



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER AGENDA ITEM 4 ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Geneva, 26 June 2006

Mr. President,

The International Service for Human Rights is very happy to agree with many of the comments made today on issues concerning human rights defenders.

For example, we agree with the representative of Argentina, who highlighted how human rights defenders continue to face harassment, intimidation and attacks, because of the work they carry out. In this context, we would also like to emphasise the specific vulnerability faced by women human rights defenders and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists.

ISHR also agrees with the representatives of Azerbaijan and Japan on the issue of impunity and how the lack of investigations of human rights violations has contributed to the increased vulnerability of human rights defenders.

Many States, including the United Kingdom, also highlighted the worrying trend of adopting restrictive legislation that limits the work of human rights defenders.

We could not agree more with the representatives of Morocco and Canada, who have expressed strong support for the work of the Special Representative on human rights defenders.

And we also agree with the representatives of Indonesia and Austria speaking on behalf of the European Union, who have underlined the important role of human rights defenders in promoting and protecting human rights.

ISHR agrees with the distinguished representatives of these States on each of these points and hopes that they and other States will also agree with us that this Council has a key role to play in protecting defenders and ensuring an environment conducive to their work.

We ask the Council to view human rights defenders as key partners of this Council in promoting and protecting human rights. This Council has the responsibility to ensure that human rights defenders and NGOs, as key stakeholders in the work of the Council, are able to participate in and contribute to the decision-making processes concerning the implementation of General Assembly resolution 60/251, which will shape the work of the Council for many years to come.

Thank you

