

President of Human Rights Council must address alleged reprisals in China

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(Geneva - 5 July 2013) - In a joint letter, Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) requested the President of the United Nations Human Rights Council to urgently address alleged reprisals against human rights defenders in China.

A press release issued by 'Chinese Human Rights Defenders' (CHRD) on 4 July alleges that human rights defenders who were staging a peaceful sit-in aimed at highlighting the importance of the State engaging civil society actors in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process were subjected to restrictions of their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, association and expression and were further subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention.

'The President of the Human Rights Council is responsible for the work of the Council and its subsidiary mechanisms, and is the custodian of the integrity and quality of the UPR' said Phil Lynch, Director of the International Service for Human Rights. 'It is therefore imperative that he acts decisively to ensure the full and safe participation of civil society in the Council's work', Mr Lynch said.

The Universal Periodic Review process is a critical mechanism of the Human Rights Council. The participation of civil society in the UPR process is essential to ensure that the process is based on 'objective and reliable information' as required by General Assembly Resolution 60/251. Civil society participation in the drafting of the national report is directly envisaged by the founding texts of the Council, and is essential to ensure that the national report reflects the actual human rights situation on the ground.

In their joint letter, HRW and ISHR also urged the President to give effect to the Human Rights Council's resolutions condemning intimidation and reprisals against those who cooperate with it, and in which the Council affirms "the duty of all States to end impunity for such actions by bringing the perpetrators, including accomplices, to justice in accordance with international standards and by providing an effective remedy for their victims".

Read the [joint letter](#) and the CHRD [press release](#).