Franciscans International
A voice at the United Nations

(4)

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28th session of the UN Human Rights Council

Agenda Item 6: adoption of UPR outcome of Italy

Oral Statement

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SPEAKER: FRANCESCA RESTIFO

We welcome that Italy accepted almost all recommendations[1], including the commitment to addressing detention conditions and gender-based violence.

We are encouraged that Italy committed to fighting against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and to including sexual orientation as grounds for protection against hate speech.[2]

However, we regret that no recommendation was made on environmental and human rights abuses caused by business activities in Italy. Recently, Italy has been marked by alarming environmental scandals, such as the crimes caused by the so-called 'ecomafia', responsible for the illegal burial and burning of toxic waste in the Land of Fires.

In the same line, no mention was made on the environmental disaster involving ILVA, Europe's largest steel plant, blamed of causing environmental disasters and serious health damages to local people. Last week a Decree rescued the insolvent ILVA Company. Unfortunately this decree was rather aimed at accommodating business and production demands instead of seriously responding to protection needs for the population and the environment.

Another infamous example is the Eternit case, involving the deaths of hundreds of workers by asbestos poisoning. The case was acquitted last November due to statute of limitations, leaving the 263 victims and their families without redress.

Finally we welcome the recent set of norms that created new crimes on environmental pollution and disasters. We call on the Government to ensure that this Bill will be translated into concrete measures leading to greater protection for workers and for people, to effective remedies and to the punishment of environmental crimes.

Thank you

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[1] 176 out of 186 recommendations were accepted
[2] Recommendation 94 (Spain) and 96 (Canada)