



EUROPEAN UNION
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and other international organisations in Geneva

**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
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**Interactive Dialogue with the Assistant Secretary General on the
Secretary General's report on reprisals**

19 September 2018

EU Intervention

Mr. President

The European Union welcomes the holding of this interactive dialogue with the Assistant Secretary-General with a view to ensuring adequate attention to the report and to sharing good practices, challenges and lessons learned.

The EU remains a staunch supporter of civil society; a central pillar in our multilateral work. Civil society plays a crucial role at local, national, regional and international levels to achieve the purposes of the United Nations. Civil society organizations and human rights defenders contribute daily to the promotion and protection of human rights, peaceful dialogue and in building pluralistic democracies – all of which are core values of the European Union. Civil society also ensures that international discussions and decisions are informed by what is happening on the ground, and that a full range of perspectives are heard and that expertise is provided to the decision-making processes.

The European Union is gravely concerned about the increasing pressure in all regions against civil society and human rights defenders, including violent attacks, forced disappearances, malicious prosecutions, punitive registration regimes but also restrictions on the receipt of funding. We also deeply regret that intimidation and reprisals against civil society and human rights defenders cooperation with the UN, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights is a recurrent phenomenon, also here in the Human Rights Council. The European Union will continue to speak out and oppose and condemn intimidation, harassment and reprisals against individuals and groups cooperating with the UN system.

The European Union therefore acknowledges the important achievements in relevant Human Rights Council resolutions to institutionalize the Interactive Dialogue with the Assistant Secretary General on reprisals as well as the important role that the HRC President and the Bureau is playing to address these matters. We reaffirm in this regard our support to the UN Assistant Secretary-General for human rights, including for his work in this area.

Mr. Gilmour,

You mention in your report that the United Nations is regrettably seeing evidence of self-censorship in all regions with regard to engagement with its institutions at the local, national, regional and international levels and that the impact of fear of reprisals is not only visible in the field, where United Nations personnel often encounter people too afraid to speak with them, but also at headquarters in New York and Geneva.

Could you elaborate on how we could do better in terms of coordination between New York and Geneva when it comes to addressing cases of intimidation and reprisals against civil society and human rights defenders cooperation with the UN, in order to better prevent reprisals and to promote protection against and accountability for these acts as well as to secure a system-wide response?

Thank you.