



**42<sup>nd</sup> Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council  
Item 5: General debate on human rights bodies and mechanisms**

**Oral Statement Delivered by Rosanna Ocampo  
On behalf of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

**Monday, 23 September 2019**

Mr President,

FORUM-ASIA welcomes the report of the Secretary General on reprisals against those who cooperate with UN and its mechanisms in the field of human rights.

We share his concerns on hate speech and reprisals in online spaces; self-censorship by civil society because of security concerns; and threats based on sexual orientation or gender. We echo his calls to UN entities to support the strengthening of its system-wide response, and for States to ensure accountability.

We draw the Council's attention to reprisals in several Asian states, including members of the Council, who are known repeat offenders. These include restrictions put in place in July 2019 against all NGOs that receive foreign funding in Bangladesh; reprisals against Khurram Parvez for his work on Jammu and Kashmir, and the use of the FCRA to restrict the work of NGOs that cooperate with the UN in India; and attacks on civil society, the Commission on Human Rights, and opposition politicians in the Philippines.

Countries that have long been under scrutiny at the Council have intimidated those cooperating with the mechanisms the Council has created, if not the mechanisms themselves. We regret the verified instances of reprisals against those cooperating with the Fact-Finding Mission and other mechanisms on Myanmar, and threats of legal actions that could stifle the work of human rights defenders, as well as threats against and non-cooperation with the Special Rapporteur, and harassment and surveillance of human rights defenders and victims from Sri Lanka.

We call on the Council to meaningfully hold States that persistently attack human rights defenders accountable. We call on the UN to put human rights up front and redress its systemic failures in places like Myanmar and Sri Lanka. We call on businesses to play their part in ending reprisals, including social media, telecommunications, and surveillance companies that can prevent hate speech and online threats.

Thank you.