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CIVICUS Statement

UPR outcome report of Uzbekistan

20 March 2009

CIVICUS welcomes the detailed report of Uzbekistan and thanks the delegation for making strong efforts for cooperation with the UPR process. In particular we welcome new laws adopted in 2007 “On non-governmental non-profit organizations”, “On public associations” and “On guarantees of the activity of non-governmental non-profit organizations”. In this context we ask the government to report publicly, accurately and comprehensively how these laws have been implemented and what has been done in relation to various recommendations to improve the

Protection of civil society space in Uzbekistan, namely

- “to ensure the exercise of freedom of expression, assembly, association and the right to participate in public and political life, lifting all restrictions on local and foreign press to investigate and freely inform about the national reality”. (Chile33e)
- “to adopt national plans of action to improve the human rights situation in the country as well as to implement some of the recommendations of the United Nations treaty bodies” (Azerbaijan)

Freedom of peaceful assembly

- To adopt “a national legislation complying with international human rights standards to ensure freedom of assembly, as enshrined in the Constitution, particularly by guaranteeing human rights NGOs the right to carry out their activities freely”. (France 32a)
- to “investigate all reports of assaults on human rights defenders and bring to justice those responsible”. Netherlands (34b)

CIVICUS also supports the statement of Canada that Uzbekistan, “release all detained human rights defenders and political prisoners”.

Freedom of association

CIVICUS supports the recommendation made by Austria (43a): “that any restrictions on the activities of civil society be lifted and safeguards implemented to prevent human rights defenders from being prosecuted for their peaceful activities”.

CIVICUS believes that the right of association that permits citizens to freely organize and enter civil society for protection of their individual and collective rights is still gravely impaired in Uzbekistan.

In the overall Recommendations

CIVICUS strongly supports the recommendations of Chile, Ireland, France, Netherlands, Canada and Austria, and reinforcing its previous written submission to the UPR Working Group, CIVICUS urges the Uzbek government to permit space for legitimate dissent to official actions and policies and to uphold the freedoms of association and assembly in the spirit to the ICCPR to which Uzbekistan is a party and to its own constitution which guarantees these freedoms.

In light of this, and in light of the Delegation’ s own very welcomed affirmation expressed in the addendum on page 2 under recommendation 5 para 8, CIVICUS proposes that

- A visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders be facilitated at the earliest possible opportunity.
- A national action plan on human rights be drawn up with emphasis on protection of civil society space and freedom for human rights defenders to carry on their work.