

HRC38 | Critical situation of environmental defenders should serve as benchmark for diplomatic support

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The UN Working Group on business and human rights, together with States, must consider the particular threats and attacks on defenders working on rights related to land and environment, ISHR and a group of environmental defenders told the Human Rights Council. ISHR also emphasised that States providing diplomatic support to business should also require a clear commitment to respect, consult and protect defenders.



Together with a group of environmental human rights defenders from Peru, Botswana, Myanmar and the Philippines, ISHR has called on States to combat impunity for attacks on defenders, and ensure full civil society participation in development and the management of natural resources. The statement was delivered during the dialogue with the UN's expert group on business and human rights. The Council also considered new reports on the use of [economic diplomacy to increase respect for human rights](#), and on investigative missions to [Canada](#) and [Peru](#) by the working group.

'We welcome the affirmation by the Working Group that the situation of human rights defenders should be a critical benchmark to assess eligibility for State support and benefits relating to trade and export promotion,' said Michael Ineichen, Programme Director at ISHR.

'Especially States who also have a foreign policy priority on protecting human rights defenders, like those having specific Guidelines on the protection of defenders, should demand that businesses demonstrate a specific policy commitment to respect and consult with defenders before requesting diplomatic support', Ineichen said.

A range of countries, including [Canada](#), the [EU](#), [Switzerland](#), [Norway](#), and [Finland](#), have adopted specific guidelines on the protection of human rights defenders for their diplomatic posts. Only the Canadian guidelines currently detail what should happen when the [challenges facing defenders relate to Canadian companies](#).

The statement also called on the forthcoming guidance by the working group to include a specific focus on the situation of environmental human rights defenders.

Watch the statement here:

Read the full statement [here](#) and below.

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