Human Rights Council, 51st session.

Universal Periodic review,

working group 41 to 43

Geneva, 17th of November 2022

Dear life participants,
Dear Nonkilling upholders,
Friends and colleagues,

The **51st session of the Human Rights Council** was a lively and busy time. Among many issues addressed, some with success, the Council has nominated a special rapporteur for the situation of human rights in Russia. Yet it failed to program a debate on the human rights situation in China. More detailed reports of the session can be found on the Council’s [page](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session51/regular-session) - with the resolutions adopted; or on the [page](https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/hrc51-civil-society-presents-key-takeaways-from-human-rights-council) of the International Service for Human Rights, or the one of the Universal Rights Group [here](https://www.universal-rights.org/urg-human-rights-council-reports/report-on-the-51st-session-of-the-human-rights-council/).

In our fields of work, broadly the rights to life and ensuing peace, our main concern was indeed the situation in **Ukraine**.
We did *two vibrant calls*: one for the respect of life in all situations and for the protection of those who refuse to kill, deserters and conscientious objectors alike, as well as for all those that use non-violent means in their strives for life, peace and progress.
In the second statement, delivered jointly with IFOR and CPTI, we recalled the illegality of war, in general as regarding this ongoing situation. We insisted on the very limited scope of the exceptions provided therefore – namely legitime defense under the supervision of the Security Council and peace operations – none of them being applicable here, as the International Court of Justice confirmed by ordering the immediate cessations of hostilities. In the same statement, we called for the pursuance of the financing of peace process ongoing at the UN’s General Assembly, which was confirmed since. The idea is to have all States specifically paying for peace through the UN general budget.

Thanks to the participation of Elina Viitasaari, our nonkilling gender focus, we expressed our concerns regarding **Women and Girls in Afghanistan** highlighting, as an urgent call for change, the rise of the suicide rate among them, and citing as an example of non-violent resistance people keeping schools open for girls. Thus, we recalled that it is the voices of the first concerned that is the most important and which bears some of the best solutions.

Jointly with “Release Eritrea”, we delivered a statement on the situation in **Ethiopia, Tigray and Eritrea** highlighting violations and forced recruitment.

During the interactive dialogue with the **International Expert for the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order,** we made a statement calling for “generosity”, as being a key value for our future: humanity is immensely rich but needs better sharing methods. We were also invited to a side event with the Expert in which we recalled, evermore, the infrastructures and policies needed for peace to prevail.

At every session, resolutions advancing human rights are adopted and as an NGO, we do participate in the negotiations. Every four years (though this time one year, pandemic), a resolution is proposed and now adopted regarding **conscientious objection to military service**. As a result, best practices regarding this right will be highlighted during a half day intersessional meeting of the Council next year.

[The resolution](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2FRES%2F51%2F6&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False) is simple but comprehensive, thematic without naming any country and was thus adopted by consensus. As an NGO, we recalled that though it stands under the freedom of conscience, the right to objection is also a refusal to kill under the right to life. We also mentioned that some persons, me included, object to taxation for military budgets, preferring to see their monies going to peace funds.

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For the peer-to-peer **Universal Periodic Review** of the human rights situation in each country, as we are presently writing this report **Indonesia** is passing in front of the working group. Putting all our energy on a single issue, we recommended to Indonesia the swift ratification on the Genocide convention. Armenia, that systematically does a similar recommendation has indeed addressed this demand to their delegation, and we hope that this time it will be accepted, and duly implemented.

For the upcoming reviews in February next year, we made a large analysis of the situation of human rights in **Japan** commending great dispositions towards life and peace, but also pinpointing some major lacks in the life’s constitution (ratification of the genocide convention and death penalty), thus encouraging for improvements. We also made a short submission for **Switzerland**, highlighting some policies that – though they should not! –

augment poverty.

We also made two new submissions for the Bahamas and Botswana.
With our submission for the **Bahamas**, we inaugurate a new campaign for the universal decriminalization of suicide. We intend to make a submission to every State that burdens suicides with extra punishments. A list of such States is available [here](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicide_legislation).
For **Botswana**, this is our second submission after the one done in 2017. Regarding the ratification of the genocide convention, as the country has been “considering” doing this since 2013 and accepted to do so in 2017, why delay more? We repeated, insisting, our call to see this ratification urgently done. We also had to notice that homicide statistics were lacking, or when present differing from usual standards. We do hope to have clarifications on this. Botswana seems to be wanting to change its constitution, a civic and participative process we largely encourage as so many constitutions lag on minimum standards of living and life preservation, individually as universally.

All the produced documents are available [here](https://nonkilling.org/center/nonkilling-monitoring-programs/nonkilling-activity-at-the-un/).

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Lively yours,

Christophe Barbey and CGNK’s United Nations team.