

ORAL STATEMENT - FOR DELIVERY (1.5 MIN)

28 September 2023

**54th session of the Human Rights Council
Item 5
Interactive Dialogue on the Secretary General's report on cooperation with the United
Nations its mechanisms and representatives in the field of human rights
A/HRC/54/61**

Mr. President,
Madam Assistant Secretary General,

The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) thanks the Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights for her annual report on cooperation with the United Nations and welcomes the opportunity to engage in today's interactive dialogue.

We are deeply concerned about reported acts of reprisals against those who engage or seek to engage with UN bodies and mechanisms.

Human rights defenders including NHRIs must be able to access and communicate with the UN freely and safely so that the UN and its bodies and mechanisms can receive information on national human rights situations and carry out its crucial work of monitoring states' compliance with human rights obligations and protect victims from abuse.

We welcome the efforts of the ASG in systematically reporting such cases including by strengthening follow-up and collaboration processes across the UN system.

We call on all States to fully cooperate with the ASG and other UN human rights protection mechanisms and stress the need to focus on both the protection and prevention of reprisals.

We welcome the ASG's efforts in identifying best practices, to assist States in this endeavor.

Since the last report of the Secretary General in September 2022, GANHRI and the four regional networks of NHRIs have continued to raise the alarm and express concern due to the persistent reprisals and other acts of intimidation against NHRIs, their members and staff across regions.

In April 2023, as part of the implementation of GANHRI Global Action Plan to support the protection and promotion of human rights defenders and civic space, GANHRI conducted a global survey to assess the extent of these threats.

NHRIs undertaking human rights work in accordance with their mandate, including as a result of their cooperation with the United Nations, continue to experience reprisals in different forms,

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including but not limited to smear campaigns, harassment, threats and acts of intimidation, undue interference with the selection, appointment and dismissal process of members of a NHRI, disproportionate budget cuts, and lack of recognition of the NHRI's mandate. Women, environmental, and LGBTQI+ human rights defenders were identified as particularly at risk.

Madam Assistant Secretary General,

NHRIs' active engagement with the United Nations is crucial for conveying on-the-ground realities to various UN entities. Therefore, we call on States and the UN to enhance efforts in protecting and supporting NHRIs to exercise their broad mandates freely and independently without fear from reprisals.

GANHRI, working closely with the four NHRI regional networks, is committed to protecting the independence of our NHRIs facing threats or reprisals for undertaking their work according to their mandate.

I thank you Mr. President.