



## Open Letter to all United Nations Member States: Secure access to justice for all human rights

The undersigned **300** civil society organizations, and **33.713** individuals from **111** countries, have signed a global petition calling on all UN Members to take the necessary steps to become a party to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Optional Protocol) when it opens for signature at a ceremony to be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 24 September 2009. The NGO Coalition for an Optional Protocol (NGO Coalition)<sup>1</sup>, together with these individuals and organizations from around the world, call on governments to help ensure that access to justice and the right to an effective remedy become a reality for all victims of human rights violations.

The NGO Coalition has welcomed the adoption by consensus of the Optional Protocol and repeats its appreciation of the efforts of all those who contributed to this great advancement in the pursuit of the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. We will continue to advocate for the early entry into force of the Optional Protocol and its full implementation.

The Optional Protocol reaffirms the universality, indivisibility and inter-dependence of all human rights, and is a much needed and concrete step to rectify the imbalance in international protection for victims of violations of economic, social and cultural rights. It also reinforces the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights by providing victims of violations of these rights who are unable to obtain an effective remedy in their domestic legal system, an opportunity to seek redress at the international level.

We call on all states to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its Optional Protocol without reservations, and to ensure the Optional Protocol enters into force as soon as possible and fully implemented without delay. We also ask all states to make a declaration recognizing the competence of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to undertake inquiry and interstate procedures under this Optional Protocol.

We commend the decision of those states that have publicly committed to sign the Optional Protocol on September 24 and look forward to its ratification and implementation. We call on all States that have not yet taken a decision to sign the Optional Protocol to also participate in the ceremony and to affirm their commitment to ensuring the human rights in their countries by signing and ratifying it on Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>.

Becoming a party to the Optional Protocol will reinforce the commitment of States to develop and ensure effective remedies for victims of violations of economic, social and cultural rights at both the

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<sup>1</sup> The Steering Committee of the International NGO Coalition for an Optional Protocol to the ICESCR is composed by the following organizations: Amnesty International; Community Law Centre, South Africa; Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), Switzerland; International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net), USA; Food First Information and Action Network (FIAN) International Secretariat, Germany; International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Switzerland; International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), France; International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia-Pacific (IWRAP Asia-Pacific), Malaysia; Inter-American Platform of Human Rights, Democracy and Development (PIDHDD), Paraguay; Social Rights Action Centre, (SRAC), Canada.

domestic and international levels. Signing the Optional Protocol will be a tangible demonstration of States' commitment to bring this important legal instrument into force as soon as possible and to create an effective avenue of redress for victims.

### The petition

The petition calling on states to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol was launched by the NGO Coalition on 13 July 2009. Signatures are being collected online and in person by members of the NGO Coalition. The petition is available at <http://www.protectallhumanrights.org> and will remain open until 30 September. It reads as follows: "We, the undersigned organisations and individuals, call on all States of the world to ensure that access to justice and the right to an effective remedy become a reality for all victims of human rights violations. We urge all States to become a party to the Optional Protocol when it opens for signature on September 24, 2009; to ensure that it enters into force as soon as possible; and to take all necessary steps to fully implement the Optional Protocol without delay. We call on those countries that are not yet a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to ratify or accede to this treaty immediately and to also sign to the Optional Protocol on September 24."

