



## Oral Statement in Support of the United Nations Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights Karima Bennoune's New Report on Cultural Rights Defenders

Thank you, President.

The 75th anniversary of the United Nations and the beginning of the SDG Decade of Action is a unique opportunity to reiterate the importance of Cultural Rights Defenders and recognize their work as being in the same category as that of other human rights defenders.

On behalf of 12 civil society organizations, it is an honor to be present at the Human Rights Council to express support for the work of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights and commend her most recent report on Cultural Rights Defenders.

Cultural rights defenders (or CRDs) are human rights defenders who fight for the respect, protection, and fulfillment of cultural rights. Their work is often used to defend human rights more broadly. According to data from Front Line Defenders, CRDs defended more than 25 other human rights, including those of indigenous peoples, minorities, refugees and migrants, women and LGBTQI persons, and more. They are thus critical for making progress on the SDGs and vice versa.

President, CRDs are critical to a free and open society, but often face threats from both state and non-state actors for their work. However, CRDs are often ignored as a subcategory of human rights defenders and receive insufficient attention, support, and protection. The present

report does not create a new category but rather calls for a more comprehensive approach to implementing the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Therefore, we encourage the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights to continue to work for the recognition and protection of cultural rights defenders and call upon member states to fully implement the Special Rapporteur's recommendations.

Thank you for your attention.

Signed,

- Arterial Network
- Artist Protection Fund
- Bahá'í International Community
- Cartoonists Rights Network International
- Front Line Defenders
- Humanists International
- Minority Rights Group International
- PEN America and its Artists at Risk Connection (ARC) program
- PEN International
- Penn Cultural Heritage Center
- UNESCO Chair "Cultural Policy for the Arts in Development", University of Hildesheim and its Arts Rights Justice program
- Urgent Action Fund