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MR. GEROLD VOLLMER
1st SEC.

United Nations Human Rights Council

Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

15th Session – Review of the UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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Statement by AUSTRIA

Mr. President,

Austria welcomes H.E. ... and the delegation of the United Arab Emirates to the UPR and thanks them for their report.

We note with appreciation the ratification of CAT following the first round of the UPR. However, echoing concerns expressed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and several UN special procedures, we call on the Government to fully respect and ensure the protection of the rights, in particular the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association and assembly, of human rights defenders and political activists. Could the Government explain which steps it is taking to better protect religious minorities and to ensure freedom of religion and belief?

The UAE have announced new protective legislation ensuring legal rights, minimum wage and housing and social standards for domestic labourers – a measure which is highly necessary and warmly welcomed as it closes a gap in labour legislation that has been open for a very long time. Is there a concrete timeframe for enactment envisaged and moreover are measures envisaged to ensure a speedy implementation and thorough enforcement?

We are also deeply concerned about the persistent inequality between men and women and in particular by the fact that women continue to be unequally treated in courts. We also urge the Government to take measures in fighting violence against women, including sexual violence and the sexual abuse of domestic workers.

Austria offers the following recommendations to the Government of the UAE:

- Ratify the ICCPR, the Rome Statute of the ICC, OP-CAT and withdraw your reservations to CAT;
- Ensure the full protection of the rights to freedom of expression, association, assembly, religion and belief by all UAE residents;
- Take steps to protect human rights defenders, journalists and religious minorities from discrimination, harassment or intimidation, including the arbitrary deprivation of nationality;