1. Aliança para Promoção do Desenvolvimento da Comunidade de Hoji Ya Henda	Angola
2. 3D -> Trade - Human Rights - Equitable Economy	Switzerland
3. Acción Social y Desarrollo (ASDE)	Peru
4. Action Contre l'Impunité Pour Les Droits Humains (ACIDH)	Democratic Republic of Congo
5. Action for Social Rights (AfsOR) (formerly Youth Movement for Peace and People's Rights)	Sierra Leone
6. ActionAid International	South Africa
7. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS)	The Gambia
8. Afro-Colombian National Movement CIMARRON	Colombia
9. Alliance for Holistic and Sustainable Development of Communities (AHSDC)	India
10. Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights	Palestine
11. Amigos Multicultural Services Center	United States
12. Amnesty International (AI)	
13. AMUMRA - Asociación Civil de Derechos Humanos Mujeres Unidas Migrantes y Refugiadas en Argentina	Argentina
14. Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)	Thailand
15. Asian Foundation for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)	Thailand
16. Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)	Hong Kong
17. Asian Institute for Human Rights (AIHR)	Thailand
18. Asmita Resource Centre for Women	India
19. Asociación Jalisciense de Apoyo a los Grupos Indígenas	Mexico
20. Asociación Escuela Ciudadana	Colombia
21. Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia (ACIJ)	Argentina
22. Asociación Comité de Familiares de Víctimas de Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos " Marianella García Villas" (CODEFAM)	El Salvador
23. Asociación Coordinadora de los Clubes de Madres del Perú	Peru
24. Asociación para la Defensa y Desarrollo de la Familia (ADDEFAM)	Peru
25. Asociación Q'ukumatz	Guatemala
26. Asociación Tierra de Esperanza	Colombia
27. Associação Contra a Exclusão pelo Desenvolvimento	Portugal
28. Association Africaine de Défense des Droits de l'Homme,	Democratic Republic of

representation du Katanga (ASADHO/Katanga)	Congo
29. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)	Canada
30. Association Nigerienne de Défense des Droits de l'Homme (ANDDH)	Niger
31. Association of Environmental Lawyers of Liberia (Green Advocates)	Liberia
32. AUGE/UG - Alternative und Grüne GewerkschafterInnen	Austria
33. Baha'i International Community	Switzerland
34. Bahrain Human Rights Watch Society (BHRWS)	Bahrain
35. BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights (BAOBAB)	Nigeria
36. Bretton Woods Project (BWP)	United Kingdom
37. Broad Initiatives for Negros Development (BIND)	Philippines
38. Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC)	Bulgaria
39. Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation	Bulgaria
40. Butere Focused Women in Development (BUFOWODE)	Kenya
41. CADTM Belgique	Belgium
42. Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network	Canada
43. Casa de la Mujer- Rosario	Argentina
44. CDHG - Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala	Guatemala
45. Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR)	Spain
46. Center for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Promotion (ESCR-PRO)	Thailand
47. Center for Minority Rights Development (CEMIRIDE)	Kenya
48. Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR)	United States
49. Center of Concern	United States
50. Centre d'Information Juridique/Femme Justice Aide (CIJG/FJA)	Republic of Guinee
51. Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALs)	South Africa
52. Centre for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Hakijamii)	Kenya
53. Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA)	Canada
54. Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria	South Africa
55. Center on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE)	Switzerland
56. Centro Cultural Per Aspera ad Astra	Mexico
57. Centro de Apoyo Comunitario Trabajando Unidos (CACTUS)	Mexico
58. Centro de Asesoría Laboral del Perú (CEDAL)	Peru
59. Centro de Capacitación Social - CCS	Panama
60. Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales (CDES)	Ecuador
61. Centro de Derechos Humanos del Migrante Beato Juan Bautista Scalabrini	Mexico
62. Centro de Derechos Humanos y Ambiente (CEDHA)	Argentina
63. Centro de Educación en Apoyo a la Producción y al Medio Ambiente A. C.	Mexico
64. Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)	Argentina
65. Centro Diocesano para los Derechos Humanos "Fray Juan de Larios"	Mexico
66. Centro Operacional de Vivienda y Poblamiento - Copevi	Mexico
67. Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos "Bartolomé Carrasco Briseño" A.C.	Mexico
68. CEPAC	Spain
69. Charter Committee on Poverty Issues (CCPI)	Canada
70. CIDAC – Centro de Informação e Documentação AmAlcar	Portugal
71. CLADEM EL SALVADOR	El Salvador

