



STÄNDIGE MISSION  
DES FÜRSTENTUMS LIECHTENSTEIN

MISSION PERMANENTE  
DE LA PRINCIPAUTÉ DE LIECHTENSTEIN

PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

37<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council

High-Level Segment

**Statement by H.E. Ms. Aurelia Frick**

**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein**

Geneva, 26 February 2018

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Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of this Council.

I also wish to express my strong support for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights – Prince Zeid. I have closely followed his work of the last years and admired his outspoken way on many issues that are dear to me. Liechtenstein has great respect for the principled and impartial manner in which he has carried out his mandate.

Four weeks ago I was sitting on this panel (behind me) on the occasion of Liechtenstein's third Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Going through the UPR is a challenge that we take seriously and that involves many parts of our administration. While we can proudly say that our people enjoy high human rights standards, we also know that changes to the better are possible and necessary. Sometimes, outside pressure is needed to achieve such changes. One of the areas where we still need to do better is gender equality – an area where we have internationally seen a disturbing trend: Commitments remain unfulfilled, strategies have turned into empty promises and achievements that nobody questioned 20 years ago are suddenly under attack. In Liechtenstein, the level of political participation has decreased in the last years: today out of 25 parliamentarians, we only have three women. Where does this trend lead us? And what about the gender pay gap? The Sustainable Development Goals are the most powerful reminder that full gender equality is an indispensable investment in the future of our societies – rather than a demand of political correctness.

Mr. President,

Active participation of civil society is essential in the context of the UPR and for safeguarding human rights more generally – in Liechtenstein, in any country. I call on all States to end acts of reprisals against those reporting on human rights violations and to provide a safe environment for human rights defenders.

Mr. President,

Systematic human rights violations are often a warning sign for the erosion of peace and security and of imminent armed conflict. The Security Council in particular should act in a preventive manner and live up to its responsibility to fight mass atrocity crimes.

115 States have now joined the ACT Code of Conduct on which my country has had the honour to lead. This is a strong majority of States which will undoubtedly continue to grow. The situations in Myanmar, Yemen und Syria in particular have been characterized by a massively inadequate response by the Security Council and, with respect to Syria in particular, the use of the veto has played a devastating role in this. I strongly hope that this weekend's decision on a nationwide ceasefire will be implemented immediately. We are however concerned that some of the parties to the conflict seem not to be committed to the cease fire decision.

On 17<sup>th</sup> July, we will be celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Having a Court with jurisdiction over the most serious crimes under international law is an enormous achievement, of which we should be proud. But we also must protect it and help it grow further. Another key challenge is standing up for the Court when it comes under political attack – as it is bound to sometimes occupying political positions, given that it investigates crimes committed by individuals who yield significant power. We have helped coordinate such efforts for a number of years in the framework of the Informal Ministerial Network (IMN) (which I preside) to provide political support for the court.

17 July will also be the day when the Court can commence its exercise of jurisdiction over the crime of aggression – the fourth core crime under the Rome Statute. We currently witness an alarming erosion of the respect for international law and of real prospects of armed conflicts between States. There could be no more powerful statement in favour of the rule of law than criminalizing the most serious forms of the illegal use of force. We hope that as many States as possible will join us in ratifying the Kampala Amendments.

Mr. President

The atrocities in Syria are well documented. The armed conflict has been raging for seven long years. Given the scale and magnitude of the crimes committed, accountability is of the essence for a peaceful future Syria. The one glimmer of hope we have been able to give to the victims of the conflict is the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM).

We were proud to take the lead on creation of this novel mechanism and are pleased to see that it enjoys broad political support. To date, 39 countries from all regions have contributed to its financing and we hope that many more will join.

In addition, we should all share evidence available within our systems on crimes committed in Syria with the mechanism, in order to enable it to advance expeditiously with the preparation of case files.

Mr. President,

In December, we are celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It constitutes customary international law and is one of the proudest achievements in the history of multilateral norm-setting. And yet, today many of its basic tenets are violated routinely and sometimes systematically around the globe. And in spite of our enormous progress in creating more human rights instruments, we should take this anniversary as a moment to pause, to recommit ourselves fully to what we set out to do when we first created the United Nations.

Perhaps the most outrageous human rights crisis of our time is modern slavery – a scourge that was considered a tragic legacy from the past when the Universal Declaration was drafted. And yet, millions and millions of individuals live in conditions that amount to slavery, and an estimated 150 billion US dollars are generated as part of what is one of the big illegal business models in today's world. We are in the process of setting up a Commission that will deal with the role of the financial sector to help eradicate human trafficking and modern slavery, drawing from the vast experience and know-how of our financial center. This will bring together both our commitment to the 2030 Agenda and our commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I thank you.