

ACHPR/Res. 409 (LXIII) 2018: Resolution on the Need to Adopt Legal Measures for the Protection of Women Human Rights Defenders in Africa

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Commission), meeting at its 63rd Ordinary Session held from 24 October to 13 November 2018 in Banjul, Republic of The Gambia;

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

Recalling its Resolution ACHPR/Res.69(XXXV) 04 of 4 June 2004 on the protection of human rights defenders in Africa;

Further recalling its Resolutions ACHPR/Res.119 (XXXXII) 07, ACHPR/Res. 196 (L) 11, ACHPR/Res.125 (XXXXII) 07, ACHPR/Res.248 (LIV) 13 and ACPHR/Res. 273 (LV) 14 on the mandate and situation of human rights defenders in Africa;

Further considering Resolution ACHPR/Res.245 (LIV) 13 regarding the challenges faced by women human rights defenders in Africa, particularly with regard to the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of their rights;

Recalling the conclusions of the 2014 report of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Situation of Women Human Rights Defenders in Africa which highlights the various violations suffered by women human rights defenders;

Concerned about the increase in the number of acts of discrimination, arrests, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, acts of torture, stigmatising practices, attacks, death threats and assassinations, sexual abuse and rape and other risks faced by women human rights defenders as well as those working in the area of women's rights and gender-related issues;

Recognising that violence against women human rights defenders, often justified on grounds of social norms, customs, religion and tradition, is directly related to their gender and the work they carry out in favour of women's rights, including the right to health and sexual and reproductive rights, and their fight against gender-based violence;

Bearing in mind that despite the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, UN Resolution 68/81 on women human rights defenders, as well as those adopted by the African Commission, women defenders still face threats and other forms of attack relating to their activities;

Calls on States to:

1. Recognise the importance of the role of women human rights defenders;
2. Take into account the seriousness of the violations committed against women human rights defenders;
3. Adopt specific legal measures for their protection;
4. Put an end to acts of intimidation and reprisals against women human rights defenders as a result of their collaboration with national, regional and international human rights bodies, as well as prosecute the perpetrators;
5. Protect individuals engaged in combatting violence against women human rights defenders.

Done in Banjul, Republic of The Gambia, on 13 November 2018