30TH ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES’ RIGHTS (AFRICAN COMMISSION)
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INTRODUCTION

201. This is the Thirtieth (30th) Activity Report of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (African Commission).

202. The Activity Report describes the activities undertaken by the African Commission during the Inter-Session period between the 48th and the 49th Ordinary Sessions of the African Commission 2011.

203. A substantial part of the Report is devoted to the proceedings of the 49th Ordinary Session.

49TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION

Attendance at the Session

204. The following Members of the African Commission attended the 49th Ordinary Session:
- Honourable Commissioner Reine Alapini-Gansou, Chairperson;
- Honourable Commissioner Mumba Malila, Vice-Chairperson;
- Honourable Commissioner Lucy Asuagbor;
- Honourable Commissioner Catherine Dupe Atoki;
- Honourable Commissioner Musa Ngary Bitaye;
- Honourable Commissioner Mohamed Bechir Khalfallah;
- Honourable Commissioner Soyata Maiga;
- Honourable Commissioner Kayitesi Zainabou Sylvie; and
- Honourable Commissioner Yeung Kam John Yeung Sik Yuen.

205. Honourable Commissioner Pansy Tlakula was absent with apologies.

Opening Ceremony

206. Four hundred and eighty nine (489) participants attended the 49th Ordinary Session of the African Commission, including representatives from States Parties, International and Inter-Governmental Organizations, African Union Organs, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), as well as African and International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

207. At the Opening Ceremony, statements were delivered in the following order:

   i) Honourable Commissioner Reine Alapini Gansou, Chairperson of the African Commission;

   ii) Mrs. Hannah Forster, Executive Director of the African Centre for Democracy
and Human Rights Studies, on behalf of NGOs;

iii) H.E. Mrs. Julia Dolly Joiner, Commissioner, for Political Affairs at the African Union Commission (AUC);

iv) Commissioner Lindiwe Mockate, Commissioner of the South African Human Rights Commission, on behalf of the Network of NHRIs;

v) Honourable Justice A. B. Akuffo, Vice-President of the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights;

vi) The Honourable Minister Delegate in Charge of Human Rights of the Republic of Senegal, Honourable Madam Coumba Gaye, on behalf of AU Member States, and


208. Summaries of their statements are included in the Report of the 49th Ordinary Session of the African Commission.

Agenda of the Session

209. The Agenda of the Session is attached to this Report as Annex I.

Cooperation and Relationship with NHRIs and NGOs

210. In accordance with its Resolution on the Criteria for Granting and Enjoying Observer Status to Non-Governmental Organisations Working in the Field of Human and Peoples’ Rights: Res.33 (XXV) 99, the African Commission considered applications for Observer Status from ten (10) NGOs, and granted Observer Status to all of them. These 10 NGOs are:

i) Ligue Togolaise des Droits de l’Homme

ii) Right to Information Initiative

iii) Zimbabwe Women Lawyers’ Association

iv) Southern African Litigation Centre

v) Dignity International

vi) Action International pour la Paix et le Développment dans la Région des Grands Lacs

vii) Réseau des Défenseurs des Droits de l’Homme en Afrique Centrale

viii) Defender International

ix) IPAS Africa Alliance

x) Ogiek Peoples’ Development Project.

211. This brings the total number of NGOs with Observer Status before the African
Applications for Affiliate Status

212. There were no applications for Affiliate Status by National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). Consequently, the number of NHRIs with Affiliate Status with the African Commission remains at twenty two (22).

Statements on the Human Rights Situation

213. During the Session, the following States Parties made statements on the human rights situations in their respective countries during the Inter-Session: the Republic of Algeria, Burkina Faso, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, the Republic of Mali, the Republic of Niger, the Republic of Senegal, the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of the Sudan, the Republic of Tunisia, the Republic of Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Zimbabwe.

214. Representatives of AU Organs, International and Inter-Governmental Organisations, and NHRIs also addressed the African Commission on various human rights issues on the continent. The Institutions that took the floor under this Item included the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the International Organisation of the Francophonie, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the National Human Rights Commission of Algeria, the National Human Rights Commission of Burkina Faso, the National Human Rights Commission of Guinea Bissau, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, the South African Human Rights Commission, and the Rwandan Human Rights Commission. The common thread running through the statements made by these Institutions is the need for continued cooperation between these Institutions and the African Commission, to ensure better promotion and protection of human rights on the continent.

