

ISHR statement - 58th session of the UN Human Rights Council**Item 2: General Debate****Speaker:** Salma El Hosseiny*Italics only for written version.*

Mr. President, Your Excellencies,

Thirty years ago, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing marked a milestone for feminists globally, and in China. For the first time ever, Chinese lesbian activists got a tent during the NGO Forum, creating a rare, physical space of encounter, resilience, and hope.

Yet today, Chinese feminists face harsh and intersecting forms of oppression from a patriarchal society and a repressive State – far away from its 1995 commitments –. *Despite the government's crackdown, in particular on China's #metoo movement, feminist activists across China and in the diaspora continue to organise, raise awareness, and build solidarity across movements.*

Unable to address this Council out of fear of reprisals, this is a message from them.

Ten years ago, Chinese authorities detained five of us from the feminist movement: Li Maizi, Wei Tingting, Wu Rongrong, Zheng Churan, and Wang Man. Later known as the 'Feminist Five', they planned to hand out stickers on public transportation on International Women's Day to raise awareness about sexual harassment. At the time, we worried that this was the end of the feminist movement. But we did not give up. *We continued to connect with each other.*

Today, more and more women now are acting against *the injustices we face in our country*. We shared our stories about sexual harassment and assault, and this became the #MeToo movement. We help each other find safety and support when faced with domestic violence. We help each other face the pressures from a government and society that wants us to give birth to more children, and discriminates us in our workplaces.

We continue to demand the government release the Chained Woman, as well as activist He Fangmei and her children, and journalist Sophia Huang Xueqin.

With all of these actions, the movement has only grown stronger.

Today we celebrate feminism which makes the world better for everyone, including men living under the patriarchy. We celebrate a just society where everyone can flourish. We believe this is the society China can become, and today we celebrate all the actions we will take to make it a reality in the next ten years and the next ten years after that.

Thank you.