



Oslo 15 December 2015

Dear ambassador, Head of Mission to the UN,

With this letter we appeal to you and your delegation to support the resolution on human rights defenders, which comes up for vote in the UN General Assembly on 17 December.

The resolution is based on the 1998 UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. It does not create new rights or privileges for human rights defenders. It simply states that they are entitled to exactly the same rights as all people.

Behind this appeal is not only the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, but hundreds of people across the world who signed a petition that urges states to support the resolution. A list of people signing the petition is attached.

The exact title of the resolution is "Human Rights Defenders in the context of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms". It was adopted by the UN General Assembly Third Committee on 25 November 2015.

For the first time in its 16 years history, the resolution was not adopted by consensus. On the initiative of China and Russia, the resolution was put to vote. In the vote 117 states supported the resolution, 14 states voted against, while 40 abstained. About 20 states did not take part in the vote.

It is difficult to understand why states withhold support for human rights defenders. These are people who in peaceful ways promote the same human rights as the states of the world have adopted in the framework of the UN. The resolution simply asks state authorities to support and protect persons and organizations, which in different ways contribute to the translation of the international human rights norms into domestic legislation and practices.

It is among the paradoxes of our time that those who engage in assisting the UN and state as well as non-state actors in making human rights a reality for all people are under attack in many parts of the world.

There is no doubt, unfortunately, that human rights defenders really need all the support they can get from the UN. They need that your delegation supports the resolution.

In our reading, the resolution contains a strong message to the world's states that they should support and protect human rights defenders. Importantly, it also addresses business corporations, religious leaders and other influential actors. They should be supportive as well.

The resolution says that promoting respect and support for the activities of human rights defenders "is essential to the overall enjoyment of human rights". Human rights defenders, including everybody who engages in peaceful promotion of human rights or documentation of violations of human rights, are agents for positive change. They advocate open and inclusive societies. They are at the forefront in the struggle for a better future, achieving development goals set by national governments, regional organizations and the UN, preventing conflict and protecting vulnerable groups of society.

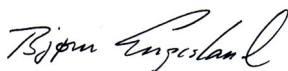
One of the great success stories of the UN is that it managed to foster universal consensus on the contents of human rights. It made human rights into binding international law. The UN also said that everybody should know about their rights and act upon them. If a state violates human rights, it needs to be corrected.

That's why the world need human rights defenders. They contribute to a better world.

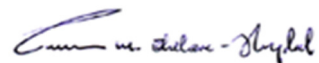
We therefore urge you to send a signal that your delegation, and indeed your state, supports human rights defenders. The failure of some states to support the resolution in the Third Committee unfortunately created a picture that these states do not fully support the purposes and principles of the UN.

Now is the time to show support.

Respectfully yours,



Bjørn Engesland
Secretary General



Gunnar M. Ekelove-Slydal
Deputy Secretary General

Governments should support resolution on human rights defenders in the UN General Assembly on 17 December

The resolution contains a strong message to the world's governments that they should support and protect human rights defenders; not attack them. It also addresses business corporations, religious leaders and other influential actors. They should be supportive as well. Human rights defenders are those pioneers who press for democratic reforms that improve our societies. Unfortunately, they are increasingly under pressure and attack from non-democratic governments. 117 states supported the resolution in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly on 25 November. We appeal to all states to support the resolution when it comes to vote in the UN General Assembly on 17 December.

