INTRODUCTION TO THE UN – MARCH 2019

IFOR would like to invite you to Geneva for the week 4th – 8th March [during the 40th UN Human Rights Council] to learn more about IFOR work at the UN, to find out how you can contribute and to become aware of what we can do to support the issues you are working on.

We contemplate a group of about six, which can move about together between meetings without causing massive disruption and is also small enough to share reflections communally between formal meetings.

PROGRAMME

The programme we propose is as follows:
Arrival in Geneva, Sunday 3rd March afternoon, and preliminary orientation session.
Monday 4th from 8am collect accreditation at Palais Wilson for Human Rights Committee which starts at 10am.

11:30 confidential NGO (non-governmental organisations) briefing of the Committee. IFOR is accrediting Emanuel Matondo, an Angolan refugee living in Germany, to speak at this meeting.
Lunch at Palais Wilson, after which we go to the Palais des Nations, the main UN building in Geneva, where you will need to collect a second UN security pass.
We will then go to the plenary of the Human Rights Council, where it is planned the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteurs on the environment and on adequate housing and a discussion on child rights and disability.

* Each participant is free to stay in the plenary or attend any of the multiple “side events” or consultations on resolutions which will be going on. We will all meet each evening to share our experiences.

Items of particular interest to IFOR, therefore included in the proposed programme, are:

**On Tuesday** the “interactive dialogues” with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and the Special Representatives of the Secretary General on Violence against Children and Children in Armed conflict (all these technical terms will be explained!).
From 2pm to 3pm there is a side event on Western Sahara and another one on human rights defenders in Colombia.

**On Wednesday** at 10am we are hosting a side event on child soldiers; then from 12 to 1.30pm there is a side event with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion (side events are rather more interactive than the so-called interactive dialogues!); then from 1.30pm to 3pm there is a side event on children affected by counter-terrorism measures.

**On Thursday** morning there is an “interactive dialogue” on the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. This will be the first time that the new High Commissioner, Michele Bachelet, former President of Chile, is presenting her own report.
At lunchtime there may be an informal NGO briefing of the Human Rights Committee on Angola; also that lunchtime there will be showing of a film on the life of Professor Sir Nigel Rodley, who worked for some years with Amnesty International, subsequently helped to set up the renowned Human Rights Law Centre at the University of Essex, served as UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, and at the time of his death in January 2017 had just stepped down as Chairman of the Human Rights Committee.
At 3pm the Committee meets in public with the Angolan Government delegation to examine its report, continuing on **Friday** from 10am to 1pm.
On Friday until perhaps 18.00 in the Council there will be the general debate on item 3 of the agenda (thematic human rights issues). IFOR will sign up for a 90-second statement, probably to be delivered late afternoon. We will also be seeking speaking slots in the interactive dialogues we are interested in, but only 10-12 NGOs get to speak in each.

*The programme will be detailed and updated with collateral proposals as needed.

ACCOMMODATION AND TRAVEL

IFOR will arrange accommodation from March 3rd to the 8th and provide a Swiss francs cash subsistence allowance; however, the cost of travel to Geneva are left in the hands of individual participants and their organisations.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

In order to enter any UN buildings, you need an accreditation. This means that we will need from anyone interested a. a scan of their passport and b. an uploadable passport-style photograph.

Registration for the Human Rights Committee session must be done by next Friday, 22nd.

Those interested are therefore invited to send us the required documents by the Thursday 21st, the latest.

The short deadline -not deliberately set- is due to various complications such a programme may involve, not least the difficulty of making provisional accommodation bookings in the week of the Geneva Motor Show.

HOW TO APPLY

Please indicate your interest in participating by email (attaching the requested documents) to zaira.zafarana@ifor.org, cc derek.brett@ifor.org, by February the 21st.

It would be helpful if you could also communicate in a couple of sentences (200 words absolute maximum):

1. your links – if any with IFOR
2. the name of your organization and role within it
3. the reason for your interest in participating,
4. what you would hope to get out of this

If necessary, we will give preference to:

a) those who are prepared to commit for the entire week
b) persons with a direct connection with IFOR
c) those who reply and get their passport details to us in time to register for the Human Rights Committee, as well as for the Council.

We may subsequently be able to help those whose availability is more limited, or who have a specific reason to come at a different time, but the total number of accreditations we can issue is strictly limited, and outside this programme we simply do not have the funds to offer any assistance with costs.

*We attach for information the current programme of work for the Human Rights Council (but without attempting to translate all the UN jargon- that is partly what our programme is for), also the provisional list of NGO side events.