72. Coalición de Organizaciones Mexicanas por el Derecho al Agua	Mexico
73. Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo	Colombia
74. Colectivo de trabajadores del Arte y la Cultura de Michoacán. A. C "COTACUM"	Mexico
75. Collectif des Femmes du Mali (Le COFEM)	Mali
76. Comisión Diocesana de Justicia y Paz AC	Mexico
77. Comisión Ecuménica de Derechos Humanos	Ecuador
78. Comisión Colombiana de Juristas	Colombia
79. Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, A.C. (CMDPDH)	Mexico
80. Comissão Pastoral da Terra	Brasil
81. Comité Permanente de Derechos Humanos	Colombia
82. Comité de Emergencia Garífuna de Honduras	Honduras
83. Committee for the Defence of Democracy, Freedoms and Human Rights	Syrian Arab Republic
84. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative Organization (CHRI)	India
85. Community Law Centre, University of the Western Cape	South Africa
86. Conectas Direitos Humanos	Brazil
87. Confederación Campesina del Perú (CCP)	Peru
88. Consorcio ONGD	Spain
89. Convergencia de Organismos Civiles	Mexico
90. Corporate Accountability International	United States
91. Council of Social Professionals	India
92. CUSBIOMAC, AC	Mexico
93. Red por los derechos sexuales y reproductivos en México	Mexico
94. DECA Equipo Pueblo, A.C.	Mexico
95. Desarrollo, Educación y Cultura Autogestionarios Equipo Pueblo A.C.	Mexico
96. Dignity International	France
97. Disability Rights Promotion International (D.R.P.I.)	Canada
98. Doctors for Human Rights	United Kingdom
99. EarthRights International (ERI)	United States
100. Eastern Africa Coalition for ESCR (EACOR)	Kenya
101. Economic and Social Rights Centre	Kenya
102. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Asia (ESCR Asia)	Philippines
103. Education and Research Association for Consumers Malaysia (ERA Consumers)	Malaysia
104. Egyptian Center for Housing Rights (ECHR)	Egypt
105. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)	Egypt
106. Encuentro de Entidades no Gubernamentales para el Desarrollo	Argentina
107. EnGenderRights Inc.	Philippines
108. Equalinrights	The Netherlands
109. Equidad de Género Ciudadanía Trabajo y Familia	Mexico
110. International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net)	United States
111. Estudio Para La Defensa De Los Derechos De La Mujer (DEMUS)	Peru
112. European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN)	Belgium
113. European Roma Rights Center (ERRC)	Hungary
114. Federação dos Órgãos de Assistência Social e Educacional (FASE),	Brazil
115. Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas Artesanas Indígenas Nativas y Asalariadas del Perú - FEMUCARINAP	Peru

116. Fédération internationale des droits de l'Homme (FIDH)	France
117. Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Kenya)	Kenya
118. Feminist Alliance for International Action	Canada
119. Femmes Cote d'Ivoire Experience (FCIEX)	Cote d'Ivoire
120. Food First Information and Action Network (FIAN) France	France
121. FIAN International	Germany
122. FIAN Norway	Norway
123. FIAN Germany	Germany
126. Foro Ciudadano de Participación por la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos (FOCO)	Argentina
127. Foro Regional por los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos Arequipa Perú	Peru
128. Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy (FOHRD)	Liberia
129. Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (FAT)	Mexico
130. Front Line – The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders	Ireland
131. Fundacao AMI	Portugal
132. Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho	El Salvador
133. Fundación Emmanuel Internacional (FEI)	Dominican Republic
134. Global Action on Aging	United States
135. Global Basic Income Foundation	Netherlands
136. GUAMINA - Programme d'appui À la promotion des DESC au Mali	Mali
137. Habi Center for Environmental Rights	Egypt
138. Habitat International Coalition-Housing & Land Rights Network (HIC-HLRN)	Egypt
139. Harmony House	Canada
140. Harvard Project on Disability (HPOD)	United States of America
141. Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights	United States
142. Human & Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA)	Nigeria
143. Human Rights Association (IHD)	Turkey
144. Human Rights Centre at the School of Law, Queens University	United Kingdom
145. Human Rights Foundation of Aotearoa New Zealand	New Zealand
146. Human Rights Tech	United States
146. Human Rights Society Of Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan
147. Ibfan Italy	Italy
148. INCIDE Social A.C.	Mexico
149. Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education (TEBTEBBA)	Philippines
150. Indonesian Legal Aid Society Association (Perkumpuluan MBH)	Indonesia
151. Informal Sector Service Centre	Nepal
152. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)	United States
153. Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)	Switzerland
154. Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA)	South Africa
155. Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH)	United States
156. Instituto de Estudios de la Mujer "Norma Virginia Guirola de Herrera" CEMUJER	El Salvador
157. Instituto de Estudios Legales y Sociales del Uruguay	Uruguay
158. Instituto de Formación Femenina Integral (IFFI)	Bolivia
159. Instituto Latinoamericano de Servicios Legales Alternativos (IL SA)	Colombia

