

FORUM: Human Rights Commission

QUESTION OF: Harassment, threats, and killing of human rights defenders

SUBMITTED BY: Afghanistan

CO-SUBMITTERS: Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, India, Rwanda, Finland, Marshall Islands, Sudan, USA, Ukraine, Ireland, Mali, Seychelles, Germany, South Korea, Israel, Honduras, Georgia, Fiji, Belgium, Costa Rica

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION,

Defining a “human rights defender” (HRD) as someone who, individually, or with others, act to promote or protect human rights,

Alarmed that many journalists have been killed in Middle Eastern nations in particular, due to terrorist groups and the nation’s security forces,

Noting the Human Rights Defenders World Summit in 2018 took measures to prevent the persecution and attacks against HRDs by promoting the cause,

Notes that the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders in 1998 affirms that, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others to know, seek, obtain, receive and hold information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including having access to information as to how those rights and freedoms are given effect in domestic legislative, judicial or administrative systems,

Recognizing the importance of the establishment and protection of international human rights for all persons in all countries of the world as specified by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights as basic elements of international efforts to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Noting with appreciation recent efforts made by its resolution 53/144 of 8 March 1999 to elucidate proper treatment of human rights defenders by redefining their associated rights and promoting educational programs designed to encourage member states to take legislative action,

Noting with concern the recent escalation of threats suffered by human rights defenders as a result of the advent of social media and the internet, specifically in nations suffering from internal strife or who oppose the work of human rights defenders,

Emphasizing that impunity for human rights violations against human rights defenders works to perpetuate the issue and promotes the notion that such transgressions are acceptable to the international community,

1. **Strongly encourages** cross-national dialogue and negotiations to increase nations’ support for human rights which helps establish a better protection mechanism for HRDs by
 - a) having the local government contribute to a database that the UN special rapporteur oversees which documents all the nation’s instances of progress and violations of HRDs’ human rights
 - b) inviting NGOs and governments to discuss how best to address the relocation and assimilation of HRDs and their families into their new host country
 - c) incentivizing nations to consider taking on various measures to safeguard human rights by discussing;
2. **Urges** governments of countries where many human rights defenders are at risk to thoroughly investigate and prosecute cases of threats or violence against HRDs by:
 - a) increasing transparency through
 - i. facilitating periodic visits of a UN special rapporteur to investigate the nation’s

- treatment towards HRDs specifically by instituting periodic checks on the treatment of HRDs in detention facilities
 - ii. having the local government create a database that the UN special rapporteur oversees which documents all the nation's instances of progress and violations of HRDs' human rights
 - b) calling upon UN-affiliated officials to discuss with government ambassadors about the benefits of making changes to the nation's way of prosecuting cases where the human rights of HRDs have been violated;
- 3. Encourages member states to reform their legal systems and adopt legislative frameworks regarding the rights of human rights defenders including but not limited to:
 - a) establishing a clear definition of human rights defenders as those who act to promote or protect human rights, which can include those working professionally as lawyers, NGO employees, judges or trade union leaders
 - b) advising governments to efficiently execute laws that penalize people who give and take bribes
 - c) having expert third-party members from UN-affiliated organizations conduct more thorough background checks on practicing lawyers and judges
 - d) implementing education to ensure that those responsible for training lawyers, law enforcement officers, the personnel of the armed forces and relevant public officials include appropriate elements of human rights in their training programs;
- 4. Recommends the international community to increase the public's awareness about the security risks that HRDs face by:
 - a) supporting the efforts of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that promote human rights for HRDs through methods such as
 - i. ensuring adequate security conditions and living spaces for HRDs when traveling to nations identified as having greater safety risks
 - ii. publishing the progress and statistics regarding the safety a HRDs in various member states as well as relevant related issues concerning their wellbeing on an official website accessible to the public
 - b) reaching out to schools and workplaces to implement projects that fundraise for relevant institutions in a local capacity and/or educate the public about the importance of HRDs by
 - i. providing a sum of money or work opportunity for members who contributed to the best school/workplace's project on protecting human rights for HRDs, as an incentive for innovation
 - ii. requesting that schools/workplaces publish suitable unique content created by human rights defenders create on a website accessible to the whole student body or all employees
 - c) encouraging media corporations to continue investing money into investigative reporting to ensure for the safety of HRDs like by tracking HRDs' movements and reporting when HRDs disappear;
- 5. Suggests organizations like the World Bank designate certain personnel who can help create a long-term plan of action for LEDCs to strengthen their economy continuously, which would add an incentive to comply with the universal human rights declaration:
 - a) recommending that the designated personnel correspond with finance officials in the nation to establish a better understanding from both parties of what this partnership could provide by
 - i. appointing the personnel as a third-party advisor for the nation's financial changes like imports/exports and changing interest rates
 - ii. allowing the personnel to closely monitor the collection and usage of tax revenue
 - b) incentivizing MEDCs to take on close correspondence with these experts in economics by
 - i. negotiating with these organizations to temporarily provide better loaning policies

