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WHO IS THE UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (HRD)?

In the context of the 1998 UN Declaration on HRDs, the Special Rapporteur has a mandate to promote the work of HRDs and protect HRDs at risk. This person is independent of the UN, states and non-governmental organisations.

How can s/he be notified?



By sending an e-mail message to hrc-sr-defenders@un.org



The e-mail should be worded according to the standard template and guidelines or in free form, with the following notes at the end:

Victims or their representatives are aware and agree that a letter containing information about them will be sent to the Government (and/or other relevant actor)

Yes No

Victims or their representatives are aware and agree that the letter containing their names will be included in public reports and in the UN online database

Yes No



By completing the secured online form



The form is placed on a secure platform and is filled in with some data and information that will help the Special Rapporteur make certain decisions.



How should a complaint to the Special Rapporteur look like?

The complaint should state the alleged violations and include:



Information about the human rights activities of the HRD at risk



Information about the current situation and the factors putting them at risk, including the dates and locations of any incidents



Details of any actions taken to date in response to the risks in question, together with the results of these (e.g. has a complaint been made to the police station?)



Any additional information that will give context to the situation, including past incidents or trends

How does the complaint assessment process take place?

1

The Special Rapporteur examines the complaint and contacts the complainant. It will then be sent to the Embassy of the state concerned based in Geneva or to the commercial headquarters if companies are involved

If you have not received a reply from the Special Rapporteur within a few weeks, send a reminder or update on the situation if there have been any developments since the last contact.

2

Over a period of 60 days, information and responses from the authorities are collected. It may happen, however, that states do not provide answers

3

In particularly urgent circumstances, the Special Rapporteur may request permission to write a press release which becomes public before the end of the 60-day confidentiality period.

During this period, the complaint remains confidential, but upon receipt of any response - it becomes public in the UN database.



What can the Special Rapporteur do?



Write letters to the governments and other actors (such as companies) expressing concern about situations where HRDs are at risk



Call on the authorities to take action to prevent or stop violations, investigate them, bring those accountable to the court and ensure that remedies are available to the victims or their families



Engage authorities in the dialogue on the HRD situation in their countries through public or private meetings and events



May conduct two official country visits per year, after which writes reports on the HRD situation in those places, including recommendations. Such visits can only be undertaken with the agreement of the undertaker.

As a reminder: The last visit of the Special Rapporteur to the Republic of Moldova was between 25-29 June 2018



Write thematic reports that are presented to the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly every year. The Special Rapporteur invites the HRD and civil society to contribute to these reports by submitting official information. The most recent report on HRD successful experiences was presented in March 2023



Cannot provide physical protection to Human Rights Defenders or funding to support their activities.