



Training on engaging with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights: **Description**

In-person course: DATES: 13th-15th October 2023 (full time)¹

Please read the information below before completing the online application form,

Applications must be submitted before midnight in Banjul on 8th September 2023, and ONLY complete applications will be considered.

1. Programme description

Human rights defenders play a vital role in pushing for sustainable human rights improvements. A free and vibrant civil society is essential to ensure States, businesses and other non-State actors respect, protect and fulfil all human rights for all and to hold them to account when they fail to do so.

The African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHR) and the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) conducts regular training courses on the use of the main human rights mechanisms, including the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). This training will equip human rights defenders from Africa with the knowledge and skills to integrate the ACHPR into their existing work at the national level in a strategic manner. The programme also provides an opportunity for participants to engage in lobbying and advocacy activities at the ACHPR with the aim to effect change back home.

2. The training (in-person DATES: 13th-15th October 2023)

The training course allows activists to benefit from valuable insights and advocacy support enabling them to develop their knowledge and skills, to make strategic use of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in their national advocacy strategies.

The expected venue is Arusha, Tanzania

This training programme consists of the following elements:

- a) Private access to the [ISHR Academy](#) e-learning platform, which includes interactive materials and toolkits, before and after the course.
- b) 2/3 days of in person sessions, which will include:

¹ Please note that these dates can be subject to change.

- ✓ Acquire knowledge and skills on the relevant regional (and international human rights) instruments and processes
- ✓ Learn more about the work of the ACHPR and **how to engage strategically** with its mechanisms
- ✓ Case-studies scenarios to practise **real-life situations and submissions**
- ✓ **Workshops** on how to engage and take action as Human Rights Defenders to influence outcomes of the ACHPR's sessions
- ✓ **Sharing** stories of good practices



- c) An opportunity to **meet, discuss and learn more** about the challenges and strategies of defenders around Africa.
- d) Receive **support and advocacy accompaniment** to conduct advocacy during the session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant meetings and opportunities.

3. Advocacy opportunities

The ACDHRS will provide support and advocacy accompaniment to support defenders to engage (in-person) with key advocacy opportunities during the 75th ordinary session of the ACHPR (October 2023). Such opportunities can include:

- Reports by key **Commissioners/ Special Procedures mandates** in the area of human rights defenders, women's rights, on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises
- Panel Discussions on issues affecting the protection of **human rights in Africa**
- State periodic review

4. Objectives

The objectives of the course fall into the following three broad categories:

- a) **Supporting human rights defenders:**
 - Develop human rights defenders' advocacy skills and expertise;
 - Enhance the ability of human rights defenders to engage strategically with the ACHPR and other international human rights mechanisms, as well as to develop diplomatic and civil society networks;
 - Improve the quality of NGO participation in the ACHPR, with a view to exert a greater influence on human rights foreign policy;

- Share tools and knowledge, which human rights defenders can use to ensure their voice is central in international human rights decision-making;
 - Develop advocacy strategies for specific issues, and to ensure follow-up and action on the ACHPR's resolutions;
 - Increase human rights defenders' understanding of the short, mid and longer-term opportunities provided by African human rights mechanisms;
 - Explore and compare the benefits of engagement with these mechanisms, and examine how advocates can use them to bolster their work at the national level;
 - Develop strategies and lobbying techniques to increase the potential of human rights defenders' national and regional advocacy work.
- b) **Influencing the substantive outcomes of regional human rights mechanisms** in a positive manner, including ACHPR resolutions and the work of ACHPR thematic and country specific human rights experts (such as the Special Rapporteur).
- c) **Creating a peer group of human rights defenders** working on a diverse range of issues, identifying best practice in advocating for human rights change, and exchanging lessons and experiences in conducting regional/international advocacy.

5. Participant profile

This programme is directed at experienced human rights defenders in non-governmental organisations, who have existing advocacy experience at the national level and some prior knowledge of the regional human rights system.

ACDHRS and ISHR support, and promote solidarity with and between, defenders working on all human rights issues or contexts, which we recognise as **intersectional and interdependent**, such as equality and non-discrimination, environmental justice, accountability or transparency and rule of law.

Final decisions regarding participants will be based upon the following criteria:

- Match between applicants' area of work/expertise and/or the opportunities provided by the 75th ordinary session of the ACHPR;
- Applicants' knowledge of human rights and their experience and willingness to engage with the ACHPR and integrate it effectively into domestic level advocacy in a sustainable manner;
- Applicants' experience of carrying out advocacy at the national and/or regional level;
- Applicants' advocacy responsibilities and role within their organisation;
- Applicants' willingness to contribute to peer education in a diverse group of participants;
- Applicants' demonstrated commitment to the principles of human rights, including the principles of universality and non-discrimination;

The course will be carried out in French and English with simultaneous interpretation.

ACHDRS and ISHR will also commit to ensure diversity and a fair balance between gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics, geographical regions and focus work of the HRDs.

Following a full commitment, participation and attendance, defenders will receive a **certificate** of completion at the end of the 2 / 3 days training.

6. Application process

By midnight Banjul time on **8th September 2023** each applicant must submit a completed application form (**take some time to read carefully the requirements and collect information you need**);

We expect to receive a high number of applications and we will only select around 15 participants. This means that we cannot accept many worthy candidates. Your understanding is highly appreciated. **ONLY complete applications will be considered.**

7. Cost

ACDHRS will cover the cost of participation of all selected candidates, this includes flights, accommodation and food.