

New report shows need for States and business to prevent and redress corporate human rights abuses

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'We are disturbed by the Working Group's reports of the harassment, persecution and reprisals faced by human rights defenders for their work investigating, protesting, and seeking redress for victims of alleged corporate human rights abuses,' said ISHR's Director of Human Rights Council Advocacy, Michael Ineichen.

The harassment of human rights defenders working on issues of corporate accountability is expressly prohibited by the UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which provide that States and corporations must not obstruct or impair the legitimate and peaceful activities of human rights defenders.

'We urge States to investigate any alleged acts of intimidation or reprisal against human rights defenders working on issues of corporate accountability. Where such abuses occur, States must also ensure that those affected have access to an effective remedy,' Mr Ineichen said.

In a statement to the UN's Human Rights Council, ISHR welcomed the Working Group's recognition as to the important and legitimate role of civil society organisations, trade unions and human rights defenders in raising awareness of the human rights impacts and risks of business enterprises and activities.

'The recent building collapse and loss of more than 1,100 lives in Rana Plaza in Bangladesh tragically demonstrates the consequences that can flow from the failure of corporations to meaningfully consult with human rights defenders to identify, prevent and mitigate the adverse human rights impacts of business operations,' said Mr Ineichen.

ISHR is calling on the UN Human Rights Council to ensure effective national implementation of an historic resolution adopted by consensus in March 2013 which recognises the important role of human rights defenders in promoting and protecting human rights and which calls on States to respect, protect and support their activities.

'The work of human rights defenders – including journalists, lawyers and advocates – is crucial to uphold human rights and the rule of law. Increasingly, this involves investigating, protesting against and ensuring accountability for corporate human rights abuses,' said Mr Ineichen.

'It is imperative that States increase their protection and support for civil society organizations and human rights defenders that work on issues of corporate accountability.'

ISHR's statement to the UN Human Rights Council is available [here](#).