

## **ACHPR 67| Outcome of the 67th session of the African Commission**

07.12.2020

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**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (the Commission) held its 67<sup>th</sup> ordinary session online from 13 November to 03 December 2020. What came out in this challenging period?**



Following the new lifestyle imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the African Commission held its 67<sup>th</sup> ordinary session virtually from 13 November to 03 December 2020. The 67th session was enriched with the human rights situation in Africa, the activity reports of Commissioners, the review of States Parties and many panel discussions on relevant themes.

This session was particularly marked by [the number of participants](#). A total of 552 delegates took part in the session, which is 217 more participants than the last session. This includes 89 States representatives from 26 countries; 11 AU Organs; 53 members of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI); 23 International and Intergovernmental Organisations; 328 African and International NGOs; 47 other observers and 01 media.

As usual, during the opening ceremony, Mrs. Hannah Forster, Director of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, speaking on behalf of the Steering Committee of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) Forum, noted that adopting an inclusive approach to engagement is crucial for success and will undoubtedly lead to enhanced promotion and protection of human rights in Africa. This was completed by Dr. Elasto Hilarious Mugwadi, Vice-President of Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) who recalled that the power of a nation is not measured by its aggression against its people, but by the use of its resources to ensure the security and future of its taxpayers, and guarantee the rule of law for good governance through independent institutions. In this regard, H.E. Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, called for the reinforcement of joint efforts to promote the widest possible respect for civic and democratic space in Africa.

On behalf of the Member States of the African Union (AU) Honourable Dawda Jallow, Minister of Justice of the Republic of The Gambia, highlighted that States Parties continue to face persistent challenges. He then recalled that it is only by working together that African leaders will become truly proud to have served the continent. The Chairperson of the Commission, Honourable Commissioner Solomon Ayele Dersso, in his statement reminded that the health of each person is intrinsically linked to the health of others, so the protection of the right to health and the provision of care are issues for every member of society. Delivering the opening speech of the Session on behalf of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission (AUC), H.E. Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology of the AUC, recalled that the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights are a collective responsibility.

Watch it [here](#)

### **Activity report of the members of the Commission**

During the session the new commissioners': [Dr Marie Louise Abomo](#), [Mudford Zacharia Mwandenga](#), [Alexia Gertrude Amesbury](#) and NDiamé Gaye had the opportunity to present their first [activity report](#) as members of the Commission. Most of the Commissioners raised concerns about the impacts of violations and abuses caused by the measures taken by authorities to fight against Covid-19 on human rights and the populations in Africa. [Honourable Commissioner Kayitesi Zainabo Sylvie](#), member of the commission since 2007 as member and Chairperson of several Working Group, and recently [Special Rapporteur On Rights Of Women](#) from July 2020 seized the opportunity at the end of the presentation of her [activity report](#) to announce her departure from the Commission.

Watch it [here](#) and [here](#).

## States review

On 23 November 2020, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) reviewed [Cameroon's 4th-6th periodic reports](#) relating to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and 1st Reports relating to the Maputo Protocol and the Kampala Convention. [The Report](#) covering the period 2015-2019 was submitted to the ACHPR in January 2020. The Republic of Cameroon became, therefore, the first country in Africa to present a report covering the three conventions.

Watch the review [here](#) and [here](#).

## Observer status to defenders NGOs

The Commission has the opportunity at each ordinary session to grant the Observer Status to NGOs and Affiliate Status to NHRIs. This in accordance with the [Resolutions 361](#) and [Resolutions on granting Affiliate Status](#) of the Commission. According to these Resolutions, the Commission granted Affiliate Status to 1 NHRI, the National Commission on Human Rights and Citizenship of Cabo Verde and Observer Status to 3 NGOs:

- African Biodiversity Network (ABN) based in Kenya;
- Media Counsel of Tanzania (MCT) based in Tanzania; and
- Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights based in Egypt.

This brings the total number of NGOs with Observer Status to 528 and the total number of NHRIs with Affiliate Status to 30. The application of International Press Institute (IPI) base in Austria for Observer Status was deferred.

Watch the review [here](#).

To conclude the Commission adopted:

### Country Resolution:

- [Resolution 469](#) on the situation in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia - ACHPR/Res.469 (LXVII) 2020

### Thematic Resolutions:

- [Resolution 472](#) on the prohibition of the use, production, export and trade of tools used for torture- ACHPR/Res.472 (LXVII) 2020
- [Resolution 468](#) on the Safety of Journalists and Media Practitioners in Africa-ACHPR/Res.468 (LXVII) 2020
- [Resolution 470](#) on the Protection of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic in Africa -ACHPR/Res.470 (LXVII) 2020
- [Resolution 466](#) on Prisons and Conditions of Detention in Africa - ACHPR/Res.466 (LXVII) 2020
- [Resolution 467](#) on the need for Silencing the Guns in Africa based on human and peoples' rights - ACHPR/Res.467 (LXVII) 2020

### Resolution on special Mechanisms:

- [Resolution 471](#) on the Mandate Renewal of the Support Group of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa for the promotion and effective implementation of the Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa - ACHPR/Res.471 (LXVII) 2020

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