

[Check against Delivery]



Statement of Ireland

54th session of the Human Rights Council

ID with Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

18 September 2023

Mr President,

Ireland aligns with the statement of the EU, and thanks the Working Group for its report.

We note with great concern the persistent issue of the arbitrary detention of Human Rights Defenders, in particular the specific challenges faced by environmental human rights defenders, as identified in the report. Human rights defenders, including environmental human rights defenders, play a crucial role in our society and must be free to carry out their activities without fear of harassment, reprisal, detention or violence.

We share the concerns raised in the report regarding anti-disinformation laws being used to falsely prosecute journalists, researchers, activists and human rights defenders for the dissemination of information. The importance of ensuring a free press cannot be understated, and it is concerning to see vague concepts of “false news” being used to arbitrarily detain dissenting voices. Seventy-five years on from ‘freedom of opinion and expression’ being enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we must ensure that it is adequately protected.

Ireland echoes the call of the Working Group for States to refrain from using ambiguously-defined anti-disinformation legislation to prosecute individuals for the dissemination of information in the course of their work.

Chair, we note your concern over challenges in state engagement. How can States best be encouraged to engage proactively with the Working Group, and in particular to engage positively with country visits?

Thank you.