



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Twenty-fourth session

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Note verbale dated 30 September 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Singapore to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council, and has the honour to refer to the attached statement\*, which was delivered on 27 September 2013 during the segment for general comments by observer States with regard to the adoption of draft resolution A/HRC/24/L.23 on conscientious objection to military service, at the end of the twenty-fourth session of the Council.

The Permanent Mission also has the honour to request that the statement be circulated as a document of the twenty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council, under agenda item 3.

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\* Reproduced in the annex as received, in the language of submission only.

## Annex

*[English only]*

### **Statement by Singapore on the adoption of the resolution on conscientious objection to military service at the end of the 24th Human Rights Council session, 27 September 2013**

Mr President,

My statement refers to the adoption of the resolution A/HRC/24/L.23 on conscientious objection to military service.

Singapore does not recognise the universal applicability of the right to conscientious objection to military service<sup>1</sup>. This so-called right cannot be viewed in isolation from the circumstances of the society in which it is embedded, and must be considered within the broader scope of the right of a sovereign State to defend itself and preserve its sovereignty. In this regard, we note that the resolution has reaffirmed an important fact that the exercise of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, from which the right to conscientious objection can be derived, is subject to limitations prescribed by law and the necessity of ensuring public safety and order, as laid down in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Small countries like Singapore do not have the luxury of a sizeable professional defence force. Compulsory military service is the only credible means to defend our sovereignty. Every male Singapore Citizen and Permanent Resident, regardless of race or religion, is required by law to defend our country. To make exceptions to the law for any individuals or groups will undermine our system of universality and be unfair to those who do their part to defend our country because all have reaped the benefits of peace.

Singapore believes that the Human Rights Council should not be a politicised forum to impose beliefs and values. A constructive dialogue on the issue of conscientious objection to military service has to be achieved through genuine efforts to better appreciate national circumstances and respect for different systems and practices.

Thank you, Mr President.

  

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to Singapore's statements at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> HRC session, as well as at the General Debate on item 3 during the 23<sup>rd</sup> HRC session which is also contained in A/HRC/23/G/6.