

[States call for protection of civil society space and media freedom: Live-tweet coverage of the High Level Segment @ HRC31](#)

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(Geneva) - The High Level Segment of the UN Human Rights Council concluded on 3 March. Several dignitaries intervening in the Council's High Level Segment reiterated the importance of civil society in promoting and protecting human rights during the initial days of the Council's 31st session. High-level speakers from [Japan](#), [United States](#), [Liechtenstein](#), [Australia](#), [Norway](#) and [Finland](#) were among the most vocal in recognising the vital role of civil society and NGOs. Other Ministers noted how repression of civil society is an urgent concern including Mr Witold Waszczykowski, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, stating the global problem of a '[shrinking space of civil society](#)' must be stopped.

Another notable theme was the issue of media freedom. Delegates from [Lithuania](#), [Sweden](#), [Mexico](#), and [the Netherlands](#) emphasised the need to protect journalists. Other States spoke of threats and intimidation journalists face, such as Swedish Minister of Culture and Democracy, Alice Bah Kunke, condemning all '[reprisals and murders against journalists and human rights defenders](#).'

'These statements highlight the clear international consensus that the global crackdown on civil society and human rights defenders must end,' ISHR Human Rights Council Advocacy Director Michael Ineichen said. 'Further, the amount and caliber of high-level statements delivered at the Council confirms that 10 years after its creation, the Council is seen by States as an important space to shape global human rights policy,' Mr Ineichen said.

Many States also highlighted areas for improvement and further work for the Council, such as in pushing for the repeal of [anti-LGBTI](#) legislation, addressing [business](#) and [human rights](#) abuses, ending [reprisals](#), and strengthening [accountability](#) and [transparency](#).

This session marked the second High-Level Segment for which ISHR provided live twitter coverage. A summary of these tweets can be found [here](#). We will be tweeting [#HRC31](#) updates for the remainder of the session. Follow us [@ISHRglobal](#).

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