



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

PC.DEL/1605/17
24 November 2017

ENGLISH only

**STATEMENT ON
HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS**

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Henning Hj. Johansen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 23 November 2017

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Chair,

I take the floor to inform the Permanent Council of progress related to Human Rights Defenders, achieved in the 3rd Committee of the UN General Assembly on 20 November.

In adopting a comprehensive resolution on the matter by consensus, UN Member States have unanimously endorsed the free, independent and legitimate role of human rights defenders in society. In addition to the fact that all OSCE participating States supported the resolution, as many as 46 participating States were also co-sponsors.

The message of the international community as expressed by the 2017 resolution is clear: Human rights defenders have a key role to play in strengthening respect for human rights in society all around the world.

The wide-ranging and substantive resolution condemns the criminalization, curtailing and killing of human rights defenders. It calls on states to give effect to the right to unhindered access to and communication with international bodies addressing human rights, including regional organizations. Further, it calls for the release of those imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of expression and other fundamental freedoms. This is the first time UN Member States have all agreed to such a clear message.

In order to build on this development, a special high level meeting will be convened at the UN General Assembly on the situation of human rights defenders. This event will take place in New York in the fall of 2018 in the context of the 20th anniversary of the UN Declaration on human rights defenders. All parts of the international community are invited to initiate and take part in initiatives to promote this Declaration during the anniversary year, and to report thereon for the benefit of the high level meeting.

We draw the attention of all participating States to this positive development at the UN. We welcome - and express gratitude for - the unanimous support by all OSCE Participating States for this important resolution.

Thank you.