



Statement of Ireland
43rd session of the Human Rights Council

Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism

4 March 2020

Madam President,

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union.

Ireland warmly welcomes the Special Rapporteur on human rights and counterterrorism, and we thank her for the presentation of her annual report and the recommendations presented therein.

We know from our own national experience that an effective counter-terrorism strategy is one that respects human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. The same is true for any measure, policy or practice that seeks to prevent or counter violent extremism.

Preventing violent extremism is a commitment and obligation under the principles and values enshrined in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. However, we are concerned that the application of vague and overly broad definitions of extremism and violent extremism may be used to unlawfully restrict fundamental freedoms, target human rights defenders, and curtail civic space.

Ireland therefore calls upon all States to ensure any measures taken to prevent or counter violent extremism are in line with their obligations under international human rights law and comply with the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality.

We agree with the Special Rapporteur that only evidence-based, rights-affirming and rights-focused policies will have long-term success in preventing violent extremism. We welcome consideration of this critically important topic by the Human Rights Council.

Madam Special Rapporteur, what concrete steps can States take to foster a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders and other civil society actors while preventing and countering violent extremism?

Thank you.