



**25th Session Human Rights Council  
Item 5**

**FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION: APPOINTING A HIGHLY QUALIFIED AND  
INDEPENDENT MANDATE HOLDER**

19 March 2014

Joint Statement\*

Mr. President,

This Council has recognised that “the exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression is one of the essential foundations of a democratic society” and has called on States to “to take all necessary measures to put an end to violations of these rights and to create the conditions to prevent such violations.”

The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression has since 1993 played a crucial role in informing the Human Rights Commission and subsequently the Council about the challenges and violations that people exercising their right to freedom of opinion and expression face on the ground.

Three successive mandate holders have provided a voice on the international stage to individuals and groups that some State and non-State actors would rather silence, and guided States on the practical implementation of their human rights obligations.

Mr President, in June you will appoint a new mandate holder.

ARTICLE 19, Amnesty International, Asian Legal Resource Centre, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Committee to Protect Journalists, the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, International Service for Human Rights, and Reporters Without Borders, have submitted a joint written statement to this session (A/HRC/25/NGO/176), available at the back of the room, which sets out the criteria to ensure that candidates are independent and possess the necessary expertise to carry the mandate forwards. These criteria include:

1. Recognised expertise in responding to developments and challenges in the field of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, in particular how new technologies impact these rights globally;

2. Experience in developing legislation, policies and mechanisms for creating a safe and enabling environment for the exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression;
3. Proven awareness of the particular challenges and risks specific individuals and groups may face and their particular protection needs when exercising their right to freedom of opinion and expression;
4. A demonstrated commitment to the universality of international human rights law, standards and values;

Thank you.

\* on behalf of:

ARTICLE 19

Amnesty International

Asian Legal Resource Centre

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Committee to Protect Journalists

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

International Service for Human Rights

Reporters Without Borders