- for nations that agree
 - ii. including thorough nondisclosure agreements to be signed between the correspondent and the nation
 - c) allocating a greater percentage of the nation's budget to infrastructure, after the economy has been boosted to increase the efficiency of the nation in ways such as
 - i. hiring local workers for these building projects
 - ii. strongly suggesting the government to sign a contract with the workers to ensure a baseline standard for working conditions and worker protection;
6. Invites member states to support a new foundation/organization called Support for Human Rights Defenders (SHRD) that will be work along with the UN Special Rapporteur and is created specifically for the struggles of HRDs which will:
- a) implement a hotline for civilians to share information with officials selected by the organization that have been witness to or know about recent activity of injustice towards HRDs within their neighborhood that will
 - i. be anonymous in order to protect civilians and ensure their safety
 - ii. help estimate which areas are more prone to these attacks
 - b) select and deploy law enforcement officials that will have a thorough background check prior, for cases where the lives of the defenders are threatened or where they are harmed, who will:
 - i. regularly check up on the defenders and their complaints
 - ii. be educated on the boundaries of their authority through seminars and frequently vetted in order to manage potential corruption
 - c) monitor cyber-harassment and threats on social media by:
 - i. calling upon social media companies to ensure that their guidelines are followed
 - ii. requesting that social media companies encourage their users to report content that involve harassment of HRDs so local police can be contacted more efficiently;
7. Implores member nations to help provide efficient and effective aid to HRDs in an event when their safety is being threatened by:
- a) Receiving aid from the previously mentioned SHED foundation about their needs in various nations where they are at risk of facing human rights violations to
 - i. provide local transportation and translation services
 - ii. implement security for HRDs in particularly high-risk areas
 - iii. relocate HRDs in danger zones
 - b) holding semi-regular seminars where HRDs can learn various self-defense skills including
 - i. education on particular dangers of certain regions they will travel to
 - ii. physical self-defense strategies
 - iii. learning how to identify edible plant species if they are on the run from persecution or danger;
8. Stresses the importance of women human rights defenders which can often be specifically targeted, these HRDs will be specifically protected through the implementation of:
- a) human rights corps which will work closely with UN Women and Human Rights Watch, which will consist of doctors, army officers, and soldiers which will be from countries that have few incidents of abuse to HRDs with the goal of implementing surveillance in areas that are particularly vulnerable to abuse and halt all forms of abuse
 - b) NGOs that support women HRDs from being sexually harassed or abused in their work by
 - i. funding better housing and insurance support for women HRDs approved through their journalism or media company organization
 - ii. suggesting that rape and abuse networks/hotlines be maintained and created worldwide to get sexual abuse victims necessary help
 - iii. implementing media campaigns intended to negate gender-typed stereotypes and promote perceptions of women as equal

- c) resource centers designated for female HRDs in order to provide them with legal advice, adequate shelter, and insurance;
9. Encourages the facilitation of human rights educational programs led by private sector for-profit companies, NGOs, or government bodies that:
- a) increase public knowledge of designated rights and entitled freedoms
 - b) spread awareness of HRDs, their intended roles, benefits, and necessary protection in order to prevent further discord
 - c) provide HRDs with a necessary means of reporting harassment and managing threats, access to support systems, and education regarding their rights and relevant policies of the inhabited member state
 - d) revise school curricula by focusing on mandatory teacher training programs in order to educate children that are appropriately aged about Human Rights and human rights defenders, which will be implemented through annual inspections of schools and teachers to ensure the previously mentioned curricula are being thoroughly conducted;
10. Affirms that the implementation of this resolution and compliance with it will be monitored by the UN and a panel of countries with few incidents of abuse to HRDs where countries can apply to be apart of the panel based on the validity of the nation's status and stability of the current regime.