

To: Member States of the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee

11 October 2021

GA 76: Sign on to Cross-regional joint statement on reprisals at the 76th session of the General Assembly Third Committee

On 14 October 2021, the United Kingdom will present a cross-regional joint statement on reprisals during the interactive dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.

By joining the statement, you will affirm your commitment to the fundamental rights of freedom of expression and association; show solidarity with human rights defenders, civil society actors and victims of violations worldwide; demonstrate your commitment to dialogue, cooperation and the institutional integrity of the UN; and contribute to ensuring that UN bodies and processes are informed by, and respond effectively to, the needs of communities on the ground.

The joint statement condemns any act of intimidation or reprisal, online or offline, against individuals and groups who cooperate, seek to cooperate, or have cooperated with the UN. Furthermore, it calls on States to prioritise and support the meaningful participation of civil society with the UN and urges States to cooperate with the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights in fulfilling her mandate to address reprisals and ensure a coordinated UN response. Importantly, the joint statement highlights existing challenges for civic space that have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, including: increased surveillance and hacking; the rise of online violence, particularly against women and girls; and the use of emergency measures to unduly restrict or hinder access and communication with the UN.

Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realisation of human rights at the community, national, regional and international levels, to exercise freedoms of expression, association and to communicate with intergovernmental organisations.

We urge your delegation to show your commitment to ensuring that all civil society organisations and human rights defenders can engage with the UN without fear of intimidation and reprisal and sign on to the joint statement.

Sincerely,

1. Access Now
2. Alkarama
3. All Human Rights for All in Iran
4. ALQST for Human Rights
5. Amnesty International

6. Anti-Discrimination Centre Memorial
7. Article 19
8. Association for Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran-AHRAZ
9. Association for Progressive Communications - APC
10. Baha'i International Community
11. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
12. CARE International
13. Center for Reproductive Rights
14. Centro de Justicia y Paz - Cepaz
15. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
16. Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights
17. Cordaid
18. Freedom House
19. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
20. Gulf Centre for Human Rights
21. Human Rights Activists in Iran (HRA)
22. Human Rights House Foundation
23. ILGA World
24. Impact Iran
25. Institute of Race, Equality and Human Rights (Race and Equality)
26. International Commission of Jurists
27. International Planned Parenthood Federation
28. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
29. Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights
30. MENA Rights Group
31. Minority Rights Group
32. OutRight Action International
33. Siamak Pourzand Foundation (SPF)
34. Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO)
35. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
36. Women's Refugee Commission
37. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)