27 February 2023

To: All UN Member States

HRC52: Support consensus renewal of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders

Human rights defenders are people who act with humanity, serve humanity and who contribute to and bring out the best in humanity. They are key to our daily lives - they work so our governments are more transparent and accountable, our environment cleaner and safer, our schools and workplaces fairer, and our futures more sustainable. As human rights defenders confront power, privilege and prejudice, they frequently face a wide range of risks and threats, including against their organisations and their families, friends and loved ones. Despite their vital contribution, both some governments and non-State actors are still seeking to silence defenders as they expose injustices and demand accountability for all.

The mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders is integral to their protection and recognition, globally. It gathers and responds to information on the situation of defenders around the world, engages constructively with governments and non-State actors and provides expert recommendations to promote the effective implementation of 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' (The Declaration on human rights defenders).

2023 marks 25 years since the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on human rights defenders. The adoption of the Declaration was a critical point in human rights history where it articulated how existing human rights law applies to the situation of human rights defenders, recognised the importance and legitimacy of human rights activity, and the need to protect it along with those who carry it out. It is apposite that this major anniversary coincides with the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, reflecting the integral role that human rights defenders play in the realisation of universal human rights.

In 2022, the Human Rights Council reaffirmed the importance of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and its full and effective implementation, and that promoting respect, support and protection for the activities of human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, is essential to the overall enjoyment of human rights, including in conflict and post-conflict situations. In 2021, the General Assembly passed by consensus with 85 State co-sponsors a resolution acknowledging the important and legitimate role that human rights defenders played in the COVID-19 response, as well as the challenges faced as a result.

At the 52nd session of the Council, States will consider a resolution extending the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for three years. This is a key opportunity for States and the Council to demonstrate their support and recognition for the indispensable role human rights defenders play to ensure that all people enjoy freedom, dignity, justice and equality.

Our organisations therefore urge all States to support the resolution renewing the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders by:

- **participating positively in the negotiations on the resolution;**
- **presenting early co-sponsorship of the text;**
- **resisting any attempts to dilute the mandate or State obligations; and**
- **supporting consensus renewal of the mandate.**

Sincerely,

1. ACAT Belgium
2. ACAT Germany (Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture)
3. ACAT Italia
4. ACAT RDC
5. ACAT Spain-Catalonia
6. ACAT, GHANA
7. ACAT-France
8. ACAT-Liberia
9. ACAT-Switzerland
10. ACAT-UK (Action by Christians Against Torture - UK)
11. Accion Solidaria on HIV/Aids
12. Action by Christians against Torture in Togo (ACAT TOGO)
13. Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture - Canada
14. action by Christians for the abolition of torture - Congo
15. Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT) - Cameroon
16. Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture of Côte d'Ivoire
17. Action of Christians for the Abolition of Torture in Burundi (Acat-Burundi)
18. Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association
19. African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum
20. Agir ensemble pour les droits humains
21. AlertaVenezuela
22. Al-Haq, Law in the Service of Man
23. ALKARAMA
24. Alliance for Democracy in Laos
25. American Association of University Women (AAUW)
26. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
27. Amnesty International
28. Amnesty International Mongolia
29. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
30. Asian Legal Resource Center
31. Association for Progressive Communications - APC
32. Association For Promotion Sustainable Development
33. association for the respect of indigenous rights, sustainable development and human right
34. Association for women and Children at Risk

35. Association of balal
36. Association of Women for Awareness and Motivation (AWAM)
37. Aula Abierta
38. Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM)
39. Brot für die Welt
40. Burkina Faso Coaltion of Human Right Defenders (CBDDH)
41. Bytes For All, Pakistan
42. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
43. Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
44. Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)
45. Center to Alternatives to Development
46. Centre for Human Rights & Democracy in Africa (CHRDA)
47. Centro de Alternativas al Desarrollo (CEALDES) - Colombia
48. Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
49. Child Rights Connect
50. CIVICUS
51. CIVILIS Human Rights
52. Collective of the Families of the Disappeared in Algeria (CFDA)
53. Committee for Free Expression (Comité por la Libre Expresión C-Libre)
54. Community Empowerment for Progress Organization
55. Community Resource Centre (CRC)
56. Coordiantion of Associations and Individuals for Freedom of Conscience
57. DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
58. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
59. Emonyo Yefwe International
60. End Impunity Organization
61. Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial - ECAP
62. Euro-mediterranean federation against enforced disappearances
63. European Network Against Racism
64. Federal Association of Vietnamese Refugees in the Federal Republic of Germany
65. FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
66. Forum Menschenrechte
67. Franciscans International
68. Freedom House
69. GALE, The Global Alliance for LGBT Education
70. Geneva for Human Rights - Global Training (GHR)
71. Global Alliance for Tibet & Persecuted Minorities
72. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
73. Global Human Rights Group
74. Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
75. Global Observatory of Communication and Democracy (OGCD)
76. Gulf Centre for Human Rights
77. Habitat International Coalition

