

## [ACHPR62 | Defenders still working in a restrictive environment in Africa](#)

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As we mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Declaration on human rights defenders, in its [statement delivered on 28 April](#), ISHR expressed its concerns about defenders still being subjected to reprisals, judiciary harassment and all forms of violence. Indeed, restrictive laws are used to curtail their work.

“Restrictions are placed on the work of human rights defenders through the adoption of laws that limit their access to funding, and the adoption of anti-terrorism laws that limit the ability of the media and human rights activists to monitor violence committed in the name of the fight against terrorism,” said Adélaïde Etong Kame, ISHR’s Africa Advocacy Consultant.

ISHR called on Egypt and all the States parties to the African Charter to end reprisals against defenders as well as arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances.

ISHR further raised concerns on the current human rights situation in Burundi.

“We call on the Burundian authorities to collaborate fully with regional and international human rights mechanisms, including the United Nations’ Commission of Inquiry, to put an end to these human rights violations and to take all necessary measures to put an end to the current impunity by bringing to justice all perpetrators of human rights violations,” emphasised Etong.

ISHR welcomed the positive developments regarding the protection of defenders on the continent. “We congratulate Mali and Burkina Faso for their recent adoption of national laws for the promotion and protection of human rights defenders and we welcome the spirit of collaboration between the authorities and civil society towards the protection of defenders”, Etong added.

However, ISHR's statement expressed concerns about the draft law for the protection of human rights defenders that is currently being discussed in the Democratic Republic of Congo. “These laws must be in line with the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and the African Charter, and should aim to create an environment conducive to the work of defenders and not to restrict it” reminded Etong.

ISHR welcomed the work accomplished by the mandate of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on human rights defenders for the protection of defenders in Africa since its establishment in 2004. We invite the Commission to monitor closely the implementation process of these protection laws, especially during the

review of the periodic reports of these countries and during its promotion and protection visits.

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*Photo: African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies*

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