



# Prison Fellowship International

*beyond crime and punishment*<sup>SM</sup>

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## STATEMENT

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Mr. President,

It's a great honour to address this august body on behalf of Prison Fellowship International, a global association in the area of criminal justice and crime prevention, representing national associations in 112 countries around the globe, with more than 80,000 dedicated and trained volunteers...

We feel the need to take the floor as the Council is reviewing the report on Switzerland, for this is the country that may be the unsung hero in the area of defending and promoting human rights for a vulnerable group of the global population – over 10 million people in various forms of detention and imprisonment. Moreover, it's done on a practical level, thus bridging the gap between the enlightened discussions in Geneva and the reality on the ground in the prisons of the world. Let's be realistic – prisons are a crisis zone in the area of human rights in almost every society - East or West, North or South... And in the south it's a terribly bigger challenge to run good prisons, with meager budgets, with zero funds for correctional and vocational programs, with dehumanizing idleness, poor sanitary conditions, and hunger, that starts to kill prisoners in some countries.

It's in this context, that we would like to commend the Swiss development aid in this particular area. Over the last 8 years, in cooperation with Prison Fellowship Switzerland, we delivered for the needs of prisons in over 30 countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Africa over 200 decommissioned Swiss Army trucks in order to improve supplies, and meet other transportation needs. Hundreds of thousands of pieces of clothes, medical equipment and supplies for prison hospitals, agricultural tools and thousands of beds were delivered. The Swiss Development Agency contributed in many cases to the delivery cost of humanitarian material, together with private donors from Switzerland, USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands.

Add to this over 20 seminars on promoting human rights, and on building up the capacity for good governance and leadership growth. And a number of projects on transfer of best practices, done in a respectful and friendly manner, and in close cooperation with the local prison administrations and Ministries of Justice. This is the real life, field experience of one NGO – Prison Fellowship International. Much more has been done I am sure in cooperation with other NGO's.

Against this background we commend the spirit of openness and sincerity, demonstrated by the Swiss delegation in the interactive dialogue in the framework of the working group. We pray and hope, that Switzerland will continue its development assistance in defense of human rights in the spirit of global solidarity.

Thank you Mr. President, thank you ladies and gentlemen!

