

[Mark International Women Human Rights Defenders' Day by sharing your experience](#)

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The Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa is seeking input for a report on the challenges faced by women defenders in Africa and their protection needs. And with International Women Human Rights Defenders' Day just around the corner (29 November), now is an opportune time to provide your feedback.

If you are a woman activist working alone or in association with others to promote and protect human rights, and/or you're someone who works on women's rights or sexual rights, including issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity, then please do complete this [questionnaire](#) (English). It is also available in [French](#), [Arabic](#) and [Portuguese](#). It is open to those working at the national, regional or international levels. **The deadline for submitting responses is 31 December 2012.**

The report comes at a time of growing attention by the international and regional human rights systems to the challenges and protection needs of women human rights defenders. In 2010, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders produced a report on women defenders, which was followed earlier this year by the first ever Human Rights Council panel discussion on the same issue, held on the UN's Annual Day of Discussion on Women's Rights.

The study on women human rights defenders in Africa was initiated by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Commission) in a [resolution](#) passed just last month at the Commission's 52nd Ordinary Session (also available in [French](#)). The Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa is spearheading this process, and is preparing a report that she will present to the African Commission at its next session, in April 2013.

The report is anticipated to provide recommendations for several stakeholders, including States, regarding the protection of women defenders and the promotion of their work. These recommendations will help to bring domestic standards and practice in line with regional and international human rights standards, including the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. This will be the first time that the African Commission provides such a focus on the situation of women defenders.

Take action!

Civil society engagement is crucial to ensure the report reflects and analyses the situation of women defenders working in different areas of human rights across the continent.

Please take the time to complete and return the questionnaire above if it is relevant to you, and also forward it onto colleagues and partners. Given that not everyone has email or responds to questionnaires, any way you can actively encourage women defenders to provide information would greatly assist the process. The deadline for submitting your responses is 31 December 2012.

Currently all the sub-regional human rights defenders' networks and several other national, regional and international organisations that regularly engage at the African Commission are actively encouraging women defenders to provide information about their experience.

For more on the challenges faced by women human rights defenders and their specific protection needs, see [Claiming Rights, Claiming Justice](#), a handbook developed by the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition.