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Human Rights Council  
Eleventh Session

Item 6  
"Consideration of UPR reports"

Oral Intervention by Amnesty International on Malaysia

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes many of the recommendations made by states to Malaysia, particularly calls to protect refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers; to end the practice of whipping for immigration offences; to abolish the death penalty and corporal punishment; and to reform restrictive laws used to suppress peaceful political dissent.

We are disappointed that Malaysia did not support many of these key recommendations and urge the government to re-consider these in due course. Malaysia's rejection of recommendations to further the right to peaceful assembly is of particular concern in light of recent arrests of up to 160 people, including lawyers and opposition parliamentarians, for illegal assembly. Although most were subsequently released without charge, the government appears to use arbitrary arrests of its critics as a way of suppressing peaceful dissent.

Mr. President,

We regret that, following consideration, Malaysia decided not to become a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, as recommended by many states. Despite assurances by Malaysia in the review that it does not criminalize refugees and asylum seekers, Amnesty International is concerned at reports of arrest, detention and deportation of refugees and asylum-seekers, including those issued with UNHCR documentation. Moreover, the government's assurances that conditions in immigration detention centres are adequate must be re-examined in light of reports of the recent deaths of two detainees from Myanmar.

Finally, we regret Malaysia's rejection of a recommendation to ratify the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. As the largest receiving country of migrant workers in Southeast Asia, we urge that Malaysia reconsider this stand.

Thank you, Mr. President