



**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THIRD COMMITTEE

**STATEMENT BY MR. STEFAN BARRIGA, MINISTER, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

**ITEM 69 B/C: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS / HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES**

Madame Chair,

We would like to thank the Secretary-General and the various Special Rapporteurs for the important and insightful reports submitted under this agenda item, which include groundbreaking thematic work, such as on the right to privacy in the digital age, as well as important information on various country situations. In the words of the High Commissioner, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al-Husseini, this was a year of "devastating impact on human rights". Human rights have been under attack on many different fronts: be they violent conflicts and extremisms, authoritarian regimes, discrimination and xenophobia, but also poverty and exclusion, disease and even climate change. We concur with the High-Commissioner's assessment that "solutions can only come from more emphatic and comprehensive protection of human rights". We are particularly concerned about the rise of religious intolerance. Persecution of religious groups is becoming a regular feature of today's conflicts, and we are also witnessing a disturbing rise of anti-Semitism. Violence committed in the name of religion has taken on new proportions, mostly due to the ill-named Islamic State, which is neither Islamic, nor a State.

It is worrisome, then, that there seems to be so little consensus among us Member States on human rights questions. It is all the more striking that for many of these human rights questions, clear answers

can be found in document that the General Assembly adopted 66 years ago – the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. It is a timeless document that contains the basic values of humanity. It does not need to be reinvented or changed; in fact, it contains clear answers to many of today's challenges. The Declaration is also, as is natural for the world's "bill of rights", worded in sweeping and general terms, so as to make sure that it covers future and unforeseeable developments. As we apply and further develop these principles in concrete and specific situations, we must always stay true to the spirit of the Declaration. It puts human rights up front. If in doubt, we must err on the side of freedom, not on the side of restrictions.

An example for this is the **right to privacy in the digital age**. Neither internet nor cell phones existed in 1948, yet the Declaration has this to say: "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks." The statement could not be any clearer. Everyone has the right to privacy, everywhere in the world, and everyone everywhere has the right to be protected against such interference or attacks – not just citizens and residents of a country that may interfere with this right. It is almost as if the Declaration had anticipated the advent of the internet, and the absurdity of the claim that in cyberspace, which has no territory, only the territorial State must respect the right to privacy.

Another example: **human rights and counter-terrorism**. Liechtenstein has for many years advocated for guarantees to ensure that the global cooperation against terrorism, which remains of course an important priority for all of us, will not lead to the erosion of fundamental rights and freedoms. In practice, the fight against terrorism, both at the domestic and the international level, relies heavily on the blacklisting of individuals – from national no-fly lists to Security Council sanctions. In all of these contexts, debates continue to this day on how to address the procedural rights of the persons concerned, given that these measures are usually – and purposefully – not taken in the context of criminal law. What process is due to these individuals? Article 10 of the Declaration has a clear answer: "Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him". Blacklisting may usually not amount to a criminal charge, but it sure determines the "rights and

obligations” of an individual. Full due process, in particular through an independent tribunal, is thus required for blacklisting, be it domestically or internationally – the Universal Declaration does not distinguish in the regard.

What about **democracy**? It has become almost impossible in the context of the General Assembly resolutions to refer to democratic values, and we frequently hear claims that the manner in which a country is governed shall be a purely internal matter. Indeed, we all have differences in our constitutional systems, and none of them are perfect. Yet the Universal Declaration also sets out a number of core democratic values which must be respected by all. “Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives”, states Article 21, paragraph 1, and its third paragraph stipulates the right to periodic and genuine universal elections.

The Universal Declaration also places great emphasis on **economic, social and cultural rights**. This is worth mentioning in particular at a time when we are setting the agenda for sustainable development beyond the year 2015. We believe that human rights, and the rule of law, deserve greater recognition and more explicit mentioning in the proposed SDGs submitted by the Open Working Group. The close link between sustainable development and human rights and the rule of law is on full display in the Declaration, which includes concepts such as the right to work, the right to equal pay for equal work, the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to education.

Madame Chair,

In conclusion, we believe that the state of human rights worldwide today requires not so much “alternative approaches” to the effective enjoyment of human rights. As human rights challenges, both thematic and country-specific, are growing ever more complex, we should revert to the core values of our past commitments, as exemplified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Indeed, today’s human rights challenges are not a question of developing new norms and standards. There is sufficient guidance for governments on virtually all of these challenges. What we need most of all is for governments to take these norms and standards seriously, to apply them true to their spirit, and to fully implement them. I thank you.