

ACHPR/Res. 336 (EXT.OS/XIX) 2016: Resolution on Measures to Protect and Promote the Work of Women Human Rights Defenders

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the Commission), meeting at its 19th Extra-Ordinary Session, held in Banjul, The Islamic Republic of The Gambia, from 16 to 25 February 2016;

Recalling its mandate to promote and protect human and peoples' rights in Africa under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter);

Further recalling its Resolutions ACHPR/Res.69 (XXXV) 04, ACHPR/Res.119

XLII. 07, ACHPR/Res.196 (L) 11 and ACHPR/Res.273 (LV) 2014 relevant to the situation of human rights defenders in Africa and the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights defenders;

Considering the obligations of State Parties under Article 18 (3) of the African Charter and the relevant provisions of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol), particularly in light of the celebration of the African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women, to eliminate all discrimination against women and ensure the protection of their rights;

Recalling the Report on the Situation of Women Human Rights Defenders in Africa, adopted at the Commission's 56th Ordinary Session, held in Banjul, The Gambia, from 21 April to 7 May 2015;

Considering that Resolution ACHPR/ Rés.196 (L)11 acknowledges the difficult environment in which human rights defenders in Africa conduct their work, which is often characterized by arbitrary arrests and detentions, acts of harassment, threats and other forms of intimidation, summary and extra-judicial executions or torture;

Further considering that Resolution ACHPR/ Rés.245 (LIV) 13 recognizes the challenges confronting women in Africa, particularly with regard to the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of their rights;

Emphasizing the importance of State Parties making progress on the implementation of UN General Assembly resolution on Women Human Rights Defenders (A/RES/68/181) of 18 December 2013;

Bearing in mind the human rights protection instruments, particularly the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and that in the *Grand Bay Declaration and Action Plan (Mauritius)*, the Organisation of African Unity (African Union) called on Member States “*to take all the necessary measures to implement the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders in Africa*”;

Emphasizing the obligations of State Parties under other regional and international human rights instruments to protect and promote human rights, particularly the obligation to guarantee the security of persons living in their own country, as well as freedoms of assembly, association, and expression;

Convinced that women human rights defenders face particular barriers to engaging in the defense of human rights and risks in the conduct of their work to defend human rights;

Deeply concerned regarding the impunity that perpetrators of acts of violence on human rights defenders, in particular on women human rights defenders continue to enjoy in a large number of African countries;

Noting efforts by some State Parties to ensure an enabling environment for human rights defenders, including by reaffirming the legitimacy of the work of women human rights defenders;

The Commission:

Calls on State Parties to:

- i. disseminate and implement the recommendations of the Commission’s Report on the Situation of Women Human Rights Defenders in Africa, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and in particular women human rights defenders;
- ii. end impunity by adopting specific laws and relevant measures to promote and protect the work of human rights defenders, which should include provisions that recognize and address the specific protection needs of women human rights defenders;
- iii. ensure that efforts designed to prevent and address violations and discrimination against women human rights defenders are developed and monitored in consultation with human rights defenders and other relevant stakeholders;
- iv. train the judiciary and public security and other relevant authorities on the specific risks and protections for human rights defenders and in particular women human rights defenders;

v. report on the progress made in the promotion and protection of the work of women human rights defenders during presentation of periodic reports to the Commission in accordance with Article 62 of the African Charter and Article 26 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).

Done in Banjul, The Islamic Republic of The Gambia, 25 February 2016