

Statement by the International Service for Human Rights, the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) to the Human Rights Council's 14th session

General debate Item 2

8 June 2010

Mr President,

The International Service for Human Rights, the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) note with deep concern the 14 reported cases of threats, intimidation and reprisals against persons that have sought to cooperate with the UN, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights. We are particularly concerned that the governments concerned in eight of the 14 cases have not provided any information on measures taken to investigate the allegations, hold perpetrators to account and provide remedies to the victims. We therefore call on Algeria, Colombia, DRC, Guatemala, Iran, Mauritania, Venezuela, and Yemen to provide the Council with this information without further delay.

We are also concerned that the replies provided by the other six States regarding the alleged reprisals are far from adequate. The denial of the allegations by India and Israel are not satisfactory replies to the serious allegations of reprisals made. Kenya committed itself to investigating the killing of two human rights defenders that had cooperated with the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, arbitrary or summary executions. No information has been received to date by the Secretary-General regarding such an investigation. Sri Lanka merely stated that it would not tolerate harassment against human rights defenders, but then questioned the legitimacy of these defenders.

In all of these cases, the Council should demand that an independent, prompt and transparent investigation is carried out, that perpetrators are prosecuted, and that victims receive reparations. States concerned must keep the Council informed of their efforts in this regard. In turn the Council should decide on an appropriate format for periodic follow-up.

Mr President,

We strongly believes that this Council is doing too little to protect those that cooperate with or seek to cooperate with its mechanisms and procedures or with other parts of the UN system in the field of human rights.

The Council should support efforts by UN bodies, including its own mechanisms, to prevent and address instances of reprisals or intimidation. There is reason to believe that instances of intimidation and reprisals are far more widespread than the Secretary-General's report suggests, but that many victims fear for their safety and do not come forward. We believe that the Council must reiterate its call on all representatives and mechanisms of the UN in the field of human rights to make public any credible allegations of intimidation or reprisals or of hampering access to UN bodies and mechanisms.

Mr President,

We believe that serious national measures to address impunity for reprisals is the most efficient way to end or reduce this phenomenon. In addition, through the Secretary-General's report the Council should receive analysis and recommendations on how States, the Council and other parts of the UN system can best prevent and address instances of reprisals or intimidation.

In its *Resolution 12/2* the Council called for accountability and remedies for victims of reprisals. It must make these words a reality and not a distant promise.

Thank you