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**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
29th session – June 24, 2015
Item 6: UPR Outcomes: Kyrgyzstan**

Oral statement delivered by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.

Mr. President,

OMCT and FIDH welcome the report of the working group on the UPR on **Kyrgyzstan**.

The Observatory has been documenting and denouncing the regional trend of tabling and adopting laws restricting or repressing the exercise of **freedom of association**. Kyrgyzstan is unfortunately no exception as bills establishing registration as "foreign agents" and restricting foreign funding among others, are currently being debated. The UN, the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe and other international and Kyrgyz organisations have already expressed their concerns in this regard. It is also worth mentioning the ongoing harassment of the human rights organisation Bir Duino which we fear is related to its monitoring of the case of Azimjon Askarov.

We welcome the acceptance by Kyrgyzstan of eight recommendations explicitly addressing the respect of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and we encourage authorities to translate these commitments into genuine and effective reforms that fully guarantee them. In a regional context in which various States have been restricting these rights, Kyrgyzstan has the opportunity to dramatically improve its international reputation by standing out as a State that fulfils its international commitments. This opportunity should not be missed.

Furthermore, the Observatory is very concerned by the rejection of most of the recommendations calling for the adoption of legislation prohibiting discrimination based on **sexual orientation**. The draft law banning the "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" is inherently discriminatory and infringing freedom of expression, assembly and other fundamental rights. It should therefore be dropped if Kyrgyzstan's human rights commitments are to be taken seriously. The bill contributes to the general intensification of harassment against the LGBTI community and its supporters. The recent assault in May 2015 against participants to an anti-homophobia event organised by Labris is a good example of this.

We would like to conclude by encouraging Mr. Maina Kiai to make use of Kyrgyzstan's invitation to visit the country during this critical time for the right to freedom of association in the country.

We thank you Mr President.