

Human Rights Council - 25th session (3-28 March 2014)

Statement by Ireland in the Item 2 General Debate, HC/SG country reports

26 March 2014

Ireland thanks the Deputy High Commissioner for her presentation of the reports by the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner on Cyprus, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala and Iran.

Ireland welcomes developments in Cyprus regarding freedom of religion, such as steps towards greater freedom of movement and worship for Greek Orthodox and Muslim religious leaders on either side of the Green Line dividing the island. We recognise that the persisting division of the island continues to have consequences for a range of human rights issues, and stress the importance of addressing all human rights protection gaps.

Ireland commends Bolivia for progress made in relation to human rights, including the promulgation of Comprehensive Law No. 348 on Guaranteeing Women a Life Free from Violence. In line with the High Commissioner's recommendations, Ireland urges Bolivian authorities to adopt all necessary measures to implement Law No. 348 and to continue to work towards the promotion and protection of human rights.

Ireland also welcomes the attention paid by the High Commissioner to the profound crisis in the administration of justice in Bolivia. In relation to the police operation referred to in paragraphs 62 to 64 of the report, Ireland recalls that one of its nationals was killed during the police operation concerned. We continue to urge a thorough and impartial investigation in relation to the circumstances which led to his killing in April 2009 by the Bolivian security forces

Ireland notes the late publication of the High Commissioner's reports on the situation of human rights in Colombia and on the activities of her office in Guatemala. We attach great value to the work of the OHCHR offices in Colombia and Guatemala, both in monitoring human rights and providing technical assistance. Ireland hopes that if might be possible for future reports to be published in good time to allow for comments on their content.

Ireland thanks the Secretary-General for his report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Ireland remains very concerned at the overall human rights situation in Iran, though welcoming some recent positive developments, including the release from prison of a number of women's rights activists, political activists and journalists. We continue to be concerned that a large number of human rights defenders and journalists remain in detention. We are also deeply concerned by the reported increase in executions in Iran. Ireland urges Iran to abolish the use of the death penalty or institute a moratorium, and to release human rights defenders and journalists from detention, allowing civil society to operate in a safe and enabling environment. We also call on Iran to improve its cooperation with the Council and its Special Procedures, beginning by allowing the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the country to visit.

Thank you Mr. President.