215. In addition, a total of thirty-seven (37) NGOs that have Observer Status with the African Commission also made statements on the human rights situation in Africa.

Inter-Session Activities of Members of the African Commission

216. The Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and the members of the African Commission presented reports on the various activities which they undertook during the Inter-Session. These reports covered activities undertaken in their capacities as members of the African Commission, as Special Rapporteurs, and as members of Special Mechanisms of the Commission. These Reports are attached to this Report as Annex II.

Consideration of State Reports under Article 62 of the Charter
217. In accordance with Article 62 of the African Charter, the African Commission considered the Periodic Reports of Burkina Faso, the Great Socialist Peoples’ Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Republic of Namibia and the Republic of Uganda.


219. The Concluding Observations on the Periodic Report of the Republic of Uganda could not be adopted as the Ugandan Delegation was unable to provide any response to the questions and observations made by the Commission during examination of the Report but promised to do so at a later date.

**Status of States Parties’ Compliance with Article 62 of the African Charter**

220. As at the 49th Ordinary Session, the status of submission and consideration of the Periodic Reports of States Parties is as follows:

i) Twelve (12) States Parties are up to date with their Periodic Reports (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, DRC, Ethiopia, the Great Socialist Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Uganda);

ii) Eight (8) States Parties are behind in their reporting obligations by one Periodic Report (Algeria, Benin, Kenya, Madagascar, the Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe);

iii) Eight (8) States Parties are behind in their reporting obligations by two Periodic Reports (CAR, Egypt, Mauritania, SADR, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa and Tunisia);

iv) One State Party, Togo, is behind in its reporting obligations by three Periodic Reports;

v) Eleven (11) States Parties are behind in their reporting obligations by more than 3 Periodic Reports (Angola, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, The Gambia, Ghana, Republic of Guinea, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland);

vi) Thirteen (13) States have never submitted Periodic Reports to the African Commission (Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone and Somalia).

221. A detailed computation of the status of submission is attached hereto as Annex
III.

222. The African Commission congratulates those States Parties that are up to date with their Reports, and continues to urge those that have not yet done so, to submit their Reports to the African Commission in compliance with their obligations under Article 62 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (African Charter). The Commission further reminds States Parties that all overdue Reports can be combined into a single Cumulative Periodic Report.

**Report of the Secretary to the African Commission**

223. The Report of the Secretary to the Commission set out various administrative developments during the Inter-Session, including feedback on the various tasks assigned to the Secretariat by the Commission. In addition, the Report analyzed the new Rules of Procedure in relation to the work, practice and operational modalities of the African Commission and its Secretariat, and made proposals for the consideration of the Commission.

224. Among other things, the Report called attention to the continuing chronic understaffing at the Commission’s Secretariat, and underscored the imperative to accelerate and expedite recruitment of staff for the Secretariat. Quite clearly, the staffing situation has reached such critical levels that **it is no longer physically possible for the Secretariat** to provide the Commission with the support which it needs to function effectively and deliver on the mandate entrusted to it.

225. The Report also recalled Executive Council Decision EX.CL/446(XIII) which calls upon the African Commission, in collaboration with the AUC, to take the necessary steps to have the status of the African Commission as an Organ of the AU regularized. The Report stressed the need for this to be done as soon as possible, in order to streamline the institutional arrangements between AUC and the African Commission on account of Article 41 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, so that the African Commission can operate like other AU Organs.

**Consideration of Communications**

226. A total of eighty-three (83) Communications were tabled before the African Commission: six (6) on Seizure; fifty-two (52) on Admissibility; twenty-four (24) on the Merits; and one (1) on Review.

227. The African Commission decided to be seized of the following five (5) Communications:

   i) Communication 396/11 – Mr El Sharkawi (represented by Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and Organization for Social Justice v Egypt;

   ii) Communication 397/11 - Omo Valley and Lake Turkana Communities v Kenya and Ethiopia;
iii) Communication 398/11 - Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa and Congolese Human Rights Observatory v DRC;

iv) Communication 399/11 – Minority Rights Group International and UNIPROBA (on behalf of the Bahakwaninda family) v Burundi;


228. The African Commission deferred consideration of seventy-seven (77) Communications to its 10th Extra-Ordinary Session, for various reasons, including time constraints and lack of response from one or both parties.

Consideration of Various Reports and Documents


231. On the issue of referral of cases to the African Court, the Commission requested the Secretariat to do further research and propose criteria for referral of cases, for the Commission’s consideration during the 10th Extra-Ordinary Session.


