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Written statement* submitted by Youth Parliament for SDG, 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.

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* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Responses to Human Rights Crises under Undemocratic Regimes

Introduction

We must address the critical challenges posed by human rights crises, especially in conflict zones and under undemocratic regimes. Our discussion today focuses on the impact of conflict on democracy and human rights, the role of international humanitarian interventions, adherence to international human rights standards, and the promotion of cultural and religious pluralism.

Conflict Zones: The Impact on Democracy and Human Rights

In conflict zones, the consequences for democracy and human rights are profound and devastating. Wars and conflicts create environments where democratic institutions are eroded, and the protection of human rights becomes nearly impossible.

1. Erosion of Democratic Structures:

- In conflict zones, democratic structures often become the first casualties. Governments may impose states of emergency, curfews, and other restrictive measures that limit democratic participation and infringe on individual freedoms.
- Recommendations: To counteract this, it is vital to support and strengthen democratic institutions even during conflict, ensuring that they can continue to function and protect citizens' rights.

2. Human Rights Violations:

- Conflict zones are breeding grounds for human rights abuses, including unlawful killings, torture, and forced displacement. The lack of accountability in such environments often allows these violations to continue unchecked.
- Recommendations: The international community must prioritize the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and reporting human rights abuses in conflict areas. Furthermore, it is crucial to support efforts to bring perpetrators of war crimes and human rights violations to justice through international legal avenues such as the International Criminal Court.

Humanitarian Interventions: Protecting Human Rights in Undemocratic Regimes

Humanitarian interventions play a critical role in protecting human rights, particularly in undemocratic regimes where governments may be either unwilling or unable to safeguard the rights of their citizens.

1. The Role of International Interventions:

- International interventions, whether through diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions, or military involvement, can be instrumental in preventing or halting gross human rights violations.
- Recommendations: The international community must adopt a more proactive stance in intervening where human rights are under threat. This includes supporting efforts to build coalitions that can respond rapidly to emerging crises and ensuring that interventions are guided by the principles of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

2. Balancing Sovereignty and Human Rights:

- While respecting national sovereignty is important, it must not be used as a shield to protect regimes that perpetrate or allow gross human rights abuses.

- **Recommendations:** It is essential to reinforce the understanding that human rights are universal and that the international community has a moral and legal obligation to intervene when a state fails to protect its citizens.

International Human Rights Standards

The global community must ensure that domestic laws and practices align with international human rights norms, as enshrined in treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This alignment is crucial for safeguarding individual rights and preventing abuses that can arise from unchecked power, including from religious institutions.

1. Adherence to International Norms:

- The adoption and implementation of international human rights standards at the national level provide a robust framework for the protection of individual rights. This is particularly important in contexts where domestic laws may be influenced by religious or ideological considerations that conflict with human rights principles.
- **Recommendations:** Countries should be encouraged to ratify and implement key international human rights treaties and to establish independent bodies to monitor compliance with these standards. Additionally, states should be urged to incorporate human rights education into their national curricula to foster a culture of respect for human rights.

2. Protection Against Overreach by Religious Institutions:

- Religious institutions, while important in many societies, should not be allowed to infringe upon the rights of individuals or dictate state policies that contravene international human rights norms.
- **Recommendations:** Governments must ensure that religious freedom is balanced with the protection of individual rights, particularly the rights of women, minorities, and other vulnerable groups. This includes enacting and enforcing laws that prevent discrimination and protect the secular nature of the state.

Promoting Pluralism

A truly democratic society is one that embraces cultural and religious pluralism, fostering an environment where diverse beliefs can coexist peacefully.

1. Cultural and Religious Pluralism:

- Pluralism is the bedrock of a healthy democracy. It involves creating a society where individuals are free to express their cultural and religious identities without fear of persecution or discrimination.
- **Recommendations:** Governments should implement policies that celebrate diversity and promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue. This can be achieved through educational programs, community initiatives, and legislation that protects against hate speech and discrimination.

2. Preventing Enforced Conformity:

- In some societies, there is a tendency to enforce cultural or religious conformity, often leading to the marginalization or persecution of those who do not adhere to the dominant belief system.
- **Recommendations:** States must resist pressures to enforce conformity and instead focus on creating inclusive societies where all voices are heard and respected. This includes protecting the rights of atheists, agnostics, and those who hold minority religious views.

Conclusion

The challenges posed by human rights crises, particularly in conflict zones and under undemocratic regimes, are significant. However, by adhering to international human rights standards, promoting pluralism, and supporting democratic institutions, we can create a world where human rights are respected and protected, even in the most difficult circumstances.

Integrating diverse religious and cultural beliefs within a democratic framework requires careful balance. By promoting secular governance, encouraging dialogue, and protecting individual rights, we can ensure that democracy and human rights coexist harmoniously, fostering societies that are both just and inclusive.

The Human Rights Council has a crucial role in guiding this process, and we must seize this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to these principles. Together, we can build a future where democracy, human rights, and pluralism flourish in every corner of the globe.
