



12 March 2018

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ORAL STATEMENT
ITEM 5: Human rights bodies and mechanisms

UN Human Rights Council
Thirty-seventh Session
26 February - 23 March 2018

Mr. President,

Amnesty International and ISHR would like to express our deepest concern to this Council. Over the past year, several UN member states, including some members of this Council, have launched attacks of a personal nature against Special Procedure mandate holders and members of Commissions of Inquiries.¹

- **Burundi**, a member of this Council, has categorically rejected the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi and threatened to bring the members of the Commission to justice for defamation and attempted destabilization of the country during an inter-active dialogue at the General Assembly.²
- The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in **Eritrea**, Ms Sheila Keetharuth, has faced personal attacks during an interactive dialogue in June 2017 where she was referred to as a 'naked Empress with no clothes' and was accused of carrying out a witch-hunt against Eritrea.
- The **Maldives** has accused the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Dr Ahmed Shaheed, a Maldives national, of spreading anti-Islamic activities and evil deeds and calling on those who love their country to speak out against him, which resulted in explicit threats of violence and murder against Dr Shaheed online.
- The **Philippines**, not only a member of this Council, but also a member of its Bureau, has threatened the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Agnes Callamard with physical violence on numerous occasions. The Philippines has also recently made terrorism accusations against the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, a Philippine national whose safety in country must be guaranteed. Furthermore, the President has been reported in media to have given direct orders to police not to cooperate with Special Procedures mandate holders that may visit the country.

What have these independent experts done to face such treats and attacks?

Mr. President,

They have done their jobs. It is wholly unacceptable that these individuals have been targeted simply for trying to fulfil the mandates given to them by this Council: investigating allegations of human rights violations and abuses, and reporting on them. These attacks constitute an attack on the Council itself.

We call on the Council to adequately monitor the current situations, respond to such attacks as they occur, and make clear that attacks of this kind will not be tolerated. Particularly when they are carried out by Members of the Council, who are expressly required to “uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights,” and to “fully cooperate with the Council” and its mechanisms.

Thank you.

¹ See also <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22421&LangID=E>

² See <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/general-assembly/main-committees/3rd-committee/watch/third-committee-33rd-meeting-general-assembly-72nd-session/5623779470001/?term=?lanchinese&sort=date?>