



CZECH REPUBLIC

Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations

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Third Committee – ID with Ms Irene Khan

Statement by

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Mr. Chair,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the EU.

We thank Special Rapporteur Khan for her report on freedom of opinion and expression focusing on the challenges posed by the information manipulation aiming at misleading and destabilizing our democratic societies.

The latest example of the blatant Russian aggression against Ukraine proves that in armed conflicts the information – notably when using the digital technology – can be misused as a dangerous weapon sowing confusion and inciting violence.

The right to information is vitally important to save health and lives of people and so is the freedom of opinion and expression to efficiently face propaganda and disinformation.

We condemn disinformation and other forms of information manipulation. At the same time states should not criminalize disinformation or “fake news” under the pretext of undermining the state’s prestige or national unity.

We further condemn the national security and counter-terrorism laws in Myanmar or Syria, which in disguise serve to silence critical political opponents, human rights defenders or journalists. The application of human rights standards must be upheld so as the right to protest and criticize is not infringed.

The Czech Republic has actively committed to building social resilience against information manipulation and disinformation publishing a national guide to recognize disinformation so as to secure safe digital space for equal enjoyment of freedom of opinion and expression by the civil society, and to counter hatred, violence and extremism.

Madame Special Rapporteur,

How can we get both States and third parties to armed conflicts to refrain from dissemination false information to degrade the information environment and manipulate the civil society?

I thank you.