

She has something to say! A student raises her hand at a public school in Taliko Neighbourhood, Bamako. Education and human rights education is central to nurturing democratic spaces and contributing to an enabling environment.





Widening the democratic space

Relevance of the issue

Transparent and participative societies based on dialogue, pluralism and tolerance can exist only where State and non-State actors respect the exercise of rights, including freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association and participation in public life. The exercise of these freedoms is fundamental to fostering dialogue, upholding the rule of law and democracy through participation and creating a safe and enabling environment within which an independent and robust civil society¹ can help build and maintain an effective human rights protection system. In many countries, independent State mechanisms have been established to promote and protect human rights as a key element of this participative system. Human rights education is also central to nurturing democratic spaces and contributing to an enabling environment through preventative strategies. In States in transition, where democratic space is nascent or limited, the protection of these freedoms is a test of political will and capacity for change.

In recent years, political changes resulting from popular protests in several countries, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, have led to the opening of democratic spaces, including through an unprecedented use of social media as a mobilizing tool. However, those spaces are often disputed and in some cases, public freedoms are threatened by both State and non-State actors, with increasingly polarized economic, political, social and religious dynamics. These developments undermine meaningful transitions that should be anchored to the rule of law and fundamentally, the enjoyment of human rights, peace, stability and social justice.

Trends to restrict public liberties and curtail the role of civil society actors have been identified around

¹ As identified in the *Handbook for civil society: Working with the United Nations human rights programme*, and consistent with OHCHR documents and policies, civil society actors are individuals who voluntarily engage in forms of public participation and action around shared interests, purposes and values that are compatible with the goals of the United Nations.

the world, particularly in the context of electoral processes or in reaction to protests against austerity measures, corruption and social injustice. Moreover, in a number of countries, governments continue to use security policies, including counter-terrorism strategies, as a pretext to restrict public freedoms and the role of civil society.

In such contexts, human rights defenders, such as media workers and activists, are often the primary targets of threats and attacks by authorities and increasingly, by non-State actors, including those linked to the private sector. Women defenders are targeted when they are perceived to challenge socio-cultural norms, traditions, perceptions and stereotypes related to the role and status of women in society. In all regions, incitement to hatred² and discrimination, stigmatizing opponents or specific groups, are more evident in political speeches and are being trivialized and amplified through the media and use of communication technologies.

Rather than engaging in dialogue to address the root concerns of protestors, some governments are adopting measures to restrict public freedoms and resorting to violent repression of any forms of protest or criticism. The power and role of the military is frequently used and abused to curtail democratic spaces. These practices are likely to continue.

In other countries, the increased trend towards combining politics and religion and/or traditional values has led to restrictions on public freedoms, exacerbating intolerance, incitement to hatred and violence, and thereby endangering pluralism and dialogue. In those contexts, women are often exposed to multiple forms of discrimination and targeting.

New technologies offer a variety of opportunities for media workers, activists and institutions to expand democratic spaces. But, they also carry with them additional human rights challenges. Measures

² "Incitement to hatred" is used with reference to article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ("Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law"). Reference is also made to General Comment No. 34 (Freedom of Opinion and Expression) by the Human Rights Committee and General Recommendation No. 35 (Combating Racist Hate Speech) by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.



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Equality March, LGBTI pride festival in Moldova, 2013.

to control these technologies, and those who use them, are rapidly developing, including measures of mass surveillance, leading to concerns for the right to privacy and the need to protect individuals who reveal human rights violations, such as whistleblowers.

Although if the number of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) has grown from a mere handful 20 years ago to more than 100, the lack of independence prevents some of them from effectively fulfilling their mandates. NHRIs must be independent, equipped with sufficient resources and the competence to promote and protect the full spectrum of rights, in accordance with the Paris Principles. Victims of human rights violations often face serious financial and other difficulties in seeking access to justice. NHRIs, which in principle are much easier to access, can play an important role in receiving and considering individual complaints related to human rights violations.

