

COC Netherlands
Item 3 – Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of
Expression
and Violence against Women
23rd session of the Human Rights Council

- delivered by Yahia Zaidi

Thank you Mr. President,

COC Netherlands and Akham would like to thank the Special Rapporteurs on freedom of expression and violence against women for their work.

Freedom of expression is an essential component for democracy. In compliance with a country's international human rights obligations, states are obliged to promote, protect and respect these rights. Algeria and Egypt are in violation of these rights.

Algeria aims, to silence the voices of dissent and critics and denies Algerians full exercise of their rights to freedom of expression. The government can deny an organization registration for political, religious, or discriminatory reasons including on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, and also restricts NGOs from receiving foreign funding.

Furthermore, freedom of expression and assembly in Egypt has been repressed because the message conveyed does not please the authorities. Women in Egypt face brutal attacks and sexual violence, with impunity, simply for exercising their right to organise freely in public spaces.

This has reached unprecedented levels during the commemoration of the second anniversary of the revolution. 19 cases of gang rapes were committed against women in Tahrir Square and its vicinity; in 2 of these cases, the rapes were committed using a knife and a sharp metal rod. No investigations have so far been conducted and no one was held accountable.

We thank the Special Rapporteurs for their efforts to ensure the rights of all persons to freedom of expression, without fear of violence or reprisals, and without discrimination on any grounds, including sexual orientation or gender identity.

Thank you.