

Human Rights Council – 23rd Special Session

The human rights situation in Nigeria in light of the terrorist attacks and human rights abuses and violations committed by the terrorist group Boko Haram

Statement by Ireland

1 April 2015

Mr. President,

Ireland would like to add some remarks to those made on our behalf in the statement of the European Union.

Ireland has consistently condemned the senseless acts of violence being perpetrated by Boko Haram. As the brutal actions of this group continue to spread beyond north-eastern Nigeria, Boko Haram has grown to represent a threat to the peace and security of the whole region, including Cameroon, Chad and Niger. The regional nature of the threat is deeply worrying.

Most recently, we have been appalled by the discovery of at least 70 bodies in a mass grave on the outskirts of the town of Damasak in Northern Nigeria, days after it was freed from Boko Haram forces. We are appalled also by recent reports that more than 400 women and children were abducted by Boko Haram at the time Damasak was freed. Nor have we forgotten the abduction of more than 200 young girls from a school in the town of Chibok almost a year ago.

Primary responsibility for the security situation in Nigeria rests, of course, with the Nigerian Government. It is the responsibility of the Government, as well as of its military authorities, to create a secure environment in which the human rights of all are promoted and protected, including in those areas affected by Boko Haram. We commend Nigeria for having issued a standing invitation to the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council on 25 October 2013. In this regard, we strongly encourage Nigeria to consider the valuable guidance, support and expertise which the Special Procedures could provide in promoting and protecting human rights while countering the terrorist activities of Boko Haram. We will

continue to support the Nigerian authorities in their efforts to counter further radicalisation and terrorism and to promote full respect for human rights.

It is also important to highlight the serious humanitarian situation both within Nigeria and neighbouring countries, which is a direct result of the violent activities of Boko Haram. It is estimated that since 2011 over 1.5 million people have been displaced within Nigeria and that in addition some 150,000 Nigerians have fled to neighbouring countries. We encourage all States to assist the Nigerian Government, as well as other Governments in the region, in responding to the humanitarian crisis caused by the terrorist activities of Boko Haram. In this context, last week Ireland dispatched €900,000 worth of food relief to provide assistance to thousands of vulnerable Nigerian families, who have sought refuge in the Minawao refugee camp in northern Cameroon.

Mr President,

It is entirely appropriate that we have had an opportunity to consider here in the Human Rights Council the effect on human rights which the ongoing atrocities being committed by Boko Haram are having. We hope that today's discussion will renew the focus on ensuring accountability, combating impunity and safeguarding the protection of human rights for all in the areas affected by Boko Haram.