he expressed deep concern over the “severe” conditions there, stressing that they have not improved over the last year, due to the refusal to grant access to the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, or to engage in dialogue with the United Nations. The situation is “worrisome”, due to the high prevalence of malnutrition, and obstacles imposed on the delivery of humanitarian aid. Further, there has been no improvement in the cases of abduction, he said, adding that the latest report by the Special Rapporteur confirms the distressing, bleak outlook for human rights in the country. Due to decreased contact during the pandemic, freedoms have been restricted, and discrimination is widespread in the political prison camps. The draft addresses such systematic gross violations of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and urges the country to respect the rights and freedoms of its people. The international community must send a message to the country to induce it to make immediate improvements and must ensure accountability for violations committed in the country, he stressed.

The representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea said he “categorically rejects” the draft resolution as a “political plot that has nothing to do with human rights”, stressing that “the forcible adoption of this resolution constitutes a hostile policy aimed at overthrowing our system.” He characterized the draft as “cooked-up political slander” written by “hostile forces”, adding that it does not deserve any consideration at all. The text is based on a report that uses the testimony of those harboring a sinister intent against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. He went on to denounce Japan for its “blood-stained past” on the Korean Peninsula, calling it a “disgraceful war criminal State”, which has committed “Class A human rights crimes”. His country will strongly respond to such a confrontational approach. While he has not called for a vote, he called on States to disassociate from consensus, and to reject such double standards and selectivity.

The representative of Belarus reaffirmed his position on country-specific resolutions, which are “in nature counterproductive, as they use human rights issues for political purposes.” The appropriate venue for inter-State dialogue is the universal periodic review at the Human Rights Council. Belarus will therefore not join any consensus on such texts and will vote against them if put to a vote.

The representative of the Russian Federation, likewise, reiterated his disapproval of country-specific resolutions, and noted that the universal periodic review process opens opportunities for constructive dialogue. He disassociated from consensus on the draft resolution, noting that he will vote against such texts if they are put to a vote.

The representative of Burundi, associating herself with the statement by Azerbaijan, opposed the draft resolution, as well as other country-specific mandates, as counterproductive. While there is no request for a vote, Burundi would have voted against the draft, should there have been occasion to do so,

as such texts always focus on “what does not work” instead of on the progress made. “The trend of using the Third Committee to address such issues is an affront to the principle of cooperation,” she stressed, also rejecting the universal coercive measures applied against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The representative of Syria deplored the misuse of the United Nations forum to “target countries and destabilize them, while turning a blind eye to practices by other countries for reasons divorced from morals, laws and the United Nations Charter.” Syria rejects the politicized and flagrant duplicity and disassociates from consensus, he said, adding that he will surely vote against the draft if it is put to a vote.

The representative of the United States said her country is proud to co-sponsor the draft resolution, which promotes accountability related to the human rights situation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. The Commission of Inquiry has outlined many “systematic, gross and widespread” abuses perpetrated by the regime, including enslavement, torture, murder, forced abortion, persecution of religious groups and prolonged starvation, she said. The draft sends a clear message that these abuses must stop, and that the perpetrators must be held to account.

The representative of China said he is against the practice of confrontation and selectivity, which puts pressure on countries, using human rights as a pretext. Moreover, sanctions compromise the rights of the people in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Therefore, China will disassociate from consensus on the draft.

The representative of Japan, speaking in general statement, recalled the serious human rights violations that took place in the 1970s and 1980s, when many Japanese students were forcibly abducted. “These serious human rights violations are of great concern and have affected the lives and safety of our people,” he stressed. He welcomed the references to these abductions in the report by Special Rapporteur [Tomás Ojea] Quintana. Noting the “heartbreaking” fact that some parents of the abducted children had recently passed away, he said “we have no time to lose”. He urged the country to heed the views of the international community and called for the immediate return of all abductees. On the references to Japan by the representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, he said they are “groundless” and filled with “factual errors”. Since the Second World War, Japan has viewed its past with humility. It has consistently respected human rights and has contributed to the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region.

The representative of Venezuela, aligning himself with Azerbaijan, said country-specific resolutions run counter to the spirit of the United Nations, as they are abused for political purposes. He called for the celebration of positive developments in countries, as well as for the use of the universal periodic review on a cooperative basis. “If the resolution is approved, we will not join consensus, and we will vote against it if it is put to a vote,” he stressed.

The representative of Singapore, likewise, said she does not agree with country-specific resolutions, which are “inherently divisive and counterproductive”. “This is why the [universal periodic review] mechanism was created in the first place,” she stressed. However, her abstention on such resolutions must not be taken to be a comment on their substance, she added.

The Committee then approved draft resolution “L.30” without a vote.

By its terms, the Assembly would condemn in the strongest terms the long-standing and ongoing systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights in and by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, including those that may amount to crimes against humanity according to the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, established by Human Rights Council resolution 22/13 in 2013.

By other terms, the Assembly would express very serious concern about persistent reports of torture, inhuman conditions of detention, sexual and gender-based violence — including rape — public executions, extrajudicial and arbitrary detention, the absence of due process and the rule of law, and extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions, among other acts. The existence of an extensive system of political prison camps, enforced and involuntary disappearances, and the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers expelled or returned to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea — and retaliations

against citizens who have been repatriated from abroad, which include the death penalty — are among the extensive list of other events about which the Assembly would express very serious concern. It would also express its very deep concern at the precarious humanitarian situation, which could rapidly deteriorate owing to limited capacity and resilience to the COVID-19 crisis.

