

**Interactive Dialogue on the report of the Secretary-General on the cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights**

Joint statement on behalf of Austria, Liechtenstein, Slovenia and Switzerland

Item 5

24. September 2025

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Mr. President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of Austria, Liechtenstein, Slovenia and Switzerland.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report and welcome the Assistant Secretary-General's continued efforts to address acts of intimidation and reprisals across the United Nations system.

Once again, we are confronted with a high number of reported acts of intimidation and reprisals by States and non-state actors against those who cooperate, or seek to cooperate, with the UN. This is particularly concerning given that the report cannot capture the full extend and scope of persons or groups affected, as many cases remain anonymous or unreported due to serious protection concerns. In some cases, even anonymity is not regarded as sufficient protection.

We are equally highly alarmed by the deepening trend of transnational repression and its growing scale and sophistication.

The chilling effects of such acts seriously hinder the meaningful and safe engagement of civil society and human rights defenders with the UN. Their courageous work is indispensable to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.

We strongly condemn all acts of intimidation and reprisals and call on all States and non-state actors to put an end to them, and to ensure accountability for perpetrators.

Assistant Secretary-General, how can we further strengthen the system to ensure that civil society and human rights defenders are better protected – and not punished – for engaging with the UN?

I thank you.