



NORWAY

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61ST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

STATEMENT BY

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AMBASSADOR

**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA**

ITEM 9

**QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND
FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE
WORLD**

Geneva, 23 March 2005

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Mr. Chairman,

A clear message is conveyed in many of the reports before this Commission: there is deep concern that human rights are being violated and called in question in many different ways and in all parts of the world. I will within the short time allocated for this statement mention but a few of our concerns.

The situation in Darfur is still deplorable. Protection must be secured for the civilian population. Impunity can not be accepted, and the perpetrators behind the atrocities in Darfur must be brought to justice. The historic Peace Agreement on 9 January provides a framework for a political solution also for Darfur and other areas in Northern Sudan.

The human rights situation in Zimbabwe continues to give reason for concern. Referring to the parliamentary elections on 31 March this year, we call on the Government of Zimbabwe to uphold its obligations under the ICCPR, article 25. It is the responsibility of the Government of Zimbabwe to stop obstruction of regular political activities, and restrictions on freedom of information.

We have seen important steps towards peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Norway, however, remains seriously concerned about the humanitarian situation in the eastern part of the DRC, with grave violations of human rights.

The human rights situation in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation and, increasingly, in regions neighbouring on Chechnya, is still cause for concern. The rule of law and respect for human rights are necessary conditions for genuine reconciliation and future stability in the region. Norway welcomes attempts at reconciliation in the republic and urges the parties to intensify their efforts to put an end to the human rights violations.

The human rights situation in Belarus has in the period after the parliamentary elections, which fell significantly short of internationally accepted principles, deteriorated even further. The increasing pressure on the political opposition coupled with gradual curbing of press freedom and civil rights are examples showing that the country has left the path of democratic development. We strongly urge the authorities to respect the commitments they have undertaken as a member of the United Nations.

We call on the government of Myanmar to release all political prisoners, to improve humanitarian conditions and to address the human rights situation. Efforts should be intensified to ensure that the National Convention becomes an inclusive and democratic process for national dialogue and reconciliation.

The situation in North Korea is still cause of great concern. We call on the government to respect the rule of law and to improve the humanitarian and human rights situation for its citizens.

Norway values the opportunity to address human rights issues with the People's Republic of China through our bilateral human rights dialogue. We welcome China's inclusion of human rights protection in its constitution last year. My government attaches special importance to the preservation of cultural and religious identity of the Tibetan people. We are concerned about the imprisonment of individuals who express their views on the Internet, the lack of religious freedom and the extensive use of capital punishment. We encourage the government to abolish the "re-education through labour" system and speed up the ratification of the ICCPR.

Reputedly negative developments in the human rights situation in Iran after the elections in 2004 give reason for great concern. One particular area of concern is death penalty for minors. The recent arrests of journalists and web-loggers show that the right of expression is another area which gives reason for worry.

We are worried about the continued lack of civil and political rights in Cuba, and the persecution of peaceful dissidents, writers and journalists. The deplorable human rights situation in Cuba contributes to the country's isolation in the international community. We urge the Cuban government to release all political prisoners.

Thank you, Mr, Chairman