The representative of the United Kingdom said it is regrettable that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not engaged with the Special Rapporteur. The draft resolution sends a strong message from the international community and articulates its long-held demands: for an end to systematic and widespread human rights violations, for relief for vulnerable persons held in detention and for unhindered access to be provided for humanitarian organizations. Moreover, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is responsible for illegal acts against its citizens abroad perpetrated by agents of the regime. While use of the term “abuses” unnecessarily distracts from the central message of the text, it is essential to hold perpetrators to account, he said, adding that the regime cannot keep ignoring its people's rights in favour of developing its illegal weapons programme.

The representative of Iran, in explanation of position, said the universal periodic review is a functioning mechanism to address human rights concerns, rather than such resolutions, which reflect a “naming and shaming” approach. Such a confrontational and selective approach contravenes United Nations principles, and he therefore disassociated Iran from the draft.

The representative of Viet Nam said she joined consensus on the draft. Nonetheless, her country's position is that dialogue is the only effective way to address human rights matters. She said Viet Nam shares concerns outlined in the draft about the issue of abductions and called on parties to engage in dialogue.

The representative of Cuba, disassociating from consensus, said such resolutions are only used against developing countries, which are also subjected to sanctions. “We will not be complicit in any attempts to deny the DPRK people their right to self-determination and peace,” he said, adding that the universal periodic review is an appropriate forum for such issues. However, he pointed out that while he disassociates from consensus, the issue evoked in preambular paragraph 24 [on separated families] calls for an “honorable solution”.

The representative of the Philippines disassociated from operative paragraph 12, and all other paragraphs that refer to the International Criminal Court, recalling that the Philippines withdrew from the Rome Statute in March 2019. “As our courts are fully functioning, we do not accept the International Criminal Court as a substitute,” he stressed. The Statute itself says States have the first responsibility and right to address atrocity crimes.

The representative of Nigeria said he abstained from consensus on draft resolutions “L.30”, “L.31”, “L.32” and “L.33”, in keeping with Nigeria's traditional stance on such issues.

The Committee then took up the draft resolution titled “Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran” (document A/C.3/75/L.31/Rev.1), which contains no programme budget implications.

The representative of Canada, presenting the draft, welcomed Iran's progress in legislative measures. However, he expressed grave concern at unprecedented repressive measures taken against peaceful protesters in November 2019, and shared the concerns expressed by the Special Rapporteur regarding the absence of transparency. Perpetrators must be held accountable for their crimes, including the execution of thousands of political prisoners. He expressed alarm over the harassment, intimidation, arrest and torture of journalists and human rights activists, and the targeting of female human rights advocates, urging Iran to repeal laws on the use of torture and the death penalty, including against children. He also expressed concern over unfair trials and the lack of due process. To delegates who vote against the draft and who believe that country-specific resolutions have no place in the Third Committee, he said that the purpose of the United Nations Charter is to achieve international cooperation and promote respect for human rights. “We cannot uphold the Charter and promote human rights if we are not willing to talk about them,” he asserted.

The representative of Iran said his country's firm commitment to human rights is deeply rooted in its religious teaching. Respect for the rights of its citizens is indispensable for ensuring national security. However, it is most regrettable to witness the destructive behaviour of those who manipulate human rights through the tabling of a politically motivated draft resolution. Among the worst rights violators are the sponsors of this one-sided draft, he said, stressing that they still must compensate the victims of their own inhumane violation of international law. He condemned countries that assume they can lecture others, pointing out that "these false preachers" act as willing accomplices to the economic terrorism waged by the United States against civilians in Iran. Denouncing unlawful unilateral coercive measures, he said Iran has made significant progress in improving its human rights situation. The draft presents unsubstantiated accusations and he categorically rejects it.

The representative of the United Kingdom reiterated support for the draft, urging Iran to improve its poor human rights record. He recalled the excessive use of force by authorities in suppressing protests, noting that such drafts are tabled only for the most serious violators. He called on Iran to fully comply with its international human rights obligations.

The representative of Brazil welcomed Iran's recent legislation that protects children, as well as its efforts to address COVID-19. Recalling at the same time Iran's violations against religious and ethnic minorities, arbitrary detentions and use of torture, he urged the country to cooperate with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council. Brazil will abstain in the vote, he added.

The representative of Pakistan welcomed Iran's commitment to engage positively with international mechanisms, stressing the importance of constructive, non-politized dialogue and non-interference in States' internal affairs. He said Pakistan will vote against the draft.

The representative of Cuba, noting that his country will vote against the draft, reiterated its principled position against country-specific resolutions, which are "only used against developing countries". This punitive and shaming approach does nothing to advance human rights, he said. Maintaining this item on the agenda has been driven by a political agenda, rather than a genuine effort to cooperate with Iran, he said, condemning the strategy of discrediting legitimate countries.

