

Council called upon to take action on human rights defenders and corporate accountability

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In a [statement during the interactive dialogue with the Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#), ISHR expressed concern at the harassment and reprisals faced by human rights defenders for their work investigating, protesting, and seeking access to remedies for victims of alleged abuses linked to business activities.

In a [statement made to the Panel on Business and Human Rights](#), ISHR urged the UN and all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights are interpreted and applied consistently with the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. In ISHR's submission, this requires: that States enact legislation to protect civil society organizations and human rights defenders from harassment, persecution and reprisals linked to their corporate accountability work; that corporations consult with human rights defenders about the human rights risks and impacts of their work; and that both States and corporations provide access to an effective remedy for victims of corporate human rights violations.

Finally, in a [side-event on business and human rights defenders jointly sponsored by ISHR and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), a group of four expert panelists (Clement Voulé, expert member of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights working group on extractive industries and human rights; Sapna Malik, Partner at Leigh Day; Gerald Staberock, Secretary-General of the World Organisation Against Torture; and Lene Wendland, Adviser on Business and Human Rights in OHCHR) outlined the 'particular risks' that human rights defenders who work on issues of corporate accountability face. The panelists concluded that the Human Rights Council should better protect and support the work of such defenders and proposed a range of actions in this regard, including a joint study or report on the issues by the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and the Working Group on Business and Human Rights, and developing a resolution on business and human rights defenders for adoption by the Human Rights Council. All panelists agreed that there is a more pressing need for full and effective implementation of both the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders at the national level than for the elaboration of a new treaty or declaration on the issues.