



Madam President,

ADHRB welcomes the Italian delegation and compliments their efforts in engaging with the UPR mechanism. However, we are concerned about the lack of practical steps the government of Italy has shown towards creating a National Institute for Human Rights despite being recommended during its last UPR.

While we recognize Italy's enactment of the Freedom of Information Act, which allows the general public to access information held by the authorities, we are concerned that the enacted law does not have a clear path of implementation. The effective implementation of this act is essential to fight deep-rooted corruption and anti-transparency practices within high-level governmental offices.

Moreover, the situations of intimidation, hate speech, bureaucratic restrictions, and court rulings against NGOs dedicated to saving lives is also worrying. We recommend that Italy refrains from misusing criminal law and other punitive procedures against NGOs rescuing people in the Mediterranean, and engages in maritime search and rescue operations.

Lastly, we are dismayed about Italy's lack of implementation of the EU guidelines on human rights defenders, particularly in parts of the world where human rights defenders are constantly attacked and intimidated. For example, in Bahrain, the Italian Embassy refused to meet human rights defenders and their families in a clear trend of favoring relations with the Bahraini government instead of addressing ongoing human rights violations. I would like to ask then whether Italy would commit to meet human rights defenders and their families in Bahrain and other GCC countries?

Thank you.