

**71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly
Third Committee**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights
defenders**

**Statement by Ireland
21 October 2016**

Ireland aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and wishes to add the following comments in its own capacity. Ireland welcomes the work of the Special Rapporteur and takes this opportunity to reiterate its strong support to human rights defenders all over the world. They play a key role in promoting and protecting human rights at all levels.

Ireland has long been an advocate of human rights defenders. We strongly support the central role played by human rights defenders in ensuring the enjoyment of human rights by all and we condemn all acts of violence and intimidation against them. We are seriously concerned that human rights defenders find themselves the target of harassment and coercion. In that respect, we are particularly troubled by instances of reprisals against human rights defenders who have cooperated with UN human rights mechanisms, including the special procedures mandate holders.

We welcome that your report highlights “The Guidelines against Intimidation or Reprisals (the “San José Guidelines”)” which aim to enhance the protection provided by treaty bodies to those who face reprisals for engaging with the international human rights regime. I would like to ask if you can address in more detail your recommendation that relevant international and regional organizations put in place policies and measures to prevent and address reprisals against environmental human rights defenders? Do you have any examples of best practice in this regard that you can share?

We are aware that the remit of the Special Rapporteur is very broad and challenging one, and that, like many other special procedures mandate holders, the resources available to you are

limited. We would therefore like to know what you consider to be key priorities and challenges and what support the International community could provide to help you in your important undertakings?

Finally, let me reiterate the full support of Ireland for your mandate.

Thank you.