



**Statement of Ireland**  
**41st session of the Human Rights Council**

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Clustered interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression  
and the Special Rapporteur on peaceful assembly and association

**26 June 2019**

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union and adds the following.

Mr (Vice) President,

Ireland warmly welcomes the Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression and the Special Rapporteur on peaceful assembly and association. We thank both for their annual reports and reaffirm Ireland's continuing support for their mandates.

Ireland considers the ability to exercise the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association without undue restriction to be a cornerstone of democracy. As a member of the core group on civil society space, we share the concerns expressed by both Special Rapporteurs about the unauthorised use of digital surveillance to deter journalists, human rights defenders, protest organisers and opposition leaders from their legitimate activities.

We firmly agree with the Special Rapporteur on peaceful assembly and association that States have an obligation to ensure the same rights people enjoy offline are also protected online, as stated in General Assembly resolution 73/173 and Human Rights Council resolution 32/13.

*Mr Voule, what practical steps can States take to create and maintain a safe and enabling digital environment for civil society?*

Ireland also shares the concerns of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression about the unlawful use of targeted surveillance to interfere with the right to privacy.

*Mr Kaye, how can States ensure the rights of marginalised groups, including LGBTI persons, are not disproportionately impacted by the unlawful use of targeted surveillance?*