

Human Rights Council

29TH SESSION - CONCLUSION OF THE SESSION

Joint civil society statement by International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), CIVICUS, International Federation for Human Rights | FIDH, Human Rights Watch Article 19, Human Rights House Foundation, ILGA – International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association,

Mr President,

We welcome the focus on human rights defenders in detention by both the High Commissioner and a large group of States, and encourage OHCHR to swiftly create a publicly accessible database.

Among the positive outcomes of this session are the attention to the human rights of migrants, including those in transit, as well as the advances reflected in a strong resolution condemning violence against women. We welcome the recognition of the important role of women human rights defenders in this regard. We applaud the diverse group of States that took a stand against domestic violence and resisted attempts to justify human rights violations with reference to culture, tradition or religion.

At the same time, we deeply regret that a similarly principled approach was absent in relation to the protection of the family resolution, which remains fundamentally flawed. In particular, we oppose the use of “no action” motions to stifle debate on substantive amendments in the Council.

We welcome the many States from all regions reaffirming the need to end violence and discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and urge the Council to heed civil society's call to address this in a systematic and regular way.

We're encouraged by calls on States to ensure national laws don't hinder, but support and protect the work of defenders, such as in the counter-terrorism and Belarus resolutions. That said, we regret the failure of the resolution on corruption to reflect the risks faced by defenders working to fight corruption.

Mr President,

We welcome the latest COI report on the Gaza conflict and, to end the impunity for violations that have killed and injured so many civilians, support the call for the Council to review implementation of these and previous recommendations. We are dismayed that some States felt unable to support proposals to this effect.

We welcome the cross regional statement on Azerbaijan and the Council's decision to renew the mandates on Eritrea and dispatch a mission to South Sudan, and hope the latter lives up to the expectation of being a decisive step towards accountability. However, that the resolution comes many months after the serious nature of violations was clear shows in an exemplary way that the Council still fails to swiftly address all situations of human rights violations, and to be the agile and impactful body its founders envisaged.

Finally, Mr President, we're concerned about serious cases of reprisals during the session, including that of a physical attack on the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea, currently investigated by Geneva police. The Council cannot accept such incidents, and must speak out against them with one voice.

Thank you.