

46th session of the Human Rights Council

High-level segment

Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Mr. Jeppe KOFOD

Mrs. President, excellencies, colleagues,

The global pandemic has highlighted the importance of multilateral cooperation.

The importance of human rights.

And the importance of this Council's responsibility to uphold all human rights for everyone.

As Council members, we must adhere and aspire to the highest human rights standards. Membership must never be a shield against critique. Rather, the Council must be a watchdog over human rights violations. Wherever they may occur.

Mrs. President,

Let me highlight a few specific country situations of great concern while also referring to the Danish statement under the relevant Council agenda items.

In **Belarus**, our continued calls on the authorities to immediately cease all violence have gone unanswered. Nevertheless, all perpetrators of these grave human rights violations must be brought to justice, and accountability must be ensured.

In **Russia**, the human rights situation is continuously worsening. We urge the authorities to guarantee the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of speech and to release all peaceful protesters immediately.

I strongly condemn the military coup in **Myanmar**. My message is clear: release arrested leaders, restore civilian government, and respect human rights and the rule of law. Denmark stands with the people of Myanmar in their fight for democracy.

Fundamental rights continue to be violated in **Hong Kong** despite promises to protect human rights and to live up to legally binding international obligations. The implementation of a national security law goes well beyond questions of national security. The EU and Denmark call on the authorities in **China** and in Hong Kong to allow democratic freedoms and rights to be restored and peacefully exercised.

In **Ethiopia**, concerns remain around allegations of human rights violations in Tigray. Denmark encourages and supports impartial and transparent investigations into these allegations to ensure accountability.

Mrs. President,

We see increasing violations regarding freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly and freedom of information.

We see attacks on human rights defenders and shrinking civic space.

It is deeply worrying, which is why we have increased the Danish engagement to promote an enabling space for civil society and protect human rights defenders.

We need to preserve a safe, open and interoperable internet based on the respect for human rights and international law. Only cooperation between states, tech-companies and civil society will solve this common challenge. The Danish strategy for Technological Diplomacy reaffirms our commitment to this work.

Despite the absolute prohibition of torture, reports of the use of torture persist. Denmark continues this fight, and presents a resolution on the role and responsibilities of police and law enforcement at this session.

We stand firm on women and girls' right to decide over their life, body and future. We will never tolerate going back on years of gains. And we must include women and girls when we build back from COVID-19. To this end, I am proud that we co-lead the SRHR Action Coalition.

Mrs. President,

We remain deeply committed to human rights and look forward to our last year as members of this important Council.

Thank you very much.