



Statement of Ireland
76th session of the United Nations General Assembly
Third Committee

General Debate

[754 words]

Mr Chair,

Ireland fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

In the 18 months since the COVID-19 pandemic has swept the globe, we have witnessed growing inequality, including in access to **vaccines** as well as relentless attacks on human rights in all regions. Multilateralism anchored in human rights is the only viable way to return the world to a more stable and sustainable path, and the **UN Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights** provides a roadmap. In the face of pressure and pushback **the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Treaty Bodies and the Special Procedures** play a critical role in protecting human rights for all, and we urge all States to fully cooperate with and provide unrestricted access for them.

Mr Chair,

Civil society belongs at the UN, including back here in this building, participating, connecting us to the grassroots, and holding states to account. Ireland is deeply concerned by continuing restrictions on **civil society space** in all regions where we have witnessed attacks on **journalists and media workers, peaceful protestors, activists and human rights defenders**.

Ireland urges all States to create a safe and enabling environment for civil society and to take concrete steps to prevent acts of **reprisal and intimidation**. We must categorically reject reprisals against civil society who engage with the UN. This is something Ireland has been acutely aware of in bringing a large number of civil society briefers to the Security Council table during our presidency last month.

Mr Chair,

We need to move beyond silos and recognise that human rights belong everywhere at the UN. Since we took up our seat on the **UN Security Council**, Ireland has sought to ensure that human rights are woven through efforts to maintain international peace and security. We know that human rights violations and abuses are both a driver of, and an integral part of, conflict.

In **Ethiopia**, widespread sexual violence and the denial of humanitarian access are exacerbating the human rights toll of the conflict on the civilian population. The announcement of the expulsion of UN humanitarian and human rights officials from Ethiopia is of grave concern.

In states where conflicts rage, **children** are suffering disproportionately, deprived of their education because of violence and poverty, subjected to sexual violence, maimed, even killed. All states have a fundamental responsibility to protect children and the UN has a vital role to play in protecting children, monitoring violations, and ensuring accountability.

Accountability matters. When impunity reigns, it contributes to the reoccurrence of conflict and violence. That is why we support the vital work of the **International Criminal Court** in ensuring accountability for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.

Mr Chair,

Women and girls are bearing the brunt of the economic and social impacts of COVID-19, including the 'shadow pandemic' of increased domestic violence. In many countries, the rights of women and girls are under sustained attack including their **sexual and reproductive health and rights**. Ireland will continue to prioritise **gender equality** at home and abroad. As our Taoiseach stated last month at the General Assembly, the promotion of gender equality and of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda is a golden thread throughout our work.

We are deeply concerned about the fate of the women and girls of **Afghanistan**. We stand with them in their call for full, meaningful and equal access to education, healthcare, freedom of movement within their own country, and the right to participate fully in public life.

Over the last twelve months, **LGBTQI+** persons in many states across the world have continued to experience the denial of their human rights. Ireland sees an important role for the UN in promoting, protecting, and fulfilling the rights of LGBTQI+ persons.

Mr Chair,

Ireland remains steadfastly opposed to the **death penalty** and we call on all countries that have not abolished the death penalty to introduce a moratorium as a first step towards abolition.

We strongly condemn all forms of racism, as well as persecution on the basis of **religion or belief**. In the past 18 months we have been forced to confront the realities of persistent racism in every society, as well as an appalling upsurge in hate speech and religious intolerance. We call on all countries to promote equality, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion and to respect the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities.

Mr Chair,

We look forward to a busy and productive Third Committee and we wish you well in your role.

Thank you.

ENDS.