



### UN Releases Special Rapporteur Kiai's latest report on 'at risk groups'

May 13, 2014 - The United Nations has publicly [released](#) Special Rapporteur Maina Kiai's third thematic report to the Human Rights Council, in advance of Kiai's presentation of the report to the Council in June.

The report focuses on the challenges facing those most "at risk" when exercising their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association. This category includes individuals and groups that are often relegated to the margins of society, both in their daily lives and in the exercise of their rights.

Some of the groups considered in the report include persons with disabilities; youth, including children; women; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people; members of minority groups; indigenous peoples; internally displaced persons; and non-nationals, including refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers.

"Two thousand fourteen is shaping up to be the year of the protest, with the news dominated by stories of mass demonstrations in Ukraine, Venezuela and elsewhere," said Kiai, who recently began his second three-year term as Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association. "But the crackdown on assembly and association rights extends far beyond what we see in the headlines."

"Those at the margins of society face vicious repression, with their assembly and association rights limited by unjust legislation, harassment, violence and threats. These individuals – the excluded, the disfavored, people whose voices have not been heard through more conventional means – are not always featured on the news. But they deserve our attention."

The report documents numerous examples of marginalization that negatively impacts assembly and association rights in dozens of countries.

In Myanmar, for example, the Rohingya people – who some claim have been present in the country for centuries – have seen their assembly and association rights entirely eliminated under the constitution due to their "stateless" classification. The law in Cyprus allows private employers to prohibit legal migrants from engaging in political activity in their employment contracts, effectively depriving this group of their right to peacefully assemble and freely associate.

In Nigeria, it is a criminal offence to register, operate, participate in or support "gay clubs, societies, organizations, processions or meetings", which prohibits any public or private meeting on the subject of sexual orientation and gender identity. In Russia, meanwhile, a recent law prohibits "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" among minors, effectively banning gay rights protests.

Youth can be targeted as well – in Malaysia, people under 21 are prohibited from organizing a peaceful public demonstration. Children below age 15 cannot even participate.

The report includes case studies from Canada, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Kuwait, Singapore, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Uganda, China, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Costa Rica, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Viet Nam and more. The report also considers threats against groups and individuals who are targeted not because of their identity, but because they actively lobby for the rights of those most at risk of discrimination and retribution.

"An individual's status as a member of a marginalized group should never mean that assembly and association rights are diminished," Kiai said. "If anything, disenfranchised groups have an even greater need for alternative means to participate. Associations and peaceful assemblies are an important tool for allowing the voices of otherwise excluded groups to be heard."

Kiai is tentatively scheduled to present the report to the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 10.

The report's document number is A/HRC/26/29; it is available on Maina Kiai's website, [freeassembly.net](http://freeassembly.net). For media inquiries, please contact [media@freeassembly.net](mailto:media@freeassembly.net)