160. Instituto Mexicano para el Desarrollo Comunitario, A.C.	Mexico
161. Inter-American Platform of Human Rights, Democracy and Development (PIDHDD)	Paraguay
162. Intercambio y Desarrollo Humano en América Latina CIDHAL A.C.	Mexico
162. Interchurch Organisation for Development (ICCO)	Netherlands
164. International Centre for Reproductive Health and Sexual Rights (INCRESE)	Nigeria
165. International Code Documentation Centre	Malaysia
166. International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)	Switzerland
167. International Human Rights Internship Program (IHRIP)	United States
168. International Women and Mining Network (RIMM)	India
169. International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP Asia Pacific)	Malaysia
170. International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations (ISMUN)	Nigeria
171. Italian Global Health WATCH (OISG)	Italy
172. Justiça Global (JG)	Brazil
173. Justice and Peace Center, Silliman University, Negros Oriental	Philippines
174. Justice and Peace Commission	Mexico
175. Karimojong Community Child Welfare Initiative (KACOCI)	Uganda
176. Kazakhstan Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Management	Kazakhstan
177. Kebetkache Women Development & Resource Centre	Nigeria
178. Kenya Land Alliance (KLA)	Kenya
179. Khartoum Center for Human Rights & Environmental Development	Sudan
180. Kituo Cha Sheria (Center for Legal Empowerment)	Kenya
181. Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Center (LHAHRDEV)	Nigeria
182. Land Center for Human Rights (LCHR)	Egypt
183. Legal Resources Centre (LRC)	South Africa
184. Legal Resources Centre Organization (LRC)	Ghana
185. Ligue des droits et libertés du Québec	Canada
186. Llamado Mundial a la Acción contra la Pobreza - Perú	Peru
187. Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM)	India
188. Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM), Pune, India	India
189. Maison de Droits de l'Homme du Cameroun (MDHC)	Cameroun
190. Masimanyane Women Support Center	South Africa
191. Mazingira Institute	Kenya
192. Media Mobilizing Project (MMP)	United States of America
193. Merveilles Academy 2000	Cameroun
194. Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center (Center Prodh)	Mexico
195. MINBYUN-Lawyers for a democratic society	Republic of Korea
196. Mines, Minerals & PEOPLE (mm&P)	India
197. Minority Rights Group International (MRGI)	Uganda
198. Mouvement pour le Progres de Roche Bois (MPRB)	Mauritius
199. Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)	Nigeria
200. Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens (MAB)	Brazil
201. Movimiento Manuela Ramos	Puerto Rico
202. Mujeres por México en Chihuahua	Mexico
201. Multi-Initiative on Rights: Search, Assist, Defend (MIRSAD)	Lebanon
202. Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen	El Salvador

