

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

Media Advisory

66th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)

INVITATION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

WHAT: The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the ACHPR) wishes to inform representatives of the media that it will be holding a Press Conference on **7 August 2020** to inform and update the general public on issues considered during the public session of its 66th Ordinary Session, and the current state of human rights in Africa in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

VENUE: Virtual Session, Zoom Webinar

WHEN: 7 August 2020
11:30 Hours (GMT)
14:30 Hours (EAT)
13:30 Hours (CAT)

WHERE: Virtual Session
7 August 2020 Press Conference *Zoom Webinar link:*

<https://zoom.us/j/98304419073?pwd=aVczVXVVTjZlWb3F1WnRoK0pnSUTwdz09>

Webinar ID: 983 0441 9073

Passcode: 907096

WHO: Members of the Media.

Background

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) was established pursuant to Article 30 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter), which came into force on 21 October 1986. The ACHPR is an autonomous treaty organ of the

African Union, and is composed of eleven (11) Commissioners, who are elected by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union. The Commissioners serve in their individual capacity, and, in an independent and impartial manner.

The mandate of the ACHPR is set out in Article 45 of the African Charter, and includes: *protecting and promoting human and peoples' rights on the continent; interpreting the provisions of the African Charter at the request of a State Party, an institution of the African Union or an African Organization recognized by the African Union; and formulating principles and rules on fundamental freedoms, upon which African Governments may base their legislations.*

Pursuant to its new Rules of Procedure adopted at its 27th Extra Ordinary Session (19 February – 4 March 2020), the ACHPR holds four (4) Ordinary Sessions per year, and at the request of the majority of the members of the Commission or the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, it may also convene Extra Ordinary Sessions. The Rules of Procedure are available on the ACHPR website at

<https://www.achpr.org/legalinstruments/detail?id=72>. Since its inception, the ACHPR has held sixty-five (65) Ordinary Sessions and twenty-eight (28) Extra-Ordinary Sessions.

Agenda

At this 66th Ordinary Session, held virtually from 13 July – 7 August 2020, the ACHPR held discussions on the human rights situation in Africa, with a special emphasis on the impact of COVID-19 on the different stakeholders and actors working to protect and promote human rights on the continent, including interventions by the ACHPR and State Parties, highlighting the actions they have taken in response to the pandemic. The ACHPR also hosted a panel discussion, namely, “*Making human rights a priority during and after COVID-19*” and “*Human Rights and COVID19: Socio-economic Impact and Silencing the Guns*”.

Pursuant to Article 62 of the African Charter, which requires State Parties to submit periodic reports to the ACHPR every two years, the Republic of Mauritius presented a Combined Report of its 9th and 10th Periodic Reports on the African Charter, covering the period January 2016 – August 2019.

The ACHPR commends the Republic of Mauritius and calls on other State Parties with outstanding reports to fulfil their reporting obligations under Article 62 of the African Charter.

The ACHPR has established five (5) Working Groups, five (5) Special Rapporteurs, and two (2) Committees, collectively referred to as “Special Mechanisms”, to monitor and address certain thematic issues of concern on the continent. The Special Mechanisms are required to present reports at each Ordinary Session of the ACHPR on activities undertaken during the inter-session period. At this 66th Ordinary Session, the following Special Mechanisms presented their reports, with a particular focus on the effects of and response to COVID-19; **(i)** Special Rapporteur On Prisons, Conditions Of Detention And Policing In Africa **(ii)** Special Rapporteur On Rights Of Women; **(iii)** Working Group On Indigenous

Populations/Communities In Africa; **(iv)** Special Rapporteur On Freedom Of Expression And Access To Information; **(v)** Special Rapporteur On Human Rights Defenders And Focal Point On Reprisals In Africa; **(vi)** Special Rapporteur On Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Internally Displaced Persons And Migrant In Africa; **(vii)** Committee For The Prevention Of Torture In Africa; **(viii)** Working Group On Economic, Social And Cultural Rights; **(ix)** Working Group On Death Penalty, Extra-Judicial, Summary Or Arbitrary Killings And Enforced Disappearances In Africa; **(x)** Working Group On Rights Of Older Persons And People With Disabilities; **(xi)** Working Group On Extractive Industries, Environment And Human Rights Violations; and **(xii)** Committee On The Protection Of The Rights Of People Living With HIV (PLHIV) And Those At Risk, Vulnerable To And Affected By HIV.

The ACHPR furthermore reflected on its Relationship and Cooperation with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and also considered applications from NHRIs and NGOs on Affiliate and Observer Status.

For more comments:

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