



Item 3: Human Rights Situation in Africa

Statement of AfricanDefenders/DefendDefenders

Observer Status 359

Honorable Chairperson,

Honorable Commissioner,

Distinguished State delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am presenting this statement on behalf of AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders,

On behalf our **Chairperson, Hassan Shire**, and the **AfricanDefenders family**, allow me to congratulate you upon your re-election as member of this Commission and as its Chairperson. I would like also to acknowledge the great contribution of **Hon. Maya Fadel** to the work of this august house in dedicating 12 good years of her life to the service of African citizenry.

Honourable Chairperson,

We are glad to bring to your attention that we supported 40 HRDs to access this space and interact with the commission's work in order enhance their capacity.

75 years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted as an infrastructure for a just and equal society. As a continent, the adoption of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' rights, now ratified by 54 member states, with the promise to promote and protect human rights and basic freedoms in the African continent.

Whether this promise is fulfilled or not, atrocities, humanitarian crises, conflicts, violence, restrictions to liberties and social injustice are loud. All this against our aspiration for a continent where democratic values, culture, practices, universal principles of human rights, gender equality, justice and the rule of law are entrenched.

Honorable Chairperson,

We appreciate an acknowledge the statement of the President of the African Court at the opening of this 77th OS and echo that member states have deliberately ignored their obligations and commitments under the African Charter. There will be no justice without respect for democratic principles, rule of law, and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms.

Last year, around this period, about 200 peaceful citizens were brutally killed by security forces in Chad, which massively arrested mostly youth students. Their only crime was demanding inclusion in the democratic process of their country. To date, there has been no justice for the victims, and most of the democracy activists have fled the country and are in limbo.

Our Comrade Thulani Maseko was at the Commission at every single session to advocate on the situation of injustice in Swaziland. He was killed in his house, in front of his children and wife, and there has been no investigation, let alone accountability.

On this platform, we have repeatedly highlighted the situation in Ethiopia, DRC, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Burundi, and Djibouti – just to name a few countries. For some of them, back-up by resolutions of the Commission and decisions on cases brought before you has been appreciated, but there has been no sign of compliance.

Yet most of these states are present at every session of this Commission.

Honourable Chairperson,

On the situation in Sudan, we welcome the decision of the United Nations Human Rights Council, through the adoption of a resolution at its recent 54th session, to urgently **establish an independent International Fact-Finding Mission (FFM)** for Sudan, and welcome the participation of African Union representatives in future interactive dialogues on Sudan at the Council. This recent Council resolution also welcomes resolution 563 by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted on 4 August 2023, and decides that the FFM should **give due regard to ensuring the complementarity of its efforts with those of other actors**, including the African Union, drawing on the expertise of the ACHPR. This is good practice, in line with the Addis Ababa RoadMap and with the objective of cross-fertilizing accountability efforts of the African and UN top human rights bodies. We therefore encourage stronger collaboration between the new mechanism and this Commission.

Finally, Honourable Chairperson,

As we celebrate 25 years since the adoption of the UN Declaration on HRDs, we would like to congratulate the DRC for following other African countries in enhancing the protection of HRDs with the adoption of a specific law on defenders.