Resolutions

233. The African Commission adopted the following Resolutions:

i) Resolution on the Appointment of the Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Internally Displaced Persons and Migrants in Africa;

ii) Resolution on the Rights of Indigenous Women in Africa;

iii) Resolution on the Appointment of Members of the Research Team on the Study of Freedom of Association in Africa;

iv) Resolution on the Safety of Journalists and Media Practitioners in Africa;
v) Resolution on the Renewal and Extension of the Mandate of the Advisory Committee on Budgetary and Staff Matters;


Report of the 49th Ordinary Session

234. The African Commission deferred consideration and adoption of the 49th Ordinary Session Report to the 50th Ordinary Session, due to time constraints.

Dates and Venue of the 50th Ordinary Session

235. The African Commission decided to hold the 50th Ordinary Session from 24 October to 7 November 2011, at a venue still to be determined.

9th EXTRA-ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION

236. The African Commission held its 9th Extra-Ordinary Session from 23 February to 3 March 2011, in Banjul, The Gambia. The Extra-Ordinary Session was convened to deal with some urgent and outstanding matters, including the 2011 and 2012 budget, program of activities for the year and Communications.

237. The following members of the African Commission participated:

i) Honourable Commissioner Reine Alapini-Gansou, Chairperson;
ii) Honourable Commissioner Mumba Malila, Vice-Chairperson;
iii) Honourable Commissioner Musa Ngary Bitaye;
iv) Honourable Commissioner Catherine Dupe Atoki;
v) Honourable Commissioner Kayitesi Sylvie Zainabo;
vi) Honourable Commissioner Soyata Maiga;
vii) Honourable Commissioner Mohamed Bèchir Khalfallah;
viii) Honourable Commissioner Lucy Asuagbor.

238. Honourable Commissioners Pansy Tlakula, Mohamed Fayek, and Yeung Kam John Yeung Sik Yuen were absent with apologies.

239. The 9th Extra-Ordinary Session considered seven Communications. It was seized of one; it considered four on Admissibility, one on Review and one on Merits. One of the Communications considered on Admissibility was declared admissible, one was deferred, and two were declared inadmissible – the latter are attached hereto as Annex IV. Communication 334/07 – EIPR and INTERIGHTS v Arab Republic of Egypt, decided on the Merits is being finalized and will be attached to the next Activity Report of the Commission.
240. The African Commission considered the human rights situation in Northern Africa and Cote d’Ivoire, after which it issued Press Statements on the Human Rights Situation in Northern Africa and in Cote d’Ivoire.

241. The Commission also adopted the following Resolutions:

i) Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in the Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya;

ii) Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in the Republic of Tunisia;

iii) Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in the Arab Republic of Egypt;

iv) Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria;

v) Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in the Republic of Cote d’Ivoire;

vi) Resolution on the Electoral Process and Participative Governance in the Republic of Benin;


242. In addition, the African Commission considered the issue of cases to be referred to the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and requested the Secretariat to identify cases for its consideration in this regard.


CONSTRUCTION OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION

244. The Commission continued to follow up on the construction of a permanent Headquarters for the African Commission. The Deputy Chairperson of the AUC also raised the matter when he paid a courtesy call on the Attorney General and Minister of Justice of the Republic of The Gambia on 28th February 2011, during his visit to The Gambia. Thereafter the host authorities requested the Secretariat to re-submit the relevant documentation, which was duly done.

THE STATUS OF HUMAN AND PEOPLES’ RIGHTS ON THE CONTINENT

245. It will be recalled that paragraph 2 of Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.639 (XVIII), adopted during the 18th Ordinary Session of the Council, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 27 to 28 January 2011 “calls on the ACHPR to include in future reports, the status of human and peoples’ rights in the continent”.

246. This new section on the status of human rights in Africa, is drawn from the Periodic Reports submitted to it by States Parties, the Inter-Session Activity Reports of
members of the Commission and its Special Mechanisms, the reports of the promotion missions undertaken by the members of the Commission to various State Parties, the missions as well as study and information visits carried out by the Commission’s Special Mechanisms, the reports and appeals made by or on behalf of alleged victims of human rights abuses in different parts of the continent, the interventions made during the Commission’s Sessions and from reports received at the Commission’s Secretariat.

