



PRESS RELEASE

Civil Society Welcomes Maina Kiai as UNHRC Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Assembly and of Association

30 MARCH 2011 - ARTICLE 19, CIVICUS:World Alliance for Citizen Participation, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), and the World Movement for Democracy welcome the appointment of Maina Kiai as the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association for the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). His appointment comes at a crucial time when issues related to freedom of assembly are at the core of recent developments in North Africa, the Middle East, and beyond.

Through a press release on 5 July 2010, ARTICLE 19, CIVICUS, ICNL, and the World Movement called for the establishment of a UN Special Rapporteur to defend freedom of association and the creation of an objective and independent mechanism for monitoring repressive measures against civil society. On 30 September 2010, we and other civil society groups welcomed the adoption of the Human Rights Council's Resolution A/HRC/15/L.23, which created the Special Rapporteur on freedom of assembly and association.

We are now delighted that the UNHRC also appointed Mr. Kiai as the Special Rapporteur. We have no doubt that Mr. Kiai, who has over 20 years of experience in human rights advocacy and policy development in Africa and around the world, will execute the responsibilities of the Special Rapporteur in an independent, impartial, objective, principled, and diligent manner.

At a time when the rights to freedom of assembly and association are increasingly under threat around the world, Mr. Kiai's mandate is of the highest importance. We expect him to put the issues of freedom of assembly and association at the center of the UN's priorities and to further deepen the UN's commitment to protecting civic participation in political and social development.

ARTICLE 19, CIVICUS, ICNL, and the World Movement express our support for Mr. Kiai as he seeks to fulfill his mandate, and we look forward to working with him.

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