

12 March 2020

## Statement to UN Human Rights Council 43rd session (24 February - 20 March 2020)

### Item 6: Universal Periodic Review

## Statement on Italy

I speak on behalf of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). This statement is also supported by more than 70 Italian organisations.<sup>1</sup>

We welcome that Italy accepted most of the UPR recommendations, including many of those related to women's rights. For example, Italy has committed to adopt measures to improve gender equality and end gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence, including domestic violence;<sup>2</sup> to promote the participation of women in decision making processes;<sup>3</sup> improve the conditions of women in the labour market;<sup>4</sup> promote their access to sexual and reproductive health;<sup>5</sup> implement policies to tackle human trafficking.<sup>6</sup> We reiterate that the challenges relating to women's rights in Italy are long-standing. Thus, we urge a prompt implementation of these recommendations in the context of a comprehensive policy to advance gender equality and end all forms of discrimination and violence.

We strongly regret, however, that Italy did not accept a recommendation to "consider revising the framework regulating the control of firearms, given the correlation between their use and femicides."<sup>7</sup> In its explanation, Italy stated that firearms were used "only in the 18% of the cases" of femicides in Italy in 2019.<sup>8</sup> Our organisations ask the government: isn't 18% more than enough to raise the alarm about the urgency of reviewing the current legislation? If even one woman's death is not enough, how many more women's lives should be lost before the government takes seriously the potential danger brought by firearms?

Moreover, while we welcome that Italy accepted recommendations to "ensure that all arms transfers and exports comply with Italy's obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty"<sup>9</sup> and "take more measures to prevent arms transfers that may facilitate human rights violations, including gender-based violence, and that negatively impact women,"<sup>10</sup> we strongly regret that it did not accept a recommendation to "sign and ratify

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<sup>1</sup> See list of NGOs that endorsed a joint UPR advocacy brief of October 2019 available at [https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/UPR-2019\\_Italy\\_Analysis-and-Recommendations-english-version.pdf](https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/UPR-2019_Italy_Analysis-and-Recommendations-english-version.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Recommendations 148.217 - 148.241.

<sup>3</sup> Recommendation 148.242.

<sup>4</sup> Recommendations 148.170, 148.173 - 148.177, 148.184, 148.234.

<sup>5</sup> Recommendations 148.200, 148.201.

<sup>6</sup> Recommendations 148.153, 148.157, 148.161, 148.163, 148.167, 148.168, 148.293, 148.296, 148.299, 148.264, 148.273, 148.305.

<sup>7</sup> Recommendation 148.135 Consider revising the framework regulating the control of firearms, given the correlation between their use and femicides (Peru)

<sup>8</sup> "Recommendation No. 148.135. Not accepted.

The analysis of operations concerning the cases of femicide, based on information provided for by Police Headquarters during 2019, shows that a firearm was used only in the 18% of the cases; bladed weapons (36%), blunt instruments (27%), suffocation or other means (19%) were used in the other cases. Current legislation envisages that the Quaeator promptly adopts measures concerning the detention of firearms when cases of domestic violence and stalking are reported."

<sup>9</sup> 148.15 Ensure that all arms transfers and exports comply with Italy's obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty (Iceland).

<sup>10</sup> 148.232 Take more measures to prevent arms transfers that may facilitate human rights violations, including gender-based violence, and that negatively impact women (Namibia).

the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and integrate a human rights impact assessment into its arms export control mechanisms.”<sup>11</sup> In this regard, we note that while the government provided some explanation as to why Italy does not intend to become party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,<sup>12</sup> a decision that we nonetheless regret, the government did not explain why it could not support the part of that recommendation regarding the integration of a human rights impact assessment into its arms export control mechanism. Italy’s continued arms transfers to countries with poor human rights records remain a matter of great concern.

We urge the government to reconsider its decision not to support the above-mentioned recommendations.

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<sup>11</sup> 148.7 Sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and integrate a human rights impact assessment into its arms export control mechanisms (Ecuador).

<sup>12</sup> “Recommendation No. 148.7 Not accepted.

Although we share the goal of a nuclear weapons free world, we cannot accept Recommendation No.148.7. Our approach is based on Article VI of the Treaty on the non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and on the idea that such a goal can be reached only gradually, with the involvement of all relevant actors and through a series of concrete and progressive steps. Unfortunately, some of the provisions of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons raise doubts about its real capacity to work as an irreversible, transparent and verifiable nuclear disarmament tool.”