



Statement of Ireland

46th session of the Human Rights Council

Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

3 March 2020

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union.

Ireland warmly welcomes Special Rapporteur Mary Lawlor to the Council and thanks her for this critically important report drawing attention to intolerable acts of killing or threatening of human rights defenders.

Ireland condemns in the strongest terms all threats and attacks against HRDs. Over 330 have lost their lives last year alone. No individual, anywhere, should fear violence or death for seeking to protect or promote the human rights of others. There can never be a justification or an excuse. Ireland was therefore honoured to unveil a memorial in Dublin in December to commemorate the lives of all human rights defenders killed because of their work.

Special Rapporteur, you rightly state that: “there is no more direct an attack on civil society space than the killing of HRDs”. It is for this reason that Ireland will continue to champion the rights of HRDs and civil society worldwide.

The harrowing testimonies in your report clearly demonstrate that the international community cannot ignore threats against human rights defenders. We welcome steps taken by some States which have adopted laws or policies designed to protect those at risk. Ireland calls on all states to take concrete steps to prevent and respond to all acts of reprisals by state and non-state actors and ensure accountability for all violations.

Special Rapporteur, as Ireland updates our HRD guidelines, what would you recommend that we and other states include in these guidelines?