

41st session of the Human Rights Council
Joint statement on reprisals against Special Procedures,

Item 5: General Debate

Thank you, Mr. President.

Our organisations are gravely concerned by the proliferation of reprisals against Special Procedures mandate holders and members of Expert Mechanisms and Commissions of Inquiry (COI) by States, including members of the Council, as well as threats against the Special Procedures system as a whole.

Special Procedures are the eyes and ears of the Council and ensure that this body's work remains relevant and informed by the reality of human rights on the ground. Reprisals aim to discredit, intimidate, deter and silence these experts, and to prevent civil society from engaging with them.

We are alarmed by a pattern of reprisals and non-cooperation by Council-member, the **Philippines**. The government has threatened the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings with physical violence on numerous occasions. It has made terrorism accusations against the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples.

Burundi and **Eritrea** are also engaged in patterns of reprisals, with the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea and members of the COI's on both **Burundi** and **Eritrea** having been attacked on multiple occasions, at the Council, the GA or in the media. **The Maldives** has accused the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief of spreading anti-Islamic activities, resulting in death threats against him online. The Special Rapporteur on **Myanmar** has faced reprisals and has also experienced violent threats on social media.

We call on States to cooperate in good faith and end all reprisals against Special Procedures and those who cooperate with them. The President and States must act immediately in meetings when such reprisals occur. This Council must safeguard its Special Procedures from all efforts to undermine them through reprisals or other dangerous initiatives.

Joint oral statement by Article 19, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Concelho Indigenista Missionário CIMI, Conectas Direitos Humanos, DefendDefenders (the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project), Franciscans International, Human Rights Law Centre, International Commission of Jurists, International Federation for Human Rights Leagues (FIDH), International Humanist and Ethical Union, International Service for Human Rights, World Movement Against Torture (OMCT).