

[Paraguay: Protect defenders; protect rights; implement the UPR](#)

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In Geneva today, the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) called upon Paraguay to do more to guarantee the security of human rights defenders, journalists and *campesino* leaders.

The call came during the adoption of the recommendations from the country's second Universal Periodic Review (UPR), in which Paraguay received 13 recommendations regarding the protection of human rights defenders, although the State considered five of them as being already implemented or in the process of being implemented.

Representing ISHR, Ben Leather denied this affirmation and thanked those States which, through their recommendations, had 'recognised the grave situation of risk which have left these motors of change facing threats, criminalisation and even death'. Recommendations on this issue were made by Slovenia, Honduras, Sweden, Switzerland, Macedonia, the US and Noruega amongst others.

Last June, ISHR published a [report](#) on the situation of defenders in the country, and Mr Leather signalled to the Council that, since then, 'the risks persist, with harassment of community leaders by private security agents, the criminalisation of women defenders, and a latent impunity'.

'In order for Paraguay to foment an enabling environment for the implementation of its UPR', he continued, the State 'must strengthen policies and laws for a safe environment for those who defend human rights, and implement recommendations for their recognition, protection and access to justice'.

Campesino leaders and defenders of land rights face tremendous risks, particularly when their demands put them in collision with business interests. The Human Rights Coordinator of Paraguay (CODEHPUY) documented 115 murders or disappearances of leaders of *campesino* organisations between 1989 and 2013.

'We demand', emphasised Mr Leather in a call to the Paraguayan delegation in the Council chamber: 'Protect defenders; protect rights; implement the UPR'.

Mr Leather closed his intervention repeating a call, made by representatives of Paraguayan civil society in a [side event](#) in Geneva this January, to those States which made UPR recommendations to Paraguay: 'Please: put in place follow-up mechanisms which guarantee that human rights [issues] be covered in your existing diplomatic and economic relations. Do what you can so that your recommendations are implemented in

Paraguay'.

ISHR