

**Oral Statement by the International Service for Human Rights
to the Human Rights Council 15th Session**

**Item 5
21 September 2010**

Mr President,

The International Service for Human Rights is extremely concerned by the phenomenon of reprisals against those cooperating with the UN and its human rights bodies and mechanisms. Threats, intimidation and attacks against those that cooperate with the UN system constitute serious human rights violations that must be addressed by the Human Rights Council. These violations also constitute obstacles to the effective functioning of human rights mechanisms that rely on information from civil society.

ISHR believes that the Council has a particular responsibility towards those that engage with it or its mechanisms and must ensure that they can carry out their human rights work in safety and without risk of reprisals. We are therefore very concerned by the Council's ineffective systems and lack of initiative to seriously address this issue.

In most cases of reprisals reported to the Secretary-General, States have provided no response to the alleged violations, or information on efforts to investigate the violations, prosecute perpetrators, and provide reparations to victims. If the Council is to be an effective human rights body, such State silence on attacks against those cooperating with the Council or its mechanisms cannot be allowed. The Council as a collective body must demand answers and concrete investigative results from States in relation to these violations.

ISHR believes that the Council is not giving this issue the attention it deserves. We therefore call on the Council to follow up on the recommendation by the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, that the Council should define an appropriate mechanism to make representations to the Government concerned, in a timely and effective manner and to monitor situations [of reprisals] (A/HRC/11/2). We have previously called for focused attention to this issue at every session of the Council and hope that this recommendation will soon be taken up.

In conclusion, we wish to underline that States bear the primary responsibility for protecting and respecting human rights. To fulfill these responsibilities States must:

- investigate attacks and intimidation against those cooperating with the UN and its human rights bodies and mechanisms
- regularly report to the Council on incidents of reprisals against those that have engaged with the UN human rights system.