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THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

IMADR Oral Statement, Human Rights Council 16th Session

Item 4: General Debate

14 March 2011

Mr. President,

IMADR offers its condolence to Japan and New Zealand for the tragedies they faced and are facing in the wake of earthquakes and tsunami. We wish all the people affected a speedy recovery, normalcy restored and lives rebuilt. While expressing our support to the concerned government in dealing with the damages caused by natural disasters, we also hope that Japan will review its discriminatory policy towards Okinawa, in particular the construction of US military helipads in Takae district.

Mr. President,

A lot of tragedies are also caused by human beings themselves, taking the lives of others and violating fundamental human rights. IMADR continues to urge the government of Sri Lanka to give meaningful effect to pledges given to protect human rights at various sessions of the HRC. The National Human Rights Action Plan is flawed, rushed and reframed ignoring substantive contributions made by the civil society. The sweeping changes made to the Constitution through the 18th amendment have made the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka an institution subordinate to the Executive. The Emergency Regulations and the PTA is used to harass and detain political opponents. The Attorney General Department is no more a subject of the Minister of Justice. Today the AG department is a subject of the Ministry of Defense causing alarm regarding its independence, functioning, implications for rule of law and independent functioning of the judiciary.

We condemn the assassination of the Punjab Governor, Mr. Salman Taseer, and the minority Minister, Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti, in Pakistan. We call upon the government to take all measures to protect human rights defenders working for minorities. We wish to extend our support to you for the efforts taken towards this end.

Thank you Mr. President.