

Statement by

**the Republic of Slovenia**

at the

**46th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation with**

**human rights defenders**

Geneva, 3 March 2021

Madame President,

We thank the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders for presentation of her report which is reflecting on the alarming situation of the issue of death threats and killings of human rights defenders in many parts of the world.

According to the OHCHR human rights defenders have been killed in at least 64 countries between 2015 and 2019. We find it unacceptable that defenders still face numerous threats, be it off-line or on-line, as a tool for being silenced because they want to speak up. Human rights defenders must be able to carry out their activities in the environment that empowers them to work on specific human rights issues. Death threats and killings have no place in the twenty-first century.

It is the primary responsibility of states to properly protect human rights defenders, in particular their right to life and human treatment. Their family members are also too often at risk solely on the basis of their relationship.

In your report you mention that underreporting and lack of accountability for killings fuels impunity and makes killings more likely to continue. How can we break the vicious cycle, in particularly in countries with weak democratic institutions and rule of law?

Finally, allow me to reiterate Slovenia’s full support for your work and your mandate.

Thank you.