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International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH)
Unione Forense Per la Tutela dei Diritti dell'Uomo (UFDTU)
Joint Oral Statement

Item 6
Universal Periodic Review of ~~Iran~~ Italy

The International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH) and its affiliated league in Italy the Union of Jurists for the Protection of Human Rights (Unione Forense Per la Tutela dei Diritti dell'Uomo, UFDTU) express their satisfaction for the high number of pertinent recommendations addressed to Italy. However, our organisations would like to draw the attention of the Council on three areas of concern which have not been addressed or for which the replies of Italy were insufficient.

The first area relates to the marked increase of racist and discriminating behaviour against migrants as well as against the Roma and Sinti population. The Italian Government maintains that statistical data do not confirm this tendency. However, the numerous accidents of the last two years demonstrate that violence against migrants is still one of the main concern in Italy. Judicial authorities still fail to prosecute and punish those responsible, although legal instruments are available.

We also deeply regret that Italy omitted to answer to recommendation 23 on racist and xenophobic political platform. The Council should pay attention to the extremely worrying racist speeches pronounced in public by some Italian politicians including the Minister of Interior and the Minister for Institutional Reforms.

Moreover, FIDH and UFDTU regret that the question of the discriminatory 2008 Emergency Measures, which target among others the Roma and Sinti as threats to public order and security, has not been addressed in the UPR report .

Secondly, regarding the treatment and refoulement of illegal migrants and asylum seekers, we wish to stress that Italy's reply does not reflect the reality of the widespread practice to push-back migrants in the high sea. This practice has also been recognised and condemned by the European Committee on the prevention of torture , which refers to at least 600 migrants pushed back to Libya by July 2009, despite risk for ill treatments.

Furthermore, we welcome recommendations that Italy decriminalizes irregular entry and stay on its territory and stops considering non-documented status as an aggravating factor in the commission of criminal offences.

The third area of deep concern covers the increasing restrictions to the freedom of expression and to the right to information. The concerns of Canada about media concentration are particularly relevant, as Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi recently declared that he was, quote "*seriously considering not to sign the public service contract, [should Italian TV Channel RAI] not stop being so partisan against the government*", end quote.

In this framework of severe restriction of the freedom of expression and of the right to information, the public debate on the proposed telephone tapping's reform has recently taken place. The most criticized aspect of this reform is the introduction of severe sanctions for journalists and publishers for publishing the content of conversations tapped in the course of criminal investigations. These measures would risk to severely restrict the right of the public to be informed.