

Human Rights Council – 28th session – March 2015

Item 3: Clustered ID with the SR on Torture and the SR on HR Defenders

Statement by Action Canada for Population and Development

Action Canada makes this statement in collaboration with the Sexual Rights Initiative. We welcome the report of the of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and the road map for moving forward with this mandate.

The report highlights the particular risks faced by human rights defenders, particularly those working on economic, social and cultural rights and minority rights; environmental defenders; defenders of LGBTI rights; women defenders and those who work for women's rights; defenders who work in the area of business and human rights; those who work in an area exposed to internal conflict or a national disaster; defenders living in isolated regions; and those working on past abuses, such as the families of the victims of enforced disappearance.

We are also concerned by the current trends of States using the rhetoric like “protecting the integrity of the State and national security” to curb the freedoms of defenders by arresting them, or letting violence be committed against them with impunity. This trend is seen across the world wherever defenders speak up on the abuses and violations conducted by States. We urge the Council to take note of these cases and ensure that protection is guaranteed to these defenders. We further urge the Special Rapporteur to highlight these cases in future reports.

We commend the Special Rapporteur's resolve to interpret the mandate broadly and urge the continuation of a focus on gender based violence perpetrated with impunity by communities and families.

We note with concern that globally, the situation of women human rights defenders is deteriorating alongside the context for social justice work in both the global north and south. This context includes militarism, the deepening crises in democracy, the neoliberal economic order, heteronormativity and patriarchy, and fundamentalisms. We urge the SR on HRD to pay special attention to the situation of women human rights defenders who are attacked and persecuted both because of who they are as women and as people working on sexuality and gender, and what they do to defend human rights.

I thank you!