

INTERVENTION

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Agenda Item 6 : Consideration of future opportunities and initiatives for raising awareness of the Declaration, and ensuring its practical implementation

Thank you Madame Chair.

My name is Kitprasert Nopparat. I represent the People's Empowerment Foundation, an NGO based in Bangkok, Thailand.

While we are now addressing our views and concerns before the Forum, some of our friends both in this room and at home are not able to speak, for fear of being threatened by their government. Our friends, minority rights activists, who have put their efforts to protect and promote the issues of minority rights have become one of the most vulnerable groups facing danger and violence in their daily life.

In the past, minority rights defenders attending this Forum, did not feel they could safely raise their concerns in the Forum and have returned home carrying threats from authorities in their countries.

Minority rights defenders face threats to themselves for the activities they conduct for the protection of minority rights. Malayu Muslim Minority activists working in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces, for instance, have been closely monitored by state officials. Both 'Martial Law' and the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency 2005² give the military sweeping power leading to several cases of arbitrary detention,

² Available at <http://www.icrc.org/ihl-nat.nsf/6fa4d35e5e3025394125673e00508143>

/4c3b530c7d241e4ec12571060047487a/VILE/Martial%20Law%20Order%20-%
20Thailand%20-%20EN.pdf

'Available at <http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Emergency> Decree_on_Public Administration_in_State_of
Ennergency,_BE_2548_(2005)

torture, and various forms of human rights violation such as a famous case of Somchai Neelapaijit, Muslim lawyer who was abducted or the recent case of well-known Yala student activists arrested by soldiers from Special Task Force ¹¹³.

Madame Chair,

We very much appreciate the Declaration and efforts made by this Forum. Nevertheless, we are deeply concerned with the lack of attention in the Recommendations paid to issues related to "minorities" who are human rights defenders or those that defend the rights of minorities.

Recalling Article 1.1 of the UNDM, we reaffirm the significance of Draft Recommendation no. 20 and urge the Forum to prioritize not only protection but also promotion of minority rights. We also urge the Forum to extend Draft Recommendation no.20 to address the protection of minority human rights defenders and ensure that their voices can be heard without threat to their lives.

Taking note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/7, Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/33, also of Declaration on human rights defenders⁴, we urge the Forum to adopt Draft recommendation no.20 as herein revised:

*Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the Declaration and other minority rights standards and instruments. States should recognize explicitly the diversity within their respective societies, including with respect to race, ethnicity, religion and language. States should demonstrate their commitment to the protection **and promotion of minority rights and the protection of the rights of minority human rights defenders** by ensuring that minority issues are consistently integrated into and reflected in governmental policies and practice.*

We are hopeful that we can go back home without our names on the blacklist of our

⁴Available at

[http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/dsj/3261?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+deepsouthwatch+\(deepsouthwatch.org\)](http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/dsj/3261?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+deepsouthwatch+(deepsouthwatch.org))

See A/RES/53/144

respective governments and we look forward to hearing more voices and concerns from those who cannot be with us here today.

Thank you Madame Chair.

