

Human Rights Council 32nd session

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ITEM 5 - GENERAL DEBATE, JUNE 2016

Thank you Mr President,

Human rights are an evolving concept, and need to be constantly adapted to new realities and challenges in society. So will the human rights bodies and mechanisms of the UN mandated to protect these rights, including the Council. Any healthy and functional body should be open to exploring opportunities for self-improvement on a continuing basis.

In this spirit, we hope that the 10th anniversary of the Council will be the start and not the end point of building a Council which constantly evolves towards a more accessible, effective and protective body.

We therefore call on existing and incoming members of the Council to set out a positive vision for using their term to bring more attention to situations requiring the Council's attention.

We also urge members of the GA to take the level of cooperation of States with human rights mechanisms into account before casting their vote in Council elections.

A good place to start this analysis is the [joint communications report](#)¹, *contained in document A/HRC/32/53 presented to this session.*

It shows shocking evidence of threats and attacks against human rights defenders, but sadly is met by widespread ignorance by the Council members concerned.

For instance, in Burundi human rights defender Marie-Claudette Kwizera was abducted and her family was forced to pay a ransom *to a SNR member* and threatened with reprisals.

Nothing has been done so far by the authorities to investigate the enforced disappearance and her family keeps being pressured and threaten of reprisals.

In Venezuela, Mr Héctor Sanchez Lozada, a lawyer and human rights activist, was reportedly killed by two unknown people on a motorcycle, *when leaving a visit with a client in the city of Maturin in the State of Monagas.*

Neither of these emblematic cases has received a reply from the concerned government.

President Choi, as the guardian of the Council's founding texts, we look to you to ensure full cooperation *with the Council's mechanisms*. Among the more than 40 States *listed the [joint communications report](#) presented to this session* as having yet to respond to at least one initial communication alleging rights violations, 12 are Council members. We urge to remind Burundi, El Salvador, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Vietnam of their obligations by inviting them to update the Council on the status of these

¹ http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/32/53

communications. Failure to do so should carry consequences *to their Human Rights Council membership. We appreciate that some States may have responded since the report's publication.*

Council members are required under GA Resolution 60/251 to 'fully cooperate with the Council.' A lack of timely and substantive response to Special Procedures not only undermines the integrity of this forum, but is plainly incompatible with membership.

Thank you.