UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
SPECIAL PROCEDURES
SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS, INDEPENDENT EXPERTS & WORKING GROUPS

PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND
www.ohchr.org • TEL: +41 22 917 9000 • FAX: +41 22 917 9008 • E-MAIL: freessembly@ohchr.org

Call for inputs from the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association for his report to be presented at the 44th session of the Human Rights Council

This year will mark the 10th anniversary of the mandate of the United Nations Special Rapporteur (UNSR) on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association (FoAA). Its creation by the Human Rights Council in 2010 put the rights to FoAA at the center of international human rights discussions and helped raise awareness and counter the many threats people face while exercising these rights.

Over this decade, the mandate - working closely with civil society organizations, governments and other international and regional human rights bodies – has advocated for the creation of a more open and enabling civic space for many individuals and communities around the world. There have been many achievements but also an increase in the number and complexity of threats to the enjoyment of FoAA. Furthermore, the mandate has carried out extensive work to strengthen the international normative framework for the exercise of the rights to FoAA. It has also strived to ensure that this framework is applied in domestic laws and practices by providing action-oriented recommendations for legislative and institutional reforms. In addition, it has offered guidance to courts at the national and regional level on how to provide effective recourse for violations of these rights. Many governments have engaged in constructive dialogue with the mandate and supported its work throughout these years. Moreover, collaboration with civil society organizations has been a defining feature of the work of the mandate since its inception.

Despite the progress made, the global problem of closing civic space persists and in many places is intensifying. An increasing number of States, as well as non-State actors are placing unwarranted restrictions on civil society, calling into question the value of the rights of individuals and groups to exercise freely their rights to FoAA. In multiple reports, the UNSR has identified several threats facing these rights: from the adoption of restrictive legislation and the criminalization and brutal repression of peaceful protests to the stigmatization of and violence against civil society actors and restrictions to digital space.

It is in this context that the Special Rapporteur, will devote his thematic report to the Human Rights Council at its 44th session to reflecting on the past decade and setting a vision for the mandate's future agenda. He therefore wishes to receive

your inputs, by responding to the below questions, that will help enriching this upcoming report.

Responses to the below questions and any other relevant input should be sent in English, French or Spanish to freeassembly@ohchr.org by 29 February 2020. Kindly indicate in the subject of your email "Submission to HRC 44th session report".

Call for inputs – Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

1. What have been the most important areas of progress and achievements in your work over the past decade in advancing the exercise on the freedoms of peaceful assembly and of association (FoAA)? How is your organization engaging with the UN human rights mechanisms to promote FoAA? Please provide specific examples or concrete cases.

2. What are the main challenges that your organisation has confronted in seeking to protect the freedoms of peaceful assembly and of association since 2010? How have you addressed these challenges? What part of the population was particular affected by those challenges?

3. To what extend has the work of the Special Rapporteur proved useful in support of your work and to address the above-mentioned challenges? What were the most impactful actions of the mandate vis à vis your work and these challenges?

4. In your view, a) where does the mandate stand today in terms of achieving progress or pushing back against closing civic space? b) What are your expectations of the mandate for the future? c) What should the mandate do more of, and where should its priorities lie in the coming years?

5. Please share examples of innovative initiatives by your organization that should inspire the work of the mandate in the years ahead.