- 1 Susi Bascon United Kingdom
- 2 Camilla andersson Norway
- 3 Antoine Raffoul United States of America
- 4 Fahro Konjhodzic Norway
- 5 Barbara Rowen Sivertsen Norway
- 6 Arild Berg Norway
- 7 Meit Krakau Sweden
- 8 Leonore Leonore Wide Sweden
- 9 Ann-Sofie Nyman Finland
- 10 Artur Sakunts Armenia
- 11 Katharine Derderian Belgium
- 12 Madeleine Sinclair Canada
- 13 Ronny Hansen Norway
- 14 Christian Bull Norway
- 15 Dan United Kingdom
- 16 Hilde Rutle Norway
- 17 Leila Alieva Azerbaijan
- 18 Magda Adamowicz Poland
- 19 Harry Hummel Nepal
- 20 Ragnfrid Kogstad Norway
- 21 Therese Jebsen Norway
- 22 David Kilgour Canada
- 23 Jon Knutzen Norway
- 24 åsa Murray Sweden
- 25 Ketil Magnussen Norway
- 26 Mary Scott United Kingdom
- 27 Gunilla von Malmborg Sweden
- 28 Olivia Bueno United States of America
- 29 Antoine Raffoul United Kingdom
- 30 Nathalie Mercier United Kingdom
- 31 Elisabeth Langdal Norway
- 32 Lars Husberg Sweden
- 33 Gidsken Braadlie Belarus
- 34 Irene Skagestad Norway
- 35 Moa Myklebust Norway

36 Heidi Tuck Norway
37 Nicole Bjerler Belgium
38 Eva Meyer Norway
39 Maria South Korea
40 Mabel Bianco Argentina
41 Ozlem United Kingdom
42 Behdad Bordbar Norway
43 Kari Anne Næss Norway
44 Nadia YL France
45 Virginie Amato Belgium
46 Kaja Melsom Norway
47 Siri Holden Norway
48 Batur Talu Ireland
49 Tore Olavson Buarøy Norway
50 Niels Jacob Harbitz Norway
51 Duygu Turemez Turkey
52 Olexandra Matviychuk Ukraine
53 Rune Hansen Norway
54 Curtis Wayne France
55 Camilla Skare Norway
56 Ingrid Stolpestad Norway
57 Johan Nordgaard Hermstad Norway
58 Tereza Nordmark Norway
59 Hans Haugen Norway
60 Harriet Berg Switzerland
61 Robin Hørling Norway
62 Åshild Marie Vige Norway
63 Kathrine Fauske Norway
64 Oleg Drozdov Russia
65 Sandro Sarukhanishvili Georgia
66 Joseph Gruzinski Georgia
67 Kitty Larsgaard Norway
68 Henrik Alffram Sweden
69 Bjørnar Dahle Norway
70 May-Elin Stener Norway
71 Görkem Ceyhan Turkey
72 Birsen Turkey
73 Nizami Abdullayev Azerbaijan
74 Mina Skouen Norway
75 Ulas KORHAN Norway
76 Trine Hamran Norway
77 Benjamin Endré Larsen Norway
78 Gunnar Martin Ekeløve-Slydal Norway
79 Elif Kuşkonmaz Turkey
80 Kirsti Næss Belarus
81 Anders Nielsen Norway
82 Osman Boliev Russia

83 Inna Sangadzhieva Norway
84 Nino Jibuti Georgia
85 Alexander Venger Russia
86 Світлана Валько Ukraine
87 Ethan Pearson United States of America
88 Salome Kandelaki Georgia
89 გორგი ხარაიშვილი Georgia
90 Рита Карасартова Kyrgistan
91 Irakli Piranishvili Georgia
92 Zhana Sirbiladze Norway
93 Eirik Moen Norway
94 Zhana Sirbiladze Georgia
95 Arman Sahakyan Armenia
96 Giogi Georgia
97 Sergey Gabrielian Armenia
98 Sandy Theriault Canada
99 Alik Tahirov Azerbaijan
100 Taline Haytayan United Kingdom
101 Hilde Sandvik Norway
102 Saga Vanadis Sweden
103 Dinara Oshurahunova Kyrgistan
104 Oscar Heyerdahl Norway
105 Marte Skogsrud Norway
106 Einar Flydal Norway
107 Elisabet Engström Sweden
108 irakli Georgia
109 Giga Gugutishvili Georgia
110 NO NAME Belarus
111 Vanja Skoric Croatia
112 Steinar Gil Norway
113 Bente Sandvig Norway
114 Haykuhi Harutyunyan Armenia
115 Jarle Sveen Norway
116 Beate Ekeløve-Slydal Norway
117 Marit Vik Norway
118 Tale Longva Norway
119 Pia Holter Norway
120 John P Egenaes Norway
121 Kristin Mile Norway
122 Olga Flydal Norway
123 Ion Manole Moldova
124 Katarzyna Pisarska Poland
125 Inga Marie Nymo Riseth Norway
126 John Kinahan Ireland
127 Gina Lende Norway
128 Ruth Kinahan Ireland
129 Kristin Storaker Norway

