

Statement at the 63rd session of the Human Rights Council

Item 6: UPR adoptions of Seychelles

Speaker: Lucianne Sofola

Mr. President,

Our organisations welcome the recommendations made to the government of Seychelles calling to remove restrictions on civic space and the establishment of specific mechanisms for the protection of defenders.

Indeed, Section 25 of the Associations Act 2022 requires authorisation from the Registrar for elected members of a board of directors to carry out their duties. This requirement may undermine the autonomy of associations. In addition, the Public gatherings Act, governing peaceful assemblies, empowers authorities to impose restrictions on venue and time of assemblies if deemed to present a risk for public health, morality, and safety. Finally, despite the diversification of the media landscape, the protection of freedom of expression still has room for improvement. Journalists are still exposed to arbitrary arrests, detentions and bans.

We therefore call on the government of Seychelles to:

1. remove any disproportionate restrictions on the autonomy of associations included in the Associations Act in order to comply with the international standards.
2. ensure that human rights defenders, journalists and civil society organisations are protected against any forms of intimidation and attacks.
3. review the restrictions on public demonstrations in order to align them with the international standards.

Seychelles need to turn their commitments into concrete protection measures.

Thank you