Despite the creation of more mechanisms and mandates to protect civil society actors, in recent years they have been subjected to acts of intimidation and reprisals as a consequence of their cooperation with the UN, its representatives and its mechanisms in the field of human rights. As the Secretary-General stated in his report on peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict, "[r]eprisals and intimidation against individuals cooperating with the United Nations are unacceptable [...] We must take action at every level to strengthen the voices of democracy."

OHCHR added value

Focus areas

- Protecting public freedoms (freedoms of opinion, expression, assembly, association; prohibition of incitement to hatred)
- Protection of media freedoms, including protection of journalists
- Protection of human rights defenders, with a focus on women
- Human rights education, particularly youth

Most international human rights instruments include provisions that are directly relevant to the protection of public freedoms and most refer to the principles of non-discrimination and participation in political, economic and cultural life. In particular, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provide for the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association, conscience, religion and belief, as well as participation in political life. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides for the right to form or participate in a trade union and in cultural life. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women specifically provides for the right of women to participate in political, economic and cultural life. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination prohibits all forms of discrimination on the grounds of race, color or ethnic origin. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also guarantees the rights to freedom of opinion and expression; access to information; and participation in public, political and cultural life. Other relevant human rights instruments include: the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders; the Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training; and the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

Several UN actors working in this area include UNESCO, on freedom of expression and education; UNDP, on participation of civil society; and the ILO, on freedom of association. But, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is the only UN entity with a comprehensive mandate in this field. It represents the leading, authoritative, global voice that promotes and protects these rights, including those related to public freedoms and human rights education.

OHCHR has built global credibility as a principled advocate, which speaks out against all forms of human rights violations wherever they take place, based on international human rights norms and standards. OHCHR is a voice, sometimes the only voice, for those who are unable to speak out. One of the Office's major achievements in the past 20 years has been its work to support civil society and help them build their capacity. In many countries, OHCHR's promotion of the role of civil society, particularly human rights defenders, has been instrumental to their recognition and greater acceptance by authorities and, in some cases, by society at large. OHCHR's advocacy and technical advice have also contributed to the adoption of legislation for the protection of public freedoms and civil society organizations. This work has assisted the establishment and strengthening of protection mechanisms, particularly for human rights defenders and journalists, examples include Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico. In countries recently undergoing transitions, the Office has worked to ensure broad participation in fundamental processes such as constitution-making, legislative reforms and development strategies. OHCHR has seen increasing requests for higher expectations regarding OHCHR's engagement to support civil society, particularly human rights defenders. There have also been numerous requests for advisory services and advocacy on relevant legislation, notably in the context of political transitions and where public freedoms have been curtailed.

In addition, OHCHR has extensive experience in advocating and providing technical advice and training for the development of State institutions, including the judiciary, NHRIs, parliaments, and ministries; and for human rights education programmes.

The Office has played a key role in fostering cooperation between NHRIs at the regional and global level. Its role as Secretariat of the International Coordinating Committee of NHRIs and its Sub-Committee on Accreditation is of central importance, since only "A" status NHRIs benefit from speaking and participatory rights in the Human Rights Council. OHCHR assists NHRIs in setting up and building capacity, while also partnering with them in implementing the Office's strategies at the country level. In a sense, NHRIs are OHCHR's clients and partners at the same time.

Specific attention has also been devoted to the role of law enforcement personnel in the context of

demonstrations, with a view to ensuring ethical and lawful crowd control which fully respects relevant international human rights norms and standards.

The practical monitoring expertise OHCHR has gained over many years in a wide variety of contexts renders it an authoritative organization to objectively raise human rights concerns, including in polarized situations. Its independent and universal mandate also makes OHCHR a credible convener and facilitator of dialogue. At the country level, OHCHR generally works with a broad range of stakeholders, including diverse civil society actors (human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists and media activists, trade unions, religious leaders, faith-based organizations, academics, etc.) as well as local communities and has used its convening role to facilitate sustained, long-term dialogue and promote interinstitutional and intersectorial dialogue and exchanges on human rights issues.

