



*Présidence française de l'Union Européenne  
French Presidency of the European Union*



## **63<sup>ème</sup> ASSEMBLEE GENERALE**

Troisième Commission  
Point 64 c) Situations des droits de l'Homme et rapports des  
Rapporteurs et Représentants spéciaux

**New York, le 28 octobre 2008**  
(Vérifier au prononcé)

**Déclaration prononcée au nom de l'Union européenne par  
M. Philippe DELACROIX, Secrétaire général de la  
présidence française de l'Union européenne à New York**

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## **63<sup>RD</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Third Committee  
Item 64 c) Human rights situations and reports by the Special  
Rapporteurs and Representatives

**New York, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008**  
(Check upon delivery)

**Statement on behalf of the European union delivered by  
Mr Philippe DELACROIX, Coordinator for the French  
Presidency of the European Union in New York**

Mr. President,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The candidate countries Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Montenegro, as well as Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

The General Assembly, which embodies the United Nations' universality, cannot remain indifferent when faced with human rights violations around the world. Further to the Human Right Council's action, this Assembly, which 60 years ago adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, must react to and redress these violations.

The European Union reiterates its belief that no serious human rights violation should escape UN Member States' scrutiny. These situations must be reviewed in straightforward and open discussions with the countries concerned. However, when these countries turn a deaf ear to the repeated calls by the international community; when they refuse to cooperate and continue to openly flout the most basic rights of their populations, the international community cannot remain acquiescent and must give priority to these situations.

This is why the European Union wishes to draw your attention to the human rights situations in Burma/Myanmar and to that of Democratic People's Republic of Korea by submitting resolutions on these situations, which are justified by the seriousness and extent of violations committed in these countries, as well as to the urgency with which this Assembly must act.

In Burma/Myanmar, the population is still facing an extremely difficult situation that Cyclone Nargis has only worsened. In this respect, the European Union recalls the key role that the United Nations and ASEAN are playing in the area of humanitarian aid. NGOs must be able to work freely in this country and have access to disaster victims. Furthermore, the situation of political prisoners, their arrest and detention conditions are matters of great concern. The Burmese authorities have not responded to calls from the international community, and notably those of the Security Council, to release all political prisoners, in particular Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, and to initiate a truly inclusive democratization and national reconciliation in Burma/Myanmar. The European Union supports the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General, and again calls upon the Burmese authorities to implement the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Tomas Ojea Quintana, as well as those included in the latest resolution that the Human Rights Council adopted by consensus.

The human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not improved. It has been marked by serious and systematic violations of all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Furthermore, the humanitarian situation is extremely fragile in North Korea. The European Union is worried about allegations of severe punishments for North Korean citizens attempting to flee their country. It is also worried by the situation of North Korean refugees and calls upon the host countries to comply with their commitments in terms of international humanitarian law. The European Union once again

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\* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

calls upon the North Korean authorities to cooperate with the relevant United Nations mechanisms, in particular with Mr. Vitit Muntarhorn, the Special Rapporteur, and to engage in constructive dialogue with the international community. The European Union is also concerned about the situation of North Korean refugees and calls upon the host countries to comply with their commitments with respect to international humanitarian law. We reiterate that, pursuant the responsibility agreed by consensus at the 2005 World Summit, it is a country's primary responsibility to protect its civil population from mass atrocities.

Mr. President,

The human rights situation in Sudan is extremely worrying as well. Human rights there continue to be flouted. In some regions, such as Darfur, international human rights violations have been observed all too often. The European Union renews its request for the perpetrators of these atrocities to appear before a court and recalls that the fight against impunity must be a high priority for the Sudanese government. The European Union reaffirms that the principle of cooperation with the ICC is not negotiable. It reiterates its appeal to the Government of Sudan to fully cooperate with the ICC, to implement the decisions made by the Judges of the International Criminal Court. The European Union is concerned by the continually worsening security situation, which is affecting humanitarian operations and the situation of the local populations. The European Union condemned the attack on the Kalma camp and the operations initiated by the Sudanese forces this past September in various areas of the Djebel Marra, which included the use of aircraft painted white to intentionally create confusion between these aircraft and those used by the UN and humanitarian workers.

The European Union calls upon Sudan to continue its cooperation with the UN and AU to step up deployment of the UNAMID in Darfur. It also calls on all parties to commit themselves to searching for a political solution that puts an end to violence. The renewal of the Special Rapporteur's mandate on the human rights situation in Sudan in 2007 illustrated the international communities' concern for the declining security and humanitarian situation in this country, and the European Union welcomes the extension of his mandate.

The European Union remains concerned about the situation of internal conflict in Sri Lanka where the human rights situation is deteriorating, in particular as regards human rights violations. All parties in the conflict are responsible for taking concrete measures to guarantee the safety and freedom of movement of civilians and enable humanitarian organizations to safely carry out their work. The resumption of the recruitment and use of child soldiers is a major cause for concern, which is why the European Union calls upon authorities to step up their efforts. The European Union is also concerned about violations of freedom of expression and the intimidation of and attacks on journalists in Sri Lanka. It calls upon the government to guarantee the freedom of press, freedom of expression and to protect journalists. Full cooperation with the appropriate United Nations bodies and mechanisms is a precondition for fighting impunity and human rights violations.

