



Statement of Ireland

46th session of the Human Rights Council

Item 2: General debate on the High Commissioner's oral update

26 February 2021

Thank you Madame President,

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union and we thank the High Commissioner for her statement to the Council.

We take this opportunity to underline our unequivocal support for your work, Madame High Commissioner, for the Office you that you lead, and for the independence of its activities.

Regrettably, we share the assessment of the High Commissioner that serious and sobering human rights challenges persist in every geographic region, including our own.

In particular, attempts to overthrow, or delegitimise democratic elections are profoundly worrying.

We remain deeply perturbed by the fact that in some instances, the response to the COVID pandemic has been used as a pretext to push back on the most fundamental of freedoms including, freedoms of expression, assembly and association.

Further, as a champion of civic space at home and abroad, Ireland is gravely concerned by increasing and unacceptable pressures on civil society actors, including human rights defenders, journalists and media workers.

Madame High Commissioner,

We have previously articulated concerns to this Council that the COVID pandemic has intensified vulnerabilities and inequalities globally.

As we seek a way forward through the challenges presented by the pandemic, Ireland believes that the UN's vital human rights pillar is needed more than ever.

We share your view Madame High Commissioner, that a human-rights based approach to the global recovery provides the only credible way forward, and we stand ready to support you in your efforts to deliver this for all.

Thank you