

[African Commission | Alert to the NGO Forum and the 68th ordinary session](#)

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The 68th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights will be held online, from 14 April to 4 May 2021. The African Commission session will be preceded by the NGO Forum, which will be held online on 12 and 13 April 2021.



What will happen during the NGO Forum and 68th ordinary session of the African Commission?

The NGO Forum

[The Forum on the Participation of NGOs](#) in the Ordinary Sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission), also known as the 'NGOs Forum' is an advocacy platform coordinated by the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) to promote advocacy, lobbying and networking among and between human rights NGOs, for the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa. The NGOs Forum shares updates on the human rights situation in Africa by the African and international NGOs community with a view of identifying responses as well as adopting strategies towards the promotion and protection of human rights in the continent.

Same as the last session, this session will be hosted online and will be framed around the theme "The Africa we want: the role of arts, culture and heritage in the realization of human rights and democracy in a post-COVID-19 environment".



The general content of the Forum will cover three main thematic areas namely:

- **The Situation of Human Rights, Democracy and Rule of Law in Africa**, with a focus on the implications of Covid-19 on the rights to arts, culture and heritage
- **Special Interest Group Discussions**, that will be divided as follows:
 - Enforcement of Covid-19 measures in Africa
 - Shrinking civic space and human rights defenders
 - Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Africa (with a focus on the right to health)
 - Role of youths in the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063
 - Independence of the Judiciary
 - Impact of Covid-19 on elections in Africa
- **Networking for Human Rights in Africa**, strategies and best practices for the enjoyment of cultural rights and freedoms in the current and post-Covid-19 environment.

Register for the NGO Forum [here](#).

The 68th ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

• Panels and Launches (Item 5)

- *Launch of the drafting of the proposed General Comment on Article 23 of the African Charter*, 15 April, 12.30pm to 13.45pm
- *Joint Panel on Violence against Women in Vulnerable Situations*, 17 April, 11.30am to 12.45pm
- *Panel on Abuses Against Migrants: THE ADDIS ABABA ROADMAP*, 20 April, 12.30pm to 13.45pm
- *Human and People's Rights aspects of Arts, Culture and Heritage*, 21 April, 12.30pm to 13.45pm
- *Panel on Human Rights Defenders and Reprisals in Africa*, 23 April, 11.30am to 12.30pm
- *Launch of the Guidelines on the Right to Water in Africa*, 24 April, 9.00am to 10.30am

• State periodic Reports (Item 6)

During this session, pursuant to Article 62 of the African Charter and State Parties obligation to report every two years on the legislative or other measures taken with a view to giving effect to the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed by the Charter, three countries will be reviewed:

- **Malawi's** review will be based on its combined [2nd and 3rd report](#), covering the period 2015-2019 and submitted to the ACHPR in February 2020 (16 April, 9.30am to 10.30am)
- **Benin's** review will be based in its combined [6th to 10th report](#), covering the period 2009-2018 and submitted to the ACHPR in August 2020 (20 April, 9am to 10.30am)
- **Niger's** review will be based on its [15th report](#), covering the period 2017-2019 and submitted to the ACHPR in November 2019. (21 April, 9am to 10.30am)

• Activity reports (Item 7)

During every session, special mechanisms from the African Commission present their activity report. These reports catalogue the activities and initiatives undertaken by each mechanism inter-sessionally:

- Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa
- Special Rapporteur on Prisons, Conditions of Detention and Policing in Africa
- ACHPR Vice-Chairperson and Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information
- Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons
- Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities in Africa
- Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons and People with Disabilities in Africa
- Working Group on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Africa
- Working Group on Death Penalty and Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Killings and Enforced Disappearances in Africa
- Working Group on Communications
- Working Group on Extractive Industries, Environment and Human Rights Violations in Africa
- Committee on the Protection of the Rights of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) and Those at Risk, Vulnerable to and Affected by HIV
- Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa
- Chairperson of the ACHPR on activities of the Chairperson and Bureau

For the full programme, click [here](#).

What will ISHR do during this session?

During this session, ISHR will make several statements under Items 3 and 7:

- The situation of human rights in Africa (item 3)
- Activity reports (item 7)
- Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa
- Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa
- Working Group on Extractive Industries, Environment and Human Rights Violations

What advocacy opportunities does the Commission offers?

The situation of human rights in Africa

Under Item 3, civil society organisations with observer status have the possibility to make a statement highlighting specific issues relating to the human rights enshrined in the African Charter. It can be used to call the attention of the Commission on a specific issue or even update the Commission on an issue previously brought to its attention.

Country review

Under article 62 of the African Charter, States are obliged to submit a report every two years on the legislative or other measures taken with a view to giving effect to the rights and freedoms recognised and guaranteed by the present Charter. During this process, civil society organisations also have the possibility to submit shadow reports ahead of the session during which countries will be reviewed in order to inform the Commission's recommendations and provides share advices to a specific State.

Country and Special Rapporteurs mandates

- [Every Commissioners has under its mandate 5 countries in Africa](#). During the session, civil society organisations have the opportunity to meet with the Commissioner which has their country under its mandate. It is important to seize this moment to update the mandate on the issues specific to your country and more specifically call his attention to an issue you want him to raise with the State directly or during the session.
- All year long it is recommended to civil society to share information with Special Rapporteurs. During sessions, civil society organisations can make statements during the presentation of each Commissioners, including Special Rapporteurs, activity reports highlighting important issues of interest.

How can you follow the session?

14 April 2021 - 24 April 2021 - Public Session

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qaIAghJMQEGhBzv79Pj5vQ

04 May 2021 - Closing Ceremony (Public Session)

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qaIAghJMQEGhBzv79Pj5vQ

The Ordinary Session will be live streamed on:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgwJmiMTr59J0jYZJJtfzuw>

ISHR will monitor and report on key developments at the 68th ordinary session of the African Commission. Follow us on Twitter at [@ISHRglobal](#), [@ISHR_fr](#) and at #ACHPR68. Our staff can also be followed [@Adelaide_ISHR](#), [@StephanieWamba](#),