

May 21, 2020

H.E. Michelle Bachelet
High Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais Wilson
United Nations
Geneva, Switzerland
(via email: mbachelet@ohchr.org)

Ambassador Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger
President of the Human Rights Council
Palais des Nations
United Nations
Geneva, Switzerland
(via email: hrcpresidency@un.org)

Your Excellencies,

The undersigned civil society organizations request an opportunity to provide supplements to submissions made to the 36th session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group, tentatively scheduled for November 2 to 13, 2020. In order for civil society contributions to meaningfully support the work of the Human Rights Council, we also request that the supplemental submissions be summarized and published by the UPR Secretariat and shared as an addendum to the summary of stakeholders' information.

On March 20, 2020, the Bureau of the Human Rights Council decided to postpone the 36th session of the Working Group, which was scheduled to take place May 4 to 15, 2020. The decision was made because “of the spread of COVID-19 and the emergency measures that have been taken by affected countries worldwide, including the host country, Switzerland.”

As you are well aware, the COVID-19 pandemic is having a catastrophic impact on millions of people around the world, especially the most vulnerable in our societies, who are suffering the worst of and will undoubtedly be the last to recover from this global health and economic crisis. Too many will not even survive the pandemic. We strongly believe, and we have no doubt you agree, that the international human rights system should continue to vigorously monitor, document, and report on the human rights implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on marginalized populations. It should also encourage Governments and other stakeholders to take all necessary measures to protect everyone's human rights without discrimination or distinction of any kind - an imperative in times of global crisis.

The upcoming UPR Working Group session will have profound significance as the first session to examine Member States' human rights records in the wake of COVID-19. It is critical that this November session ensures that government responses to the current pandemic, including recovery and relief measures, protect basic human rights and are compatible with international human rights commitments and obligations. The objectives of identifying effective state practices and highlighting gaps in human rights protections that result from COVID-19 are key to strengthening compliance with international standards, and articulating the necessary conditions for transformative and lasting change.

Civil society submissions to the 36th session were made in October 2019, more than a year prior to the rescheduled review. Further, given the severe and far-reaching impact of COVID-19

on human rights, some of the information that was provided to the Human Rights Council is insufficient and outdated. Allowing civil society groups to formally supplement their submissions is critical to ensuring a more reliable and accurate assessment of governments' compliance with their international human rights obligations, especially since the outset of the COVID-19 crisis.

We thank you in advance for providing sufficient notice with regard to your decision, including timelines for submission of supplemental materials, and any scheduling changes for the upcoming review cycles so that we can effectively contribute to this critical process.

Sincerely,

African Diaspora Directorate

Aging People in Prison Human Rights Campaign

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

American Friends Service Committee

Amnesty International

Art and Resistance Through Education (ARTE)

Assembly of Pro-Democratic NGOs of Belarus

Best Practices Policy Project

BLM Memphis

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

Campaign for Youth Justice

Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR)

Center for Disability Rights

Center for Pan-African Affairs

Center for Reproductive Rights

The Center for Rural Enterprise and Environmental Justice

Coalición de Derechos Humanos

Columbia Global Freedom of Expression

Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute

Committee to Protect Journalists

Cornell Law School Gender Justice Clinic

Creative Educators International Network
Detained Migrant Solidarity Committee
The DC Human Rights City Alliance
First Peoples Worldwide
Fourteenth Amendment Group
The Franklin Law Group
Friends of Angola
The GAP Gyrلز and Gyz
Global Justice Center
Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights
The Hill District Consensus Group
Human Rights and Gender Justice Clinic
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights Educators - USA
Human Rights NGO Forum
Human Rights Project at the Urban Justice Center
Human Rights Watch
If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University
Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion
International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law
International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
International Women's Initiative
MADRE
MAS Justice Center
Medical Whistleblower Advocacy Network
Movement for Black Lives
NAACP

National Council of Churches
National Jericho Movement
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
National Lawyers Guild International Committee
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
New Afrikan Peoples Organization and Malcolm X Grassroots Movement
NGO Committee on the Status of Women, NY (NGOCSW/NY)
NGO Ecohome
Partners for Dignity and Rights
Plataforma Internacional Contra la Impunidad
Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance
Pittsburgh University Human Rights Working Group
Pittsburghers for Public Transit
Positive Women's Network
Prevention Access Campaign
Protection International Mesoamérica
Rescue Alternatives Liberia (RAL)
Rights and Democracy Institute (RDI)
Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc.
San Jose State University Human Rights Institute
Santa Clara University International Human Rights Clinic
Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center
Sexual Rights Initiative
Soroptimist International
South Texas Human Rights Center
The Talking Drum Incorporated
Tranawave Jamaica
Trap Panther Party

Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC)

United Nations Association of the USA

University and College Consortium for Human Rights Education (UCCHRE)

University of Miami School of Law Human Rights Clinic

University of Oklahoma College of Law International Human Rights Clinic

University Professionals of Illinois Union, NEIU Chapter

US Human Rights Network (USHRN)

Women Enabled International

Women Lead Network

Woodhull Freedom Foundation

CC:

Mr. Eric Tistounet, Head of the Human Rights Council Branch

Mr. Gianni Magazzeni, Head of UPR Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights