

Recommendations of delegates attending the Mano River Union workshop on the implementation of recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Commission).

Convened by the International Service for Human Rights in collaboration with Liberia Coalition of Human Rights Defenders, and the West Africa Human Rights Defenders Network.

Held from 8 to 12 July 2012 at Hotel Provident in Monrovia, Liberia, we the participants – human rights defenders, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), and government representatives from ministries of justice and human rights – from the Mano River Union region:

Considering that countries in the Mano River Union basin, i.e: Liberia, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, are signatories to international instruments and treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR);

Noting that all four countries, Cote d'Ivoire (2009), Liberia (2010), Guinea (2010), and Sierra Leone (2011), have been reviewed by the UPR mechanism and accepted some of the recommendations, for which implementation is essential for peace;

Concerned at the lack of submission of reports to the African Commission and the number of late reports accumulated by these countries, i.e. Liberia (15 reports outstanding), Sierra Leone (14), Ivory Coast (10), and Guinea (7);

Realizing that the implementation of the UPR recommendations are essential to peace and security and respect for human dignity in the sub-region;

Conscious of the fragile situation of human rights in these countries; a situation that has necessitated the recent assembly of the heads of States of the Mano River Union countries in the Ivorian capital Abidjan, to discuss peace, security and respect for human rights;

Noting the continued commitment of the International Service for Human Rights to support and strengthen the capacities of human rights defenders and NHRIs of the Mano River region, through the financial support of Irish Aid and Diakonie;

Deploring the slow implementation of UPR recommendations by the different Mano River Union States, and remaining confident that the respective governments of these countries will work to the full implementation of these recommendations;

Believing that the implementation of UPR recommendations will foster peace and enhance the promotion and protection of human rights in the sub region;

Recommend:

1. That Mano River Union States put in place national action plans on the UPR, where they do not already exist;
2. That governments encourage the involvement of national non-governmental organizations in preparation for their countries' respective reviews under the UPR;
3. That all State actors involved in the UPR process are mobilised, through effective mechanisms, for monitoring of the implementation of recommendations made to the State;
4. That States provide the necessary support to NHRIs that allows them to be actively involved in monitoring the implementation of the UPR recommendations and preparations for the next UPR process;
5. That States submit all their overdue reports to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Done on 12 July 2012, in the City of Monrovia, Republic of Liberia

The participants