16/11/2026

Your Excellency,

Re: Civil society call for support for the resolution on human rights defenders at the 81st session of the UN General Assembly

We, the undersigned civil society organisations, urge your Government to support and co-sponsor the resolution on human rights defenders, currently before the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly. The resolution, formally entitled *"Implementing the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms through providing a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders and ensuring their protection"* (A/C.3/81/L.36/Rev.1), is expected to be adopted on 17 November 2026.

Nearly 28 years after the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders by consensus, human rights defenders remain essential to achieving the goals at the heart of the UN's work: sustainable development, peace, security, gender equality, accountability and the rule of law. Yet around the world, defenders continue to face killings, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, criminalisation, smear campaigns and reprisals for engaging with the UN. As civic space comes under increasing pressure in many regions, emerging threats — including spyware, technology-facilitated violence and repression across borders — are placing defenders at risk wherever they are.

The resolution has a long record of broad support: since the adoption of the Declaration by consensus in 1998, the General Assembly's resolutions on human rights defenders have been adopted by consensus at every session but one, with co-sponsors from every region. We urge States to maintain that cross-regional support this year.

Against this backdrop, the resolution on human rights defenders offers an important opportunity for the General Assembly to reaffirm the essential and legitimate role of defenders and strengthen international commitments to their protection. The resolution maintains important previously agreed protections while responding to emerging threats and challenges. In particular, we welcome its:

- **Recognition of repression across borders**, expressing grave concern at repressive activities conducted abroad by States to silence, intimidate and harm human rights defenders, and calling for effective measures to prevent and address such violations, protect those affected and ensure accountability and access to remedies.
- **Strengthened protection against online attacks and technology-facilitated violence**, including gender-based violence, doxxing, deepfakes, cyberstalking and other forms of digital harassment and abuse, which disproportionately affect women human rights defenders.

- **Greater attention to unlawful or arbitrary surveillance and emerging technologies**, including spyware, biometric surveillance and artificial intelligence, and the need for human rights safeguards, accountability and effective remedies.
- **Recognition of the responsibilities of technology companies**, including those operating in the private surveillance industry, to conduct human rights due diligence and prevent adverse impacts on human rights defenders.
- **Call for action against strategic lawsuits against public participation**, which are increasingly used to judicially harass, intimidate and silence human rights defenders.

These provisions do not establish new human rights standards or obligations. Rather, they reaffirm and give practical expression to existing obligations under international human rights law, clarifying how States must respect, protect and fulfil human rights in the face of evolving threats. The methods used to target human rights defenders may be changing, but States' obligations to protect their rights remain unchanged.

We also welcome the resolution's continued recognition of the vital contributions of women human rights defenders, Indigenous and environmental human rights defenders, and others working to advance the full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Its reaffirmation of the right to cooperate safely and without fear of reprisals with the UN and other international and regional human rights mechanisms is especially important.

We therefore call on all States to:

1. **Co-sponsor** draft resolution A/C.3/81/L.36/Rev.1
2. **Vote against any amendments which would weaken the text**, should such amendments be tabled.
3. **Vote in favour** of the draft resolution as a whole, should a vote be called, and speak in support of it during action in the Third Committee and General Assembly plenary.

Maintaining broad and cross-regional support for the resolution continues to send an important message of solidarity with human rights defenders everywhere and reaffirm States' commitment to ensuring that everyone can exercise their right to defend human rights safely and freely.

