UN Human Rights Council

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## **Oral Statement**

**ITEM 3: Interactive Dialogue on the report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions**

Mister President,

Harm Reduction International welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on summary executions and the attention paid to States’ obligations to protect against unlawful deaths. Regrettably, many States are failing to uphold this obligation when it comes to people who use drugs.

Thousands of suspected **extrajudicial killings** are reported in the context of repressive anti-drug campaigns. Up to 27,000 people are suspected to have been unlawfully killed since 2016 in the Philippines alone, with perpetrators often enjoying absolute impunity; similar trends unfolded in Bangladesh and other countries.

The Human Rights Committee General Comment 36 also clarifies that from States’ duty to protect life descend ***positive* obligations,** some of which are particularly relevant to drug policies. We highlight the duty to take measures to avoid “foreseeable and preventable life-terminating harm or injury”, echoed by the Rapporteur’s acknowledgment of States’ due diligence obligations. People who use drugs are a vulnerable category in jurisdictions with punitive drug control laws or practices; and due to the high incidence of overdose-related deaths, which are broadly preventable.

**Finally, the death penalty** remains a possible punishment for drug offences in at least 35 countries. Our research indicates that in the past ten years over 4,300 people were executed for non-violent drug offences around the world.

We express particular concern regarding the expansion of, proposed end of moratorium, or reintroduction of the death penalty in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines respectively – all under the auspices of drug control. We are dismayed at reports from Sri Lanka that four death warrants have been signed, and executions are now impending.

Harm Reduction International urges States to ensure that domestic drug policies align with their human rights obligations and to condemn developments in Sri Lanka and invites the Special Rapporteur to investigate, produce, and disseminate a report on the human rights violations committed in the context of drug control relevant to her mandate.

Thank you.