

## [Treaty bodies | Threats and assaults on human rights defenders incompatible with the core international human rights treaties](#)

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“This pronouncement constitutes a major step forward in the protection of human rights defenders and lays the ground for substantial enhancement of treaty body recommendations and jurisprudence in that area” says ISHR head of treaty body advocacy Vincent Ploton.

[The statement](#) reiterates the vital and central role played by human rights defenders to promote and support the application of the fundamental rights enshrined in the core international human rights treaties. It further contextualises the importance and relevance of the UN Declaration on human rights defenders which “reaffirms, is underpinned by, and elaborates binding human rights obligations, including rights set out in the Treaties, and is relevant to the interpretation and implementation of the Treaties”.

The Committee on economic, social and cultural rights (CESCR) was the first to adopt in 2016 a statement affirming that threats and violence against human rights defenders amount to violations of the Covenant. “We are delighted that fellow Treaty Bodies are now following suit with the adoption of this new joint statement”, says ISHR’s New York Director Madeleine Sinclair.

Marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Declaration on human rights defenders, the statement confirms that the core international human rights treaties and the Declaration prohibit discrimination against individuals and groups who champion such human rights norms and standards. It reaffirms that all individuals should be able to engage with treaty bodies free from all forms of interference, intimidation, abuse, threat, violence, reprisal, or undue restriction. It concludes with a series of practical measures that States ought to take to guarantee the protection of human rights defenders, including the adoption of specific legislation to protect and recognise defenders, and the revocation of legislation which restricts or hinders their work.

“We hope that all Treaty Bodies will draw on the substance of this statement which brings a fresh and inspiring perspective on the interpretation of the treaties.” Ploton concluded.

Read the statement:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23154&LangID=E>

Pictures of the consultation are available on the [ISHR Facebook page](#).

The statement was endorsed by the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, and the following Treaty Body members in their individual capacity: Virginia Brás-Gomes, CESCR Chair; Dalia Leinarte, CEDAW Chair; Nouredine Amir, CERD Chair; Ahmadou Tall, CMW Chair; Danlami Basharu, CRPD Vice-Chair; Felice Gaer, CAT Vice-Chair; Marcia Kran, HRCtte member; Olga Khazova, CRC Vice-Chair and Satyabhooshun Gut Domah, SPT member.

*Update: The Human Rights Committee endorsed the statement at its 124th session from 1 October to 5*

October along with the Committee on Enforced Disappearance, the Committee on Migrant Workers, and the Committee on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities. The Committee on the Rights of the Child also endorsed the statement during the 79th session. Find the French version of this statement [here](#).

Photo: ISHR

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