Mr. President,

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the European Union welcomes the cooperation of authorities with the International Criminal Court, which enabled a third warlord to be arrested and transferred to the Hague, where he has been charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity. However, the EU is deeply concerned that human rights continue to be

violated in the country, and thus remains extremely troubled by the widespread and systematic nature of sexual violence against women, especially in the east of the country. Rape should never be used as a weapon of war, and we must remain alert in order to fight against this barbaric practice, particularly by stepping up the fight against impunity. Secondly, the resumption of the recruitment and use of child soldiers is a major cause for concern, which is why the European Union calls upon authorities to step up their efforts. Lastly, the situation of human rights defenders remains particularly problematic. The EU is looking forward to a report on thematic special procedures to follow up to the situation in the DRC, as well as the High Commissioner's report, both of which are due out in March 2009.

The European Union is also concerned by the serious human rights violations in Iran. The growing number of executions alarms the EU, including of people who were minors at the time of their offence. It is also troubled that death sentences by stoning are still being carried out. Furthermore, members of religious and ethnic minorities are victims of discrimination and systematic repression. The situation of the Bahá'ís and other minorities has deteriorated, that of Christian converts is genuinely worrying, while the Majlis is set to examine a draft revision of the penal code aimed at, among other things, reintroducing the death penalty for apostasy.

The arrest and imprisonment of numerous student and trade union leaders is cause for concern for the European Union. The Iranian authorities are maintaining severe restrictions on the freedom of expression and the press, while serious discrimination and violence against women continues to take place. Human rights defenders are subject to organized persecution. The Iranian authorities must meet their commitments as well as the international standards on human rights to which they subscribed. The European Union calls upon the Iranian authorities to stop impunity for the perpetrators of human rights violations and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women, as well as to release women detained for taking part in the "One Million Signatures" campaign, launched in June 2006 to demand equal rights between men and women in Iran. The European Union also calls on the Iranian authorities to put an end to discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation.

Mr. President,

In Zimbabwe, Mr. Mugabe's regime has long been in violation of human rights and the situation has worsened since Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai's victory in the first round of presidential elections. A campaign of intimidation and violence was quickly launched, in which 200 people were killed, several hundred were injured, thousands were displaced and many were detained as prisoners of conscience. Since Mr. Robert Mugabe was the only remaining candidate following Mr. Tsvangirai's withdrawal, he could thus be re-elected unopposed. This political crisis is coupled with the extreme deterioration of the economic and social situation: 5 million Zimbabweans now depend on international aid for food and medical care. Furthermore, the authorities suspended aid from humanitarian associations this summer. In this context, and since the political agreement signed on 15 September last under President Mbeki has still not brought about the formation of a unity government to embody the people's desire for change, the European Union appeals to the country's authorities to re-establish rule of law. The EU, which is the largest donor to Zimbabwe, also stresses the importance of maintaining unrestricted humanitarian access so that vulnerable populations can benefit from its aid immediately.

The European Union is very concerned about the human rights situation in Somalia and other countries in the Horn of Africa. In Somalia, violence persists despite prospects of a ceasefire following the conclusion of the Djibouti Agreement. This climate of insecurity will only serve to worsen the human rights situations and encourage violations of international humanitarian law. It is the responsibility of all parties to the conflict to allow humanitarian organizations to carry out their work in total security. The European Union is also particularly concerned about journalists' working conditions, as they are increasingly becoming targets for violence and kidnappings. We welcome the mandate renewal of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia last March. In Eritrea, the human rights situation has been in steady decline since 2000. The European Union is concerned by the repressive nature of the Eritrean regime, which has suppressed most freedoms, imposed a single-party regime and only allowed one election to be held since independence was acquired. It repeats its call for the release of all political prisoners and journalists held secretly, without trial, since September 2001.

Mr. President,

In Belarus, the European Union noted that despite a number of improvements, the legislative elections of 28 September 2008 did not meet the OSCE's democratic standards. The EU calls upon Belarussian authorities to address these shortcomings, to uphold their international commitments and to fully cooperate with the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The European Union welcomed the release of the last political prisoners, calls for a gradual rapprochement with Belarus and is thus ready to develop dialogue with the Belarussian authorities, as well as with all parties who wish to take part in democratic debate, in order to strengthen democracy and uphold human rights in the country.

The European Union remains concerned about several aspects of the human rights situation in Uzbekistan and appeals to the Uzbek authorities to fully comply with their international obligations in this regard. The EU also calls upon the Uzbek authorities to stop persecuting and release all imprisoned human rights defenders. It notes that some progress has been achieved in Uzbekistan and encourages the country to remain on the path towards human rights, democratization and the rule of law, and is ready to assist Uzbekistan in effecting reform towards this goal.

The European Union welcomes Cuba's efforts in the area of economic and social rights, as well as civil and political rights, in particular the ratification of the 1966 Covenants, and the actions taken for a number of political prisoners. The EU calls upon Cuba to continue its efforts in this area, particularly towards political prisoners whose physical condition gives cause for concern. The European Union welcomes the European troika with Cuba, which took place in Paris on 16 October and was the first step in the process to resume comprehensive and open dialogue on all matters of common interest, especially human rights, with the aim of achieving tangible results.

Mr. President, thank you very much./.