203. Nairobi Peoples Settlements Network (NPSN)	Kenya
204. National Economic and Social Rights Initiative, (NESRI)	United States
205. National Union of Domestic Employees (NUDE)	Trinidad and Tobago
206. Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD)	Sierra Leone
207. Nuremberg Human Rights Centre	Germany
208. Observatoire Congolais des Droits de l'Homme (OCDH)	Congo-Brazzaville
209. Observatorio de Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas (OBDPI)	Chile
210. Office of Human Rights Studies, Mahidol University	Thailand
211. Ogiek Peoples Development Program (OPDP)	Kenya
212. ONGD Fundación Contrucción y Comercio Solidarios	Spain
213. Organization for Human Rights & Social Justice	United States
214. Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum	Pakistan
215. Pax Romana	France
216. Pel Advocates	Liberia
217. People Against Injustice (PAIN)	The Gambia
218. People's Health Movement (PHM)	Egypt
219. People's Movement for Human Rights Learning (PDHRE)	United States
220. PHM-Togo	Togo
221. Plate - Forme Droits Economiques, Sociaux et Culturels du Mali	Mali
222. Pólis – Instituto de Estudos, Formação e Assessoria em Políticas Sociais	Brazil
223. Poverty Initiative	United States
224. Programa DESC, Universidad Diego Portales	Chile
225. Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos (PROVEA)	Venezuela
226. Programme for the well-being of children	South Africa
227. Programme on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (PWESCR)	India
228. PROSALUS	Spain
229. Proyecto de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales (ProDESC)	Mexico
230. Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative, (EGI)	United States
231. Red Departamental de Mujeres Chocoanas	Colombia
232. Red Mexicana de Acción frente al Libre Comercio	Mexico
233. Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México	Mexico
234. Rencontre pour la Paix et les Droits de l'Homme (RDPH)	Congo-Brazzaville
235. Responsable de Educacion para el Desarrollo	Spain
236. Rights and Accountability in Development (RAID)	United Kingdom
237. SACRED	India
238. Salud Integral para la Mujer	Mexico
239. Samata	India
240. Service Initiative for Voluntary Action Trust	India
241. Servicio Desarrollo y Paz A.C. (SEDEPAC)	Mexico
242. Shelter Forum (SF)	Kenya
243. SISFA, Negros Oriental	Philippines
244. Social and Economic Rights Action Center (SERAC)	Nigeria
245. Social and Economic Rights Action Center-Indonesia (SiDAN)	Indonesia
246. Social Rights Advocacy Centre (SRAC)	Canada
247. Social Watch – Tamilnadu	India
248. Socio Economic Rights Initiative (SERI)	Nigeria

249. Socio Legal Information Centre	India
250. Socio-Economic Rights Foundation (SRF)	Kenya
251. Sœurs Unies à l'œuvre (SUO)	Benin
252. SOLIDAIRES-CADTM Pointe-Noire(Membre du CADTM International)	Congo
253. South Africa Human Rights Non-Governmental Organization Network	Tanzania
254. Southeast Asian Council for Food Security and Fair Trade (SEACON)	Malaysia
255. Stakeholder Democracy Network	Nigeria
256. Sustainable Development Foundation	Thailand
257. SWISSAID	Switzerland
258. Terra de Direitos	Brazil
259. Terre des Hommes France	France
260. Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC)	Thailand
261. The Democracy and Workers' Rights Center in Palestine (DWRC)	Palestine
262. The Democracy Center	Bolivia
263. The Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement	Egypt
264. The Jus Semper Global Alliance (TJSGA)	United States
265. The Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC)	Kenya
266. Tierraviva a los Pueblos Indígenas del Chaco	Paraguay
267. UCISV-POBLADORES AC	Mexico
268. Uganda Environmental Education Foundation (UEEF)	Uganda
269. University of the Philippines (UP) International Center Association	Philippines
270. UP Circle of Entrepreneur	Philippines
271. UP Green League	Philippines
272. Vola Onlus	Italy
273. Waso Trustland Project	Kenya
274. Western ShoShone Defense Project (WSDP)	Neve Sogobia
275. WITNESS	United States
276. Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF)	Ghana
277. Women's Economic Agenda Project (WEAP)	United States
278. Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF)	Canada
279. WOREC Nepal	Nepal
280. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)	Switzerland
281. Yiaku Peoples Association	Kenya
282. ZÁšvule prava, o.s.	Czech Republic
283. Zi Teng	China
284. Zi Teng (sex workers organization)	Hong Kong
285. Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association	Zimbabwe