OHCHR supports the international human rights mechanisms, including treaty bodies and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council. This work specifically focuses on promoting and protecting the rights to freedom of opinion and expression; on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; on the right to freedom of religion and belief; and on the situation of human rights defenders. The Office is also responsible for producing the Secretary-General's annual report to the Human Rights Council on

reprisals against persons cooperating with United Nations human rights mechanisms. By raising human right awareness, holding duty-bearers to account and providing guidance for the promotion and protection of human rights, the international human rights mechanisms play an important role in widening the democratic space. In addition, the High Commissioner has been entrusted with a specific mandate on human rights education in the context of the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing). Over the years, OHCHR has contributed to the increased and improved engagement of civil society actors from around the world with international human rights mechanisms, which has led to the recognition of their role and value at the international level.

OHCHR has considerable experience and expertise in this area, which has been central to its work since its inception. OHCHR's policy on the protection of civil society actors, adopted in 2012, synthesized a range of protection interventions and provided guidance for the work of the Office in this area. For the next four years, OHCHR intends to capitalize on this experience with more concerted action, in particular through: increased and more visible advisory services, monitoring, reporting and advocacy; the collection and dissemination of good practices and lessons learned; and the strengthening of OHCHR's convening role to facilitate dialogue between State actors, civil society, the international community and the UN system.



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Mexican poet Javier Sicilia, who leads the Movement for the Peace with Justice and Dignity, demonstrates along with several social organizations in Mexico City, demanding more security to human rights defenders.

OHCHR expected contribution

Widening the democratic space	
RIGHTS-HOLDERS CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS	DUTY-BEARERS COMPLY WITH THEIR OBLIGATIONS
<p>[EA5]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased participation of rights-holders, including women and discriminated groups, in public life at the national and local levels ▶ Civil society, in particular youth and women, increasingly advocate and claim their rights; and protect themselves more effectively from reprisals ▶ Rights-holders meaningfully participate in the design and monitoring of public policies, budgets and development projects particularly affecting their human rights, especially their rights to food, housing, water and sanitation, and their access to natural resources such as land ▶ Increased use of national protection system by rights-holders, especially through strategic litigation on economic, social and cultural rights 	<p>[EA1]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Constitutions, laws, administrative measures and policies respect, protect and guarantee freedom of opinion and expression, including prohibition of incitement to hatred, peaceful assembly, association, conscience, religion and belief ▶ State agents and political and faith-based actors increasingly comply with human rights standards related to public freedoms and take measures for the development of an independent and pluralistic civil society ▶ Effective human rights education programmes, particularly for youth, established or strengthened ▶ National human rights institutions established and effectively functioning in accordance with the Paris Principles and other relevant international standards and recommendations
	<p>[EA3]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Effective protection mechanisms and measures for civil society actors, including at-risk human rights defenders and media actors established and strengthened
	<p>[EA4]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased representation of marginalized and discriminated groups in State institutions and decision-making bodies
<p>[EA7]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased number and diversity of rights-holders, and of NHRIs and civil society actors acting on their behalf, making use of UN and regional human rights mechanisms and bodies 	<p>[EA6]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased compliance and engagement of Member States with international human rights mechanisms
	<p>[EA8]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Advances in the progressive development of international and regional human rights law in areas relevant to the thematic priorities
<p>[EA10]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased interventions of the international community to promote and protect civil society actors, including against reprisals ▶ Increased responsiveness of the international community to potential, emerging or existing human rights crisis situations, with human rights protection as an integral element of this response 	

By 2017, OHCHR expects to have contributed to the achievement of the results outlined on the table above. OHCHR will pursue these behavioural, institutional and legislative changes in cooperation with relevant partners and using the different strategic tools at its disposal (see Part I on OHCHR's Theory of Change). It is expected that if achieved, these results will contribute to improving the duty-bearers' compliance with their international human rights obligations and to the rights-holders' ability to claim their rights and thereby to widening the democratic space. To illustrate the inter related nature of the Thematic Strategies, the table shows the results to which OHCHR is planning to contribute in this area, including relevant results from other strategies, which can be identified as follows:

- ▶ Mechanisms Strategy; ▶ Discrimination Strategy; ▶ Rule of Law Strategy; ▶ Development Strategy; ▶ Violence Strategy.

