

# Abuses by non-State actors no justification for rights violations by Governments – UN rights chief

1 May 2017 – Raising alarm over use of rhetoric by States that they can “solve problems” and find ways around lawful safeguards, the United Nations rights chief today urged vigilance to protect and promote human rights of everyone.

“The use of, or the creation of, some form of political fog to create confusion at times, even amounting to the depth charging of truth or parts of it, so that a government can pursue a particular line [is,] I think something [...] to watch very carefully,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein at a press briefing in Geneva.

“Violations by non-State actors of human rights norms, of international law, do not, and should not serve as grounds for violations thereby by Government actors,” he underscored.

In his remarks, he expressed particular concern over the renewed state of emergency in Turkey and the human rights situation in the country.

According to reports, up to 150,000 civil servants have been suspended. Furthermore, there are reports that last week about 10,000 police officers were also suspended and some one thousand among them detained.

“With such a large number, it is highly unlikely that the suspensions and detentions will have met due process standards,” added Mr. Zeid.

“Yes, the terror attacks need to be tackled, but not at the expense of human rights, and I am very concerned about the renewed state of emergency which was undertaken in mid-April and the climate of fear in the country,” he underscored.

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In the same vein, he also drew attention to the dangers confronting human rights defenders, journalists and civil society members in their lines of work.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights also spoke out against the impact of human rights violations on the lives of people and the resulting increased suffering.

“Human rights violations have also resulted in famines in Yemen and South Sudan and human rights deficits have exacerbated the impact of droughts in other places like Kenya, Somalia and northern Nigeria,” he said.