



הארגון הבינלאומי של עורכי-דין ומשפטים יהודים (ע"ר)
THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LAWYERS AND JURISTS (R.A.)

Human Rights Council 2nd Session, 12 March 2013

Item 5 - General Debate

Thank you Mr. President,

The Human Rights Council Advisory Committee has recently published a report under item 5 regarding the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms through a better understanding of traditional values. The report deals with a delicate and sensitive subject - the relationship between tradition and universal human rights. The International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists supports the Advisory Committee in its aspiration to promote human rights when dealing with traditional societies. Yet, and as emphasized by the Advisory Committee itself, fundamental human rights cannot be overlooked and ignored in the name of tradition.

We are deeply concerned by the use of “traditional values” as a term justifying the marginalization of minorities and in particular gender-based groups. The term “tradition” is frequently used to justify the deprivation of the fundamental freedoms and human rights of these groups, and especially women. The International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists is appalled by recent incidents of mistreatment of women in different parts of the world. In India statistics show that a woman is raped every 20 minutes. Recently, we heard the horrific story of 3 sisters, young girls who were raped, murdered and thrown into a well. In Pakistan, young women are being “sentenced” by tribal courts to be “gang-raped” as a punishment for offences committed by their family members. Education is being denied to girls in large areas of Pakistan. As several human rights organizations have shown, young girls under the age of 18, are being forcibly married to older men for money. Usually these young girls are abused and neglected by their husbands, they have no opportunity to obtain an education and approximately 30% die during childbirth.

The current statement is too short to cover all the incidents in which women and girls have been deprived of their fundamental freedoms or not been protected against serious violations of their human rights. We urge the relevant states to engage in legislation that will ensure this protection, and call upon them to enforce these protective laws fiercely and educate their government officials, including law enforcement personnel, to better respect, support and protect the dignity of women and girls. Finally, we urge the Special Rapporteur on *violence against women its causes and consequences* to address the matter, and specifically to conduct country visits to the relevant states.