

[HRC40 | States should defend environmental human rights defenders](#)

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ISHR update: The draft resolution on environmental human rights defenders has now been formally 'tabled' at the Human Rights Council, meaning it is scheduled for consideration and adoption by the Council on 22 and 23 March. The draft resolution is a timely and important statement on the vital role of environmental human rights defenders in safeguarding biodiversity, addressing climate change, achieving sustainable development and promoting and protecting all human rights.

However, while the resolution contains some important elements, several of the below civil society asks are still missing. In particular, the resolution should :

- more clearly identify and name the root causes and perpetrators at the heart of the insecurity facing environmental human rights defenders;
- increase the demands on States and businesses with regard to conducting due diligence on business and development activities; and
- include specific calls on investors and development finance institutions to use their influence to better protect environmental human rights defenders.

As the negotiations at the Human Rights Council enter their final phase, ISHR calls on all States and civil society to continue to push for the inclusion of key civil society asks, and to use the remaining days to work towards the adoption of a strong resolution on environmental human rights defenders. The resolution, as currently drafted, is an important step but does not yet represent the unequivocal signal in support of environmental activists the Council should send.

Civil society* from across the world are calling on all UN Member States to demonstrate their support to environmental human rights defenders.

At its current 40th session, the Human Rights Council is discussing a draft resolution on environmental human rights defenders. This is a timely and important initiative as UN agencies, human rights organisations and the media have documented unprecedented killings and attacks against people defending land and the environment.

It is important for the Council to adopt a resolution that reflects the gravity and the reality of the situation

defenders face every day. Our organisation therefore call on members of the UN Human Rights Council to ensure that the resolution adopted by the Council clearly:

- Outlines the root causes of the threats against environmental human rights defenders, including development and commercial activities with adverse social and environmental impacts, or those imposed on communities without meaningful consultation and respect for their rights;
- Recognises that environmental human rights defenders confront multiple adverse interests when challenging State and corporate activities, and highlights the collusion between different actors which hinders the work of defenders and aggravates their vulnerable position;
- Clearly names the industries and activities most dangerous to defenders, such as the mining industry, natural resource exploitation, agribusiness and large-scale development projects;
- Acknowledges the wide number of States that have recognised the right to a healthy environment in their internal legal order;
- Recognises that the lack of effective access to information, access to participation and access to justice causes environmental conflicts and leads to violence against defenders;
- Calls for the development of protection mechanisms for environmental human rights defenders in line with best practice identified by the Special Rapporteur;
- Articulates the specific risks women and indigenous human rights defenders face and the need for an intersectional approach in assessing and designing protection measures for defenders;
- Calls on States to ensure that all communities are meaningfully consulted and can participate genuinely in matters that affect their rights and, in particular the use, management and conservation of their land and natural resources;
- Calls on States to guarantee the right to free, prior and informed consent for indigenous peoples;
- Calls on States to adopt legislation that creates due diligence obligations for companies registered in their jurisdictions and those of their subsidiaries;
- Articulates the responsibility of businesses to respect the rights of human rights defenders and highlights measures companies should take to contribute to addressing their insecurity;
- Adequately articulates the responsibility of investors and the obligations of development finance institutions to respect human rights in the context of their investments and to develop and implement effective policies to prevent and address threats; and
- Stresses that an open civic space, including respect for the rights to freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association and movement, as well as the right to participate in the conduct of government and public affairs, is vital to the protection of both a healthy and sustainable environment and environmental human rights defenders.

The draft being negotiated in Geneva contains some of these essential elements, which must be defended, but also offers significant potential for strengthening.

As negotiations enter the final stretch, our organisations urge States to actively support the development of a resolution which clearly recognises the vital contribution of environmental human rights defenders to sustainable development and the effective enjoyment of human rights and formulates concrete asks of the States, development finance institutions and companies with the power of safeguarding that contribution.

Sincerely, **signatures are collected on a rolling basis*

1. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
2. Amnesty International
3. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum Asia)
4. CIVICUS
5. DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
6. Earth Justice
7. Front Line Defenders
8. Global Witness
9. JASS (Just Associates)
10. IM-Defensoras
11. Christian Development Alternative (CDA)
12. Nigerian Women Agro Allied Farmers Association

13. Social Justice Connection
14. Franciscans International
15. Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos - Guatemala (UDEFEGUA)
16. Geneva for Human Rights
17. Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
18. Réseau Ouest africain des Défenseurs des Droits Humains/West African Human Rights Defenders' Network
19. Coordination des associations et des particuliers pour la liberté de conscience
20. La'o Hamutuk
21. Karapatan Philippines
22. Human Rights House Foundation
23. HETAVED SKILLS ACADEMY AND NETWORKS
24. International Commission of Jurists
25. Conectas Direitos Humanos
26. World Movement for Democracy
27. Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia (AHRE)
28. Center for Civil Liberties
29. Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights
30. Human Rights Concern - Eritrea (HRCE)
31. International Women's Development Agency (IWDA)
32. Humanitaire Plus (Togo)
33. Coalition Burkinabé des Défenseurs des Droits Humains
34. AMARA
35. Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)
36. Odhikar
37. Freedom House
38. Red Internacional Unión Latinoamericana de Mujeres - Red ULAM
39. Rivers without Boundaries Mongolia
40. Asian Legal Resource Centre
41. OYU TOLGOI WATCH
42. Ligue Burundaise des droits de l'homme Iteka
43. International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES)
44. AVIPA association des victimes parents et amis du 28 septembre 2009 Guinée
45. Porgera Red Wara (River) Women's Association Incorporated (PRWWA INC.)
46. KRuHA - people's coalition for the right to water
47. Asia Pacific Network of Environment Defenders (APNED)
48. EMPOWER INDIA
49. EarthRights International
50. Dawei Probono Lawyer Network (DPLN)
51. Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ)
52. Partnership for Justice, Nigeria
53. Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
54. Huridocs
55. Steps Without Borders NGO
56. Humanists International
57. Coalition Togolaise des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CTDDH)
58. Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Centre
59. Institute for Multi-Resource Development (IMdev)
60. Not1More
61. Patrons of Khuvsgul lake movement
62. Liberia Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Human Concern, Inc
63. Brot für die Welt
64. ARTICLE 19
65. Peace Brigades International
66. Metro Center Journalists Rights & Advocacy
67. World Uyghur Congress

