



**UNITED NATIONS 78<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
THIRD COMMITTEE  
Item 73: Promotion and protection of human rights**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ms Ní Aoláin**

***Belgian intervention***  
20 October 2023

Special Rapporteur,

Thank you for your report and for sharing the findings of the Global Study on the impact of counter-terrorism measures on civil society and civic space.

Belgium shares your concern about the restrictions on civic space, and the judicial harassment, fair trial violations, administrative obstacles and other impediments to the work of human rights defenders and civil society more broadly, as a consequence of the misuse of counterterrorism measures.

Policy measures aimed at countering and preventing terrorism and violent extremism must fully respect the principles of legality, proportionality, necessity and non-discrimination, as well as all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Thank you also for the reports about your visits to Guantanamo Bay and North East Syria. As Belgium attaches great importance to cooperating with the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, we welcome the access you were granted to detention facilities and detainees in both places.

Your assessment of the situation in North East Syria is deeply troubling. Belgium remains particularly alarmed by the grave violations against children described in your report. In this context, my country has repatriated, between 2019 and 2022, all eligible Belgian children from camps in North East Syria – 33 in total. *Have you had the opportunity to discuss your visit with the SRSG for Children And Armed Conflict, and if so, were there any operational conclusions?*

Special Rapporteur,

As this will be your last interactive dialogue as Special Rapporteur with the Third Committee, allow me to thank you for your vigorous commitment to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in the context of the fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

Thank you.