The representative of Syria rejected the politicization and double standards outlined in the draft resolution. Claiming to be "guardians" of human rights and pursuing a strategy of animosity are actions that contravene the United Nations Charter, he stressed, proposing an alternate course of action through dialogue and non-interference in State internal affairs. Syria will vote against the draft, he added.

The representative of Venezuela said his delegation will vote against the draft. He rejected country-specific resolutions as selective, lacking objectivity, created to politicize the issues and contradict the United Nations Charter.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, endorsing the statement by the Non-Aligned Movement, criticized the politicization, selectivity and double standards reflected in the draft resolution. Such drafts arrogantly interfere in the internal affairs of countries, he said, adding that he will vote against the draft.

The representative of China said any differences in the field of human rights have to be resolved via dialogue and cooperation. He objected to putting pressure on other countries and the use of country-specific resolutions, likewise calling for the lifting of unilateral coercive measures against Iran, which only cause further harm to its people.

The representative of the Russian Federation called politicized country-specific resolutions counterproductive, as they "have nothing to do with the protection of human rights" and can only discredit the United Nations Charter, whose foundational principle is State sovereignty. The Russian Federation will vote against the text, he added.

The Committee then approved draft "L.31/Rev.1" by a recorded vote of 79 in favour to 32 against, with 64 abstentions.

By its terms, the Assembly, while acknowledging Iran's efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on human rights, would express serious concern at the alarmingly high frequency of use of the death penalty, particularly against minors, in violation of its international obligations. It would call on Iran to ensure that no one is subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and to cease the widespread and systematic use of arbitrary arrests and detention, including the practice of enforced disappearance.

By other terms, the Assembly would call on Iran to address the poor conditions of prisons; release women human rights defenders imprisoned for exercising their rights; end rights violations against persons belonging to ethnic, linguistic or other minorities; and ensure free presidential elections in 2021, consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The representative of Burundi said her country's vote against the draft is in line with its principled position on country-specific resolutions that they undermine cooperation and are counterproductive. Reaffirming support for the universal periodic review, she lamented that unilateral coercive measures have been imposed on Iran, especially in the context of the pandemic.

The representative of Mexico, noting that he abstained from the vote, recognized positive changes in Iran, underscoring that there have been fewer instances in which the death sentence has been applied. However, Iran should institute a moratorium on the death penalty, he said, urging the country to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and noting that cooperation with the United Nations will help it overcome persistent challenges.

The representative of the United States recalled that one year ago, Iran's regime brutally killed 1,500 protesters, and tortured and imprisoned thousands more. He expressed deep concern about the human rights situation, as Government institutions continue to subject Iranians to a variety of abuses with no accountability, citing the detention of political prisoners, use of lethal force against peaceful protestors and torture. The United States remains concerned over death sentences following unfair trials and reports of forced confessions obtained through torture, he said, drawing attention to the execution of wrestler Navid Afkari and calling on Iran to release political prisoners immediately.

The representative of Japan, noting that his delegation voted in favour of the draft, expressed hope to see progress through implementation of the recommendations.

The representative of Israel drew attention to the wider context in which human rights violations take place, noting that Iran has long been a destabilizing terror-promoting entity whose fingerprints appear in conflict, chaos and civil war. Iran's involvement is deepest in Yemen, Syria and Lebanon, he said, adding that its actions stand in sharp contrast to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Committee next took up the draft resolution on the "Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine" (document A/C.3/75/L.32).

The representative of Ukraine said that in the context of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, the Russian Federation is urged to end prosecutions and other reprisals, as well as the criminal prosecution of Crimean residents for peaceful manifestations of their religious beliefs. This is the recommendation of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, contained in the latest report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). If the Russian Federation does not agree with the High Commissioner or the Secretary-General, it should provide the Monitoring Mission access to Crimea. He urged Member States to support human rights defenders working in Crimea and to follow United Nations recommendations.

A recorded vote was requested.

The representative of the Russian Federation called information outlined by Ukraine's delegate about mass human rights violations in Crimea defamatory and based on fantasy. The people of Crimea exercised the right to self-determination with a free election that was in line with international standards. For several years, the co-sponsors have been trying to punish the people of Crimea for freely choosing the

Russian Federation. During the winter of 2015, Kiev stopped energy supplies to 175 human settlements, where almost half the population lives. Its pivot to European values is looking “very odd indeed”, he said, expressing concern over the mistreatment of people simply because they wish to speak Russian. He asked delegates to vote against the anti-Russian draft, or at least abstain.

The representative of Azerbaijan condemned radicalism and the obtaining of territories through use of force. Her delegation’s position on the issue is clear and consistent, she said, noting that any resolution to the conflict must be based on the sovereignty of Ukraine. She called for a settlement of all inter-State conflicts to be resolved through political dialogue.

The representative of Georgia expressed support for the draft resolution, registering his deep concern over the alarming human rights situation in Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. He is also concerned by consistent reports about the Russian Federation’s policies aimed at changing the demographic structure of Crimea.

The representative of Syria rejected the draft resolution, calling it a politicized attempt that has nothing to do with the protection and promotion of human rights. Moreover, it makes poor use of United Nations mechanisms in order to undermine certain countries and sow defamation against them.

