30th session of the
Human Rights Council
Item5

Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights

22 September 2015
Delivered by Renate Bloem

Thank you Mr. President

CIVICUS aligns itself with the joint statement delivered by ISHR on the SG's report on Reprisals and wants to add a few remarks. We believe that the report signals once more the urgent need for member States to devise a coordinated response to reprisals against human rights defenders and civil society organisations which range from threats, harassment, smear campaigns, fines, travel bans, the forced closure of organizations, politically motivated prosecutions, arbitrary imprisonment, torture and assassinations.

We are most alarmed by the non-cooperation and the lack of response by members of this Council to requests made by the SG on these cases, thus undermining the very essence of the United Nations system.

In follow up on the SG's report with regard to cases on Vietnam, CIVICUS had submitted the names of individuals who were threatened, prevented from travel, had their passports confiscated or were otherwise intimidated, simply for participating or wishing to participate in their country's Universal Periodic Review. Some were subjected to reprisals for seeking to meet the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion.

We would at a minimum expect a response from Vietnam towards steps taken to address these issues or from China on the case and circumstances of the late Cao Shunli.

Mr. President, in this context we underline once more the importance of your role in promoting the prevention of reprisals and in engaging with member states when these occur, and we thank you for your strong commitment so far.

We fully endorse the SG's recommendations to respond to pending cases of reprisals without delay and quote from Botswana's statement last year: "This cannot be so difficult for us Governments as we remember to hold ourselves accountable to those we govern."

Thank you Mr. President