



39th Session of the Human Rights Council

Item 5

ID with the ASG on SG Report on Reprisals

19th September 2018

Statement by Rwanda delivered by Mr. Moses Rugema

Thank you Mr. President,

1. Rwanda aligns itself to the statement delivered on behalf of the African Group.
2. Rwanda thanks the Assistant Secretary General for his report and the update just provided.
3. At the outset, let me state categorically, that the Government of Rwanda does not condone nor engage in reprisals. Reprisals against individuals cooperating with the UN, its representatives and mechanisms are completely unacceptable. Rwanda values and benefits from cooperation with the UN, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights and has no interest whatsoever in scrutinizing the conduct of its citizens on the basis of any perceived cooperation and actually supports and encourages that cooperation.
4. The Government of Rwanda has responded fully to the allegations contained in the report of the Secretary General. In regard to the allegations by the SPT, we maintain that those allegations remain without foundation. Contrary to the assertions by the SPT, the Government of Rwanda fully cooperated with the SPT on its visit. Five days into what was a seven day visit the SPT decided to terminate its visit for reasons only known to it. Any and all issues that were brought to the attention of the Government of Rwanda were promptly and conclusively addressed. Allegations of reprisals were not once brought to the attention of government. The government of Rwanda, at its own initiative, investigated these allegations and found them baseless. In regard to Mr. Robert Mugabe, the legal proceedings he faces have absolutely no relation with his apparent cooperation with the UN, its representatives or mechanisms. The Government of Rwanda is as a matter of fact not aware of any cooperation by Mr. Mugabe with the UN, its representatives or mechanisms, something he is fully entitled to.
5. The allegations of reprisals against Rwanda pose a number of serious procedural issues that go to the core of this mandate which we have

supported. It appears to be sufficient for an individual or an entity to allege reprisals for those allegations to be taken as established fact. The allegations are reflected *in extenso* and even allowed the benefit of contextual background. These allegations do not appear to be investigated or at best, examined for veracity. Government responses to the allegations are on the other hand reflected either as footnotes or partially and in a distorted manner and certainly do not make it into media briefings.

6. Mr. Assistant Secretary General, we take any allegation of reprisals very seriously. We however must express grave concern at the conduct of your mandate in this case. For reprisals to be truly addressed and for States to meaningfully engage with your mandate there needs to be a modicum of balance and fairness in how those allegations are responded to. In that regard, I would ask, what kind of responses should we give to ensure that false allegations are exposed as such and genuine reports are properly addressed? Otherwise it is likely that a system that was established with the best of intentions will allow itself to be abused by some who seek to manipulate it to their own ends. Rwanda remains ready to engage with your office to address these and any other issues that can truly contribute to comprehensively addressing reprisals. Thank you.