

Protecting Civic Space and the Right to Access Resources

A project of the Community of Democracies in partnership with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association

Supported by:



Community of Democracies (CD) is an intergovernmental coalition founded in the year of 2000 to bring together governments, civil society and the private sector in the pursuit of a common goal: supporting and strengthening democratic norms, practices and institutions around the world.

The mandate of the **United Nations Special Rapporteur (UNSR) on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association** was established in 2010. The Special Rapporteur examines, advises and publicly reports on the status of the rights to freedom of assembly and association worldwide.

Background

In recent years, a worrying trend of shrinking civic space has emerged, bringing with it an alarming increase in restrictions on local and foreign funding of activists and organizations in supporting democracy. The urgency of the matter was highlighted in a recent report compiled by the UNSR, presented to the United Nations Human Rights Council in April 2013.

The need to counter this trend was stressed in a special high-level event hosted by the President of the United States in September 2013, in which heads of states and international organizations (including the CD) committed to initiate actions to protect civic space globally.

Project overview

The project “Protecting Civic Space and the Right to Access Resources” is a part of these global efforts to protect and support civil society. It aims to create platforms where civil society actors and states can discuss obstacles and solutions to the shrinking civic space in different regions of the world.

Through a series of dialogues in five regions, the project will focus on key challenges that civil society organizations face in accessing resources. The goal of the regional dialogues is to identify these challenges, disseminate information about them, and produce recommendations and strategies, which can help in overcoming them.

Activities

Over the course of two years (2014-2015), a set of five regional dialogues will be organized in the framework of the project, covering five regions of the world: Africa, Asia, OSCE Region, Latin America, and the Middle East and Northern Africa. Each meeting will include consultations with local and regional civil society, as well as a cross-sector dialogue with government representatives of one or more countries from the respective regions.

In addition, a research study will be implemented as part of the project, analyzing previous resolutions by the United Nations on civil society organizations' access to resources, and evaluating the ability to provide support to non-violent civil society organizations.



Results

The outcomes of the regional dialogues, as well as possible tools to be developed by the project, will be presented during a final conference. The conference will evaluate the state of civil society around the world and measure the progress of efforts to facilitate access to funding for civil society organizations. Furthermore, recommendations arising during the dialogues are expected to inform the work of the UNSR, the UN Human Rights Council and the work of the Community of Democracies.



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