

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

**IMADR Oral Statement: 32nd session of the Human Rights Council
Item 4: General Debate**

22 June 2016

Thank you Mr. President,

We express grave concern regarding the deteriorating human rights situation in Bangladesh, Iran and Egypt as international human rights NGO committed to uphold the principles of non-discrimination and human rights for all.

Reports from Bangladesh require the immediate attention and intervention of the Human Rights Council. With the crackdown on the human rights organisation Odhikar, the Government has created repressive environment for human rights defenders and organisations.¹ Furthermore, we are alarmed at the increasing violence against journalists, bloggers and media professionals which the Government has failed to investigate and prosecute perpetrators. We have received reliable reports related to the heavy surveillance on online platforms and individuals who post critical comments against the Government, the Prime Minister and her family. Since January this year, at least 7 people were arrested for online speech.²

Moreover, we are deeply concerned that hate crimes against religious minorities, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings are prevailing with impunity in Bangladesh. The Government must carry out proper investigations into the crimes and hold perpetrators accountable while providing sufficient protection measures for the population, especially for vulnerable groups.

We call upon the Government of Iran to release Professor Homa Hoodfar, a Canadian-Iranian anthropologist, who was arbitrary arrested and put in prison in Tehran on 6 June without clear charge.³

We firmly affirm the right of human rights defenders and their full engagement with the Human Rights Council. We call upon the Human Rights Council to ensure the civil society space to hear the voices of victims and those working with affected groups. We are concerned by the attempts of some States to silence NGOs. We stand with solidarity with Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) in its intervention on behalf of human rights defenders and victims in Egypt. We call upon the Human Rights Council to condemn any oppressive acts and guarantee that NGOs can freely voice their opinions without fear in keeping with civil society participation in the United Nations.

Thank you Mr. President.

¹ Odhikar (May 27, 2016), "A new phase of attack on Odhikar by the Anti Corruption Commission", available at: <http://odhikar.org/a-new-phase-of-attack-on-odhikar-by-the-anti-corruption-commission/>

² Ibid (June 1, 2016), "Human Rights Monitoring Report – May 1-31, 2016"

³ "Academics and Authors In Support of Professor Homa Hoodfar", available at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1z6ll5q8InnCcqp_9JDeYBodVMqMDaRV7vDYQqa8cyaM/viewform#responses