Compliance of laws, policies and institutions [EA1]

Constitutions, laws, administrative measures and policies respect, protect and guarantee freedom of opinion and expression, including prohibition of incitement to hatred, peaceful assembly, association, conscience, religion and belief

OHCHR intends to contribute to this change by:

- ▶ Providing legal analysis and advice to and advocating with Member States and other stakeholders in order to bring into compliance with international human rights standards, draft legislation or existing laws, administrative measures and other policies related to freedoms of opinion and expression, including prohibition of incitement to hatred, peaceful assembly, association, conscience, religion and belief and participation in public life.
- ▶ Developing tools (relevant standards, jurisprudence, good practices, lessons learned) to guide the work of legislators, human rights practitioners and other stakeholders on legislation on public freedoms and/or affecting civil society, including laws regulating freedom of assembly and NGOs, counter-terrorism legislation or legislation on public morals.
- ▶ Supporting the interventions of human rights mechanisms in relation to draft and existing legislation and policies and follow-up to their recommendations and views in this area.
- ▶ Using the voice of the High Commissioner and special procedures as advocacy tools, including through diverse communication channels, such as media statements, interviews, letters, open letters, web stories and campaigns.
- ▶ Monitoring and reporting on processes of drafting, adopting or amending legislation, administrative measures and other policies and their compliance with international human rights standards through reports from field presences, rapid deployment missions and the High Commissioner.



By the end of 2017, OHCHR expects to have contributed to the increased compliance with international human rights standards related to the development or strengthening of a legal framework for public participation in Algeria, Cameroon, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Morocco, South Sudan, Tunisia and Uganda.

In Bolivia, Guinea, Mexico and Tanzania the focus will be on legislation protecting the freedom of opinion and expression and the right to information. In Cambodia, Myanmar and Somalia, OHCHR will support national efforts to improve compliance of media legislation or to adopt codes of conduct for the media, such as in Madagascar. OHCHR will work towards the adoption of legislation or procedures protecting the right to peaceful assembly in Guinea, Myanmar and Togo; and of legislation on hate speech in Sri Lanka. In other cases, the Office will support the work of relevant institutions, such as the Independent Audio-visual Regulatory Body in Tunisia or the National Institute for Indigenous People in Paraguay.

In addition, by the end of the programming cycle, OHCHR expects to have contributed to legislation in Burundi, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mauritania and Myanmar that enables the work of civil society and/or protects human rights defenders.

State agents and political and faith-based actors increasingly comply with human rights standards related to public freedoms and take measures for the development of an independent and pluralistic civil society

OHCHR intends to contribute to this change by:

- ▶ Advocating for independent, diverse and pluralistic civil societies through different communication channels (i.e., media statements, interviews, letters, open letters, web stories and campaigns).
- ▶ Acknowledging duty-bearers' expressions of public support for the role of civil society actors and the legitimacy of their work and any measures taken to counter stigmatization, criminalization or de-legitimization of civil society.
- ▶ Awareness-raising among State agents, including the military and law enforcement agents, as well as political and religious actors, on public freedoms, particularly freedom of expression and the use of new forms of communication and information technologies and the human rights challenges posed by related surveillance measures. Monitoring



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Leaders from four religions, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian, march together in Yangon, Myanmar, to mark the 25th anniversary of the “8888 Uprising”. The demonstrations which took place in 1988 were aimed at the one-party state regime.

and reporting on their behaviour in this field, including instances of reprisals.

