



Human Rights Council - 31st session
Item 4 - General Debate
Oral statement

Mr. President,

This statement is delivered by FIDH together with its member organization Human Rights in China. Within a year, **China** has detained five peaceful women's rights activists; arrested, disappeared, held incommunicado, put under house arrest or surveillance, questioned, or prevented from leaving China 317 rights defense lawyers and activists, with 28 still in custody and 16 accused of “subversion of state power” or “incitement” – heavy charges for citizens advocating for fundamental rights; and introduced restrictive laws that diminish civil society space in the name of “national security,” including the recent Counter-Terrorism Law.

The deterioration of human rights extends to Hong Kong. In late 2015, five residents associated with a private publishing house were forcibly disappeared, highlighting broader threats to freedom of the media. This Council must support the High Commissioner's call for upholding universal human rights principles, deplore China's invocation of politicized interference, and call its human rights record to account.

Mr. President,

In **Russia**, 123 NGOs have been officially labelled as “foreign agents”. More than 30 new laws severely restrict citizens' participation in public life, oppress peaceful dissent and hamper cooperation with foreign organizations. Activists, journalists, artists and human rights defenders are being harassed and prosecuted. Latest examples include the conviction of activist Ildar Dadin for single-person pickets and the liquidation of NGO “Agora” by court decision. The closure of the UN rights office in Moscow dissipates the last illusions of Russia's cooperation with international human rights protection mechanisms.

In **Turkey**, violence in the Southeast results in appalling breaches of international human rights and humanitarian law. Throughout the country, the government expands its crack down on human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists. As any opposition to the AKP government is conflated with betrayal and terrorism, the government's disregard for human rights and pluralism now threatens the rule of law.

Lastly, we remain appalled by the situation in **Egypt**, **Saudi Arabia** and **Bahrain**, and deplore this Council's continued failure to act in this regard, which has further emboldened these governments.

Thank you.