

UN Human Rights Council 49: UK statement for the interactive dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders

World news story

The UK delivered this statement reiterating that all attacks on Human Rights Defenders are part of a wider trend of restrictions to civic space that must be abated.



The Human Rights Council takes place in Geneva.

Thank you, Mr Vice-President,

The United Kingdom welcomes the Special Rapporteur's report. Human Rights Defenders perform a crucial function within society. They promote the rights of their fellow citizens, including marginalised groups. And they expose corruption and challenge poor governance. Sadly, that role is not universally respected.

The UK notes with concern the attacks on Human Rights Defenders working in the field of anti-corruption, as outlined in the report. All attacks on Human Rights Defenders are part of a wider trend of restrictions to civic space that must be reversed.

The United Nations must lead by example to protect those who participate in its processes from reprisals. We regret in particular that women working in the fields of peacebuilding and security are being increasingly targeted for sharing their views.

In July 2019, the UK published guidance outlining its support for Human Rights Defenders. We continue to provide assistance through our bilateral engagement around the world, and through multilateral organisations. Our diplomatic network will go on monitoring cases, observing trials, and raising

our concerns on this issue with other governments.

Special Rapporteur,

What can be done to reduce reprisals against Human Rights Defenders and where should responsibility lie for their protection?

Thank you.

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