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Universal Periodic Review

Written statement* submitted by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 February 2013]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

The need for a universal mechanism for cases of persistent non-cooperation

On the 29th of January, for the first time a State did not attend the Universal Periodic Review. The principles of universality and accountability to human rights are thus at stake and their preservation will depend on the responsible and prompt response from the Human Rights Council.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is deeply concerned for the integrity of this human rights mechanism that we have found vital for civil society, as it is the most comprehensive and universal tool for human rights accountability.

WILPF has been warning the of the danger in setting an inappropriate precedent for non-cooperative States based on political considerations as this would open a door for delaying the process or even jeopardising it.

Despite the language in the presidential statement, which deals with a first absence, it is still the case that there is a lacuna as to how to deal with cases of persistent non-cooperation. This must be addressed, and an effective mechanism must be established to ensure transparency and accountability in the process. WILPF argues that such a mechanism should incorporate the potential for a Review in absentia.

In the current case of Israel, having regard to the principle of equality of treatment, Israel's UPR must not be indefinitely delayed. A clear message must be sent that, should they decide not to immediately resume their cooperation, the review in absentia will take place and a date should be set by the Council as soon as possible. Civil society should be given the opportunity to update their reports, so as not to render them obsolete due to this delay.

Hence the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom:

- Urges the Human Rights Council to uphold Israel's UPR at the earliest opportunity. Should the Israeli delegation not be present, the UPR should be held in absentia.
- Calls for the establishment of an unambiguous, firm and universal mechanism for cases of non-cooperation that would encourage every Member State not to abandon the UPR process, including the use of the review in absentia.