

*NGOs in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*

Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada  
Item: Item 3: General Debate  
Date: 1 July 2019  
Speaker: Ms. H el ene Ramos dos Santos

**Oral Statement to the 41st Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), International Bar Association, Lawyers for Lawyers, NGOs in special consultative status**

**Re: Attacks on lawyers in China, Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Turkey**

Mr. President,

In countries where lawyers are imprisoned and prosecuted for defending rights, there is no equal access to justice or protection of rights.

In China, numerous human rights lawyers have been disappeared, arbitrarily imprisoned, tortured, or disbarred.<sup>1</sup> In Saudi Arabia, lawyer Waleed Abu al-Khair is one of hundreds of rights defenders arbitrarily convicted and detained.<sup>2</sup> In Turkey, 311 lawyers have been arbitrarily convicted and detained since July 2016.<sup>3</sup> In the Philippines, 40 jurists are among the "staggering number" of victims of extrajudicial killings since July 2016. Last month, eleven Special Procedures mandate holders called for an independent investigation of grave abuses in the Philippines.<sup>4</sup>

We urge Council to:

1. Insist that these States halt and remedy violations and comply with remedial recommendations of Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures;
2. Ensure that all Council members, including China, Philippines and Saudi Arabia, "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights" as required by GA Resolution 60/251 or face suspension from membership; and
3. Establish an independent investigation into human rights violations in the Philippines.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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## References

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its eighty-fourth session, 24 April–3 May 2019: Opinion No. 15/2019 concerning Yu Wensheng (China), at [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session84/A\\_HRC\\_WGAD\\_2019\\_15.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session84/A_HRC_WGAD_2019_15.pdf); Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its eighty-second session, 20–24 August 2018: Opinion No. 62/2018 concerning Wang Quanzhang, Jiang Tianyong and Li Yuhan (China), at [https://www.nchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/WGAD-Opinion\\_Wang-Quanzhang-Jiang-Tianyong-and-Li-Yuhan-62-2018-1.pdf](https://www.nchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/WGAD-Opinion_Wang-Quanzhang-Jiang-Tianyong-and-Li-Yuhan-62-2018-1.pdf).

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<sup>2</sup> LRWC, Saudi Arabia: Persistent gross, widespread and systematic violations of human rights while a member of the UN Human Rights Council: Joint Written Statement to the 39th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, 31 August 2019, at <https://www.lrwc.org/saudi-arabia-persistent-gross-widespread-and-systematic-violations-of-human-rights-while-a-member-of-the-un-human-rights-council/>

<sup>3</sup> See Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Report on the impact of the state of emergency on human rights in Turkey, including an update on the South-East, March 2018, at [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/TR/2018-03-19\\_Second\\_OHCHR\\_Turkey\\_Report.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/TR/2018-03-19_Second_OHCHR_Turkey_Report.pdf) and “Incarceration of Turkish Lawyers: Unjust Arrests and Convictions (2016-2019), June 2019,” Arrested Lawyers Initiative, at <https://arrestedlawyers.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/report-june.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> OHCHR, UN human rights experts call for independent probe into Philippines violations, 7 June 2019, at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24679&LangID=E>.