

Human Rights Council 40th session

ITEM 3 – GENERAL DEBATE

Speaker: Helen Nolan – *Check against delivery*

Mr President,

Disturbingly, the *Special Procedures*' latest communications report cites several cases of reprisals and intimidation related to UN engagement.

It describes how:

China sought to revoke the Society for Threatened Peoples' ECOSOC status after vexatiously alleging that a person accredited by them, Dolkun Isa, participated in incitement and funding of separatism and terrorism;

Egypt carried out forced evictions, and violations of the rights to physical integrity, liberty and security against individuals who cooperated with the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing *during her recent visit*;

The Philippines labeled defenders “terrorists”, Iraq carried out unlawful arrest, enforced disappearance and torture against Imad Al Tamimi and intimidated and threatened Israa Al Dujaili, Turkmenistan carried out reprisals against a defender and her husband, and in Yemen, forces loyal to President Hadi and the Saudi-led coalition detained human rights defenders Radhya Al-Mutawakel and Abdulrasheed Al-Faqih – all these actions taken in reprisal for cooperation or engagement with the UN;

Libya arrested an individual in retaliation for taking steps to clarify the fate and whereabouts of his father, including with UN mechanisms;

Russia surveilled, intimidated and harassed Yana Tannagasheva and her husband, for speaking out about impacts of coal mining on indigenous people in Siberia and in possible reprisal for their communication with UN mechanisms;

Mr President, we look to you to ensure full cooperation with the Council's mechanisms. *Human rights defenders must be able to access and communicate with the UN freely and safely so it can do its crucial work of monitoring countries' compliance with human rights obligations and protect victims from abuse.* In particular we urge you to request updates before the end of the session on the cases just cited *from Iraq, Libya, Russia, Turkmenistan and Yemen, from which replies have not been received.*