



Obituary and message of condolence to the family and friends of Professor Christof Heyns

With immense sadness, the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) and the Steering Committee of the Forum of NGOs in the Work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) received news of the demise of Professor Christof Heyns, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions on 28th March, 2021.

Professor Christof Heyns, a legal luminary, an eminent scholar and a giant in the field of human rights both regionally and globally. He was the Director of the Centre for Human Rights from 1999 to 2006 after which he moved to become the Dean of the Faculty of Law at University of Pretoria from 2007 to 2010. He then became the founding Co-Director of the Institute for International and Comparative Law in Africa (ICLA) at University of Pretoria before serving as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions (2010 – 2016). He chaired the UN Independent Investigation on Burundi in 2016, and was a member of the United Nations Human Rights Committee (2017 – 2020), where he served as rapporteur for General Comment 37 on the right of peaceful assembly.

Professor Heyns also served as a member of the Working Group on Death Penalty, Extra-Judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Killings and Enforced Disappearances in Africa of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and has engaged in wide-

reaching initiatives on human rights in Africa among other roles. He has advised a number of international, regional and national entities on human rights issues.

A generous, accommodating, courageous man of an unassuming disposition, this illustrious son of Africa, with notable bonds across the aisle of state and non state actors, alike, will surely be missed. In paying tribute to the dearly departed, Mrs. Hannah Forster stated that 'Death has indeed dealt us a blow! Africa has lost an eminent giant. I have known Professor Heyns for over two and half decades and his dedication to the application of human rights can only be equaled by his quiet determination and always ready and infectious beam'

On behalf of the Governing Council, Management and Staff of the ACDHRS; the NGOs Forum Steering Committee and indeed participants of the NGOs Forum, we extend our heartfelt condolences through the United Nations and Centre for Human Rights to his family, colleagues friends and loved ones.

May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace!