

GAMBIA: UPR OUTCOMES

Oral Statement

Check against delivery

26 March 2015

Delivered by Sonia Tancic, FIDH

Mr President,

ARTICLE 19 and FIDH urge the implementation recommendations to promote and protect freedom of expression¹ and information² as a matter of urgency.

In light of Norway's recommendation to "ensure the protection of human rights defenders, including journalists", we highlight the crucial role human rights defenders³ and journalists⁴ play. We also welcome Spain's recommendation to "abolish the death penalty"⁵ and emphasise the importance of recommendations made by Australia to "decriminalise defamation" and by Portugal to review the "Criminal Code in the area of "false information"".

We thank Member States⁶ which made recommendations to improve the human rights of LGBTI individuals. We welcome the recommendations made by USA to "ensure human rights of all Gambian citizens are respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity" and by Argentina to "guarantee to LGBTI persons the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights".

In early November 2014, dozens of LGBTI individuals were detained on charges of aggravated homosexuality. They were held beyond the 72 hours prescribed by the constitution, and tortured.

We call for an immediate end to the persecution and harassment of individuals on grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

With regards to the UN Special Procedures, we thank Member States⁷ which made recommendations to facilitate visits. We particularly note the recommendation made by Uruguay to "accept the visit of the Special Procedures [...] and allow them access without restriction"

In early November, the UN Special Rapporteurs on Torture, and on Extrajudicial Executions visited Gambia. However, they were denied access to critical detention centers where political prisoners are held and reportedly tortured.

ARTICLE 19 and FIDH call on Gambia to allow full and unrestricted access to the Special Procedures to detention centres and other key institutions.

Mr President, given the lack of progress and the Gambia's appalling human rights record, we urge Member States to increase the Council's attention on the Gambia by creating a mechanism to monitor the human rights situation in the country.

Thank you.

¹ ARTICLE 19 and FIDH note that Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain all made recommendations to promote freedom of expression.

² ARTICLE 19 and FIDH note that Chile made a recommendation to guarantee of freedom of information.

³ ARTICLE 19 and FIDH note that Canada, France, Norway, Slovakia made recommendations to protect human rights defenders.

⁴ ARTICLE 19 and FIDH note that Canada, Norway, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom made recommendations to protect journalists

⁵ ARTICLE 19 and FIDH note that Argentina, Brazil, Italy, and Spain made recommendations on the death penalty

⁶ ARTICLE 19 and FIDH note that Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, USA, and the UK all made recommendations concerning the non-discrimination and LGBT rights.

⁷ ARTICLE 19 and FIDH note that Costa Rica, Denmark, Mexico, Rwanda, Uruguay, all made recommendations concerning the facilitation of full and proper visits to Gambia by the UN Special Procedures.