

ACHPR/Res. 432 (LXV) 2019 : Resolution on the Drafting of an African Declaration on the Promotion of the Role of Human Rights Defenders and their Protection in Africa

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the Commission), meeting at its 65th Ordinary Session held from 21 October to 10 November 2019 in Banjul, The Gambia:

Recalling its mandate to promote and protect human and peoples' rights in Africa under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter);

Considering Article 45 (1) (a) of the African Charter which mandates the African Commission to collect documents, undertake studies and research on African problems in the field of human and peoples' rights;

Considering that the UN Declaration on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders adopted by the 54th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights marks a significant turning point and calls upon African governments to take appropriate steps to implement the Declaration in Africa;

Further considering the Grand Bay (1999) and Kigali (2003) Declarations which recognize the importance of adopting the UN Declaration on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and the important role played by Civil Society Organizations in general, and human rights defenders in particular, in the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa;

Recalling the Cotonou Declaration on strengthening and expanding the protection of all Human Rights Defenders in Africa adopted in 2017, Resolutions ACHPR/Res.69(XXXV)04, ACHPR/Res.119(XXXII)07, ACHPR/Res.196(L)2011, ACHPR/Res.345(LVIII)2016 and ACHPR/Res.376(LX)2017 on the situation of Human Rights Defenders in Africa and ACHPR/Res.336(EXT.OS/XIX)2016 on measures to protect and promote the work of Women Human Rights Defenders;

Conscious of the need for ownership, at the continental level, of conventions and other standards or guidelines adopted by the United Nations, in particular, the 1998 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;

Also conscious of the need to reinforce the concept of "human rights defender" and their importance for the promotion of human rights on the continent, through a better understanding of their role, rights and responsibilities by all stakeholders;

Concerned about the progressive tightening of civic space and the increase in acts of reprisal against human rights defenders as a result of their collaboration with human rights bodies;

Convinced of the importance of reaffirming its mandate to promote and protect human and peoples' rights in Africa and that this objective cannot be achieved without the involvement of all stakeholders, including civil society, national human rights institutions, State authorities and citizens;

The Commission:

- 1. Decides** to draft an African Declaration on the Promotion of the Role of Human Rights Defenders and their Protection in Africa;
- 2. Decides** to adopt an inclusive approach, reaching out to all stakeholders, for the drafting of this Declaration;
- 3. Decides** to entrust the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa with the task of drafting the said Declaration;
- 4. Calls upon** State and non-State actors to support the drafting of this Declaration.

Done in Banjul, The Gambia, 10 November 2019