

Draft Resolution approved at the Human Rights Committee on “Human Rights Defenders in the context of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms”

The Asia Democracy Network endorses and welcomes the approval of draft resolution A/C.3/70/L.46/Rev.1) *Human Rights Defenders in the context of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* at the 70th Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.

The resolution again recognizes the importance of the respect and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, strongly condemning violence and intimidation of human rights defenders. It was highlighted that States were urged to refrain from acts of intimidation or reprisal against human rights defenders, also emphasizing the responsibility of enterprises to respect the rights of defenders.

The resolution passed with 117 Yes, 14 No, and 40 Abstain. We would like to recognize that most of the countries in the Asian region voted in favor of the resolution. However, we would like to bring to light countries in the Asian region that voted against the resolution, mainly Cambodia, China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Myanmar, and Pakistan. Brunei abstained from voting on the resolution. The voting record on this resolution is also a clear indication of the state of human rights and democracy in the respective country. Human rights are universal, indivisible, and interdependent. With this reminder, we call on those countries that voted against or abstained from to reconsider their decision to uphold the rights of human rights defenders and NGOs to exercise their rights to work for the rights of those who work for and support human rights wherever they are.

As a region, we celebrate the approval of the draft resolution that reiterates and emphasizes the importance of human rights and democracy. This will drive the laudable work of non-governmental organizations across the world that takes those risks to protect and respect human rights and democracy. This draft resolution is also a reminder that we have to come together in solidarity to stand with all human rights defenders in the world risking their lives to protect our fundamental freedoms. We look forward to monitoring the process of this draft resolution and hope for its passing in the General Assembly in December.

The Asia Democracy Network (ADN) is a civil society led international network composed of democracy and human rights advocates in Asia. The ADN serves as a multi-stakeholders’ space for policy dialogue for action and reflection at the regional level.

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