

# [Commission Alert! Previewing the 56th session of the African Commission on Human Rights and Peoples' Rights](#)

17.04.2015



Cet article existe également en français [ici](#).

(Banjul, The Gambia) - Postponed twice in 2014 due to the expansion of the Ebola virus in West Africa, the 56th session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights will finally be held in Banjul, the Gambia from 21 April to 7 May 2015. Ahead of the session, a forum bringing together African and international NGOs was held over three days from 17 to 19 April in Banjul.

You can follow the ACHPR Session closely online at [www.ishr.ch](http://www.ishr.ch) and [www.facebook.com/ISHRglobal](https://www.facebook.com/ISHRglobal), as well as by following @ISHRglobal and our staff, @cvoule and @BenLeather1, on Twitter.

The major topics of the session will include:

## **The situation of women human rights defenders in Africa**

During its 15th extraordinary session in 2014, the ACHPR adopted a study on the situation and protection needs of women human rights defenders on the continent. At this session of the ACHPR the study will be officially launched. To this end, ISHR, which contributed substantially to the drafting of the study, held several events during the NGO Forum to publicise its results. These events included, among others:

- A panel on the situation of women human rights defenders in Africa, which will also present an opportunity for the ACHPR Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders to present the study and its recommendations to NGOs: and
- A consultation on 20 April with women human rights defenders to discuss strategies to ensure effective implementation of the recommendations of the study, as well as similar initiatives taken at an international level.

## **The right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly in Africa**

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted a study on the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly in Africa at its 55th session in Luanda, Angola. Like the report on women human rights defenders, this report will also be made public and officially launched during the 56th session.

ISHR formed part of the [study group](#) which produced the report and, along with the other members of the group, organised a panel held during the NGO Forum. The panel discussed the results of the study and the follow-up to its recommendations. See the African Commission's website: [www.achpr.org](http://www.achpr.org)

## **The fight to end reprisals against those who collaborate with the African human rights system.**

At its 55th session, the ACHPR adopted resolution 273, which extended the mandate of the ACHPR Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders by designating the holder of that mandate as the 'focal point' in the fight to end reprisals against anyone working with the African human rights system.<sup>[1]</sup> The adoption of this resolution, welcomed by defenders, was followed by an NGO consultation with the Special Rapporteur in February in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. This consultation, organised by the office of the rapporteur, in collaboration with ISHR and the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, allowed NGOs to propose a roadmap for the operationalisation of the focal point on reprisals. This roadmap was discussed at the NGO Forum during a panel, in order to allow those NGOs that were not able to participate in the previous consultation in Abidjan to make their contributions.

## **Human rights defenders working on human rights and the extractive industries.**

Alongside this session ISHR is organising a meeting between the ACHPR Working Group on Extractive Industries, the Environment, and Violations of Human Rights in Africa and human rights defenders working on business and human rights, specifically the mining industry. The purpose of this meeting is to allow human rights defenders working in this area to present to the working group on the difficulties they face in the course of their work and to advise the group on what can be done to improve their working conditions.

## **The examination of the situation of human rights in States Parties to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights**

Under Article 52 of the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Commission plans to review the periodic reports of 8 State parties on their implementation of the African Charter.<sup>[2]</sup> In preparation for this review, ISHR has published and submitted information on the situation of human rights defenders in four countries (namely [Nigeria](#), [Sierra Leone](#), [Ethiopia](#) and [Uganda](#)) to the African Commission.

*For more information on the agenda of this session, visit the following link: <http://www.achpr.org/sessions/56th>*

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[1] See <http://www.achpr.org/sessions/55th/resolutions/273/>

[2] The States under review will be: Senegal, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Niger, Djibouti, Uganda, Ethiopia