130 Osman İşçi Turkey
131 Ilia Utmelidze Norway
132 Ivana Bursíková Czech Republic
133 Frank Conde Tangberg Norway
134 Marianne Løge Norway
135 Stig Rasmussen Norway
136 Audgunn Oltedal Norway
137 Knut V. Bergem Norway
138 Elisabeth Weckner Norway
139 Inger-Johanne Slaatta Norway
140 Yordanka Stoyanova Bulgaria
141 Haakon Gunleiksrud Norway
142 Telli Smail Kyrgistan
143 Helge Blakkisrud Norway
144 Enver Djuliman Norway
145 MARC LIMON United Kingdom
146 Katinka Troye Norway
147 Jon Trana Norway
148 Hege Winje Norway
149 Susanne Berger United States of America
150 Roberto Frifrini Turkey
151 MARAN TURNER United States of America
152 Jesús Alcalá Sweden
153 Anne Brinch Skaara Norway
154 Nils Tore Gjerde Norway
155 Ragnhild Sjøvollen Norway
156 geneste France
157 Brigitte Dufour Belgium
158 Lena United Kingdom
159 Jim Roger Pettersen Norway
160 Tika Belgium
161 Pontus Modéer Sweden
162 Rachel Gasowski France
163 Rogerio Junior Mozambique
164 Knut Svenes Norway
165 Alisa Soderquist United States of America
166 Mona Bentzen Norway
167 Human Rights Foundation of Turkey Turkey
168 Veronika Vimberg Norway
169 Anders Garbom Backe Norway
170 Berit Lindeman Norway
171 Paula Tolonen Norway
172 Cankız Çevik Turkey
173 Anna Belgium
174 Ina Tin Norway
175 Tomasz Belgium
176 Gisle Kvanvig Norway

177 Anna Georgia
178 Ketii Murusidze Georgia
179 tsiako Georgia
180 Anas Talalqa Jordan
181 tamar gavashelashvili Georgia
182 Amiran Makaradze Georgia
183 margaret vikki Norway
184 Levan Gorgadze Georgia
185 Firuz Kutal Norway
186 Sandra Petersen Norway
187 Guram Georgia
188 Julie Wilhelmsen Norway
189 Ferruh Özalp Norway
190 Karim Lahidji France
191 Lorraine Borgolini United States of America
192 Truls Ljungström Sweden
193 Heidi Tovsrud Knutsen Norway
194 Aleksandra Sidorenko Norway
195 Inger Skjelsbæk Norway
196 Sophio Georgia
197 Maggie Marsahl United States of America
198 Ana Georgia
199 Öznur Boztaş Slovakia
200 Victoria Morrison United States of America
201 Kathy D United States of America
202 Noak Löfgren Sweden
203 Fernanda Nilsen Norway
204 Per Halvorsen Norway
205 Ingrid Rosland Norway
206 Martin Reksten Norway
207 Ed Brown Norway
208 Tako Georgia
209 Tom Nielsen Norway
210 Margaret Knapp United States of America
211 Daniel Joloy Mexico
212 Einar Steensnæs Norway
213 Luben Panov Bulgaria
214 Riitta Djordjevic Sweden
215 Diana Saghin Moldova
216 Stine Rofeldt Norway
217 Alberta Røvik Norway
218 Alfred Røvik Norway
219 Katherine Russia
220 Björn Tunbäck Sweden
221 Jenny Jansson Pearce Sweden
222 Sigrun Johnstad Norway
223 Katherine Colombia

224 Meg Simms Canada
225 Leif-Aage Tønnessen Norway
226 Lisha United States of America