78. Hallmark Media
79. Human Rights Association (Insan Haklari Dernegi)
80. Human Rights Concern - Eritrea (HRCE)
81. Human Rights Council of Australia
82. Human Rights Defenders Fund
83. Human Rights House Foundation
84. Humanists International
85. Idheas. Strategic Human Rights Litigation
86. IFEX
87. ILEX Acción Jurídica
88. In Defense of Human Rights and Dignity Movement (iDEFEND)
89. Inclusive Bangladesh
90. Indigenous Peoples Rights International
91. Initiative for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services (IDEALS), Inc.
92. Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA)
93. International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)
94. International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Sri Lanka
95. International Commission of Jurists
96. International Commission of Jurists Australia
97. International Dalit Solidarity Network
98. International Federation of ACATs (FIACAT)
99. International Planned Parenthood Federation
100. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
101. International volunteer organization for women education development
102. Intersex Society of Zambia
103. Ivorian Human Rights Defenders Coalition (CIDDH)
104. Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF.org)
105. Judicial Reform Foundation Taiwan
106. Karapatan Alliance Philippines
107. KIOS Foundation
108. Law Society of England and Wales
109. Lawyers without Borders Canada
110. Maldivian Democracy Network
111. Mauritanian association for socio-educational development
112. MENA Rights Group
113. Mesoamerican Initiative of Women Human Rights Defenders (IM-Defensoras)
114. Mongolian Women's Employment Supporting Federation
115. Namibia Diverse Women's Association (NDWA)
116. Network of the independent Commission for Human rights in North Africa CIDH AFRICA
117. ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE WOMEN IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE
118. Organization Solidarity Development
119. OYU TOLGOI WATCH NGO

120. Peace Brigades International
121. People Forum for Human Rights(People Forum)
122. PICUM (Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants)
123. Plateforme Droits de l'Homme
124. POS Foundation
125. Project on Organizing, Development, Education, and Research (PODER)
126. PROMEDEHUM
127. Protection International Mesoamérica
128. Public Verdict Foundation
129. Rainbow Pride Foundation
130. Red Dot Foundation
131. Refugee Council of Australia
132. Renewable Freedom Foundation
133. Riposte Internationale
134. Rivers without Boundaries
135. Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
136. Safety and Rights Society (SRS)
137. SAHR
138. Scholars at Risk
139. SHOAA for Human Rights
140. Society for Threatened Peoples
141. SOS-Esclaves
142. Speak Up
143. Struggle to Economize Future Environment (SEFE)
144. Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU)
145. Swedwatch
146. Syrians for Truth and Justice - STJ
147. The Barys Zvozskau Belarusian Human Rights House
148. The Community Action Center at Al-Quds University
149. The Global Interfaith Network (GIN-SSOGIE)
150. The Kvinna till Kvinna foundation
151. The Norwegian Human Rights Fund
152. The Regional Coalition for WHRDs in MENA (WHRDMENA Coalition)
153. The William Gomes Podcast
154. Togolese Coalition of Human Rights Defenders
155. Tournons La Page
156. Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO)
157. Viet Tan
158. West African Human Rights Defenders Network
159. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
160. Women's World Summit Foundation
161. World Justice Project
162. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

163. World Uyghur Congress (WUC)
164. WWF International
165. Yemeni Institute for Strategic Affairs
166. Youth Care Motivators
167. Youth Initiative for Human Rights Serbia
168. Zambia Climate Change Network (ZCCN)
169. Zo Indigenous Forum (ZIF)