



## **Global action plan calls for States at the UN General Assembly to ensure protection of human rights defenders worldwide**

A plan of action for how to protect and promote the work of human rights defenders will be presented today to the UN General Assembly following a major international summit held at the end of October. This effort to move the international community at the highest level on the need to ensure the effective safety and security of human rights defenders around the world comes at a time when their role is constantly challenged and undermined in blatant contradiction with international obligations and commitments.

The meeting will take place on 18 December 2018, twenty years on from when the first UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders was created. A representative from the recent Human Rights Defenders World Summit is set to present the outcomes at the UN General Assembly, shining a spotlight on the increasing levels of danger facing activists worldwide.

"We can only attain peace, security, dignity and sustainable development if we advance justice, freedom and equality for all, the ultimate goals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," said Alice Mogwe, Director of Ditshwanelo - the Botswana Centre for Human Rights, on behalf of The Human Rights Defenders World Summit.

States are the main perpetrators behind violations against human rights defenders, either directly or in complicity with other powerful non-State actors. They must take urgent action to recognise their essential role, protect those at risk, and take concrete measures to foster a safe and enabling environment for the defence of human rights without discrimination.

"Governments, companies and other powerful figures are harassing, spying on, jailing, torturing and even killing human rights defenders - just for defending the fundamental rights of their communities. These people must be respected, protected and able to live and work in an environment where it is safe to claim human rights."

Marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, more than 150 human rights defenders from around the world gathered in Paris earlier this year to plan for the next 20 years of advancing human rights.

The **Summit** came at a time when, on an almost daily basis, a human rights defender is reported killed, when criminalization and defamation have become standard risks, when illegitimate and abusive restrictions to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly are routinely introduced into law and when governments are failing their commitments made in 1998 to respect and protect these people.

During the summit, the participants adopted an Action Plan to be urgently implemented by States, businesses, financial institutions donors and intergovernmental institutions. <https://hrdworldsummit.org/action-plan/>

The Action Plan stresses that it is everyone's responsibility to create an environment in which it is truly possible and safe to claim our human rights. However, it emphasises that those with power, state and non-state actors, must take the lead in creating a safe and enabling environment for those who defend human rights.

Since the Summit, thousands of people around the world have signed the Summit's petition urging those in power to [Protect Human Rights Defenders Everywhere](#).

#### **Notes to editors**

#### **The Human Rights Defenders World Summit 2018 ([www.hrdworldsummit.org](http://www.hrdworldsummit.org))**

The Human Rights Defenders World Summit 2018 brought together a diverse group of over 150 human rights defenders from around the world for three days of meetings, panel discussions, networking and workshopping. These activists, who are at the forefront of struggles for social, political and environmental changes in their countries, had the opportunity to connect and engage with regional and international human rights organizations, global government leaders, the United Nations, donors and the private sector. The first Human Rights Defenders World Summit took place 20 years ago in 1998 at the Palais de Chaillot, Paris, the same location where this year's closing ceremony was held.

#### **About the organizations involved:**

##### **Amnesty International**

Amnesty International is a global movement of more than seven million people who take injustice personally. We are campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. We are funded by members and people like you. We are independent of any political ideology, economic interest or religion.

##### **Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)**

AWID is a global feminist organisation with over 5,000 individual and institutional members from 164 countries. We support feminist, women's rights and gender justice movements to thrive, to be a driving force in challenging systems of oppression, and to co-create feminist realities.

**FIDH**

FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) is an international human rights NGO federating 184 organisations from 112 countries. Since 1922, FIDH has been defending all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**Front Line Defenders**

Front Line Defenders works for the protection, security and well-being of human rights defenders at risk around the world, providing grants, training and capacity building in physical and digital protection, advocacy and campaigning/visibility for HRDs.

**International Service for Human Rights**

The International Service for Human Rights is an independent, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights. We achieve this by supporting human rights defenders, strengthening human rights systems, and leading and participating in coalitions for human rights change.

**OMCT**

The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) is the world's largest coalition of non-governmental organisations fighting against arbitrary detention, torture, summary and extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances and other forms of violence and provides a comprehensive system of support and protection for human rights defenders.

**ProtectDefenders.EU**

ProtectDefenders.eu is the European Union Human Rights Defenders mechanism, established to protect defenders at high risk and facing the most difficult situations worldwide. Led by a consortium of 12 NGOs active in the field of human rights.

**Reporters Without Borders**

Reporters Without Borders, or Reporters Sans Frontières, is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Paris, France, that conducts political advocacy on issues relating to freedom of information and freedom of the press.