

## [President of Human Rights Council condemns continuing reprisals, requests more resources for Council](#)

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On 14 November 2012, the President of the Human Rights Council (the President), Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre, presented her [report](#) to the General Assembly's Third Committee in New York.

In her statement, the President summarized some of the key developments in the Council in 2012, including the ongoing consideration of the human rights situation in Syria; the creation of new mandates on Eritrea and on Belarus, and on the effects of Israeli settlements on human rights; the adoption of resolutions on 17 countries; and the organization of 16 panel discussions, including on freedom of expression on the Internet, and on access to justice for indigenous peoples.

The President stressed the importance of civil society contributions to the Council, which were indispensable to its work and credibility. However, she was disappointed at continued reprisals against those cooperating with the UN system. She underscored that it was essential for human rights defenders to carry out their work in a safe and open environment, and in particular, she referenced paragraph 30 of HRC Resolution [16/21](#). In this provision, the Council strongly rejects acts of intimidation and reprisals, and urges States to prevent and ensure adequate protection against them. She also highlighted the strong stance of Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon on the issue during his September address at the Council, and in a high-level panel on reprisals.

The President highlighted several other Council resolutions, including one recommending the General Assembly to allow participation of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) at the General Assembly. She also welcomed the constructive discussion in June on the line between freedom of expression and incitement to hatred and violence, which was an important follow-up to Council resolution 16/18 (2011). That resolution, among other things, emphasizes the interdependence and mutually reinforcing bond of freedom of religion and freedom of expression.

She also appealed to States to keep up the momentum of the first Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle, noting that the second cycle, already underway, will be crucial in dealing with follow up on human rights in a non-confrontational and depoliticized manner.

One of the major challenges facing the Council is the lack of resources for the numerous activities it undertakes. In particular, the President noted that the conference services required more resources, including for translation of UPR documents into all languages. She also requested that resources from the regular UN budget cover webcast coverage of Council and UPR meetings, as the webcasts are the only official archive of those meetings.

In the interactive dialogue, most States praised the Council's progress, though a few pointed out some issues that required further attention. Mexico said there was room for improvement in how the Council addressed national situations, while Liechtenstein regretted that the Council had not taken sufficient action regarding the human rights situation in Bahrain. Liechtenstein also questioned the usefulness of the "traditional values" debates. China and Cuba expressed concern about the Council's lack of attention to economic, social and cultural rights. Russia, Syria, Bangladesh, Cuba and China accused the Council of selectivity and double standards, practices which could lead to the discrediting of the Council, as happened with the Commission on Human Rights, its predecessor. China also disagreed with the General Assembly practice of taking up the Council's report before the Third Committee considers it. As the premier human rights body, China believed the Third Committee should review it first.

Mexico, Turkey, Switzerland and South Africa agreed that the Council needed more resources, though Mexico urged the Council and Third Committee to look closely at their division of labour and avoid duplication of efforts. Turkey highlighted the need for more transparency around voluntary contributions to the Office, and for easily accessible information on sources and funding allocation to the Office. Switzerland urged States to maintain their voluntary contributions, while increasing their portion of the regular budget for the High

Commissioner.

The United States (US) , Switzerland, European Union (EU), and Japan asked for advice about how best to ensure the implementation of recommendations during the UPR's second cycle. Apparently referring to Israel decision to suspend relations with the Council, Liechtenstein expressed concern about the threat to the universality of the UPR.

In closing, the President again invited States to consider providing additional resources to the Council and for OHCHR. Funding was very much needed, including for technical cooperation, local offices and general support for fieldwork.

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