

Human Rights Council 39th session

ITEM 3 – GENERAL DEBATE

Statement by the International Service for Human Rights

Speaker: Helen Nolan

Mr President,

ISHR welcomes the Special Procedures' latest [joint communications report](#), although it continues to provide a troubling picture of threats and attacks against civil society actors and human rights defenders worldwide. Some of the defenders cited have been the subject of several previous communications, yet they continue to be subjected to grave human rights violations.

Mr President, as the guardian of the Council's founding texts, we look to you to ensure full cooperation with the Council's mechanisms. Among the [55 states](#) listed in the present [joint communications report](#) as failing to respond to at least one communication alleging human rights violations, 19 are Council members. Some of these states are repeat offenders and have failed to reply to two or more communications in this report and in previous ones. They include Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, Kenya and Mexico.

In light of this deeply disturbing situation, we urge you Mr President, to request speedy updates from these states and other non-responders, namely Angola, Burundi, Chile, China, Ethiopia, Hungary, Iraq, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea and United Arab Emirates on the status of these communications. A lack of timely and substantive response to Special Procedures not only undermines the integrity of this forum, but is plainly incompatible with the collective goals of Council membership.

We also regret that several communications involving human rights defenders working in the context of human rights and business remain unanswered by the companies involved.

GA Resolution 60/251 requires all Member States to uphold the highest standards in promoting and protecting human rights and to 'fully cooperate with the Council'. Yet, the report highlights deeply concerning cases of reprisals involving Council Member States. In Iraq, Faisal Al Tamimi received numerous death threats and suffered an attempt on his life for engaging with UN human rights mechanisms. In Rwanda, Robert Mugabe was detained and questioned for several hours, also to prevent him from cooperating with the Council and Special Procedures.

It is essential that all Council Member States act to maintain a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders engaging with UN human rights mechanisms and actively strive to ensure that threats and attacks against them are prevented and adequately remedied.

Thank you.