



[english]

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UN Human Rights Council adopts Guiding Principles on business conduct, yet victims still waiting for effective remedies

On June 16th 2011, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution by which it endorses a set of « Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights » and establishes a working group. "FIDH welcomes the creation of a working group, which mandate is focused on the dissemination and implementation of the Guiding Principles, but regrets that it fails to sufficiently address victims dire need to access effective remedies", says Souhayr Belhassen, FIDH President.

The working group is composed of five independent experts to be appointed in September 2011 and whose mandate is focused on the dissemination and implementation of the Guiding Principles. The Principles are meant to operationalize the « Protect, Respect, Remedy » Framework proposed by John Ruggie, whose six year mandate as the UN Special Representative on business and human rights has come to an end.

FIDH, along with several civil society organisations, has [expressed concern](#) on certain weaknesses in the Principles during the drafting process, in particular on the right to an effective remedy and the need for States' measures to prevent abuses committed by their companies overseas. FIDH recalls that the Guiding Principles are meant to be a guidance tool to implement the "Protect, Respect, Remedy" Framework. Situations of corporate abuses should always be analysed in light of the Framework and applicable international human rights standards.

"We deplore the regressive position adopted by some Member States during the negotiation process" said Souhayr Belhassen. "Instead of acting as representatives of companies, we expected that such Members adopt positions which are consistent with their human rights obligations. Such policy coherence has been emphasized by the UN Special Representative himself in the first pillar of the Framework unanimously adopted in 2008." It is worth mentioning that, on the same day yet in another forum, States, along with employer and worker representatives members of ILO, have adopted a landmark treaty to improve the working conditions of domestic workers.

FIDH calls on the Council to show leadership on this crucial issue and to ensure the working group can effectively address obstacles encountered in business-related abuses. FIDH hopes that the working group will be adequately equipped to assess the implementation of these principles and the Framework by governments and companies and to formulate recommendations on enhancing access to effective remedies for victims, as stated in its mandate.

FIDH has a long-standing experience of working with its member organisations across the world on the documentation of corporate-related abuses. With numerous situations of abuses and in light of emerging trends such as land grabbing and the increasing criminalization of human rights defenders raising their voices against corporate projects, the road towards accountability is still a long way ahead. The denial of justice for victims requires urgent and concrete action: FIDH hopes the Council's work on this issue will lead to effective prevention and reparation of cases

of corporate abuses, including stronger legal protection for victims.

FIDH calls on both governments and companies to commit, in good faith, to implement - in an effective and transparent manner- the "Protect, Respect, Remedy" Framework.

<http://www.fidh.org/UN-Human-Rights-Council-adopts-Guiding-Principles>