

**Joint Oral Intervention: Item 2 General Debate with the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
11 September 2018**

Thank you Mr. President,

High Commissioner Bachelet,

On behalf of over 750 civil society organizations from every corner of the world, we offer warm congratulations on your appointment.

We are committed to a world in which every person enjoys human rights and dignity and where our communities are fair, just and sustainable. A strong High Commissioner, working in strategic partnership with independent civil society, can contribute to the realization of this vision.

On every continent, rights are being violated and abused by governments and non-state actors, often with impunity. The role of your Office in ensuring robust monitoring and reporting is essential for curbing and deterring violations, and ensuring justice and accountability. Technical-assistance and capacity building is also critical and, to be effective, should be approached holistically alongside rigorous assessment of rights challenges.

You have a unique role to play in bringing country situations to the attention of the Council, particularly those that may not be on the agenda, often because of political pressure. Monitoring missions and inter-sessional briefings can be initiated at your prerogative, contributing towards the Council's prevention mandate.

Many States will insist you avoid "naming and shaming" and respect national sovereignty. Often, those most intolerant of criticism and most forceful in suppressing dissent will speak the loudest in seeking to mute your voice. Survivors, victims and defenders on the front lines will rely on you to have the courage and conviction to call out violators clearly and publicly, even when it's unpopular.

Globally, civil society and defenders face severe daily risks, including imprisonment, torture, enforced disappearance, and even death, as well as reprisals in the UN context. We urge you to be a staunch defender of the rights of defenders both on the ground and at the UN, and stand ready to support you and your Office in the fulfilment of your vital mandate.

Thank you.