

## **ISHR welcomes record number of draft resolutions on protection of human rights defenders**

11.06.2013

(Geneva – 11 June 2013) - Building on the momentum created by its landmark resolution on protecting human rights defenders in March 2013, the UN Human Rights Council is set to adopt a record number of resolutions strengthening the recognition and protection of the work of particular groups of human rights defenders at its current session.

(Geneva – 11 June 2013) - Building on the momentum created by its landmark resolution on protecting human rights defenders in March 2013, the UN Human Rights Council is set to adopt a record number of resolutions strengthening the recognition and protection of the work of particular groups of human rights defenders at its current session.

'The current session of the Council has heard evidence and received extensive reports of unprecedented attacks and restrictions on human rights defenders,' said Michael Ineichen, Director of Human Rights Council Advocacy with the International Service for Human Rights.

'In the last two weeks alone, we have borne witness to the conviction of 43 civil society workers in Egypt, the passage of a draft law criminalising gay and lesbian rights organisations in Nigeria, and the prosecution of NGOs in Russia for submitting information to the UN Committee against Torture,' Mr Ineichen said.

In this context, ISHR welcomes and supports the adoption of the following resolutions, all of which have been the subject of ISHR lobbying and advocacy:

- A draft resolution on the elimination of discrimination against women, presented by Colombia and Mexico, which recognises that the work of women human rights defenders and women's civil society organisations is crucial to promoting gender equality and eliminating violence against women and which calls on States to support the sustainability and growth of such organisations.
- A draft resolution on eliminating violence against women, presented by Canada, which expresses deep concern at the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence to intimidate, harass, deter and commit reprisals against women human rights defenders and which calls on States to protect women and girls from such threats and attacks.
- A draft resolution on women's empowerment, presented by the US and other States, which acknowledges 'the important role of women journalists and women human rights defenders in the exercise, promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and, in this context, expressing concern at the risks faced by these women in the exercise of their work'.
- A draft resolution on the independence of the judiciary, presented by a coalition of States, which condemns attacks and reprisals against lawyers and judges and calls on States to protect them, to prosecute such acts and to bring perpetrators to justice.
- A draft resolution on the human rights of migrants, presented by Mexico, which calls on States to ensure that their domestic laws and policies facilitate the work of human rights defenders who defend migrant rights, 'including by avoiding any criminalization, stigmatization, impediments, obstructions or restrictions thereof contrary to international human rights law'.
- A draft resolution on the human rights situation in Eritrea, presented by Djibouti, Somalia and Nigeria, which condemns 'the severe restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of information, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freedom of peaceful assembly and association, including the detention of journalists, human rights defenders, political actors, religious leaders and practitioners in Eritrea'.
- Finally, a draft resolution on the human rights situation in Belarus, presented by the European Union, which condemns the harassment of civil society organisations, human rights defenders and journalists, and which calls for an immediate end to the arbitrary detention of human rights defenders.

ISHR also welcomed one joint statement led by Norway calling for a resolution to combat discrimination and

violence on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and another joint statement, again led by Norway, which recognised the important work of human rights defenders who work on issues of corporate accountability. Both of these issues are key ISHR priorities.

‘While ISHR is disappointed that this session of the Council has not taken action to address discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, and to protect and support human rights defenders working on those issues, we do welcome the positive attention given to defenders in many other resolutions,’ said Mr Ineichen.

ISHR will continue to push for action by the Human Rights Council – the world’s peak human rights body – to strengthen protections for human rights defenders and also work with national and regional NGOs to promote the concrete implementation of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and relevant Council resolutions on the ground.

All draft resolutions are all available on the [OHCHR extranet](#) (username: hrc extranet; password: 1session).

ISHR