

31st session of the Human Rights Council (29 February-24 March 2016)
Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism and
Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights
Statement by Ireland
10 March 2016

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and adds the following.

Mr President,

Ireland welcomes the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights and the Special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights and thanks them for their reports.

Ireland would first like to congratulate the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights on her appointment. As a member of the core group on the protection of cultural heritage, we encourage all States to share the joint statement condemning the destruction of cultural heritage and addressing its negative human rights impact.

Ireland particularly welcomes the focus the Special Rapporteur has given to defenders of cultural heritage, who, as she states, should in many circumstances be recognised as human rights defenders. These individuals play an important role in not only preserving our diverse culture but also in enabling the enjoyment of other rights including the freedom of expression, the freedom of religion, and the right to education, facing many risks to do so. *Could the Special Rapporteur elaborate on measures to protect persons engaged in the preservation of cultural heritage?*

Turning to the Special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights, we note the finding in the report that repressive Governments have used the lack of conceptual clarity around violent extremism to implement security measures leading to immense pressures on civil society. We believe civil society plays an important role in countering violent extremism, including by empowering persons belonging to minorities and vulnerable groups. We call on States to ensure all responses to counter violent extremism are in full compliance with international human rights law.

Could the Special Rapporteur offer any practical guidance for States in ensuring that any measures taken, including security measures, do not interfere with the important role of civil society in promoting inclusion, and preventing violent extremism?

Thank you