

Letter to Member States of the UN Human Rights Council

Re: Civil society organisations urge States to support Human Rights Council resolution on “the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests” (HRC/31/L.21)

18 March 2016

Your Excellency,

The undersigned non-governmental organisations write to express our strong support for the draft resolution on “the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests” (HRC/31/L.21), and call for its adoption by consensus with broad co-sponsorship at the 31st Session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC).

This initiative remains a timely response to serious and multiple violations of human rights in protests globally, on which the HRC has made a notable contribution to setting out critical aspects of the applicable international human rights law framework. In an important effort to build on this, the HRC tasked the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, to prepare a “compilation of practical recommendations for the proper management of assemblies” (the Compilation), which was presented at this 31st Session of the HRC.

The Compilation was prepared on the basis of extensive cross-regional consultations with over 50 States and more than 100 experts. It provides practical recommendations for the management of assemblies that reflect States’ obligations under international human rights law, and should therefore be warmly welcomed. We fully support the Compilation’s recommendations that bring together a variety of best practices, and call on all States to implement them at the national and operational levels, including through the development of National Plans of Actions developed with the full and effective participation of all relevant stakeholders.

As guidance to the implementation of States’ international human rights obligations, and the commitments set out in HRC Resolution 25/38, the Compilation is a tool that if effectively utilised could significantly enhance protection of human rights during assemblies, including protests, in all parts of the world. HRC/31/L.21 presents an opportunity to give encouragement to States in this regard, as the onus is on them to ensure that the HRC lives up to its mandate “as a platform for action” against all violations of human rights, in connection with assemblies including protests.

We respectfully urge your delegation to cosponsor and support the consensus adoption of draft Resolution HRC/31/L.21 at the 31st Session, and to vote against any proposed amendment that does not receive the support of the co-sponsors. We look forward to the HRC remaining prised on the issue of human rights in protests, and also to the dissemination and implementation of the Compilation at the national level.

Yours Sincerely,

1. The Advocacy and Policy Institute (API), Cambodia
2. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
3. Amnesty International
4. ARTICLE 19 Global Campaign for Free Expression (ARTICLE 19)
5. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
6. Association for Free Thought and Expression (AFTE), Egypt
7. Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

8. Boat People SOS (BPSOS)
9. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
10. Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA)
11. Centre for Human Rights Studies of University of Surabaya, Surabaya-Indonesia
12. Centro de Derechos Humanos “Fray Francisco de Vitoria OP”, A.C. (CDHFFV), México
13. Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, A.C. (Centro Prodh), México
14. Centre for Internet and Society (CIS)
15. Centro de Investigación y Capacitación Propuesta Cívica A.C. (CIC-PC)
16. CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS)
17. Coalition to Abolish Modern-day Slavery in Asia (CAMSA)
18. Colectivo de Abogadas y Abogados Solidarios CAUSA (CAUSA)
19. Colectivo Resonar (RESONAR)
20. Defend Defenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
21. Electronic Frontier Finland (Effi)
22. European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL)
23. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
24. Espacio Libre Independiente Marabunta A.C. (ELIM)
25. Fortify Rights
26. Fundar, Centro de Análisis e Investigación (FUNDAR)
27. Global Indigenous Youth Caucus, Asia
28. Human Rights House Foundation (HRRF)
29. Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU)
30. International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL)
31. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
32. Instituto Mexicano de Derechos Humanos y Democracia (IMDHD)
33. Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union (LPHU)
34. Nazra for Feminist Studies
35. Omega Research Foundation (ORF)
36. People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD)
37. Punto24 (P24)
38. Radanar Ayar Rural Development Association, Myanmar
39. Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos “Todos los Derechos para Todas y Todos” (conformada por 79 organizaciones en 21 estados de México):
40. Vietnam Committee on Human Rights (VCHR)
41. Web Foundation
42. World Movement for Democracy