

**Statement at 48th session of the UN Human Rights Council**

**Item 2: General Debate**

**Speaker: Salma El Hosseiny**

Thank you, Madame President.

We join the [High Commissioner](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27443&LangID=E) in urging the Council's Member States to demonstrate leadership on environmental justice. ISHR urges the Council to respond urgently to the environmental crisis, as well as to the repeated calls by diverse States and civil society, by recognising the right of all to **a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment,** and by establishing a new Special Rapporteur on **climate change** at this session. The Council should also recognise the critical role of environmental human rights defenders in addressing climate change and safeguarding biodiversity, contribute to their enhanced protection, and pursue accountability against those State and non-State actors who attack and kill defenders.

Also as a matter of priority at this Council session, the Council must establish a Fact-Finding Mission, or similar independent investigative mechanism on **Afghanistan**, with a gender-responsive and multi-year mandate and resources to monitor and regularly report on, and to collect evidence of, human rights violations and abuses committed across the country by all parties.

We take note of the High Commissioner’s update that no progress has been made for meaningful access to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of **China**. ISHR reiterates its calls for OHCHR and the High Commissioner to ensure public monitoring and reporting on the situation, undertaken with the full engagement of civil society. We look forward to the Office’s publication of its assessment of evidence of serious human rights violations in the country. This will be a critical first step for future concrete actions that respond to demands of victims, their families and communities, and others defending human rights.

Finally, the Council should take stock of Nicaragua’s multi-pronged repression against defenders and any form of dissent, ahead of the November 7 elections. ISHR and 12 rights groups have recently concluded that the Government has taken no steps to implement Resolution 46/2. As set in the resolution, and stressed by the High Commissioner, this Council should consider all measures within its power to strengthen human rights in **Nicaragua**: this should include the creation of an international accountability mechanism.