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SUMMARY OF THE 77th SESSION

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) held its **77th Ordinary Session** in Arusha, Tanzania, from 20 October to 9 November 2023 - one of the most well-attended gatherings for the body, with over 1600 delegates present. The session was preceded by the **Forum on the Participation of NGOs**, from 16 to 18 October.

[Read the 77th session's final communiqué here.](#)

OUTCOMES OF #ACHPR77



Before a packed audience, the Commission saw the re-election of three of its sitting members, including Rémy Ngoy Lumbu, who was also re-elected for an additional two-year term as chairman of the ACHPR in the renewal of the body's Bureau. The session hosted 12 panel discussions and saw the launch of 7 documents, as well as two country reviews and the adoption of 8 country resolutions.

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ISHR, ACDHRS HOLD TRAINING FOR DEFENDERS ENGAGING WITH THE COMMISSION

Ahead of the session, ISHR and the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRs) organised a



A DISCUSSION ON LAWS RESTRICTING THE RIGHTS OF DEFENDERS IN AFRICA

ISHR, KUTAKESA and African Defenders hosted an event to analyse recent trends in Africa with respect to laws limiting

training for 24 defenders on strategic engagement with the ACHPR.

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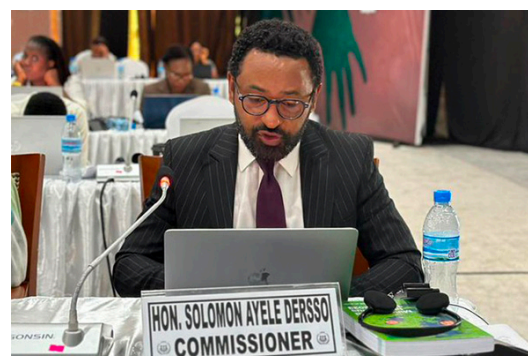
STATES MUST CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN LEGAL PROTECTION OF DEFENDERS

In a statement, ISHR pointed to a concerning series of laws and policies that restrict the rights of defenders, especially in Angola and Zimbabwe, stressing the need to ensure that existing measures and mechanisms to protect defenders are effective.

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freedom of association and their impacts on the work of defenders.

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CALLING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS INSTRUMENT IN AFRICA

To strengthen the protection of the environment and those who defend it, ISHR has joined the Environmental Regional Agreement Coalition in calling on the ACHPR to initiate the development of a continental instrument that would enshrine environmental rights.

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ACHPR GRANTS OBSERVER STATUS TO NINE CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS, REJECTS FIVE REQUESTS

To ensure legal certainty and predictability, the Commission should clarify the content and nature of a requirement that requesting organisations must have offices in Africa.

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EXPLORING CHALLENGES, RESPONSES TO SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE IN AFRICAN SOCIETIES

A panel discussion underscored a real concern about the erosion of civic space, highlighting the significance of preserving freedom of association, assembly and expression, and emphasising the role of defenders.

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- Tanzanian civil society validates a human rights defenders policy [READ MORE >](#)
 - A declaration to protect defenders in Africa [READ MORE >](#)
 - Commission showcases importance of relationships with NGOs, NHRIs [READ MORE >](#)
 - States must end reprisals, provide a safe, enabling environment for defenders [READ MORE >](#)
 - Consultations on the Study of the Impact of Climate Change on Human Rights in Africa [READ MORE >](#)
 - Navigating environmental protection, challenging rights violations by businesses [READ MORE >](#)
 - Environmental defenders call for better protection by the Commission [READ MORE >](#)
 - Enhancing civil society engagement with the AfCFTA [READ MORE >](#)
 - Confronting racism, xenophobia and discrimination of migrants [READ MORE >](#)
 - Networks help enhance the protection of women human rights defenders [READ MORE >](#)
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75th SESSION'S SUMMARY

Earlier in the year, the Commission held its 75th Ordinary Session in a hybrid format from 3 to 23 May 2023, with in-person meetings taking place in Banjul, The Gambia.

[Read the 75th session's final communiqué here.](#)

AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM MUST WORK TO FULL POTENTIAL TO PROTECT DEFENDERS



ISHR delivered a statement on the situation of defenders in Africa, highlighting the impact of anti-constitutional government changes on their rights, and calling on the Focal Point on Reprisals to publish his first report.

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DEFENDERS' PROTECTION LAWS MUST RESPECT REGIONAL STANDARDS, BE IMPLEMENTED

ISHR called for the full implementation of laws protecting defenders, denouncing violations faced by women defenders in Sudan and the rejection of applications for observer status by NGOs working on LGBTIQ rights.

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INCREASING AWARENESS OF GUIDELINES ON FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION, ASSEMBLY

Six years after the adoption of the ambitious framework set out by the Commission's Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa, its implementation remains mostly wishful thinking across regions.

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COMMISSION DISCUSSES REFORM OF JUDICIAL, QUASI-JUDICIAL BODIES OF THE AFRICAN UNION

At a discussion on the reform of the judicial and quasi-judicial organs of the African Union, Commissioners and panellists called for a process that would avoid 'regression' and 'duplications' of



COMMISSION SHOULD WORK ON LEGAL TOOL PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT, DEFENDERS

Speaking on the situation of the village Similimi (Côte d'Ivoire), which has been affected by the operations of an extractive company, ISHR called for an African legal instrument to enshrine the

existing mandates.

protection of both the environment and environmental rights activists.

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- A human rights-centred approach to implementing the AfCFTA [READ MORE >](#)
- Senegal must adopt law on defender protection [READ MORE >](#)
- States must produce meaningful data on economic, social, cultural rights [READ MORE >](#)
- Zambia must implement preventive measures to protect defenders [READ MORE >](#)



ISHR would like to thank Irish Aid for their generosity in supporting this publication.

Kumulika is a newsletter produced by ISHR with the aim of informing readers of developments and opportunities around the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.



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