247. A review of all these sources reveals that the continent has witnessed quite a number of positive developments in the field of human and peoples’ rights. For instance, the organization of the Referendum in Southern Sudan, which is expected to usher in the birth of the world’s youngest Nation State, is a good example of the exercise of a people’s right to self-determination as provided for in Article 21 of the African Charter.

248. The right to political participation as provided for in Article 13 of the African Charter was also given a boost during the Inter-Session with the organization of elections in the Republic of Benin (27 February 2011), the Republic of Niger (12 March 2011), the Federal Republic of Nigeria (16 April 2011), the Republic of Uganda (18 February 2011), the Republic of Chad (25 April 2011), the Referendum in the Arab Republic of Egypt (19 March 2011) and the Referendum in the Sudan as already alluded to in the preceding paragraph.

249. The adoption by the Republic of Congo of Law No 05 on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Populations on 25 February 2011, which is the first of its kind in Africa, is a very positive development that will go a long way in enhancing the protection of the rights of indigenous communities, and, indeed, should be emulated by other States Parties that have indigenous populations.

250. Africa has also witnessed the adoption of progressive laws and the ratification of international and regional human rights instruments in a number of States Parties, aimed at enhancing the realization of human and peoples’ rights. The Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Gabon and Burkina Faso ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Republic of Gabon and the Republic of Zambia ratified the AU Convention for the Assistance and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. The Republic of Djibouti ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The Republic of South Africa ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. Burkina Faso, the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Malawi, the Republic of Mali and the United Republic of Tanzania have all made the Declaration under Article 34 (6) of the Protocol to the African Charter on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples Rights, giving individuals and NGOs, direct access to the African Court. The African Commission commends these States Parties and encourages those that have not yet done so to make the Declaration.

251. Some States Parties have enacted laws that directly target and promote the rights of older persons (Mauritius) and the physically challenged (Uganda); others have put in place educational systems that are specifically tailored to suit the mobile lifestyles of their indigenous populations/communities (Namibia). Others have promulgated laws that
create child friendly courts and enable children to give evidence in camera (Zimbabwe); others impose taxes to support national HIV/AIDS schemes (Zimbabwe). Yet others have adopted community service as an alternative to imprisonment (Nigeria’s Lagos State and Zimbabwe); others have built model prisons, while yet others have incorporated some of the Commission’s Robben Island Guidelines into the training manuals of their law enforcement agencies as a follow-up to their constructive engagements with the Special Mechanisms of the Commission, especially the Committee for the Prevention for Torture in Africa.

252. On the downside, the African Commission has continued to receive reports of human rights violations from many parts of the continent. The violations complained of include arbitrary arrests, arbitrary detentions, torture, ill-treatment, harassment, as well as assassination of journalists, human rights defenders and individuals in some States Parties. Concerns relating to discrimination, marginalization, prejudices, stereotyping and exclusion from political participation of vulnerable groups such as women, indigenous populations, people living with HIV/AIDS, and sexual minorities were also brought to the attention of the African Commission.

253. The situation in prisons and other places of detention in several States Parties, characterised by recurrent challenges such as high levels of overcrowding, disease, malnutrition, torture and ill-treatment of inmates and long pre-trial detention periods were also brought to the attention of the African Commission.

254. The realization of economic, social and cultural rights provided for in the African Charter continues to be an elusive goal despite the credible efforts of many States Parties. Adequate provision of healthcare, education, water, employment, adequate shelter, social security and food, is still to be achieved in many parts of the continent.

255. Similarly, the Commission continues to be concerned about alleged religious intolerance, as was reportedly the case with the clashes that erupted in Jos, Nigeria in the first quarter of 2010 and in Egypt in the first quarter of this year.

256. The Commission is concerned about the fact that not all States Parties have established National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and that not all of those NHRIs that have been established comply with the Paris Principles. In addition, the bulk of those NHRIs that exist are woefully under-resourced.

257. The issues/situations mentioned above are not exhaustive, but rather serve to provide an idea of some of the human rights challenges that face the continent.

258. In the exercise of its mandate, the African Commission has taken certain measures with respect to the reports and allegations of human rights violations.

i) In respect of the alleged religious clashes in the Jos region of Nigeria in 2010, the African Commission brought the matter to the attention of the AU Peace and Security Council in line with Articles 3 and 19 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the
African Union; the Commission also requested authorization from the Nigerian authorities to undertake a Fact-Finding mission to the region and a response to the request is still awaited.

ii) Concerning the case of the Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Commission referred the matter to the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the Court has since issued provisional measures on the same.

iii) With regards to the other human rights challenges, the African Commission sent Urgent Appeals to the authorities of the concerned States Parties requesting them to take appropriate remedial action if the allegations were true; it made recommendations to States Parties on how to address the issues concerned; it adopted Resolutions, and issued Press Statements, as appropriate.

