

Human Rights Council- 27th Session (8th September-26th September)

General Debate Statement of Ireland on Item 5

Friday, 19th September

Statement by Ireland

Ireland aligns itself with the statement made by Italy on behalf of the European Union and would like to add the following.

Mr President,

First and foremost, Ireland welcomes the **Secretary General's Report on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights**. The report outlines an extensive number of disturbing reprisals cases; however, the Secretary General has described this as just "the tip of the iceberg".

Ireland fully agrees with the Secretary General that civil society is an indispensable partner of the United Nations. We are deeply concerned by restrictions facing civil society in many parts of the world and we believe it is essential to create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment in which civil society can operate free from hindrance and insecurity.

Reprisals are never acceptable, not in any circumstances, nor in any fora. The cases mentioned in the Secretary General's Report range from very serious allegations of human rights violations such as arbitrary detention, torture and killings to travel bans, harassment, intimidations and smear campaigns. All such acts are intended to silence and ultimately to deprive the UN and its Member States of the knowledge and experience they depend on to carry-out their mandates and responsibilities effectively.

This Report serves as a clear and disturbing reminder that the current response by the UN and its Member States in preventing and addressing reprisals has been inadequate. Ireland strongly feels that more needs to be done and that the United Nations must address cases of reprisals through a more effective and coordinated approach, with a view to ensuring we all uphold the principles and purposes of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Ireland notes the balanced Report of **the Chair-Rapporteur of the Inter-Governmental Working Group on a draft United Nations declaration on the right to peace**. Ireland commends the diligent approach that the Chair-Rapporteur has taken in seeking to find text that would allow a declaration to be adopted by consensus.

Ireland fully acknowledges the link between peace and the enjoyment of human rights. The peace process on the island of Ireland has shown that even long-standing conflicts may be resolved allowing, as one of the tangible benefits of peace, a more full enjoyment of human rights by all.

Having said this, Ireland does not believe that a right to peace exists under international law. There are widely differing views on this matter, as evidenced in the Report. We therefore welcome the fresh direction taken in the new draft of the Chair-Rapporteur and hope that future negotiations will continue down this path.

Thank you