68. 350.org
69. International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)
70. Latinamerikagrupperna
71. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
72. Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
73. SUDIA
74. Synergia - 36/5000 Initiatives for Human Rights
75. Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc.
76. Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM)
77. Center for Women's Global Leadership
78. Transformative and Integrative Build Out For All
79. Institute for Strategic & Development Studies
80. Reseau de Femmes du mMlieu Rural Haitien
81. East Timor and Indonesia Action Network (ETAN)
82. FIFCJ
83. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
84. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)
85. Zo Indigenous Forum
86. MADRE
87. FOKUS Forum for women and development
88. Bougainville Women's Federation
89. Human Rights Council-Ethiopia
90. Environment Defenders Advocacy
91. Porgera Women's Rights Watch
92. Independent Human Rights Analyst and Strategy Advisor
93. Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation (BIRUDO)
94. Community Resource Centre Foundation
95. MANUSHYA FOUNDATION
96. Equitable Cambodia
97. Friends with Environment in Development
98. Corporate Human Rights Benchmark (CHRB)
99. Association For Promotion Sustainable development
100. WoMin Afrcan Alliance
101. Both ENDS
102. Child Rights Connect
103. CONSEIL REGIONAL DES ORGANISATIONS NON GOUVERNEMENTALES DE DEVELOPPEMENT
104. Enda Lead Afrique Francophone
105. Human Rights Law Centre
106. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre
107. World Voices Uganda
108. Africa Center for Policy Facilitation
109. Estonian Forest Aid
110. Community Transformation Foundation Network (COTFONE)
111. Collectif Camerounais des Organisations des Droits de l'Homme et de la Démocratie (COCODHD)
112. Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
113. North-East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS)
114. Sangsan Anakot Yawachon Development Project
115. Forum Syd Sweden
116. COALITION AGAINST LAND GRABBING (CALG) - PHILIPPINES
117. UNLAD-BLFFA
118. Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC)
119. BankTrack
120. CORE Coalition
121. The Gaia Foundation
122. Labour Behind the Label
123. Bataris Formation Center

124. Salva la Selva
125. Observatoire d'etudes et d'appui a la responsabilite sociale et environnementale (OEARSE)
126. REd de Género y Medio Ambiente
127. London Mining Network
128. Abibiman Foundation
129. Ecodesarollo
130. The Kesho Trus
131. Organisation mondiale contre la torture
132. PAPUA NEW GUINEA MINING WATCH GROUP ASSOCIATION INC
133. 11.11.11 - Koepel van de Vlaamse Noord-Zuidbeweging
134. Center for Global Nonkilling
135. Centro salvadoreño de Tecnología Apropriada
136. Coalition Ivoirienne des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CIDDH)
137. Friends of the Earth NI
138. Forest Peoples Programme
139. Environmental Investigation Agency
140. Fundación para el Desarrollo de Políticas Sustentables (FUNDEPS)
141. Bank Information Center
142. Africa development Interchange Network
143. Voluntariados Intag
144. Mangrove Action Project
145. IUCN NL
146. Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC)
147. Amazon Watch
148. HRM @Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan@
149. Task Force Detainees of the Philippines
150. Asociación ambiental e cultural Petón do Lobo
151. Asociación galega Cova Crea
152. Amigos e Amigas dos Bosques "O Ouriol do Anllóns"
153. Réseau Camerounais des Organisations des Droits de l'Homme (RECODH)
154. CNCD-11.11.11
155. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
156. Rainforest Foundation Norway
157. Women Working Worldwide
158. Greenpeace
159. AMDH- Maroc
160. In Difesa Di , per i diritti umani e chi li difende
161. Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines
162. The Fund for Global Human Rights
163. People in Need
164. ABColombia
165. Al-Haq
166. Denver Justice and Peace Committee
167. Dominicans for justice and peace
168. End Ecocide on Earth
169. Zenü Network
170. Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-determination and Liberation
171. Jamaa Resource Initiatives
172. National Indigenous Women Forum (NIWF)
173. Bretton Woods Project
174. Transparency International
175. Business, Human Rights and the Environment Research Group (BHRE)
176. GTANW
177. Campaign for Peace & Democracy (Manipur)
178. Otros Mundos AC/Chiapas, México
179. NGO Forum on ADB

180. consfound
181. Sri Lanka Nature Group
182. Bella Foundation for Child and Maternal Care
183. Accountability Counsel
184. association Green Alternative
185. Jong Groen
186. Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation (BIRUDO) - Uganda
187. ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights
188. Womankind Worldwide
189. Asociación Ecoloxista Verdegaia
190. The Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO)
191. Femmes et Droits Humains
192. CIDSE - International family of Catholic social justice organisations
193. ContraMINAcción
194. Traidcraft Exchange
195. Centre for Ecological Initiatives "Ecoaction"
196. ALYANSA TIGIL MINA
197. Oxfam
- 198.

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