The representative of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea expressed resentment about the politically motivated draft resolution, as its content is not about genuine promotion of human rights, but rather aims to create distrust among Member States. Human rights should never be used as an excuse to interfere in States’ internal affairs, he asserted, stressing that his delegation will vote against the draft.

The representative of China outlined his country’s consistent position that any differences in the field of human rights should be solved through dialogue. China is against country-specific human rights resolutions and will vote against the draft resolution, he assured.

The representative of Venezuela rejected country-specific resolutions as they do not foster constructive dialogue; they only politicize situations and contravene the spirit that created the United Nations. As the universal periodic review is the instrument to consider this issue, Venezuela will vote against the draft.

The representative of Iran said the recrimination and “naming-and-shaming” approach embodied in country-specific resolutions run counter to dialogue and mutual cooperation. The Third Committee’s engagement in issues that fall outside its purview is unacceptable and should be avoided, as such actions are a disservice to the cause of human rights. The persistence of such a selective practice contravenes the principle of objectivity in addressing human rights. As such, Iran will vote against the draft resolution.

The representative of Germany, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said he is listening to interventions and not trusting his ears. After the Soviet Union broke apart, people voted in favour of belonging to Ukraine. The Russian Federation then invaded Ukraine in 2014, depriving people of their freedom. Tatars suffered and had to leave the territory. Today people are not living in freedom; they are deprived of their basic rights. He asked delegates to examine international law and recall the freedom that existed in Crimea before this action and to support the draft resolution.

The Committee then approved draft resolution “L.32” by a recorded vote of 63 in favour to 22 against, with 85 abstentions.

By its terms, the Assembly would deplore the failure of the Russian Federation to comply with repeated demands of the General Assembly, as well as with the 19 April 2017 order of the International Court of Justice on provisional measures in the *Ukraine v. Russian Federation* case. It would strongly condemn the Russian Federation’s total disregard for its obligations under international law regarding its legal responsibility for the occupied territory, including to respect Ukrainian law and the rights of all civilians.

Further, the Assembly would condemn all attempts by the Russian Federation to legitimize or normalize its attempted annexation of Crimea, including the automatic imposition of Russian citizenship,

illegal election campaigns and voting, change of the demographic structure of the population of Crimea and suppression of national identity. In particular, it would condemn violations against the residents of the temporarily occupied Crimea, including Crimean Tatars, as well as Ukrainians and persons belonging to other ethnic and religious groups, by the Russian occupation authorities. Among other things, it would urge the Russian Federation to uphold all its international law obligations as an occupying Power, respect the laws in force in Ukraine, and repeal laws imposed in Crimea by the Russian Federation that allow for forced evictions and the confiscation of private property, including land in Crimea.

The representative of Burundi said her delegation voted against the draft, as it has nothing to do with human rights. She reaffirmed the role of the Human Rights Council in addressing such issues and opposed the use of the Third Committee to politicize them.

The representative of Singapore said her country has taken a principled position against country-specific resolutions as they are driven by political rather than human rights concerns.

The Committee commenced its afternoon session with the consideration of the draft resolution titled “The Situation of Human Rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar” (document A/C.3/75/L.34), alongside a statement of programme budget implications.

The representative of Saudi Arabia, introducing the draft on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the European Union, said more than a million Rohingya have had to flee Myanmar for Bangladesh, where they live in restricted environments. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, their situation has worsened, as they live in camps where social distancing is difficult. Moreover, they lack health care, as well as access to drinking water, and he called for urgent measures to be taken to limit the spread of the virus. He expressed concern over the lack of progress by the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar to hold offenders of serious crimes accountable. He underscored the need for political will and tangible measures to be taken to enable the safe, dignified return of the Rohingya. However, such conditions are undermined by “deplorable” circumstances, notably due to the displacement of civilians, kidnappings, the use of schools by the military, as well as arbitrary detentions. Efforts must be made to fight hate speech against Rohingya and ethnic minorities. The draft resolution is balanced and objective. He called for a lasting settlement to the tragedy, which would include the Rohingya’s right to citizenship and recognition of their right to a dignified life. He welcomed hopeful developments, such as the temporary measures issued by the International Court of Justice, which make it possible to trust that the international system might aid accountability.

A recorded vote was requested on “L.34”.

The representative of Myanmar said he called for a vote on the draft resolution, as it is one-sided. Its sponsors “conveniently ignore” coordinated attacks perpetrated by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, and the text barely reflects efforts taken by Myanmar to address the challenges, and to lay a firm foundation for lasting peace. He characterized the draft as “intrusive”, as it calls on Myanmar to follow “illegitimate demands” by the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission and its successor, the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, which constitutes an attempt to turn the Human Rights Council into a “quasi-judicial body”. Moreover, he said the text is politically motivated as it is “narrowly focused on a particular community’s human rights”, without taking into account the challenges faced by Myanmar during its complex democratic transition. He denounced the illegitimate pressure exerted on his country and accused the penholders of “fanning the flames”. “Every country undergoing a democratic transition passes through difficult times, and Myanmar is no different,” he stressed. “Such intricate challenges cannot be overcome overnight.” The draft resolution will not solve the humanitarian crisis or offer a practical solution, he said, calling on Member States to stand with his country and vote against draft “L.34”.

