

To: **All Member States of the United Nations General Assembly**

French and Arabic versions also supplied

9 December 2015

VOTE IN FAVOUR OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS RESOLUTION IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY

Excellencies,

We are a group of human rights defenders and civil society organizations located across the world working at national, regional and international levels. We seek your clear support for the resolution entitled "*Human Rights Defenders in the context of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*" adopted by the UN General Assembly Third Committee on 25 November 2015. The resolution is due to be considered by the Plenary of the General Assembly on 17 December 2015.

We urge your government to support the abovementioned resolution when the plenary of the General Assembly considers the text.

Despite the resolution being put to a vote for the first time in its 16 year history, the adoption of the text by a clear majority of States is a welcome recognition of the need to protect those who face risks and attacks for their work to defend human rights. We congratulate and thank the 117 delegations that voted in favour of the resolution and stood with human rights defenders by resisting attempts to undermine and delegitimise their important work. We urge those delegations to maintain their supportive position during the plenary vote, and thereby demonstrate their continued commitment to protecting human rights defenders and enabling their work. We also call on all delegations who were absent during the Third Committee deliberations to vote in favour of the resolution when it is considered in the General Assembly Plenary.

We are extremely disappointed that 14 States voted against the text that a further 40 States abstained. We see both votes against the resolution and abstentions as a failure to recognize the important role of defenders and the need for their protection. We strongly urge those who abstained or voted against to support the resolution during the Plenary vote.

Human rights defenders make a vital contribution to the promotion and respect for human rights, democratic processes, securing and maintaining peace and security, and advancing development in our countries. However, in doing this work, defenders often face a range of violations and abuses at the hands of State and non-State actors. States must acknowledge the role of defenders and the specific risks they face, and commit to ensuring their protection.

Seventeen years ago, all States agreed to the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, including State obligations to protect all human rights defenders working on all human rights. This commitment

has been reiterated and built upon in subsequent General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions. We are therefore extremely concerned that 14 States voted against the text and that a further 40 States abstained.

We urge all States to live up to their human rights commitments by supporting this resolution during the Plenary vote, and by taking concrete steps to protect human rights defenders.

Sincerely,

Accion Solidaria on HIV/Aids

Accountability and justice for victims of the genocide of Tamil Nation in Sri Lanka

ACDHRS

Action Trans-Crime Uganda

Alkarama Foundation

All India Network of Individuals and Organizations working with National and State Human Rights Institutions (AINNI)

Alliance for Democracy in Laos

Amnesty International

Anti-discrimination Centre Memorial

Anuak Justice Council, Ethiopia/South Sudan

ARC International

ARTICLE 19

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development

Asian Legal Resource Centre

Assistance Mission for Africa

Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT)

Association of World Citizens

Austrian Solidarity for Guatemala (Guatemala

Solidarität Österreich)

AWID

Bahrain Centre for Human Rights

Bahrain youth society for human rights

Battsengel

Belarus Watch

British Humanist Association

Brot fuer die Welt

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre

Bytes for All, Pakistan

Cambodian Center for Human Rights

CEFoRD-South Sudan

Center for Civil Liberties

Center for Development of International Law

Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA)

Center for Inquiry

Center for Reproductive Rights

Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)

Centre for Civil and Political Rights

Centre for Human Rights and Development

Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights

Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)

Child Rights Connect (formerly Le Groupe des ONG pour la Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant)

Child Rights International Network CRIN

Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Church of The Brethren

Citizens for Justice and Peace

CIVICUS

Civil Rights Defenders

Civil Rights Defenders, Sweden

CIVILIS Human Rights

Coalition for the International Criminal Court

COC Netherlands

CODAP - Youth resource center on human rights

CODEVIDA, Coalition of Organizations for the rights to Health and to Life

Collectif Guatemala

Computer Aid International

Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos

Consortio para el Diálogo Parlamentario MX

Czech Helsinki Committee

Development Alliance

Diaspora Action Australia

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP)

Ecology center in western Mongolia

E-Education center, Mongolia

Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights

FIDH, within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human

Rights Defenders

Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA)

Foundation HELP

Freedom House

Freelance Journalist / Human Rights Defender

Frente de Mujeres Defensoras de la Pachamama - Ecuador

Front Line Defenders

Geneva for Human Rights

Global Bersih

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

Global Forum for Media Development

Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Global Justice Center

Global meridian

Government-Citizen Partnership NGO

GreenNet

Gulf Center for Human Rights

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly -Vanadzor

Helsinki Committee of Armenia

Human Rights Campaign in China

Human Rights Concern - Eritrea

Human Rights Defenders' Alert - India

Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF)

Human Rights Information Center

Human Rights Watch

ILGA - The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association

Inst.DEMOS

International Campaign for Human Rights in

Iran

International Catholic Child Bureau

International Center for Justice and Human Rights

International Center for Not-for-Profit Law

International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect

International Commission of Jurists

International Commission of Jurists Victoria

International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO)

International Dalit Solidarity Network

International Helsinki Association for Human Rights

International Justice Resource Center

International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)

International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)

International Platform against Impunity

International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

International Women's Health Coalition

International Women's Rights Action Watch

International Youth Human Rights Movement (YHRM)

Ipas

Iranian Queer Organization, IRQO

Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights

JASS (Just Associates)

Justice and Peace

Justice Connect

Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law

Kharkiv Regional Foundation "Public Alternative", Ukraine

Legal Resources Centre

Legal-Informational Centre for NGOs, Slovenia

Loretto Community

MAIN Maloca Internationale

Men's Association

Mitchell foundation-NGO, Mongolia

MonAme Research Center-NGO, Mongolia

Mongolian Gender Equality Center

Mongolian Women's Employment Supporting Federation

Nazra for Feminist Studies

Netherlands Helsinki Committee

No Peace Without Justice

One World Platform Foundation

OT Watch

OutRight Action International

Peace Brigades International

Peace Watch Switzerland

People's Watch, India

Princess center

Project on Organizing, Development, Education, and Research (PODER)

Promo LEX Association Moldova

Provea, Venezuelan Education-Action Program on Human Rights

Psychological Responsiveness NGO

Public Interest Advocacy Centre

Public Union of Democracy and Human Rights
Resource Centre

Public Verdict Foundation

Queensland Association of Independent Legal
Services Inc.

Red Internacional de Derechos Humanos
RIDH

Refugee Council of Australia

RFSL, the Swedish Federation for LGBTQ
Rights

Rivers Without Boundaries

Russian LGBT Network

Schweizer Forum für Menschenrechte und
Frieden in Guatemala

Sinergia, Venezuelan Association of Civil
Society Organizations

Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia
(SMNE)

Sova Center for Information and Analysis

Spanish Society for IHRL

Swiss Helsinki Committee

Swiss Working Group on Colombia

The Association for Women's Rights in
Development (AWID)

The Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture
Victims (KRCT)

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund

The Tibet Bureau

TRIAL

UNA-USA

Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y
Defensores de Derechos Humanos -
Guatemala (UDEFEQUA)

Unión Latinoamericana de Mujeres - ULAM

United Nations Association - UK

UNITED SIKHS

Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human
Rights

West African Human Rights Defenders'
Network

Women's International League for Peace and
Freedom (WILPF)

Women's Refugee Commission

World Federalist Movement - Institute for
Global Policy

World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) -
within the framework of the Observatory for
the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

World Uyghur Congress

Yemen Organization for Defending Rights &
democratic freedoms

Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN)

Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights

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