

UN Human Rights Council, 43rd Session

Geneva, 6th March 2020

General Debate on Item 3 - Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

Oral statement delivered by the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Madam President,

IFOR outlines the urgent need to take action to implement the Right to Life which is “the supreme right from which no derogation is permitted”¹.

IFOR is heavily concerned about the situation at the Turkey-EU border. It’s unacceptable to play with human lives for political gains.

We are alarmed by the emergency measures announced by the Greek government to remove the right to claim protection² and to push refugees back to Turkey. The use of disproportionate force and violence towards migrants³ has been registered repeatedly as well as the presence of extremist groups exercising violence against migrants, local NGOs and reporters⁴.

President Sassoli of the European Parliament called for “a common European migration policy to guarantee freedom and defend human rights” and referred to “the thousands of unaccompanied minors at Europe's borders”.⁵

Europe should provide safety and protection in accordance with international law and Conventions. Those migrants at that border are waiting. And unfortunately, there are many more alike situations in other regions of the world.

IFOR is also concerned about nuclear weapons which represent an immediate threaten to our planet and its inhabitants⁶ and are incompatible with the Right to life⁷.

IFOR urges all member States to ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted⁸ in 2017.

Thank you.

¹ Parag. 2 of General Comment n. 36 of the Human Rights Committee.

² <https://www.msf.org/eu-must-address-migration-emergency-greek-islands>. Neither the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees nor EU refugee law provides any legal basis for the suspension of the reception of asylum applications.

³ <https://www.unhcr.org/>

⁴ <https://www.msf.org/eu-must-address-migration-emergency-greek-islands>

⁵ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/en/newsroom/sassoli-we-must-make-a-commitment-to-the-thousands-of-unaccompanied-minors-at-europes-borders>

⁶ Ahead of the NPT Review Conference, the Red Cross organized this past Monday a conference here in Geneva to discuss the humanitarian consequences and the growing risks of nuclear weapons.

https://www.icanw.org/hinw2020_experts_and_governments_meet_to_discuss_the_humanitarian_impact_of_nuclear_weapons?fbclid=IwAR00MtVqehZTiqVIRT96l4WM9B4XRa8hNm9V68Bd09p1Ny30Fz4-XrVanaY

⁷ General comment n. 36⁷ on article 6, adopted by the UN Human Rights Committee in 2018, concludes that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is incompatible with the Right to Life and may amount to a crime under international law.

⁸ By a vote of 122 States in favour, with one vote against and one abstention.