

## **87th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights**

### **Item 4: Situation of Human Rights in Africa**

**Speaker:** Salma El Hosseiny - International Service for Human Rights (53)

Honourable Chairperson, honourable Commissioners, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) remains deeply concerned by the shrinking civic space across the continent. This trend is increasingly characterised by the criminalisation of human rights work and a glaring absence of robust legal protections for those who defend human rights. We draw the African Commission's attention to several critical situations where defenders and media professionals face extreme danger.

In [Tanzania](#), following the re-election of president Samia Suluhu Hassan, the environment for HRDs has turned increasingly hostile. In 2025 alone, authorities shut down over thousands online platforms under the guise of "unethical content." With several recorded cases of enforced disappearances of opposition figures and defenders, Tanzania's crackdown on digital and physical space is entirely out of line with the African Charter.

Moreover, in the DRC, journalists and activists in North and South Kivu continue to be targeted by the Congolese authorities and the M23 and Alliance Fleuve (AFC).

Similarly, in Burkina Faso, we are alarmed by the use of laws that do not comply with international standards to restrict civic space and silence human rights defenders.

In Angola, we are seeing a dangerous trend of using "anti-terrorism" charges to silence journalists reporting on matters of public interest.

Regarding the review of Kenya during this session, we ask the African Commission to call the State Party to adopt effective measures protecting the civic space to avoid a repeat of 2023 to 2025 repressions against protestors in the future.

Regarding Western Sahara, ISHR remains gravely concerned by the targeting of Saharawi defenders. The defenders documenting violations, mobilising communities, or asserting the right to self-determination are exposed to overlapping forms of criminalisation, physical and psychological abuse, sexual

violence, surveillance, and restrictions on fundamental freedoms. We emphasise the need for the African Commission to be granted unhindered access to the territory to monitor the situation of defenders during a mission to the region.

In [Sudan](#), civilians continue to endure unbearable conditions in Dilling, South Kordofan, while thousands walk on foot for days in search of safety in the Blue Nile State. Two medical professionals were killed in drone attacks in the White Nile state. Local responders and human rights defenders face vicious attacks as they work to save lives and document war crimes, including systematic targeting, including detention and torture. These responders operate with extremely limited resources to fill critical gaps in areas where international aid organisations cannot function, such as Dilling. Ongoing shelling and the shutdown of communication networks have further restricted their ability to reach affected communities. We urge the Commission to engage with women human rights defenders to document the war crimes committed against homes and medical facilities to ensure the accountability of the Sudanese Armed Forces, RSF, and SPLM/N committing these atrocity crimes.

Finally, in the context of the AU Decade for Reparations, ISHR and our partners in the global movement for racial justice, including the UN Antiracism Coalition (UNARC), welcome the UN General Assembly [resolution](#) declaring that the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans and the racialised slavery that followed constituted the 'gravest crime against humanity'. This resolution, led by Ghana and supported by the African Union (AU) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) States, is a significant [victory](#) for the many organisations, advocates, Maroon communities and families who have courageously advocated for reparatory justice. We urge the Commission to adopt a follow-up resolution on Africa's Reparations Agenda and The Human Rights of Africans In the Diaspora and People of African Descent Worldwide, in line with the [NGO Forum's adopted resolution](#) ahead of the 83rd session of the African Commission. This would contribute to strengthening the important links between the diaspora and the continent, as well as the links between the African Commission and the UN bodies working on the same issues.