The representative of the Russian Federation said Myanmar requires real assistance from States, not sweeping criticism. The Government is clearly willing to resolve human rights issues, through measures including legislative ones. Welcoming efforts by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to create conditions for return of displaced persons, he went on to stress that “such resolutions do not resolve human rights problems”. States bear the greatest responsibility to uphold

human rights; others may offer technical support, he said, noting that he will vote against the draft resolution.

The representative of the United States said he co-sponsored the draft, which calls on Myanmar to deepen its democratic reforms, enable the full participation of its minorities in elections, protect its peoples' human rights and their freedoms of expression, association, movement and religion. It also calls for unhindered access for humanitarian agencies, and for people to be allowed to return to their place of origin. He called on authorities to grant access to the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, as well as Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews. The United States supports all efforts made by Myanmar to advance peace and reconciliation. While welcoming the largely peaceful elections held earlier this month, he expressed concern over the cancellation of voting in some regions, as well as disenfranchisement. Further, the United States supports the call for justice and accountability.

The representative of Germany, speaking for the European Union, said the humanitarian situation has not improved in recent years. He expressed concern about the severe conflict in Rakhine State, where there are exploding landmines, shelling and fighting, impeding access to health care. The pandemic exacerbates the situation, he said, adding, "This resolution sends a message of hope: The world doesn't forget you, Rohingya people." Individuals in the military who committed violations must be held accountable. He urged Myanmar to cooperate with the United Nations human rights mechanisms, and to grant them access and assistance. He called for the full implementation of provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice, broadly stressing that the root causes of the issue must be addressed — including discriminatory policies, and restrictions on freedom of citizenship, access to information, education and political representation. While the recent elections were an important milestone, he expressed concern that some minority groups were unable to exercise their civil and political rights. Myanmar is at a crossroads and should grant access to and cooperate with the newly appointed Special Rapporteur for the human rights situation in the country. He commended Bangladesh for providing shelter to those fleeing violence in Myanmar.

The representative of Canada, noting that his delegation co-sponsored the draft, expressed concern about the violence in Shin and Rakhine States, as well as the resulting forced displacements, use of civilians as human shields, and troubling curbs placed on freedom. While the recently held peaceful elections mark an important milestone, Canada is concerned by ongoing barriers to fair elections, he said, as well as the disenfranchisement of Rohingya Muslims and other ethnic minorities. Speaking in a personal capacity, he said he had spent several months meeting with refugees as a Special Envoy in 2017 and wrote about what he saw and heard in the camps in a report titled *Them We're Human*. "When a million people become refugees, it immediately becomes an international question," he stressed. "What can we do to restore their citizenship, and to make sure they have a home? Their voices are loud and clear. But not enough of us are hearing what they have to say."

The representative of Indonesia said his country has made efforts to engage with Myanmar on the issue, through ASEAN and other platforms. The focus must remain on finding a sustainable solution that includes the safe repatriation of refugees. Myanmar must enhance its engagement with the international community. The draft represents "momentum for positive change", he said, adding that Indonesia will remain engaged in constructive dialogue with Myanmar, as the latter's peace and prosperity are vital for the region.

The representative of Japan said his country will abstain from voting, as the draft regrettably lacks balance and does not recognize Myanmar's efforts to consolidate democracy. However, he said he shared the concerns of the international community about the humanitarian situation of the displaced and those living in Rakhine State. He commended Bangladesh for being a "generous" host to the Rohingya refugees and expressed hope that a conducive environment will enable their return.

The representative of China reiterated his country's stance against country-specific resolutions, noting that he will vote against the draft resolution. However, China will continue to facilitate dialogue, which is crucial for the repatriation of the Rohingya people.

The Committee then approved draft resolution “L.34” by a recorded vote of 131 in favour to 9 against (Belarus, Cambodia, China, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Philippines, Russian Federation, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe), with 31 abstentions.

By its terms, the Assembly would express grave concern at reports of serious human rights violations by the military and security forces, as well as violations of international humanitarian law in Myanmar against Rohingya and other minorities, notably in Kachin, Rakhine, southern Chin and Shan States. Among the abuses are those involving arbitrary arrests, deaths in detention, torture, deliberate killing and maiming of children, recruitment and use of children for forced labour, indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas, the burning of homes and the forced displacement of over 860,000 Rohingya and other minorities to Bangladesh.

Further, it would emphasize the importance of conducting international, independent, fair and transparent investigations into gross human rights violations in Myanmar, including sexual and gender-based violence, and of holding accountable all those responsible. It would also call on the security and armed forces, in particular in Rakhine, Chin and Shan States, to heed the Secretary-General’s calls for a global ceasefire, end all hostilities and address grievances through political dialogue.

The representative of Bangladesh said this resolution is not a typical country-specific resolution; it represents the custodianship of the international community, in helping facilitate the return of the Rohingya to their homeland in safety and dignity. The key factors for this, as the Rohingya have repeatedly told the world, are confidence-building and accountability measures, she said. “The adoption of the resolution sends a signal to the Rohingya, that the international community hasn’t forgotten them,” she said. She underscored the urgency of finding a solution, as not a single displaced Rohingya has been able to return home in the past three years. The problem started with Myanmar and must be ended by them. The resolution is an important step towards that objective, she said.

