

## **Oral Statement – Item 2 – General Debate / 61st Session of the Human Rights Council**

Joint Statement by Centre Europe – Tiers Monde, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, FIAN International, and EMMAÜS International

### **Check against delivery**

Mr. President, Mr. High Commissioner,

Our organizations express serious concern over the escalating attacks against international law and the systematic efforts to weaken multilateralism as enshrined in the UN Charter.

We are witnessing growing political pressure, financial coercion, the creation of parallel and substitute structures, and attempts to undermine the independence of UN human rights mechanisms. These alarming developments erode the credibility, impartiality, and universality of the multilateral system.

As host country of the United Nations, the United States of America has repeatedly restricted access for accredited State representatives, social movements and civil society organizations, in violation of its obligations under the Headquarters Agreement. Such restrictions compromise the universal character of the Organization and hinder the meaningful participation of human rights defenders in UN processes. Clearly, access to the UN cannot be subject to the discretionary power of a host State.

In this context, we reiterate our call for an urgent, transparent, and inclusive debate on the possible provisional relocation of the United Nations General Assembly from New York to Geneva, in order to guarantee safe, equal, and non-discriminatory access for all.

Mr. High Commissioner,

Given the gravity of these concerns, could you clarify what concrete measures you intend to take, within your mandate and in coordination with the Secretary-General, to ensure equal access to the UN and prevent further intimidation of civil society representatives and mandate holders?

We call for decisive leadership in defense of international human rights law and of a genuinely inclusive multilateral system. At this critical juncture, defending a democratic, people-centered multilateralism, rooted in sovereignty, self-determination, and social justice, is not optional — it is necessary to restore trust in the United Nations and to preserve its legitimacy.

Thank you for your attention.

*Geneva, 2 March 2026*