

What's it like to attend meetings of the African Commission and NGO Forum?

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'It was also really beneficial learning at the African Commission what other countries are involved in, in terms of human rights, and what the State parties are doing in response to the recommendations made by civil society.'

Ms Barlinger says she was able to pick up a number of useful resources and documents at the meetings, as well as make excellent working contacts.

'I met lots of other human rights defenders who are already working with the mechanisms and they had lots of stories to tell. It was helpful to learn there are others out there facing the same problems as human rights defenders in Liberia do, how they manage these issues, what kinds of mechanisms they use, and what process they've gone through to solve certain problems. It's also good to build contacts, friends who you can always go back to for advice.'

'As a human rights defender, it's encouraging to know that you're not alone, that you have other African and international brothers that have a desire to make this world a better place. Sometimes, we can feel like giving up - but when you attend gatherings like the NGO Forum, you get to meet others that haven't given up and you think "well if they can do it, so can we".'