

Statement at 32nd session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 6: UPR outcomes-Niger

Thank you Mr. President,

The International Service for Human Rights takes the opportunity of the adoption of the Universal Periodic Review report to congratulate Niger on accepting six recommendations (120.134 to 120.139) made by Ghana, Switzerland, the UK, US, Germany and Norway concerning the human rights defenders situation and ways to improve protection.

Among others, these recommendations call on Niger to:

- ‘ensure full respect for the right to freedom of expression and media freedom by preventing all harassment and undue detention of journalists and civil society activists’
- ‘protect human rights defenders and ensure that they are able to carry out their work free from harassment and intimidation’
- ‘take steps to halt all intimidation and harassment by law enforcement officials against human rights defenders’

We encourage Niger to implement these recommendations by adopting, in consultation with human rights defenders, a national human rights defenders protection law consistent with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Such a law should provide for specific legal recognition of the right to defend human rights and foster an enabling environment for defenders’ work. On the African continent, Cote d’Ivoire has already adopted such a law and Burkina Faso is developing one.

With the contribution of human rights defenders and experts from around the world, ISHR has drafted a Model National Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders to assist countries who are considering the adoption of such laws. This Model Law was made public at a side event organized during this session of the Human Rights Council. We would be happy to share a copy of the Model Law with the delegation of Niger to support their efforts to better protect defenders on their territory.

I thank you Mr. President.