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*Représentation permanente de la Belgique auprès des Nations Unies et auprès des institutions spécialisées à Genève*

**WG UPR 43 – United Arab Emirates**

***Intervention of Belgium***

9 May 2023

President,

Belgium acknowledges that positive steps were taken by the United Arab Emirates regarding the implementation of recommendations during its third UPR, notably on legislation to tackle violence against women, including domestic violence, and on children’s rights.

However, my delegation remains concerned about certain ongoing developments, particularly the restrictions of civic space and the difficult situation of human rights defenders.

Therefore, Belgium wishes to formulate the following recommendations:

**R1.** Ensure that human rights defenders, including those sharing information with United Nations human rights mechanisms, are able to work safely and effectively in the country, including by creating an enabling environment in which they can carry out their work on the promotion and protection of human rights.

**R2.** Unconditionally release from prison all human rights defenders, prisoners of conscience and persons imprisoned solely because of their political convictions or the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression or association.

**R3.** Abrogate legal provisions discriminating women, including regarding male guardianship and unequal rights of women with regard to marriage, custody, divorce and inheritance, as stipulated by the Personal Status Law.

Thank you, President.