- ▶ Promoting the implementation of relevant recommendations and views of human rights mechanisms addressed to State agents, political and religious actors.
- ▶ Building the capacity of different actors to monitor public freedoms, including through the development of guidance tools (i.e., the revised OHCHR’s Manual on human rights monitoring; checklists and indicators).
- ▶ Advising on good practices in areas such as: access to and use of information and information technologies, including radio, television and the internet; transparent, accessible, non-discriminatory, expeditious and inexpensive registration procedures for civil society organizations; and collaborative practices between civil society actors and government in promoting and protecting human rights.
- ▶ Advocating for the denunciation, investigation, prosecution, sanction and reparation of instances of violations of standards on public freedoms, including by supporting the use of complaint procedures of the UN human rights mechanisms.
- ▶ Sensitizing religious actors and encouraging them to advocate for tolerance and dialogue.

Effective human rights education programmes, particularly for youth, established or strengthened

With regard to youth, the focus will be on formal education, i.e., primary, secondary, higher education and vocational training.

OHCHR intends to contribute to this change by:

- ▶ Facilitating the provision of or providing technical assistance to State institutions in the area of human rights education (HRE).
- ▶ Developing overall national strategies on HRE in formal education (stock-taking/needs assessment, prioritization, elaboration, implementation and monitoring).
- ▶ Integrating HRE into education and other relevant policies, legislation and regulations.
- ▶ Adopting relevant policy implementation measures, such as establishing coordination mechanisms and allocating adequate resources, including the development or strengthening of HRE resource centres.
- ▶ Promoting the development of human rights-based learning environments.
- ▶ Developing effective learning and teaching processes (methodologies, research) and

tools (curricula, textbooks and other materials, including online tools).

- ▶ Assisting pre-service and in-service human rights training of teachers, professors and other education personnel.
- ▶ Developing public information campaigns targeting youth.
- ▶ Supporting UN human rights mechanisms in monitoring human rights education, including special procedures (in particular the Special Rapporteur on the right to education), relevant treaty bodies (in particular the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).
- ▶ Advocating for effective human rights education programming and support for the HRE work of civil society and a safe and enabling environment in the context of the specific human rights education mandate of the High Commissioner, the World Programme for human rights education and the newly adopted UN Declaration on HRE and Training.
- ▶ Developing and delivering human rights education programmes and training activities, which incorporate a gender perspective and focus on youth leaders, young trainers and marginalized and specific groups, including through joint programmes.
- ▶ Supporting educators with effective human rights education methodologies and with information on relevant resources.
- ▶ Supporting human rights education networking and information-sharing among human rights education actors, in particular between governments and civil society, including on HRE good practices with regard to materials, institutions and programmes.
- ▶ Strengthening partnerships and joint human rights education programming with relevant parts of the UN system (in particular UNESCO and UNICEF), including within United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) at the national level, as well as with other intergovernmental (international and regional) organizations, such as the Council of Europe.
- ▶ Developing and strengthening partnerships with key civil society organizations delivering human rights education, in particular youth organizations/movements, and supporting their peer human rights education work.



By the end of 2017, OHCHR plans to have meaningfully contributed to the development of human rights education policies, programmes or plans in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Mauritania, Timor-Leste and Togo. In countries such as Honduras, Niger, South Sudan and the Gulf States, the focus will be on the inclusion of human rights education in the curricula of formal education at all levels. In Niger, OHCHR will focus on primary and secondary education, in Cambodia on secondary education and in Cambodia, Kenya, Madagascar and the Russian Federation on higher education.

