

[ACHPR62 | Outcome of the NGO Forum](#)

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During the NGO Forum opening session which took place on 21 April, Pr Remy Ngoy Lumbu, who is also the Commission's Special Rapporteur on defenders, recognised the originality and uniqueness of the spirit of the Forum as a civil society space to exchange freely and independently on all countries in Africa.

Following the opening, the review of the human rights situation in Africa revealed number of critical cases on the continent. The Forum noted the deterioration of safety in Central Africa due to increasing social and political crises. The region is indeed marked by policy brutality, Internet shutdowns and the shrinking of civil society space. In the Democratic Republic of Congo for instance, abuses, gross human rights violations and arbitrary arrests are committed in total impunity.

As the session was taking place in Mauritania, several local human rights defenders exposed the reprehensible human rights situation in the country. They denounced the lack of implementation by the government of the national law condemning slavery in the country and the lack of action of special courts created to defeat this plague. They also use the opportunity to unveil the risks, especially detention and even death penalty, they face because of the human rights work they do.

Panels on the second and third day touched a wide range of themes such as female genital mutilation, the use of the African Union mechanisms to advance human rights or progress, challenges and opportunities in the fight to abolish the death penalty. In particular, the panel on the situation of human rights defenders in Africa, the concept of hub cities, women human rights defenders and the situation in Central Africa which gave a detailed insight of the situation in the region for defenders since the beginning of the Anglophone crisis. The panel also dug deep into the work of the NGO Defend Defenders regarding hub cities for defenders in immediate danger in East Africa.

As is the tradition, in the afternoon of the second day defenders gathered within interest groups to discuss the advancement and challenges of specific human rights issues and how they are approached in Africa. In particular, the group on defenders and freedom of association and assembly discussed the redundant issue of defenders declared "persona non grata" by States and the growing number of government-organised non-governmental organisations (GONGOs) in specific countries such as Mauritania and Egypt. Following these discussions, they suggested actions to address these issues and recommendations for States to improve the situation of defenders in their respective countries.

To conclude, the Forum adopted among others a country resolution on the deteriorating human rights situation in Burundi. The resolution was then submitted to the African Commission for adoption during the 62nd ordinary session.

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