

#UNHRC 27th session - Item 3: General Debate

Speaker: Ms Rumbidzai Masango

Mr President.

ISHR and CIVICUS welcome the special procedures' joint communications report presented under item 3 contained in document 27/72.

It documents a worsening trend of threats and attacks against civil society actors and human rights defenders, which we deplore deeply, and call on the Council to address.

In the most egregious examples, the report contains cases of defenders who were killed or died in connection with their work, including Cao Shunli who died allegedly in connection with her engagement with the UPR, and Gilbert Paborada, Elisa Tulid, Rolan Langala, Marcelo Monterona, Julieto Lauron and Sixto Bagasala, six defenders from the Philippines killed allegedly in connection with their work to promote corporate accountability and land and environment rights.

None of these cases received a reply from the government concerned.

Mr President, we're alarmed by the lack of responses, or of substantive responses, to many of the allegations contained in this session's communications report. The Council should formulate a clear expectation that States concerned respond to communications in a prompt, constructive and substantive manner.

Lack of adequate responses is particularly galling when it concerns Council members, who are required under GA Resolution 60/251 to 'fully cooperate with the Council'. For this session, there are communications *without response* concerning 13 members including Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, China, Cote d'Ivoire, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela, while others have failed to respond substantively.

We respectfully suggest that States in relation to which a communication has been addressed, but to which the State has not substantively responded, be given the floor first during future interactive dialogues with relevant mandate holders – just as concerned countries speak first when mission reports are presented – with the expectation of a substantive response here in Room 20.

Lack of appropriate responses to special procedures is plainly incompatible with membership; a fact which we invite members of the GA to consider when electing members to this Council.

Thank you.