

Egypt Statement  
General Debate - Item 3

Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading  
treatment or punishment

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

The 19<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council  
(5 March 2012)

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to add my delegation's voice of gratitude for the presentations delivered by Mr. Juan E. Méndez the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and Ms Margaret Sekaggya the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.

Egypt notes the work of the Special Rapporteur on torture on the thematic focus of his report, commissions of inquiry. In this regard, though part of the discussion on the topic is out of the strictures of the Special Rapporteur's work, we share the conclusion made by the Special Rapporteur specifically that COIs can play an integral role in providing impetus and eventually facilitating the formal investigation of current systems or legacies of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, and pave the way to effective and fair prosecutions. We strongly agree that where possible, national commissions of inquiry ought to be pursued, as proximity to the affected population often adds to the legitimacy and potential impact of a commission of inquiry.

That being said, we would like to listen to Mr. Mendez's elaboration on the separation of work and tasks if a commission of inquiry precedes formal criminal prosecutions, or the two mechanisms exist simultaneously, care must be taken to ensure that the work of the commission does not inhibit prosecutions in any way.

I now turn to Ms. Sekaggya's report, in which she gave details on her work and activities during the past year. The report included some important conclusions and recommendations relating to the three sub-categories of civil society mentioned in the report. Indeed, human

rights activists and defenders can play a vital role in the promotion and protection of human rights, as they are the partners with which governments cooperate in the realization of the various human rights for the peoples, and in providing the right feedback which helps in determining the measures needed to overcome challenges. At the same time, their activities have to be in line with the framework of national legislations and laws governing their work.

We also believe that a good addition to the report would have been the work of human rights defenders on issues relating to financial or economic situations, non-equitable distribution of economic benefits, and in monitoring transnational corporations. We would like the SR to elaborate on her perspective in this context.

Finally, we would like to assure the Special Rapporteur that her request for a visit to Egypt is currently seriously and positively examined.

I thank you.