

ORAL STATEMENT

Human Rights Council 45th session

ITEM 5 – GENERAL DEBATE

29 September 2020

Madame President,

Amnesty International delivers this statement on behalf of 14 NGOs.

It is with great concern that we note the renewed attacks against the Special Procedures of this Council, through which certain states seek to interfere with their independence and impose political oversight over individual experts. While we welcome the outcome of the informal discussions, we would like to raise a few issues of concern.

As we noted in our letter to you madame President, the states signatories of the letters rely on PRST 8/2 of 18 June 2008 on the *Terms of office of special procedure mandate-holders*, which was originally adopted in the specific context of Council discussions on the extension of the terms of mandate holders, and should not be regarded as a wider framework for assessing the performance of mandate holders. Furthermore, the groups of states appear to have ignored the existing Internal Advisory Procedure, instead proceeding directly to attempts to impose political oversight by this Council.

We also note with great concern that several of the signatory states launched wholly inappropriate attacks of a personal nature against Special Procedure mandate holders in the past.¹

The allegations presented against the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, in particular, seem little more than objecting to her being especially effective and proactive in doing exactly what this Council has tasked her to do, including monitoring and reporting on violations of the right to life and bringing these to the attention of the Council, and promoting respect for the right to life more generally.

We appreciate the efforts by the Coordination Committee to address broader issues related to the working methods of the Special Procedures, and welcome its willingness to work with the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy on issues related to methodology and programming of the six outstanding country reports.

The independence of the Special Procedures is absolute in nature, and any attempts to erode that status threatens the credibility and integrity of this Council.

Thank you.

Amnesty International
ARTICLE 19
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
Center for Reproductive Rights
Child Rights Connect
CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
Geneva for Human Rights
International Commission of Jurists
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)
International Service for Human Rights
Privacy International
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

¹ Amnesty International and ISHR: HRC 37: Item 5: Human rights bodies and mechanisms, 14 March 2018, Index number: IOR 40/8032/2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/8032/2018/en/>