

Human Rights Council 37th session

Speaker: Sarah M Brooks - Check against delivery

ITEM 3 – INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE W/ SR ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Thank you, Mr President.

We welcome the Special Rapporteurs' reports, with a timely focus on the human rights impacts of mass movements of people and the increasingly securitised policies with which governments, globally, respond to those movements.

Mr Forst,

We are pleased to see your thematic report to the Council focus on a range of barriers that confront defenders of the rights of people on the move. Whether they are migrants who risk deportation, or local lawyers, social workers and activists seeking to demonstrate solidarity, your report provides a compelling case for States to take concrete action to address the specific challenges faced by these defenders.

Similar conclusion appear in your country visit reports from Australia and Mexico.

We remain concerned that governments, including many in the EU, are increasingly responding to challenges of 'migration management' by backpedalling on their support for fundamental freedoms, including expression, association and assembly and instead criminalising acts of solidarity. This runs counter not only to their obligations, but to their goal of protecting migrants' rights.

How will you ensure that States incorporate recommendations on the role of human rights defenders and the need for an enabling environment for their work in negotiations of the Global Compact on Migration?

You also raise concerns about human rights defenders who, for reasons including threats and harassment in their own communities, must relocate nationally, regionally or internationally. **What specific practices can States adopt to ensure that relocation schemes and humanitarian visas allow human rights defenders to continue their important work?**

As always, we welcome your commitment to providing Observations to Communications as an important element of holding governments accountable for both responding to and acting on expert recommendations.

You expressed particular concern about the widespread impunity for attacks on human rights defenders in several regions, as well as the particular threats defenders combatting impunity face. **Would you consider dedicating a future report on impunity, which is at the root of insecurity of defenders?**

These efforts are critical in ensuring full implementation by all governments of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. We look forward to more opportunities to engage with you, the Special Procedures and the Council in this regard.

Thank you.