

HRC39 | Burkina Faso must establish a defenders' protection mechanism

25.09.2018

How can a law protecting human rights defenders be fully effective without a mechanism assuring its implementation? Burkina Faso recently became the second African country to adopt a national law protecting human rights defenders. During the adoption of the country's Universal Periodic Review report, ISHR called on the State to ensure the full implementation of the said law through the establishment of a protection mechanism.



On Friday 21 September, Burkina Faso was reviewed under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism. During its review, ISHR delivered a [statement](#) noting the lack of a gender perspective within the recently adopted defenders law. No provision taking into account the specific needs of women human rights defenders was included in the law.

Since its last review, Burkina Faso has made important steps towards a better protection of human rights and more specifically of human rights defenders. ISHR commended the adoption of the new national human rights institution law and the election of its new members.

Burkina Faso recently became the second African country (after Côte d'Ivoire in 2014) to adopt a national law for the promotion and protection of human rights defenders. For this law to be fully effective, the government needs to establish a protection mechanism. This mechanism should be the cornerstone of the protection of defenders in the country by, among other things, preventing and investigating all attacks against defenders.

“This mechanism will ensure the effective implementation of the law and should prevent, protect against and investigate all attacks and violations against defenders. Such a mechanism is essential to guarantee a safe and enabling work environment for defenders in Burkina Faso,” said Thérèse Kama, communication, advocacy and lobbying officer at the Coalition Burkinabé des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CBDDH).

During the UPR review, ISHR further called on Burkina Faso to:

- Ensure the full and effective implementation of the defenders' law through the establishment of the protection mechanism;
- Provide the National Human Rights Commission with the necessary resources for it to be fully functional and able to fulfil its mandate as a defender protection mechanism.

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