



2nd East Asia Human Rights Forum

Democratization and Security Sector Reform in East Asia:
Challenges, Opportunities and Way Forwards for Human Rights Protection

11-13 May 2009, Taipei, Taiwan

1. We are gathered here at the second East Asia Human Rights Forum (EAHRF) jointly organized by the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) and Taiwan Association for Human Rights (TAHR) in Taipei, Taiwan, from 11 to 13 May 2009, to represent more than 40 non-government organisations in East Asia, to promote critical understanding and perspectives on issues related to democracy, human rights and security sector reform in the region, and to assess the issues and solutions which have already been identified or are currently in development, under the theme 'Democratisation and Security Sector Reform in East Asia: Challenges, Opportunities and Way Forwards for Human Rights Protections'.
2. We note with concern that human rights and fundamental freedoms, including right to life, personal liberties, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly have been seriously and continuously violated and undermined in the region, although many countries in the region recognise and acknowledge these rights in their constitutions. We share common concerns on existing laws on national security, police brutality, impact of globalisation and economic recession, conflict situations and increasing militarisation in the region which threaten the promotion and protection of human rights.
3. We recognise that many democratic systems and institutions that are designed to ensure democratic rule and people participation have been undermined in the name of national security and failed to provide the necessary checks and balances on executive powers; they have also overlooked the increasing control of executive influence over security sectors.
4. We resolve to develop a critical analysis of the state centric and state driven security paradigm that is anti-human rights and anti-democratic values. We recognise that real and genuine peace and security can only be achieved with the observance of human rights, democratic values, inter-cultural understanding and people to people solidarity in the region. The definition of security and threats to national security should not be left to

the state alone. The people must reclaim control and be part of the process to ensure the protection of human rights and human security.

5. While critically questioning the foundation and the need of expanding the scope and powers of the state on various issues in the framework of national security, we recognised that security sector reform is one of the areas that need to be initiated and supported in a larger framework of democratic reform that is people-centred and people-driven to uphold people sovereignty.
6. We note that intimidating tactics and repression are frequently carried out by state security actors such as police force and the military but also not excluding border guards, immigration authorities and intelligence agencies. We recognise that the security sector reform is a key concern and cannot be implemented effectively without first strengthening other institutions, such as the judiciary, parliament, independent state institutions i.e Ombudsman and national human rights institutions at the national level; there is also the need to incorporate and extend a human rights framework into law enforcement and administration of the police and armed forces.
7. We recognise that democratic and human rights violations have been similarly violated by non-state actors such as para-military groups, private security companies, mercenaries, and armed groups, who intensify the conflicts and threaten the enjoyment of peace, development and security of the people.
8. We resolve to strengthen public monitoring and promote more effective democratic control mechanism on the security sectors. To achieve this, principles of accountability and transparency must be adhered to in all realms of government. Most of all, we recognize the importance of civil society engagement with government and its agencies, parliament and other institutions so that policy making and implementation processes can be monitored in a more effective way.
9. We recognise the importance of mainstreaming gender perspective and increasing women's participation in security sector reform.
10. Furthermore, we resolve that in order to reform the security sectors, the parliament must be capacitated and allowed to debate freely on security issues, policies, to make informed decisions and exert control on budget and commanding officers of the security forces; the judiciary must be independent to be able to hold security sector actors accountable to end impunity and ensure justice and provide remedies; the public must have free access to all information on national security policies and the right to participate in decision making processes.
11. We resolve to ensure media freedom in reporting of security issues and journalists be trained to be more aware of security sector reforms.
12. We agree to improve our capacity to be able to use the framework of the security sector reforms to improve our work to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights by:
 - 12.1 Developing modules for training on Security Sector Reform and Human Rights to clarify the concept of Security Sector Reform and contextualize it in Asia's situation.

- 12.2 Organizing national consultation on Security Sector Reform by taking into account different experiences of each country and available supports to the Security Sector Reform.
- 12.3 Developing different monitoring system for civil society to oversee the use of legal system.
- 12.4 Raising awareness of the general public on the importance of taking up security sector reform to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights.
- 12.5 Lobbying the parliament to set up relevant mechanisms to monitor the work performance of intelligence.
- 12.6 Addressing issues pertaining to security sector reform and human rights together with other civil society organizations in releasing joint statements and press releases, organising press conferences, fact-finding missions and its reporting.
- 12.7 Improving the cooperation among civil society organizations in the area of networking, exchange program, resources mobilization, and media advocacy to hold government and security actors accountable to human rights violation.
- 12.8 Engaging with and maximizing the existing inter-governmental processes as well as civil society on democracy and/or security sector reform to ensure that the promotion and protection of human rights are the main call for intervention.
- 12.9 Requesting FORUM-ASIA secretariat to act as information sharing coordinator and organize the expert dialogue on Security Sector Reform and Human Rights.

Taipei, 13 May 2009