259. The African Commission remains committed to constructively engaging with States Parties and all other stakeholders in order to inculcate a culture of human rights observance in Africa, because ensuring the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the continent is our collective responsibility under the African Charter and other international norms.

SUBMISSION OF THE THIRTIETH ACTIVITY REPORT

260. In accordance with Article 54 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the African Commission submits the present 30th Activity Report to the 20th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union, for consideration and onward transmission to the 17th Summit of the AU Heads of State and Government.
ANNEX I
AGENDA OF THE 49TH ORDINARY SESSION

Item 1: Opening Ceremony (Public Session)

Item 2: Adoption of the Agenda (Private Session)

Item 3: Organization of Work (Private Session)

Item 4: Commemorative Activities for the 30th Anniversary of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (Public Session)

Item 5: Human Rights Situation in Africa (Public Session)
   l) Statement of the African Commission on the Status of Human and Peoples’ Rights on the continent;
   m) Statements by State Delegates;
   n) Statement by African Union Organs with a Human Rights Mandate;
   o) Statements by Intergovernmental and International Organizations;
   p) Statements by National Human Rights Institutions;
   q) Statements by NGOs.

Item 6: Cooperation and Relationship with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Public Session)
   e) Relationship between the ACHPR and NHRIs
   f) Cooperation between the ACHPR and NGOs:
      i. Relationship with NGOs;
      ii. Consideration of Applications for Observer Status from NGOs.

Item 7: Consideration of State Reports (Public Session)
   e) Status of Submission of State Party Reports
   f) Consideration of the:
(i) Periodic Report of the Republic of Burkina Faso;
(ii) Periodic Report of the Peoples’ Bureau of the Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya;
(iii) Periodic Report of the Republic of Namibia;

Item 8: Activity Reports of Members of the Commission & Special Mechanisms (Public Session)

e) Presentation of the Activity Reports of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Members of the ACHPR;

f) Presentation of the Activity Reports of Special Mechanisms of the ACHPR:

   i. Special Rapporteur on Prisons and Conditions of Detention in Africa;

   ii. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa;

   iii. Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Internally Displaced Persons and Migrants in Africa;

   iv. Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa;

   v. Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa;

   vi. Chairperson of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa;

   vii. Chairperson of the Working Group on the Situation of Indigenous Peoples/Communities in Africa;


   ix. Chairperson of the Working Group on the Death Penalty;

   x. Chairperson of the Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons and People with Disabilities in Africa;

   xi. Chairperson of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of People Living with HIV (PLHIV);

**Item 9: Consideration of:** (Private Session)

(f) Reports of the Research and Study Visit of the Working Group on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples/Communities in Africa to:

iv) The Republic of Kenya;
v) The Democratic Republic of Congo;
vi) The Republic of Congo.

(g) Document on the Study of the Question of the Death Penalty in Africa;

(h) Transfer of Cases to the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights;

(i) Nomination of Experts on the Working Group on Older Persons and People with Disabilities in Africa; and


**Item 10: Consideration and Adoption of Draft Reports of** (Private Session)

a) Promotion Missions to the Republic of Mozambique.

b) Mission of Special Mechanisms to the:

   i. Republic of Tunisia

   ii. Republic of Angola

**Item 11: Consideration of Communications:** (Private Session)

**Item 12: Report of the Secretary to the Commission:** (Private Session)

**Item 13: Consideration and Adoption of** (Private Session)

e) Resolutions;

f) Concluding Observations on the:

   - Periodic Report of the Republic of Burkina Faso;
   - Periodic Report of the Peoples’ Bureau of the Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya;
   - Periodic Report of the Republic of Namibia;
Item 14: Dates and Venue of the 50th Ordinary Session of the ACHPR (Private Session)

Item 15: Any Other Business (Private Session)

Item 16: Adoption of: (Private Session)

  e) 49th Session Report;
  f) 29th Activity Report;
  g) 30th Activity Report;
  h) Final Communiqué of the 49th Ordinary Session; and

Item 17: Reading of the Final Communiqué and Closing Ceremony (Public Session)

Item 18: Press Conference (Public Session)