



UN Special Rapporteur
Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly and of Association
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International
Labour
Organization



ITUC CSI IGB



United Nations Human Rights Council - 34th Session

Side Event: Freedoms of association and peaceful assembly in the workplace

Date: 6 March 2017

Time: 12:00 – 14:00

Venue: Room XXI, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Background:

The rights to freedom of association and of peaceful assembly are fundamental rights rooted in international human and labour standards. They are essential for human dignity, democracy, decent work and sustainable development. They enable the persons concerned to claim, freely and on the basis of equality of opportunity, their fair share of the wealth they have helped to generate, and to achieve their full potential. As a powerful tool for empowerment and social dialogue, freedoms of association and peaceful assembly are essential for employers and workers to address the most pressing economic and social concerns of our times, including global poverty and inequality.

Despite the recognized integrality of protecting and promoting a conducive environment for the exercise of these rights, in many countries around the world, millions of women and men are unable to exercise them due to complex legal and practical barriers. These barriers tend to disproportionately affect informal, rural, migrant, domestic workers, small producers and workers in supply chains. The consequence of this situation is grave not only for these groups, but for their entire societies. Without collective voice and representation at work, workers are more vulnerable to discrimination, child labour and forced labour. This situation also aggravates other decent work gaps, makes it more difficult to eradicate poverty, and can result in deep social divisions and conflict.

In June 2016, the International Labour Conference adopted a resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work, which stressed the urgency of promoting the universal and immutable fundamental principles and rights at work, in particular freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, as rights and enabling conditions.

A few months later, at the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly held in October 2016, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Mr.

Maina Kiai, presented his final annual thematic report. The report examines the exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in the workplace. It also takes important steps to further consolidate the shared conceptual and legal framework underpinning labour rights and human rights. Specifically, the report reaffirms the importance of safeguarding the rights to freedom of assembly and of association to reverse entrenched economic inequality. The report's conclusion calls for greater alliances between human rights and labour rights actors to tackle rapidly evolving challenges.

Objectives:

The proposed UN Human Rights Council side event will provide an important ingress to engage in a dialogue on main challenges and opportunities to advance the rights to freedom of association and of peaceful assembly in the workplace. It will also be an opportunity to have a common discussion on lessons learned and recommendations made by actors with complementary mandates in this field. In particular, the event will provide an opportunity to examine practical measures to better integrate the interrelated norms protecting human rights and labour rights, especially in the framework of the sustainable development goals.

Format:

The two-hour event will include a panel discussion with a diverse range of actors working on the labour and human rights dimensions of freedoms of association and peaceful assembly. This will be followed by an interactive Q&A session with the audience.

Moderator and speaker:

- Mr. Maina Kiai, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association

Speakers:

- Ms. Kate Gilmore, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Ms. Deborah Greenfield, Deputy Director General for Policy, International Labour Organization
- Ms. Raquel Gonzalez, Director Geneva Office, International Trade Union Confederation
- Ms. Shawna Bader-Blau, Executive Director, Solidarity Center
- Mr. Roberto Suarez-Santos, Deputy Secretary-General, International Organization of Employers
- TBA

Accreditation procedure:

For those who do not have an NGO or conference badge to access the venue, please send the following information to Mr. Hassan Kurdi (hkurdi@ohchr.org), ccing Mr. Guillaume Pfeifflié (gpfeiffle@ohchr.org), by Thursday 2 March 3pm (Geneva time):

- First and surname; and
- Name of the organization you work for.

You will be able to collect your visitor badge at the Pregny gate entrance of Palais des Nations, upon presentation of a valid ID with photo, one hour prior to the event. Please note that next Monday morning is expected to be a busy period for accreditation in the context of the on-going Human Rights Council session, so please allow sufficient time for the procedure (wait up to 60-90 minutes):

Map of Palais des Nations:

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/88FFDD768F055AECC1256F2A0052A3C/\\$file/Palais+des+Nations+map.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/88FFDD768F055AECC1256F2A0052A3C/$file/Palais+des+Nations+map.pdf)

Should you have any question in relation to the above, please contact Messrs Kurdi and Pfeifflié.