Yours sincerely,

The undersigned civil society organisations

1. Access Now
2. Accion Ecologica
3. Accountability Accelerator
4. Accountability Lab Nigeria
5. Action Intégrale pour une Vision Épanouie / ACTIVE
6. Agency for Turkana Development Initiatives (ATUDIS)
7. AGOEC

8. Alliance for Democracy in Laos
9. Amnesty International
10. Aquarius Supervivientes
11. Arise and Thrive Africa
12. Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy (AIPNEE)
13. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
14. Asociación Fronteras Amazónicas
15. Association for Farmers Rights Defense, AFRD
16. Children and Young People Living for Peace (CYPLP), Nigeria
17. Climate Activist Defenders
18. Climate Rights International
19. Coalition Burundaise pour la Cour Pénale International (CB CPI)
20. Coalition des Volontaires pour la Paix et le Développement, CVPD-RDC
21. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)
22. Community Empowerment and Social Justice Network (CEMSOJ)
23. Dalit with Disabilities Association Nepal
24. Daunte and Kobe No More Names Initiative
25. DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
26. DIAFAR (Diáspora Africana de la Argentina)
27. DISABILITY PEOPLES FORUM UGANDA
28. Doctors for Planetary Health - West Coast
29. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
30. LGBTI Equal Rights Association for the Western Balkans and Türkiye (ERA)
31. Federación de comunidades nativas de Ucayali y Afluentes - FECONAU
32. Forest People's Programme
33. Franciscans International
34. Front Line Defenders
35. Global Canopy
36. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
37. Global Rights
38. Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights
39. HITMA for Cultural and Social Development
40. Hivos
41. Humanists International
42. Human Rights First
43. Human Rights House Foundation
44. IFEX
45. Institute for Indigenous Affairs and Development
46. International Relations Students' Association of McGill University
47. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
48. International Rehabilitation Council for Torture victims
49. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
50. Intersection Association for Rights and Freedoms

51. Jubilee Campaign
52. Kenya Ni Mimi Campaign
53. Lawyers for Lawyers
54. Libra Law Office
55. Ligue des Sacrifices Volontaires pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme et l'Environnement (LISVDHE)
56. Ligue Nationale des Associations Autochtones Pygmées du Congo (LINAPYCO)
57. MAIN Maloca Internationale
58. Maternal Mercy & Development MMD
59. Migrant Forum in Asia
60. Mining Observatory (Brazil)
61. Mother Earth for Climate Justice (ME4CJ)
62. Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples (MRAP)
63. Mutasa Youth Forum & Community Empowerment Trust
64. National Lawyers Guild International Committee
65. Nederlands Juristen Comité voor de Mensenrechten, Dutch Section of the International Commission of Jurists (NJCM)
66. Nigeria Network of NGOs
67. Oil Refinery Residents Association
68. OMCT Europe
69. Open Knowledge Development Initiative
70. Organisation pour le Développement Intellectuel de Madagascar (ODIMA)
71. Outright International
72. Pastoralists Alliance for Resilience and Adaptation Across Nations (PARAAN)
73. Peace Brigades International
74. Plataforma Nacional Juvenil Nicaragua
75. Privacy International
76. Profundo
77. Project on Organizing, Development, Education, and Research (PODER)
78. Protection International Mesoamérica
79. Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia Inc
80. Refugees in Libya - APS
81. Rencontre Africaine pour la Defense des Droits de l'homme
82. Resilient40
83. Rivers & Rights
84. Aaramanta Warmikuna, Acción Ecologica
85. Secretaría de Ambiente, Cambio Climático y Transición Justa de la CGT-RA
86. STAR Kampuchea (SK)
87. Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM)
88. Swedwatch
89. The Association Of The Rights Defender Of The Indigenous Peoples Of The Archipelago (PPMAN)
90. The Lutheran World Federation
91. Trans Support Organization Kenya

92. True Heroes Films (THF)
93. Uganda Eyenkya Development Project Group
94. United Funding and Development for Underage Mothers (UFDUM), Inc.
95. United Tribal Organization of Assam (UTOA)
96. UNU-RCE Hawai'i Moananuiakea
97. Women collective Uganda
98. Women's Human Rights International Association
99. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
100. Yayasan Ulayat Nagari Indonesia (YUNI)
101. Youth for Green Communities (YGC), Uganda
102. Women in Law and Development in Africa/Mali (WiLDAF/Mali)