National human rights institutions established and effectively functioning in accordance with the Paris Principles and other relevant international standards and recommendations

OHCHR intends to contribute to this change by:

- ▶ Providing legal analysis and advice to governments and other stakeholders in order to bring draft legislation or existing laws in line with the Paris Principles and other relevant international standards and recommendations.
- ▶ Promoting the implementation of NHRI-related recommendations of UN human rights mechanisms.
- ▶ Supporting NHRIs' interaction with the international human rights system, including treaty bodies, special procedures, the Human Rights Council and its UPR and relevant New York-based UN bodies and meetings.
- ▶ Developing guidance tools and convening trainings and workshops on relevant standards, jurisprudence, good practices and lessons learned for NHRIs, legislators, executive bodies, civil society actors, UNCTs and other stakeholders working with NHRIs.
- ▶ Supporting regular evaluations of NHRI compliance with the Paris Principles and other related standards and recommendations, in particular through rigorous and fair accreditation and re-accreditation procedures by providing secretariat support to the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) and its Bureau.
- ▶ Supporting regional and subregional networks on NHRIs and facilitating partnerships between NHRIs and UNCTs.
- ▶ Supporting NHRIs' interaction with the judiciary, parliaments, NGOs and their participation in accountability and transitional justice processes, prevention of torture and other relevant thematic issues.



In this programming cycle, OHCHR expects to contribute to the establishment of NHRIs in countries where they do not currently exist, including Botswana, Cape Verde, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Contributing to independent and effective institutions operating in accordance with the Paris Principles and the general observations of the ICC Sub-Committee on Accreditation will continue to be the priority of OHCHR in Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, Comoros, Côte D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Fiji, Gambia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iraq, Jamaica, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Maldives, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nauru, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Senegal, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tunisia, Uganda, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe.

needs of women, persons with disabilities and minorities).

- ▶ Facilitating and advocating for access to protection measures by civil society actors, including by using the convening role of OHCHR and facilitating relations between key protection actors - State agents and programmes with a protection function, NHRIs, relevant regional and UN mechanisms, NGOs specialized in protection work, the diplomatic community and civil society actors in need of protection.



By the end of 2017, OHCHR expects to have contributed to the strengthening of mechanisms and measures to protect civil society actors at risk, including human rights defenders and journalists in Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Zimbabwe and countries in Southeast Asia.

Accountability mechanisms [EA3]

Effective protection mechanisms and measures for civil society actors, including at-risk human rights defenders and media actors established and strengthened

- OHCHR intends to contribute to this change by:
- ▶ Supporting and advising on the establishment and strengthening of accessible and effective mechanisms and measures for the protection of civil society actors at risk, including early warning mechanisms, risk assessments and rapid response capacities.
 - ▶ Compiling and disseminating good practices and lessons learned on effective mechanisms for the protection of civil society actors at risk.
 - ▶ Supporting the establishment or strengthening of State institutions and oversight mechanisms (judiciary, public prosecutors, NHRIs and law enforcement institutions), as well as relevant civil society actors (bar and lawyers' associations, legal aid centres, media workers and activists, trades unions) for the monitoring and handling of complaints relating to human rights violations and the effective protection of civil society actors at risk.
 - ▶ Advocating for protection mechanisms to be human rights compliant (shelters, rather than de facto detention centres for victim/witness protection programmes; catering to the specific

Participation [EA5]

Increased participation of rights-holders, including women and discriminated groups, in public life at the national and local levels

OHCHR intends to contribute to this change by:

- ▶ Developing resources, collecting and exchanging good practices and providing expertise to build the capacity of a broad range of civil society actors, including women, migrants and groups discriminated against or marginalized, to participate in and follow-up on the development and implementation of critical public processes at national and local levels.
- ▶ Advocating for and supporting the development or strengthening of modalities for broad and meaningful participation of rights-holders in all aspects of public life in accordance with international standards.
- ▶ Monitoring and reporting on the participation of rights-holders in critical legislative, political and economic decision-making processes that affect them with an emphasis on the participation of women, migrants and groups discriminated against.
- ▶ Holding consultations and meetings with national and local authorities and State institutions to ensure participation in public life and decision-making processes.

- ▶ Advocating for and facilitating dialogue between civil society actors, NHRIs, national and local authorities and State institutions, as well as among various civil society actors.
- ▶ Engaging with international and regional actors to advocate for and support inclusive, meaningful and sustainable participation of civil society actors in all aspects of public life as a part of a human rights-based approach to programming.