The representative of Zimbabwe said he voted against the draft resolution, as such country-specific texts politicize the issue of human rights. He expressed regret about the “name-and-shame strategy” inherent in such resolutions, which push narrow self-serving agendas instead of the healing and restoration that communities need.

The representative of Viet Nam said she voted against the draft, as country-specific measures undermine cooperation and do not consider the historical context and challenges faced on the ground.

The representative of Nepal, while abstaining from the vote due to his delegation’s position on country-specific resolutions, called for the resumption of Myanmar’s cooperation with United Nations agencies, as well as its bilateral engagements with Bangladesh. She called for a sustainable resolution of the issue, and for all parties to create a conducive environment for the Rohingya’s safe return.

The representative of Myanmar thanked all those who voted against the draft resolution or chose to abstain, as the text undermines impartiality and fairness, and applies a selective standard while addressing human rights issues. Therefore, Myanmar strongly rejects the text and will not be bound by its provisions. The country’s political and cultural complexities must be considered, he said, adding that Myanmar is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society, which suffers the consequences of the “divide-and-rule” policies imposed on it during its colonial past. Nonetheless, the people of Myanmar have shown their attachment to democracy through the ballot. “Myanmar will continue to work to foster an environment of justice and peace, and the ruling party has reached out to ethnic nationalities to this end,” he stressed.

The representative of Germany, speaking for the European Union, expressed hope that the draft will facilitate a solution for the Rohingya. “The boat crisis is among many urgent priorities to be addressed,” he said, adding that Rohingya have remained stranded for months in the Andaman Sea, which calls for a regional solution. The European Union supports an open, inclusive exchange with civil society actors. He said the issue that should be prioritized is the granting of passports and citizenship to Rohingya, many of whom have lived for generations in Myanmar.

The representative of Thailand, while abstaining from voting, called for a long-term holistic solution, and for Myanmar to continue to engage in constructive dialogue with Bangladesh and the Special Rapporteur.

The representative of Singapore said she abstained from voting due to her country's principled approach towards country-specific resolutions, not due to the substance of the issue at hand. "The situation is complex, with no quick fixes," she stressed. Humanitarian assistance must reach refugees, and Myanmar must reach a viable solution. Meanwhile, ASEAN will continue to help promote sustainable development in Rakhine State, she said.

The representative of Iran, speaking in explanation of vote, said his vote should be viewed in the context of the human right to life, which Iran supports.

The representative of Nigeria, while voting alongside other members of the OIC on the draft, despite its usual stance on country-specific resolutions, said the substance of the text required Nigeria's support. "We wish to encourage dialogue and a resolution of the issue," he said, adding that the rights of Rohingya Muslims should be safeguarded in Myanmar.

The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic voted against the draft resolution, as his country adheres to the principles of universality, impartiality and non-politicization.

The Committee then took up the draft resolution titled "Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic" (document A/C.3/75/L.33), which contains no programme budget implications.

The representative of the United States, calling on the Assad regime to end its relentless assault on its own people, said the draft highlights crimes against humanity and war crimes committed by the Assad regime, including slaughter and arbitrary detention of peaceful protestors, mass displacement of civilians and the use of chemical weapons. The draft also draws attention to the deplorable closure of border crossings that has disrupted humanitarian aid and deepened the suffering of millions of Syrians, she said, drawing particular attention to persons with disabilities.

A recorded vote was then requested.

The representative of Syria expressed hope that the United States delegation has learned a lesson to no longer present this draft resolution, especially because that country "has neither the legal nor moral authority" to submit a draft resolution that is allegedly concerned about human rights in Syria. The United States violated the rights of African American citizens during recent protests. Washington, D.C., should be tackling the pandemic of racism that has afflicted the United States for centuries, rather than attacking other countries. Noting that the draft has been tabled from a position of geopolitical rivalry, he said it supposedly aims to protect human rights. However, it exceeds its mandate and tramples on that of the Security Council. It has not considered Syria's efforts to combat terrorism or to guarantee the safe return of the displaced and Syrian refugees. Syria openly participated in talks in both Geneva and Moscow, and has been involved with the Special Envoy to Syria. He drew attention to the so-called law to "protect" civilians in Syria — the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act — which suffocates Syrians, depriving them of food and aid.

The representative of Saudi Arabia said the draft resolution exposes the deteriorating human rights situation, including the targeting of civilians and air strikes. Hunger and starvation are also being used as a weapon of war, he said, calling for a political solution that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. He stressed the importance of the safe and dignified return of Syrian refugees, expressing concern about the spread of COVID-19 in Syria.

The representative of Switzerland underscored the systematic, recurring nature of human rights violations in Syria, noting that victims must receive reparations. Expressing support for the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, she expressed concern over the humanitarian situation and called on all parties to comply with international humanitarian law, notably in addressing COVID-19.

The representative of Canada characterized the draft resolution as an annual reminder to Syria's regime that the world is watching. The humanitarian situation has worsened amid violations of international humanitarian law. She welcomed the draft's strong calls for accountability, especially in relation to chemical weapons use and arbitrary detention, reiterating Canada's steadfast commitment to the Syrian people.

