



16 May 2017

Excellency,

I wish to thank you for our meeting on 22 March. I much appreciated the opportunity to inform you about my role in helping to lead the efforts to put an end to intimidation and reprisals against individuals cooperating with the United Nations (UN) in the field of human rights. As stressed by the Secretary-General when announcing my designation, these acts are unacceptable and undermine the effectiveness and credibility of the Organization. It is important for the UN to be able to cooperate with the widest possible pool of stakeholders without putting anyone at risk. Our efforts to address and prevent these acts will be developed through constructive dialogue with Member States, civil society representatives and others.

Currently, multiple actors are engaged in responding to reprisals within the UN system, in particular the Human Rights Council, and notably its President. As you know, successive Presidents have been instrumental in addressing individual cases of concern. Other UN actors who play a critical role include the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, special procedures and treaty bodies. However, more needs to be done to enhance coordination both with regard to prevention and also response to all cases of reprisals across the UN system, and to give this issue the attention it deserves.

A key aspect of my mandate is to see how we can increase our cooperation within the United Nations system, with Member States and other stakeholders, and advise the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner as appropriate. In expanding and strengthening the UN's response to reprisals across the Organization, I intend to focus on the following areas:

- Enhancing high-level engagement on reprisals, including on urgent cases of concern and on how to prevent reprisals from occurring;
  - Ensuring constructive dialogue and close cooperation with all actors involved.
- My work will be integrated into, and complement, ongoing efforts to address and prevent reprisals. The objective will be to avoid duplication, consolidate ongoing work and ensure close cooperation with all actors engaged on reprisals;

H.E. Joaquín Alexander MAZA MARTELLI  
President of the Human Rights Council



- Strengthening our collective action against reprisals by seeking to establish a more comprehensive approach to addressing intimidation and reprisals throughout the UN system; and by improving and coordinating response by different UN actors.

As I emphasized during my interaction with members of the Human Rights Council in the context of its informal conversation with the High Commissioner on 30 November 2016, the Council has played a leading role in drawing attention to this issue and keeping it on the agenda. As mentioned during our discussion last month, I look forward to working closely with you and the Council to ensure the success of this mandate, including in connection with the annual report by the Secretary-General entitled "Cooperation with the United Nations, its mechanisms and representatives in the field of human rights".

In this context, I welcome your commitment to pursue the efforts of your predecessors to address allegations of intimidation and reprisals for cooperation with the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms brought to your attention. As President of the Council, you play a critical role in preventing and responding swiftly to these allegations in line with Human Rights Council resolution 16/21. Your leadership is also crucial to ensure that the Council proceeds with the appropriate level of dignity and respect in its work to promote and protect human rights, which implies that Members of the Council and all observers, including non-governmental organizations, must be able to contribute freely and safely to the Council's work and that of its subsidiary bodies and mechanisms.

During our discussion the need to share information on allegations received was also stressed. Let me reiterate that mutual cooperation will be essential in our common endeavour to put an end to reprisals, and you can count on my support in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Gilmour", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Andrew Gilmour

Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights