

Joint statement on special procedures mandate holders

HRC40 – Item 5 General Debate

13 March 2019

Thank you Mr President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and my own country, Australia.

Our countries welcome the report of the chair of the Co-ordinating Committee for Special Procedures Mandate Holders.

The Special Procedures mandates play a vital role in promoting and protecting human rights. Their thematic work represents an invaluable contribution to the development of human rights norms, and their country visits and reports are a crucial way of holding states to account for their human rights records.

Our countries recognise the importance of protecting and upholding the independence of the Special Procedures. We may not always agree with what they say, but we recognise the absolute importance of allowing them to perform their mandates without fear of reprisal.

Mr President,

We are deeply concerned at reports of threats, harassment, intimidation or reprisal against individuals and groups who engage with special procedures mandate holders, as well as against the mandate holders themselves. We condemn any and all such acts.

Finally, we urge others to grant access to special procedures mandate holders, including by issuing a standing invitation. No country has a perfect human rights record, but avoiding problems will not solve them. Special procedures offer a critical but constructive voice to all States, helping them to improve their human rights records. That role is more important now than ever.

230 words