The representative of Cuba, noting that his delegation will vote against the draft, said country-specific resolutions are aimed only against countries of the global South. This draft uses condemnation and takes a punitive approach, which does not consider the interests and position of the country involved. Such resolutions do not contribute to a political settlement, but rather, undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria.

The representative of Iran said Syria's efforts to support civilians and facilitate the dignified return of refugees remain unnoticed. Condemning unilateral coercive measures, he said Iran will vote against the draft.

The representative of Venezuela, noting that his country will vote against the draft, rejected country-specific resolutions as they create toxic spaces for confrontation. They are selective, politicized and ignore the root causes of the conflict, such as unilateral coercive measures, which further undermine the human rights of Syrians.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea affirmed his opposition to country-specific resolutions, as they politicize human rights and seek to pressure and overthrow the social systems of other States. Such issues must be discussed from a principled position that respects State sovereignty, territorial integrity, peace and stability. He rejected the draft resolution on these grounds and stated his intent to vote against the same.

The representative of China advocated for the proper handling of differences through constructive dialogue and cooperation, opposing politicization, selective double-standards and pressuring other countries with human rights resolutions. The Syrian people are suffering from war without the guarantee of the right to live. He called on the international community to focus on a political solution that accommodates all parties, adding that he will vote against the draft.

The representative of the Russian Federation called on the Committee to adhere to the rules of diplomatic etiquette in their rhetoric, saying that labeling Governments as "regimes" does not facilitate effective, productive dialogue. Stating his intent to vote against the draft, he said the document is an "egregious example of the nefarious practice" of transforming the Committee into a body that rubber-stamps resolutions to pressure States and settle geopolitical scores. Further, the text is based on unfounded accusations, lies and conjecture shamelessly levied by Syria's opponents who seek to advance their political ambitions to the detriment of the Charter of the United Nations and the long-standing working methods of the General Assembly. He pointed to violations in Kurdish areas under the control of the United States, as an occupying Power, cautioning that the adoption of this hypocritical draft resolution does not help to stabilize the situation in Syria.

The representative of Syria stressed that Saudi Arabia should not be giving lessons on human rights, as that State lacks the most basic criteria to address this issue as it is not a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, whereas Syria has been party to the instrument since 1969. He said the draft resolution is fraught with issues of both substance and style, and that the place for this discussion is in Geneva, not New York. Further, the United States has spent billions of dollars to destabilize Syria and has trained and sheltered extremist groups — these criminal coalitions "kill anything that moves" and plunder Syria's natural resources. He questioned how a State that has invaded Iraq, sowed chaos in Afghanistan, bombed Libya and destabilized Viet Nam, Nicaragua and Cuba can claim to have an interest in human rights in Syria. He called on delegates to either vote against or abstain from the vote.

The Committee then approved draft resolution "L.33" by a recorded vote of 99 in favour to 13 against, with 61 abstentions.

By its terms, the Assembly would strongly condemn the systematic, widespread and gross violations of international human rights law committed in Syria and the indiscriminate attacks against civilians and their infrastructure, particularly medical facilities and schools. It would deplore and condemn in the strongest terms violence by the Syrian regime against the Syrian people since the beginning of peaceful protests in 2011, and demand that the Syrian regime immediately end all such attacks and immediately implement Security Council resolutions 2254 (2015), 2258 (2015) and 2286 (2016).

Further, the Assembly would urge all Member States to create conditions for the negotiation of a political solution, under United Nations auspices, by working towards the nationwide ceasefire enabling full, immediate and safe humanitarian access, and leading to the release of those arbitrarily detained. It would demand that Syria's regime declare in full its chemical weapons programme and request the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to consider additional procedures for stringent verification. It would also deplore and strongly condemn terrorist acts committed against civilians by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (formerly the Nusra Front), Al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist groups and terrorist groups such as Hurras al-Din, designated by the Security Council, among other violent extremist groups.

The representative of Saudi Arabia then thanked those States who voted in favour of the draft resolution, congratulating them on their principled position.

The representative of Syria, raising a point of order, asked if a sponsor has the right to take the floor, asking by what rule Saudi Arabia was doing so.

The Chair responded that the representative of Saudi Arabia has the right to the floor.

Retaking the floor, the representative of Saudi Arabia pointed out that the representative of the United States submitted the draft resolution and said that Syria's representative only responded to his comments even though Saudi Arabia's position is similar to those of other sponsors. Questioning why some "speak of Saudi Arabia with such hatred," he said that Syria's representative was disrespectful when speaking about Saudi Arabia, despite attempting to lecture the Committee on respectful rhetoric. Syria's delegate is attempting to muzzle the Committee as the Syrian regime muzzles its own citizens. Human rights achievements should not be measured by the date a State joins an international instrument, but by its practice, he observed.

