



CONCEPT NOTE
FORUM ON THE PARTICIPATION OF NGOS IN THE 71st ORDINARY SESSION
OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS
19-20 APRIL, 2022
ZOOM WEBINAR

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, democracy and the rule of law in Africa by the African and international NGOs community with a view to identifying responses as well as adopting strategies towards improving the situation on the continent.

The 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 promotion and protection of human rights in Africa.

The continent continues to grapple with military coup d'états from Chad, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Sudan (in 2021) and the February, 2022 failed coup attempt in Guinea Bissau which continue to have a negative impact on governance, democracy and human rights on the continent. However, some progress was registered in some countries (with 13 countries that organized national elections in 2021), despite the Covid19 pandemic. Human rights violations continue to take place on daily basis with impunity.

Two years after declaring the year of '**Silencing the Guns in Africa**', the guns are yet to be silent. The determination of the African Union to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, to make peace a reality for all people and to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts, and to prevent genocide is yet to be achieved. The role of civil society representatives as stakeholders in identifying solutions to some of these challenges cannot be overemphasized.

Due to the current Covid19 pandemic, the last NGOs Forum was held virtually from 10-12 November, 2021 with over 100 participants on the theme '40 years of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights:: the way forward for the Africa we want'. The Forum also witnessed the launching of the Lusophone Platform for Human Rights as a sub-regional focal point (for Lusophone speaking countries in Africa) to enhance their engagement with the African human rights system and mechanisms.

Consequently, the ACDHRS and its partners will organize the Forum on the participation of NGOs in the 71st Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights will take the form of a Zoom webinar from **19-20 April, 2022** due to the current Covid19 pandemic.

In the form of a panel discussion, the sub-regional focal points will update (from the last Forum held in November, 2021) participants with information on emerging trends and case studies on the state of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in their respective sub-regions as well as recommendations on the way forward.

The NGOs Forum will facilitate discussion with stakeholders strategies for the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance, peace and development in post Covid19 Africa, with emphasis on the implementation of Resolution on **'Human and Peoples' Rights as central pillar of successful response to Covid-19 and recovery from its socio-political impacts - ACHPR/Res. 449 (LXVI) 2020'** adopted at the 66th virtual Ordinary Session of the ACHPR in 2020.

In addition, the NGOs Forum, through the organization of a Panel will seek to increase the visibility of the United Nations Torture Fund and United Nations Slavery Fund with a view to assisting slavery and torture survivors and strengthening partnership, amongst others.

An investigative report by Minorities Rights Group (MRG) entitled **'To purge the Forest by Force'** on the negative and devastating impact of a new form of colonialism. Information on the said report will be shared during the NGOs Forum to highlight the new form of colonialism known as 'green colonialism' on the Batwa community in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo following a three-year campaign by park authorities to expel them from their lands.

Recommendations from the two-day event will be forwarded to the African Commission as the contribution of African civil society to the work of the 71st Ordinary session of the ACHPR.

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:

- Update on the situation of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Africa (especially from States whose reports will be examined during the 71st Ordinary Session of the ACHPR)
- Adopted recommendations as outcome documents for presentation to the ACHPR
- Networking and partnership building with and amongst participants
- NGOs Statement at the official opening of the 71st Ordinary Session (highlighting deliberations of the NGOs Forum)
- Report of the NGOs Forum

For more information, kindly contact:

Adama Cooper-Jah - admin@acdhrs.org

Ellen Ann - csec@acdhrs.org

Yankuba Keita - library@achrs.org