



**AFRICANDEFENDERS**  
Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network



**DEFENDDEFENDERS**  
East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

**73<sup>rd</sup> ordinary session of the African Commission  
on Human and Peoples' Rights**

**Observer Status No. 359**

**Statement on the situation of human rights defenders in Africa**

**Honorable Chairperson,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is heart-breaking that as we celebrate 35 years of the African Commission and 24 Years of the UN Declaration on human rights defenders, we have documented just for the past 6 months 216 cases of violations against HRDs with impunity.

Many human rights defenders have been forced to exile, jailed and some have paid the ultimate price, like a land protection human rights defender [Ayanda Ngila](#), a member of the grassroots movement Abahlali baseMjondolo in south Africa who was shot dead near Durban, South Africa, on 8 March 2022.

We witness the persistence of violations of basic freedoms, attacks on civic space, and reprisals against HRDs and this in contradiction with the credo of the Africa we Want.

This means that instead of addressing the warnings and the grievances and concerns HRDs express, they are met with judicial

oppression. Governments have always used the judiciary as a tool of repression and arm to silence HRDs.

**Hon. Chairperson,**

In March 2022, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a landmark resolution on HRDs, focusing on HRDs operating on conflict and post-conflict situations. We welcome that 11 out of 13 African members of the Council voted “Yes” on the resolution. Only two (Eritrea and Sudan) abstained.

We encourage all states to walk the talk and protect HRDs in all circumstances.

In this regard, we note with high regard the statement delivered by the delegation of The Gambia during the [adoption process](#).<sup>1</sup> I Quote The Gambian representative: *“Given the fact that we have just come out of 22 years of tyranny, and knowing exactly what that does, it is important that we do register our support for all human rights defenders across the world.”*

We would like to re-echo your report on your visit with us to Cabo Verde and would like to appreciate the great collaboration and outstanding support expressed to us by the government of Cabo Verde in Hosting the Ubuntu Hub City Initiative.

I thank you, Honorable Chairperson.

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<sup>1</sup> At 38’38”.