Egypt’s Perspective on the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders

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On 30 March 2026, during the 53rd meeting of the UN Human Rights Council, the draft resolution concerning the “Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders” (A/HRC/61/L.29/Rev.1) was adopted without a vote.

Prior to adoption, Egypt presented its comments on the draft resolution reaffirming its commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights while **drawing attention to a number of considerations which viewed as central to preserving the agreed international framework governing the issue.**

Egypt began by reaffirming its commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. It further recognized the role played by civil society and individuals as key partners of States in advancing and strengthening the human rights agenda.

Egypt stressed that the understanding of the concept ‘human rights defenders’ remains strictly grounded in 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*, which it identified as the agreed international framework governing this issue.

Turning to the text of the draft resolution itself, Egypt welcomed the inclusion of references to situations of occupation. At the same time, it expressed regret that proposals intended to bring greater balance to the draft had not been reflected in its current version.

In this regard, Egypt highlighted concerns that the resolution does not sufficiently reflect the balanced approach established in the Declaration, which sets out both the rights and the corresponding duties and responsibilities of individuals and groups. According to Egypt, this risks conferring a distinct or privileged status upon particular individuals and groups and could be understood as implying immunity from accountability. Such an interpretation, Egypt noted, would be inconsistent with the principles of equality before the law and the rule of law.

Egypt also reaffirmed its rejection of all forms of intimidation, reprisals, and attacks, including those directed at special procedure mandate holders. At the same time, it underscored the importance of

mandate holders carrying out their responsibilities in full compliance with the applicable code of conduct and engaging in constructive dialogue and cooperation with States, in line with their role in supporting States in fulfilling their human rights obligations.

Egypt further addressed the consultation process surrounding the draft resolution. While acknowledging that bilateral consultations had taken place between the penholder and a number of delegations, including Egypt itself, it expressed the view that broader and more inclusive informal consultations would have been preferable, particularly in light of the substantive changes introduced in the current version of the text.

With these considerations in mind, Egypt joined the consensus on the draft resolution. However, it did so on the understanding that the resolution does not expand or reinterpret the agreed framework of the Declaration and with the expectation that future iterations would more adequately address these concerns.

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