

H.E. Katerina SEQUENSOVA

(6)

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Human Rights Council
Item 4, General Debate - Czech Republic

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic welcomes the opportunity to address this important agenda item on human rights situations requiring the Council's attention and, in addition to this statement and the remarks made on our behalf in the EU's statement, our views will be expressed during interactive dialogues under this agenda item on the worrying human rights situations in **Eritrea, Syria, the DPRK, Belarus, CAR and South Sudan.**

We are further seriously concerned by the recent execution of death penalty in **Iran** for sharing information and providing financial assistance to a TV organization abroad. We fully share the opinion of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression, Frank La Rue, that such an extreme sentence imposed on a political activist is an alarming signal of the restrictions to freedom of expression. We are furthermore disconcerted by the number of imprisoned journalists and bloggers and by the ongoing cutting back of Internet speeds, blocking proxy servers, websites and jamming foreign satellite broadcasts.

Detentions of human rights defenders in **China** in connection with the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests raise as well our concerns. We once again call for the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees imprisoned for their political and civic activities. We remain concerned about restrictions on the freedom of expression and freedom of the press in the country, as well as about restrictions on ethnic minorities' rights.

Additionally, we are concerned about the recent legislation adopted in the **Russian Federation** urging most-read bloggers to register and abide by the same restrictions as mass media. We are also worried about the State-introduced structural changes in Russia's media environment which limit the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression and have a detrimental effect on media plurality. Furthermore, effects of the so called "foreign agents" law, which requires certain organizations to register and to declare themselves as "foreign agents", are particularly disturbing as well as other legal restrictions to freedom of assembly. We are also worried about the increasing discrimination of ethnic, national or sexual minorities at both regional and federal level. We urge the Russian Federation to adopt measures ensuring full enjoyment of freedom of expression and assembly and enabling civil society to develop freely.

Moreover, we are disturbed by the excessive use of force and arbitrary detentions in response to anti-government protests in **Venezuela** that re-erupted after the April

elections. The Government must ensure that no one is punished for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Violence and torture must be urgently and thoroughly investigated and perpetrators held accountable. An effective and reconciliatory peaceful dialogue needs to be established.