

Human Rights Council 25th session

Closing of the session

28 March 2014

Joint statement delivered by International Service for Human Rights, expressing the views of 19 organisations.

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Mr President, we thank you for your efforts to steer this session and to support civil society engagement with the Council, and look forward to working constructively with you to build on the initial successes of 2014. We wish to highlight the following important developments:

First, we welcome the Council's contribution to advancing accountability for international crimes, as evidenced by the resolutions adopted on DPRK and Sri Lanka.

Second, we also welcome the renewal of several important special procedure mandates.

Thirds, protests play a critical role in contributing to progress on human rights, promoting democracy and civic participation, and challenging repression and censorship. While the Council still falls short of responding adequately to human rights violations committed in the context of protests, particularly the abusive use of force by police, we welcome the ongoing efforts on this topic. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of a thematic resolution, and the joint statements – albeit modest – on Egypt and on Ukraine.

Fourth, Mr President, this Council will ultimately be judged by its impact on the promotion and protection of human rights on the ground. This paramount objective alone should define the positions of members in the Council.

In this regard, we strongly emphasise the critical role of human rights defenders both in the development of resolutions at the Council and the implementation of these standards on the ground.

Fifth, and finally, Mr President, while we welcome the significant focus on civil society throughout this session, including through a dedicated Panel discussion, we deplore the continued occurrence of intimidation and reprisals against defenders in connection with their human rights advocacy work, both at national and international levels. The Council has already been made aware of several defenders who, during this session alone, were detained, ill-treated, watched and censored, one even losing her life, for their work in monitoring and exposing human rights violations. We therefore reaffirm the legal and moral obligation placed on the Council, its President, and member States to end reprisals, including by speaking out swiftly and publicly.

Thank you.

This joint statement is delivered by the International Service for Human Rights on behalf of:

1. ARTICLE 19
2. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

3. *Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC)*
4. *Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network*
5. *CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation*
6. *Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales*
7. *Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative*
8. *Conectas Direitos Humanos*
9. *East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP)*
10. *Franciscans International (FI)*
11. *Human Rights House Foundation (HRRH)*
12. *Human Rights Watch*
13. *ILGA - International Lesbian and Gay Association*
14. *International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)*
15. *International Commission of Jurists*
16. *International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission*
17. *Reporters Without Borders*

The following organisations share the points expressed:

1. *ARC International*
2. *Peace Brigades International (PBI)*