

# THE HRC AT 20: A LIFELINE FOR DEFENDERS

Why human rights defenders turn to the Council. What the Council delivers for them. How global action strengthens local human rights work.

As the UN Human Rights Council marks 20 years, this side event will ask two practical questions: Why do human rights defenders (HRDs) keep turning to the HRC, and what difference does the Council make on the ground? In a moment of financial pressure, geopolitical divisions and attacks on multilateralism, and as HRDs face reprisals, threats and access restrictions, why does the HRC remain a vital space for civil society to highlight domestic issues, bring human rights perspectives into global discussions, and seek accountability for violations?

In this stock-taking event, HRDs from across the world will share first-hand experiences of using the Council, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), special procedures, and investigative mechanisms as part of national advocacy strategies. They will discuss what the Council delivers for civil society and which Council actions have been game-changers — highlighting key achievements such as the Council's establishment of mechanisms, its work to advance accountability, its mechanisms' engagement with victims, survivors and affected communities, its standard-setting work, and the use of the UPR process and outcomes for domestic change.

## WEBEX:

<https://ungeneva-vc.webex.com/ungeneva-vc/j.php?MTID=m9ac8a2fd885a3354a41cbfa0c851a47a>  
MEETING NUMBER: 2740 461 3760  
PASSWORD: TCE9RAXNW85

## MODERATOR

Mr. Hassan Shire  
(DefendDefenders)

## PANELLISTS

- Ms. Gina Romero (UN Special Rapporteur on FoAA) (opening remarks (video message))
- Ms. Elsa Chyrum (Human Rights Concern – Eritrea)
- Mr. Akarachai Chaimaneekarakate (Thai Lawyers for Human Rights)
- Mr. Sébastien Duyck (Center for International Environmental Law)
- Ms. Falah Sayed (MENA Rights Group)



### DATE

Tuesday 16 June 2026



### TIME

13:00-14:00 CET (14:00-15:00 EAT)



### VENUE

PdN, Geneva, Room IX and online

