

To: Permanent Representatives at the UN Human Rights Council

25 September, 2013

**RE: Amendments proposed by Cuba, Pakistan and the Russian Federation to:
Draft resolution A/HRC/24/L.24 on “Civil society space - Creating and maintaining, in law
and in practice, a safe and enabling environment”, and
Draft resolution A/HRC/24/L.17 on “Cooperation with the United Nations, its
representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights”**

Excellencies,

Civil society has an important and legitimate role to play in the promotion and protection of human rights and should not be subject to intimidation or reprisals for playing this role.

It is in this context that the undersigned NGOs urge your government to support the two abovementioned resolutions and to reject amendments tabled by Cuba, Pakistan and the Russian Federation.

Draft L.24 on civil society space provides a crucial opportunity for the Human Rights Council to address the challenges facing States in their efforts to ensure space for civil society through the convening of a panel discussion in 2014.

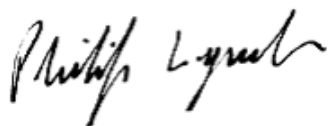
Draft L.17, better known as the resolution on reprisals, presents a long overdue response to the issue of reprisals and intimidation against those who cooperate with the UN human rights system through, inter alia, the creation of a UN wide focal point and a call on States to ensure protection of the right to access and communicate with international bodies in national legislation.

These resolutions are essential to efforts to promote and protect civil society space, and to move beyond rhetoric in addressing the issue of reprisals and intimidation against those who cooperate with the UN human rights system.

The proposed amendments run counter to the spirit and purpose of these important resolutions and would significantly weaken both the normative and institutional elements of the texts.

The amendments in question have been tabled by governments that have a history of failure to support and protect the work of civil society and human rights defenders. We urge you to demonstrate your government's respect for the role of civil society and commitment to the work of human rights defenders, by rejecting the amendments and supporting the texts as tabled.

Yours sincerely,



Phil Lynch

Director - International Service for Human Rights

On behalf of:

African Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS)

African Democracy Forum

Amnesty International

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Cairo Institute of Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR-Centre)

Civicus World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Conectas Direitos Humanos

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP)

Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)

Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF)

Human Rights Watch

International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)

International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

West African Human Rights Defenders Network (WAHRDN)

World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)