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Annual Panel on rights of indigenous peoples

EU Intervention

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Madame President,

Due to the nature of their activity, human rights defenders are often targets of attacks and other forms of violence as well as discrimination. The shrinking civic space, also due to measures taken to tackle the impacts of covid-19, has increased the risks for violent attacks and threats towards them.

Indigenous human rights defenders, working to protect their communities, lands and the environment are often at an even greater risk. The EU is deeply concerned of the attacks on indigenous human rights defenders and the criminalization of their work.

The protection of human rights defenders is a central priority of the EU's human rights policy. Based on its Guidelines on the protection of Human Rights Defenders, the EU implements a wide range of measures to ensure the protection of human rights defenders. The EU is working to ensure positive recognition of the important role played by HRDs at all levels, including by publicly expressing its support for their work, and ensuring their visibility.

States have the primary obligation to ensure the rights and protection of human rights defenders. The EU will continue to strongly condemn any acts of intimidation, violence, harassment or reprisal against indigenous human rights defenders. All human rights violations and abuses against indigenous HRDs, including indigenous women, must be investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.

Esteemed panellists, do you see any further steps that could be taken by the Human Rights Council in order to better protect indigenous human rights defenders from attacks and reprisals?

Thank you.