

Human Rights Organizations from Across the Globe Call on UN to Protect Human Rights in the Context of Social Protest

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GENEVA – As the United Nation’s Human Rights Council prepares to debate a draft motion on social protest, human rights organizations from around the world have joined their voices to call on the UN to provide meaningful protection for this essential democratic right.

On March 7, a letter signed by nine national organizations spanning five continents was sent to the Member States of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Democracies must welcome diverse forms of public participation. Such activities must be actively facilitated by states if they are to comply with their obligations to protect, respect and fulfill international human rights.

The signatory organizations welcome the renewed and increased attention to freedom of peaceful assembly and the protection of human rights, including freedom of association, expression and opinion, in the broader context of social protest. As domestically-focused actors with decades of experience monitoring policing and protest, we have seen first hand the diverse and multiple facets of the right to peaceful assembly and rights within the context of social protest more broadly. Although our individual domestic experiences stem from diverse political contexts and legal systems, we are united by our conviction that public protest is an essential component of any vibrant democracy. We are also united by our concern for the protection of this fundamental right.

The draft resolution, “The promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests”, is being debated in Geneva and is scheduled for adoption at the 22nd Session of the Human Rights Council. The civil society organizations that have signed the letter are:

American Civil Liberties Union – ACLU (USA)
Association for Civil Rights in Israel - ACRI (Israel)
Canadian Civil Liberties Association - CCLA (Canada)
Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales - CELS (Argentina)
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights - EIPR (Egypt)
Hungarian Civil Liberties Union - HCLU (Hungary)
Irish Council for Civil Liberties - ICCL (Ireland)
Legal Resource Centre - LRC (South Africa)
Liberty (UK)

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