

Human Rights Council 38th session

Item 3 – General Debate

Speaker: Salma El Hosseiny

Thank you Mr. President.

Firstly, ISHR welcomes the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on civil society engagement with international and regional organisations. He is right that affording space to civil society is not optional. Civil society participation is a right and States and the UN have a legal obligation to safeguard the right of freedom of association.

Civil society engagement is essential to ensuring an effective UN. Civil society brings human rights analysis to the system and pushes for that system to be fit for the purpose of protecting rights.

Reprisals against civil society are counterproductive therefore – they undermine the effectiveness of the UN (as well as being unconscionable individual violations).

On Friday, a long-overdue meeting was held on how to safeguard and evolve the relationship between the UN and NGOs. Recommendations must be followed up and meetings must continue, as mandated in ECOSOC resolution 1996/31.

Secondly, Mr President, we look to you to ensure full cooperation with the Council's mechanisms. Among the [56 States](#) listed in the present [joint communications report](#) as having yet to respond to at least one initial communication alleging rights violations, 14 are Council members. Four of these have ignored three or more requests for information: DRC, Egypt, Kenya and the Philippines.

State failure to respond to Special Procedures not only undermines the integrity of this forum, but is incompatible with membership.

We urge you to request updates before the end of this session from all States that have failed to respond.