

## [Treaty Bodies | NGOs call on experts to affirm their support for groundbreaking statement on human rights defenders](#)

05.09.2018



Two months ago the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders and representatives from all human rights treaty bodies adopted a ground-breaking [Joint Statement on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the UN Human Rights Defenders Declaration](#).

The statement speaks of the importance of the work of defenders in promoting human rights around the world, assisting Treaty Bodies in monitoring States' compliance with the Treaties, and disseminating information about the treaties and the Treaty Bodies' work. Importantly, the statement affirms that violations of the rights of defenders **constitute violations of State parties' obligations towards the realisation of rights set out in the Treaties.**

'This is a major step forward for defenders,' said Madeleine Sinclair, ISHR's NY Office Director. 'The statement echoes [an earlier statement by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) and affirms that all forms of abuse and unnecessary restrictions against defenders are violations of State treaty obligations,' said Sinclair. 'It is important that all treaty bodies as a whole support the joint statement and begin to draw upon it in their work.'

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the UN Declaration on human rights defenders and the situation for defenders remains grim. ISHR's legal counsel Tess McEvoy notes that positive recognition of the role of defenders, and need to protect them, is gravely needed. 'This Statement comes at a critical juncture as defenders are under unprecedented attack, facing defamation, detention and even death. We urge States to protect defenders and heed the calls in the statement to [adopt legislation for the protection of defenders](#) or amend legislation that hinders their work.' 'The work of human rights defenders globally is more important now than ever before. An endorsement from all of the treaty bodies would be a strong show of much needed support.'

The full NGO letter can be accessed [here](#).

Contact: Madeleine Sinclair, [m.sinclair@ishr.ch](mailto:m.sinclair@ishr.ch). 917-544-6148

Tess McEvoy, [t.mecevoy@ishr.ch](mailto:t.mecevoy@ishr.ch), 929-323-9962