



Statement of Ireland
43rd session of the Human Rights Council

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

4 March 2020

Madam President,

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union.

Ireland warmly welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and we take this opportunity to thank him for his work in discharging this critically important mandate.

As the report highlights, the contribution of human rights defenders is indispensable to peace and sustainable development. Increasing attacks on civil society space and human rights defenders in every region across the globe renders the work and mandate of the Special Rapporteur more vital than ever. The international community must redouble its efforts to defend and promote a safe and enabling environment for all, including by supporting his work.

Ireland has long championed civil society and human rights defenders, and we are proud to lead on a resolution on civil society space as part of a cross-regional core group.

We recognise that human rights defenders operate in a wide variety of contexts and welcome the focus of this year's report. As highlighted by the Special Rapporteur, those operating in conflict and post-conflict areas face extreme risks while carrying out their work and, as such, require additional protections and support from States and other stakeholders.

Mr Forst, you highlight in your report that defenders are particularly at risk when they belong to indigenous communities or to certain religious or ethnic minorities or because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. How can States promote the visibility of these vulnerable groups and ensure that they are not forgotten or left behind?

Thank you.