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**UN Human Rights Council
Twenty-sixth session, 10-27 June 2014**

**Item 6:
Consideration of UPR reports**

CYPRUS

Mr. President,

In Cyprus, every year hundreds of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers are arbitrarily deprived of their liberty.

Amnesty International is concerned that the authorities detain irregular migrants without first considering less coercive measures, in breach of international law and domestic legislation.¹ Individuals, who cannot be deported within a reasonable time, often find themselves arbitrarily detained for prolonged periods.

The organization is particularly alarmed by cases of arbitrary detention of asylum-seekers, including Syrian nationals, despite official policy to not return them to Syria, and of mothers for immigration purposes without due consideration of the best interest of the child.

Amnesty International therefore welcomes recommendations by states during the review to ensure respect for the human rights of irregular migrants during deportation procedures² and urges Cyprus to act swiftly on these and to ensure that less restrictive alternatives to detention are always considered first and given preference. We also urge Cyprus to immediately release irregular migrants when their removal from Cyprus cannot be implemented within a reasonable time. Detention of asylum-seekers for immigration purposes should be used only in exceptional circumstances.

Mr. President,

¹ Law 153(I)/2011, Article 18 ΠΣΤ

² A/HRC/26/14 recommendations 114.53 (United States of America) and 114.89 (France)

Amnesty International welcomes recommendations by a number of states regarding the conditions in facilities used for immigration detention purposes.³

While the organization welcomes that the Nicosia Central Prison is no longer used for immigration detention purposes, we are concerned that detainees in the Menogia pre-removal detention facility are forced to live in cramped conditions and only allowed outside the building for 2.5 hours each day.

We call on Cyprus to ensure that conditions in immigration detention facilities conform to international human right standards and that the decision to detain irregular migrants is reviewed periodically by a judicial body on the basis of clear criteria set out in law.

Thank you, Mr. President,

³ A/HRC/26/14 recommendations 114.51 (Djibouti), 114.52 (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and 114.53 (United States of America)