

[Democratic Republic of Congo | UN expresses concerns over bill on the protection of defenders](#)

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The efforts undertaken by the DRC to comply with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women will soon be examined by the United Nations in Geneva. In preparation for the review, the Committee issued a series of questions and complaints to obtain precise information from Congolese authorities.

ISHR and its partners from Groupe d'Action pour les Droits de la Femme (GADF) are pleased of the adoption by the Committee [of a specific question](#) in relation to adoption process of a new law on the protection of human rights defenders. Echoing the [concerns expressed](#) by three independent experts of the United Nations, the Committee demands that the DRC bill 'complies with the relevant regional and international norms and standards, such as the Declaration of the United Nations on defenders.'

'Congolese authorities instrumentalise the bill on defenders as a means to restrict and control the activities of civil society organisations, including women organisations,' stated Astrid Tambwe, a GADF representative. 'The bill must be amended in order to facilitate - not restrict - the work of NGOs and women organisations, and especially of young activists.'

[The joint report](#) of GADF and ISHR emphasises several issues such as parity, gender-based violence, reproductive health, institutional and legislative measures to improve women's representation in political and public life, and protection measures for women defenders.

As Adelaïde Etong Kame, ISHR's Africa Advocacy Consultant, sums it up: 'with this new call from the CEDAW, DRC authorities must understand the extent of UN bodies' concerns over the bill on the protection of defenders in DRC.' 'In the midst of preparing for the review of the 8th periodic report of the DRC by the CEDAW, the Democratic Republic of Congo would send a positive message by complying with the requirements of these bodies.'

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Photo: UN Photo

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