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Statement of Ireland

53rd session of the Human Rights Council

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

23 June 2023

Mr. President,

Ireland aligns with the EU statement and thanks the Special Rapporteur for her report.

Ireland is strongly committed to the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. As well as constituting an important human right, freedom of opinion and expression is an essential component for a more equal and just world.

We note with concern your report's conclusion that these are difficult times for freedom of opinion and expression, and the significant impact that curtailing these freedoms has on sustainable development.

We have witnessed with concern the continued erosion of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, both online and offline, including for journalists, civil society actors, trade unionists and human rights defenders, particularly women and environmental human rights defenders, who face serious threats of reprisals and even killings.

When civic space shrinks, the most marginalized communities are at risk of being left even further behind. As you note in your report, this is contrary to the objectives we have set in the 2030 Agenda, which strongly endorses the rights to information, expression and participation.

Special Rapporteur, your report references the difficult global situation of interlocking political, climate, and economic crises. In this environment, what meaningful steps can States take to amplify the voices of those furthest behind?

Thank you.