The representative of Armenia, explaining his position, expressed concern at the mass persecution of Syrian communities on the basis of religion or belief by ISIL/Da'esh, Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups. He condemned such attacks on Christians, Yazidis and others in Syria and said that ISIL/Da'esh desecrated Armenian religious and cultural heritage in several Syrian cities. He stressed that the international community must ensure that the perpetrators of crimes against ethnic and religious groups are held accountable, adding that it is well established that Turkey recruited foreign terrorist fighters in the Syrian territories under its control and transported them to the conflict zone in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The representative of Germany, speaking for the European Union, said that any sustainable solution to the crisis in Syria requires a political transition in line with international law. He called on the Syrian regime and its sponsors to engage in the Syrian-led constitutional committee and work towards genuine progress. Pointing to the fragile situation in the north-west and north-east, he called for a nationwide ceasefire as the conflict affects the stability of the entire region. He condemned serious breaches of international law by the regime and its allies, stating that systematic attacks on civilian infrastructure — including schools and hospitals — may amount to war crimes. Noting the effects of COVID-19, he called for safe, rapid, and unimpeded access for humanitarian actors. He further condemned the regime's use of arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearance and property confiscation in the areas it has retaken, and called for the situation to be referred to the International Court of Justice.

The representative of Japan, expressing both concern about the human rights situation in Syria and hope that the violence will end as soon as possible, welcomed the steps taken by the Netherlands to hold

Syria's Government responsible for human rights violations. He added that it is for these reasons that Japan co-sponsored and voted in favour of the draft resolution.

The representative of Argentina supported a political solution for the situation in Syria that protects human rights, respects the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity and deescalates violence to address the humanitarian situation on the ground.

The representative of the Philippines, disassociating from the resolution's paragraphs that refer to the International Criminal Court, stressed that the Philippines no longer recognizes the Court's jurisdiction after having withdrawn from the Rome Statute in 2019.

The representative of Qatar, recalling that the crisis in Syria began 10 years ago, said that the optimal way to address human rights issues is through an inclusive, political process that is Syrian-led under the auspices of the United Nations and preserves the unity, independence and territorial integrity of Syria.

The representative of Turkey said she voted in favour of the resolution because it highlights widespread human rights violations against the Syrian people. While the text is not itself sufficient to "heal the immense suffering of the Syrian people," it is an important reminder of the systematic and gross violations of their rights. She also emphasized the importance of ensuring the unimpeded flow of humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people. Turning to the situation in the north-east, she said that the YPG/PKK is responsible for continued insecurity in the region, disrupting water and electricity supplies, usurping Syria's natural resources and oppressing local populations that oppose their rule. The draft resolution also discusses the situation in al-Hol refugee camp for the first time, and long-term solutions are urgently needed to safeguard the 40,000 children who continue to suffer there. She further rejected the allegations made by Armenia's representative as an attempt to hijack this agenda item.

Right of Reply

The representative of Iran, speaking in exercise of the right of reply to allegations raised by his counterpart from the United States, said that "charity begins at home," advising that country to act before it preaches to others. The United States is the primary cause of widespread human rights violations around the globe, due to its irresponsible policies that elevate commercial and political interests above all else. He called on any State seriously concerned about human rights to hold that country accountable for its strategy of "maximum pressure" and illegal unilateral coercive measures against Iran, which constitute crimes against humanity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, the provision by the United States of weapons to the region causes hundreds of thousands of people to be killed or maimed. He called on the United States to cease its arrogant criticism of others, rejecting the allegations of another regime "on the wrong side of history" whose aggression and mass murder go unchecked, thanks to support from the United States and the United Kingdom.

The representative of Syria underscored the hypocrisy of countries that employ double standards when addressing human rights questions. Rivals cannot at the same time be arbiters, and those who instigate fires cannot be firefighters. The United States continues to apply coercive measures that deprive Syrians of food, medicine and fuel. Turkey, meanwhile, continues to exploit other Muslim countries in the region and support terrorists, while Saudi Arabia leads a coalition that violates the human rights of the Yemeni people. He said that this session "seems to be a spectacle," and that the draft resolution violates the Charter of the United Nations.

The representative of Azerbaijan said that Armenia's accusations about her country's use of mercenaries and Turkey's involvement are baseless. The armed forces of her country do not depend on external help to defend Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Armenia, however, transported mercenaries to the occupied territory to use in combat operations and provided missile systems and financing to Armenian terrorist organizations involved in armed aggression. She said Armenian leaders value unlawful territorial claims against their neighbour more than they value the lives of children.

The representative of Guinea then submitted a correction to his country's vote on the draft resolution concerning Myanmar, recalling that Guinea abstained in that vote.

The Chair referred him to the Secretary.

The Committee then turned to the draft resolution titled “United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders” (document A/C.3/75/L.11).

The representative of Uganda, introducing the draft on behalf of the African Group, said that due to the pandemic, deliberations on the text were limited to technical updates of the previous resolution. She attached great importance to the text, as the Institute helps African countries strengthen their capacities to counter crime, and she expressed hope the Committee will adopt it by consensus, as it has done in previous sessions.

The Committee then approved draft resolution “L.11” by consensus.

By the terms of the text, the Assembly would commend the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders for its efforts to promote, coordinate and carry out more activities within its core mandate, including regional technical cooperation related to crime prevention and criminal justice systems in Africa, despite resource constraints. It would urge States members that have failed to meet their annual assessed financial contributions to pay all or part of their arrears, taking into consideration that member States are to fund 80 per cent of the approved budget. It would also reiterate its request, made to the Secretary-General in resolution 73/188, to continue his efforts to mobilize the financial resources necessary to maintain the Institute with the core professional staff required.

 **For information media. Not an official record.**