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UN Watch Statement
Human Rights Council, 28th Session
Item 6: UPR Report on Kazakhstan
19 March 2015

Delivered by Ziman Gao

Thank you, Mr. President.

UN Watch is concerned with the human rights situation in Kazakhstan, where a government dominates the political scene by detaining political opposition, silencing free media and restricting independent civil society.

UN Watch is disturbed to find that many important recommendations have been rejected by Kazakhstan. These relate to the freedoms of assembly, expression, religion, and include recommendations to modify the trade union law that unduly restricts freedom of association, revise the mandatory registration rules of religious groups, and decriminalize defamation of public officials.

There have been numerous reports of Kazakh authorities closing down media, detaining worshippers who practice religion outside state control, and jailing opposition leaders such as Vladimir Kozlov, who remains in detention after an unfair trial. We call upon the government to end such measures, review Kozlov's case, and allow for media and civil society to operate freely.

UN Watch is also concerned with the rejection of measures to guarantee the exclusion by the judiciary of evidence obtained under torture. If the government is serious in its commitment to end torture, it has a responsibility to investigate all allegations of torture at penal colonies, take all necessary measures to protect prisoners' health, and ensure full and adequate reparation.

Finally, Kazakhstan has rejected recommendations relating to reducing inequalities between men and women regarding labor conditions, especially remuneration gaps. The gap between pensions of men and women is 30% on average. We urge the government to amend the Labor law and take concrete steps to further promote gender equality.

Mr. President,

UN Watch regrets that the most meaningful recommendations in the report before us have been rejected by the government of Kazakhstan. We hope the Council will stand up to its founding principles and protect the rights of the citizens of Kazakhstan.

Thank you.