By the end of 2017, OHCHR expects to have contributed to improving the level of participation in political life in Benin, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Senegal and Sudan. In certain countries, the focus will be on the participation of women (Mauritania and Togo); women and youth (Guinea and Yemen) and/or discriminated groups, such as women, indigenous peoples and peoples with disabilities in Paraguay or indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in countries of Central America.

Civil society, in particular youth and women, increasingly advocate and claim their rights; and protect themselves more effectively from reprisals

OHCHR intends to contribute to this change by:

- ▶ Increasing OHCHR use of social media to sensitize and raise public awareness about human rights, particularly among youth.
- ▶ Facilitating cooperation and networking among human rights education actors, in particular between government and civil society actors.
- ▶ Providing grants to grassroots and local civil society organizations for human rights education and training activities through the Assisting Communities Together (ACT) Project.
- ▶ Strengthening partnerships and supporting key organizations working on the protection of civil society actors by, inter alia, supporting public messaging, undertaking joint activities, providing training opportunities, giving recognition to their work and facilitating the establishment and strengthening of networks.
- ▶ Enabling access to protection measures by facilitating contacts between key protection actors

and civil society actors in need of protection, including through the online compilation of relevant organizations and resources (handbooks, training activities) with a particular focus on the specific needs of women defenders.

- ▶ Compiling and sharing good practices and lessons learned on the protection of civil society actors, with an emphasis on the experiences and challenges of women defenders, prepared through the organization of regional events.
- ▶ Exploring the possible establishment of a fellowship programme for human rights defenders at risk, particularly women defenders.
- ▶ Developing internal protocols on OHCHR's protection role, including in areas such as reprisals and conducting risk assessments.
- ▶ Supporting emblematic litigation cases involving civil society actors, including those concerning whistle-blowers and abuses committed by the business sector.
- ▶ Enhancing implementation of related recommendations and views of the human rights treaty bodies and special procedures.
- ▶ Updating the fact sheet on the right to defend human rights and developing guidance and briefing materials on reprisals, civil society space and the role of the international community and the UN.
- ▶ Advocating for rights-holders' free access to media outlets, such as social media platforms, including for human rights defenders and other civil society actors at risk.



With support from OHCHR, it is anticipated that by the end of 2017, civil society and particularly youth and women, will be making better use of human rights standards and protection systems to advocate for their rights, including their right to take part in public life in Argentina, Bolivia, Cameroon, Chile, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Myanmar, Peru, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Timor Leste, Uganda, Zimbabwe, countries in Southeast Asia, countries covered by the UN Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre in Doha and Kosovo*.

Responsiveness of the international community [EA10]

Increased interventions of the international community to promote and protect civil society actors, including against reprisals

OHCHR intends to contribute to this result by:

- ▶ Advising on and advocating for interventions by the international community and the UN system to support and protect civil society actors at risk, including whistle-blowers disclosing information on human rights violations (i.e., issuing public statements in support of civil society under threat; visiting civil society actors in detention in relation to human rights activities; facilitating temporary shelter in third countries; awareness-raising about the risks and challenges faced by civil society amongst UN system agencies and programmes and available mechanisms (i.e., the Secretary-General, the Secretary-General's Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Resident Coordinators, UNCTs and human rights mechanisms), including through the dissemination of existing and new information materials on the topic, such as on reprisals.
- ▶ Monitoring and reporting, including through OHCHR's database(s) and in conjunction with other organizations, on the situation of civil society actors at risk, particularly human rights defenders, women defenders, defenders working on the nexus between business and human rights, whistle-blowers and media workers and activists, such as bloggers.
- ▶ Making use of the convening role of OHCHR to hold consultations involving international actors to share experiences, good practices and lessons learned on measures and approaches to support and protect civil society actors.
- ▶ Establishing "contact groups" of protection actors in certain countries to address specific cases.
- ▶ Mobilizing key actors, including the diplomatic community, to swiftly follow-up on cases of reprisals.
- ▶ Strengthening coordination with international actors, including regional human rights mechanisms and bodies, on these matters.