

ACHPR/Res. 479 (LXVIII) 2021: Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in Benin

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Commission), meeting at its 68th Ordinary Session held virtually from 14 April to 4 May 2021;

Recalling its mandate of promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights in Africa, pursuant to Article 45 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter);

Mindful of the obligations of the Republic of Benin as a Member State of the African Union and State Party to the African Charter;

Considering the provisions of Article 6 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which requires States to ensure that citizens effectively enjoy fundamental human rights and freedoms, taking into account their universality, interdependence and indivisibility;

Reaffirming its commitment to the promotion of democracy in Africa and recognizing that good governance, transparency and respect for human rights are fundamental principles which contribute to peace and development in Africa;

Concerned about the deterioration of the social and political situation as well as the climate of increased repression, which has led to the arrest and detention of political opponents, activists and journalists;

Particularly concerned by the restrictions on civic space and the crackdown on demonstrations by the army resulting in loss of lives, abuses and violations, attacks on the integrity of persons, and the destruction of public and private property;

Concerned about reports of people going into exile for fear of reprisal, as well as the repressive climate and undue restrictions on freedom of expression;

The Commission

1. Condemns the crackdown on demonstrations by the army in violation of the principles set out in the Guidelines for the Policing of Assemblies by Law Enforcement Officials in Africa;
2. Calls on the Beninese authorities to:
 - i. Ensure respect for and protection of the rights guaranteed by the African Charter and other relevant human rights instruments to which it is party;

- ii. Protect journalists, bloggers, activists, human rights defenders as well as all citizens participating in public life, from acts of reprisal;
- iii. Take the necessary measures to ensure full respect for the right to freedom of opinion and expression in accordance with the 2019 Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa;
- iv. Guarantee the right of every citizen to freely participate in the conduct of public affairs in accordance with the provisions of Article 13 of the African Charter;
- v. Open an independent and impartial investigation into violations perpetrated by the army during the pre-election period;
- vi. Protect and guarantee the right to freedom of peaceful demonstration in accordance with the Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa.

Done virtually, 4 May 2021