

# The Mandate of UN Special Rapporteur Maina Kiai

## Summary of outputs & core activities: May 2011 - January 2015

The position of Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association ("FOAA rights") was established in October 2010 via Human Rights Council [resolution 15/21](#) and renewed for an additional three years in September 2013 via HRC [resolution 24/5](#). Maina Kiai took up his duties as the first Special Rapporteur on assembly and association on May 1, 2011. His term expires on April 30, 2017. The following list of activities is not comprehensive (hyperlinks lead to source documents on the mandate's website, [www.freeassembly.net](http://www.freeassembly.net) and elsewhere).

### Country visits

Country visits offer the chance for Special Rapporteurs to perform in-depth analysis and attempt to examine the entire landscape for assembly and association rights in a particular UN Member State. They are conducted at the invitation of the Member State Government. Thus far, Maina Kiai has made the following official visits as Special Rapporteur:

- [Republic of Georgia](#) (A/HRC/20/27/Add.2) - visited in 2012
- [United Kingdom](#) (A/HRC/23/39/Add.1) - visited in 2013
- [Rwanda](#) (A/HRC/26/29/Add.2) - visited in 2014
- [Oman](#) (report to be released in June 2015) - visited in 2014
- [Kazakhstan](#) (report to be released in June 2015) - visited in 2015

*Note: The mandate has time and funding for approximately three more country visits before the end of Maina Kiai's mandate.*

### Thematic reports

Thematic reports form the backbone of the Special Rapporteur's work: They survey and document how assembly and association rights are exercised, protected and restrained worldwide; they identify trends; and they provide the opportunity to help shape the contours of international law and standards in response to these trends. Thus far, Maina Kiai has produced the following thematic reports:

- [Best Practices in Promoting FOAA rights](#) (A/HRC/20/27) - presented to the Human Rights Council in 2012
- [Civil society's ability to seek, receive and utilize resources](#) (A/HRC/23/39) - presented to the Human Rights Council in 2013
- [FOAA rights in the context of elections](#) (A/68/299) - presented to the General Assembly in 2013
- [Groups most at risk when exercising FOAA rights](#) (A/HRC/26/29) - presented to the Human Rights Council in 2014
- [Multilateral institutions and their effect on assembly and association rights](#) (A/69/365) - presented to the General Assembly in 2014
- FOAA rights in the context of natural resource exploitation - [scheduled](#) to be presented to the Human Rights Council in June 2015
- Equitable treatment for non-profit and for-profit entities - scheduled to be presented to the General Assembly in Oct. 2015

*Note: The mandate will produce two more reports for the Human Rights Council (2016 and 2017) and one more report for the General Assembly (2016) before the end of Maina Kiai's mandate.*

### Communications to Governments

As part of their official duties, Special Rapporteurs regularly send communications to national Governments when allegations of serious human rights abuses arise. These communications raise concerns about specific issues, lay out the information that the UN has received concerning the issues, and request further information from the State. States are invited to respond, but not all choose to do so. The Special Rapporteur has sent roughly 600 communications to UN Member State Governments since 2011, calling their attention to alleged human rights abuses and seeking information. These communications are collated (with Government responses) at the following links (or listed by country [here](#)):

- Observations on Communications to Governments and Replies Received 2012 ([A/HRC/20/27/Add.3](#))
- Report: Observations on Communications to Governments and Replies Received 2013 ([A/HRC/23/39/Add.2](#))
- Observations on Communications to Governments and Replies Received 2013-14 ([A/HRC/26/29/Add.1](#))

### Press statements

Special Rapporteurs may also comment publicly, via press statements, on particular issues once they have raised the issue directly with the State involved. Thus far, Maina Kiai has issued roughly 80 official [press statements](#) on specific FOAA matters issued through the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights since 2011. He has issued another 30-plus statements and announcements via the mandate's independent website and mailing list.

### Conferences, consultations & speaking engagements

UN Special Rapporteurs are leading experts and spokespeople on their designated issue, which gives them the opportunity to build momentum around that issue, to listen to what people are saying on the ground, and to motivate others to help promote and protect human rights. As Special Rapporteur, Maina Kiai has maintained a packed schedule throughout the mandate, making over 100 international trips to dozens of countries and participating in conferences, workshops and other events - from [CIVICUS World Assemblies](#) to countless get-togethers for local, [regional](#) and global civil society groups. He also made several academic visits to meet with a number of stakeholders in countries that are of interest to the mandate, including to [Cambodia](#), Malaysia, [Burundi](#), Bangladesh and Canada. The Special Rapporteur also regularly conducts expert consultations to help him prepare his thematic reports to the United Nations, such as the 2014 consultations in [Istanbul](#) and [Bangkok](#), where civil society members are invited to directly contribute. He also invites comments from others with an interest in the thematic issue via [OHCHR](#) and the [discussion pages of his website](#).

### Online presence & communications outreach efforts

In late 2013, the Special Rapporteur mandate received funding to launch an independent communications plan, with the aim of widening the audience for the mandate. Specific outputs include:

- [Freeassembly.net website](#): Started in late 2013, the site serves as a hub for information about FOAA rights and promotes the work of the mandate; it received a total of 40,295 page views in 2014.
- [Social media](#): The Special Rapporteur has over 4,600 followers [Twitter](#) and approximately 1,200 page likes on [Facebook](#). A [Flickr page](#) features official photos from the mandate, which can be freely used by civil society and media outlets.
- [Periodic newsletter](#): Sent approximately 8-9 times per year to our 1,000-strong mailing list and uploaded on [Freeassembly.net](#).
- [Factsheet series](#): Concise, easy-to-use documents that summarize key aspects of FOAA rights. Some have been translated into multiple languages.
- [Annual report](#): Started in 2014, this report is published independently by Maina Kiai and reviews the events of the previous year from the perspective of assembly and association rights.
- A variety of op-eds on FOAA issues published in outlets such as the [Guardian](#), the Guardian's [development blog](#), the [Journal of Global Ethics](#), and more.

### Joint projects & collaborations

The Special Rapporteur has engaged extensively in joint projects and collaborations, including with the Community of Democracies ([civic space and funding project](#)), the Government of Sweden ([the Civic Space Initiative](#)), the Government of Norway ([FOAA litigation project](#)) and the creation of best practice manuals on FOAA rights), the Government of Switzerland (joint project with the UNSR on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions), the World Movement for Democracy, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, CIVICUS, Article 19, and countless other civil society organizations around the world.