



**CONCEPT NOTE**  
**FORUM ON THE PARTICIPATION OF NGOS IN THE 66<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY SESSION**  
**OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS AND**  
**40<sup>TH</sup> AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS BOOK FAIR**  
**9-10 JULY, 2020**  
**ZOOM WEBINAR**

**THEME: THE IMPACT OF COVID19 ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA**

**Introduction:** The world has been gripped with uncertainty since the Coronavirus (also known as COVID19) pandemic emerged in late December, 2019. Africa has also had its own share of cases, deaths and recoveries. Considering that the health systems in most African Union (AU) Members States leaves a lot to be desired, significant steps were taken by AU Members states in a bid to control, prevent and curtail the pandemic. Governments worldwide, including in Africa, instituted stringent preventive measures, amongst which declaration of states of emergency, lockdowns, social distancing, border closures and travel bans. Some States went as far as deploying security forces to ensure compliance with the said measures. The implementation of such measures has not been without human rights violations, which violates the provisions of signed human rights treaties and instruments thereby negatively impacting on human rights and governance on the continent.

Additionally, the African Union declared the year 2020 as the year of Silencing the Guns in Africa with a pledge not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans and undertake to end all wars. The declaration by the African Union's Peace and Security Council is a flagship project of Agenda 2063 which is a manifestation of the AU's determination to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, to make peace a reality for all our people and to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters, violent conflicts, and to prevent genocide.

The year 2020 also marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security as well as the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing World Conference of Women.

Due to the present Covid-19 pandemic, physical meetings have become impossible. Consequently, online meetings are currently being used by partners to continue engaging on issues of mutual interest.

Therefore, in a bid to engage civil society representatives on the impact of Covid-19 on human rights and governance in Africa, including on how governments have worked towards Silencing the Guns in these uncertain times.

The Forum on the participation of NGOs in the 66<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights will be held on Zoom commencing with a Pre-NGO Forum on 9 July and NGO Forum on 10 July, 2020 respectively. The webinar will focus on the theme '**The impact of COVID19 on Human Rights and Governance in Africa**'.

**Objective:** The main objective of the NGOs Forum is mainly to foster closer collaboration between and among NGOs and with the African Commission and other African human rights mechanisms, for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights in Africa.

The specific objective of this Forum is to promote collaboration between and amongst CSOs to tackle the impact of COVID-19 on human rights and governance in Africa as well as to identify strategies to contribute towards silencing the guns in Africa and the impact of the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

**The general content of the *Forum will cover three (3) main thematic areas namely:***

**1) Status of Human Rights and Democracy in Africa** (update from sub-regional Focal Points on the general situation of human rights in Africa with a focus on the impact of COVID19 on governance and human rights and "Silencing the Guns" which is the AU theme for the year 2020)

**2) Special Interest Groups Discussions (Revised for current Forum only)**

1. Prisons, Conditions of Detention / Policing in Africa
2. Rights of Women in Africa, Peace and Security
3. Human Rights Defenders /Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa
4. Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa
5. Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Internally Displaced Persons and Migrants in Africa
6. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Africa
7. Death Penalty and Extra-Judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Killings in Africa

8. Vulnerable Groups (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, People Living with HIV/AIDS, Indigenous communities)
9. Independence of Judges and Lawyers
10. Elections in Africa

**3) Networking for Human Rights in Africa** (sharing experiences, best practices and lessons learnt on the impact of COVID-19 on human rights and governance in Africa, contribution to peace and security in Africa (on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security adopted in 2000).

**Language:** The deliberations of the Forum would be in English and French with available simultaneous interpretation facilities.

**Participants:** Representatives from African civil society organizations, international NGOs from Africa and beyond working on democracy, rule of law, governance, human rights, peace and security, etc.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Outline of the impact of COVID19 on human rights and governance in Africa and strategies for amelioration post-COVID19
- Identification of strategies by stakeholders on contributing towards silencing the guns in Africa and the impact of UNSCR 1325 since its adoption 20 years ago
- NGOs Statement at the official opening of the 66<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session (highlighting deliberations of the NGOs Forum)
- Adoption of Recommendations and Resolutions to be forwarded to the African Commission for its consideration during the 66<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session
- Report of the NGOs Forum

The Forum on the Participation of NGOs in the Ordinary Sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission) also known as the 'NGOs Forum' is an advocacy platform coordinated by the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies to promote advocacy, lobbying and networking among and between human rights NGOs, for the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa.

The NGOs Forum shares updates on the human rights situation in Africa by the African and international NGOs community with a view of identifying responses as well as adopting strategies towards improving the human rights situation on the continent.

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