Quaker United Nations Office

FWCC Oral Statement to be delivered at the 39th session of the Human Rights Council

Item 6 General Debate

Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers) welcomes this opportunity to highlight some of the learning from our report "Integrating Human Rights and Sustaining Peace through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)".[1] This follows the call in the twin resolutions on sustaining peace for Member States participating in the UPR process 'to consider the human rights dimensions of peacebuilding'.[2]

As human rights violations are often at the root of destructive conflict, the UPR process and its recommendations constitute important entry points for collaboration with governments and other stakeholders to address violations, that if left unaddressed, could lead to violent conflict. The value of the UPR as a source of early warning and prevention is increasingly being recognised. Our work has demonstrated, however, that only a few of the UPR elements intentionally address human rights violations with the aim of "sustaining peace"; whether it be in the reports submitted to the UPR by States under Review, the UN and Civil Society, or the OHCHR compilations and existing UPR recommendations.

This is in part because peacebuilding actors are not systematically involved in the elaboration of the three reports on which the UPR is based. Therefore, the actors may unintentionally impede the integration of human rights-based conflict analysis and inhibit the potential of the UPR to ensure that human rights recommendations are articulated, accepted and implemented to sustain peace. The effectiveness of the UPR to sustain peace continues to be hampered by: concerns about the motives of closer coordination between human rights and peacebuilding; the lack of understanding across silos undermining work on prevention; and concerns about additional workloads in light of current limited resources.

Based on this analysis we recommend:
-   the inclusion of conflict analysis throughout the process.
-   and the use of information in the reports for early warning of risks of violent conflict.

We also call on all States to make and implement recommendations that intentionally link technical assistance to address human rights violations that may lead to escalating grievances or violent conflict. These recommendations would facilitate a shift in mindset and practice to improve prevention.

The costs are too high for continued fragmentation and siloed approaches.

ENDS

Delivered by Luca Motta, Programme Assistant (Peace & Disarmament)

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[1] QUNO, April 2018, Integrating Human Rights and Sustaining Peace Project Report: Exploring the Universal Periodic Review. Full report available here: https://bit.ly/2NA2WnU

[2] 'Twin' General Assembly resolution 70/262 & Security Council Resolution 2282, April 2016. Full text available here: https://bit.ly/2xb873g