

# Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

*NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*  
**Promoting human rights by protecting those who defend them**

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Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada  
Item: Item 6: General Debate: Universal Periodic Review  
Speaker: Catherine Morris

## **Oral Statement to the 39th Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), NGO in special consultative status**

Thank you, President,

Civil society participation is integral to the design of the Universal Periodic Review, yet in some States, civil society members participate in UPR processes at personal risk of reprisals including public insults and slander, threats to livelihoods, travel bans, criminalization, torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary detention, destruction of property, or even deprivation of their right to life. Several such States have been named in the Secretary General's August 2018 report on reprisals.<sup>1</sup>

The Council's increased attention to reprisals is welcome, particularly inclusion of a regular Interactive Dialogue on reprisals. While it is essential to ensure clear, accessible and secure channels for submitting allegations of reprisals, mechanisms driven by victims' complaints are not enough. It is States that bear the duty to prevent, interrupt and remedy reprisals as part of their responsibility to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights.

LRWC urges Council to institute, in consultation with civil society, specific protocols throughout the UPR, including not only secure complaint mechanisms, but also specific methods of protecting civil society from intimidation or other reprisals during any part of the UPR process, including UPR Outcomes discussed in this Chamber.

Thank you, President.

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Council, Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights, Report of the Secretary-General, A/HRC/39/41, 13 August 2018, Para 10 [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/39/41](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/39/41).