

## **ACHPR 68 | Protect defenders in Africa - stop criminalising and intimidating them**

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**On 14 April, ISHR delivered a statement on the situation of human rights in Africa, with a particular focus on the criminalisation and arrest of defenders in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, the Republic of Congo or Burundi.**



The [statement](#) delivered by ISHR shed light on a high number of defenders, including whistle-blowers, being arrested and intimidated when denouncing human rights violations or fighting for democracy.

Adélaïde Etong Kame, ISHR Africa Programme Manager urged the government of Egypt “to immediately and unconditionally release all human rights defenders, to cease restricting and criminalising their work, to effectively protect them and their families from intimidation or reprisals, and to lift all restrictive measures, including travel bans and asset freezes, taken against the defenders or their families”. Additionally, she called on Egypt “to reverse decisions taken against defenders for their human rights work and to stop using the list of terrorist organisations to punish those exercising their right to freedom of expression”.

Following this, the statement mentioned situation of defenders in the Republic of Congo, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where they have been targeted for peacefully protesting and revealing a potential money laundering scheme.

In light of this, it was important to remind States of the importance to establish a legal framework protecting defenders and enabling them to do their work safely. “ISHR calls on these States to complete the processes initiated by civil society to adopt national laws for the promotion and protection of defenders, ensuring that these comply with regional and international principles for the protection of defenders, including protection against defamation and guaranteeing the right to peaceful demonstration” said Etong Kame.

“We welcome the recent release of the IWACU Press Group journalists but recall that [in Burundi] hundreds of journalists and human rights defenders are still in exile, several human rights organisations remain deregistered and independent radio stations are banned” concluded Etong Kame.

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*Photo: Facebook page of Alexandre Ibacka Dzabana*