



The Assembly and Association Briefing

Newsletter of the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

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A garment factory in Viet Nam. The Special Rapporteur will present his latest report - covering assembly and association rights in the workplace - to the General Assembly on Oct. 20, 2016 (photo: ILO/Aaron Santos)

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Kiai to present final report to UN General Assembly, examining assembly and association rights in the workplace

NEW YORK — United Nations Special Rapporteur Maina Kiai will appear before the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly on October 20 to present his final report to the body — a study examining the exercise of assembly and association rights in the workplace.

Kiai, who has served as the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association since 2011, is scheduled to present at the General Assembly's Third Committee on October 20 (time to be announced). The session will be broadcast live on <http://webtv.un.org/>.

Kiai's report — [which is available here](#) — scrutinizes the exercise and enjoyment of assembly and association rights in the context of labour, with a focus on the most marginalized workers, including global supply chain workers, informal workers, migrant workers, domestic workers and others.

Although labour rights are sometimes seen as distinct from more general human rights, the Special Rapporteur emphasizes at the outset of the report that this thinking is false — and ultimately destructive. The rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association are in fact the foundation for the exercise of all labour rights, he argues, since are the vehicle that protects workers' ability to meet, organize and have a collective voice.

"Labour rights are human rights, and the ability to exercise these rights in the workplace is prerequisite for workers to enjoy a broad range of other rights, whether economic, social, cultural, political or otherwise," Kiai writes in the report.

Although States are obligated under international law to respect, protect and fulfil workers' assembly and association rights, the report paints a grim picture of what is happening in practice. The Special Rapporteur cites dozens of examples of rights violations in more than 50 countries, ranging from union busting to legislative gaps to assassinations of union leaders.

The implications of States' failure to protect workers' rights are grave, Kiai notes, since weakened labour rights can exacerbate problems such as global inequality, poverty, violence, child and forced labour, and directly contribute to problems such as human trafficking and slavery.

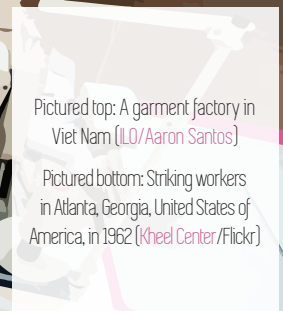
The report concludes with extensive recommendations to States, the ILO, businesses and civil society on how to promote improved respect for workers' assembly and association rights.

"The global attack on labour rights has made it disturbingly clear that the old ways of defending workers' rights are no longer working," Kiai writes. "Our world and its globalized economy are changing at a lightning pace, and it is critical that the tools we use to protect to labour rights adapt just as quickly. A first step towards this goal is to obliterate the antiquated and artificial distinction between labour rights and human rights generally."

A factsheet summarizing the report's key findings and recommendation is [available here](#). The full report (A/71/385) is available in English here: <http://freeassembly.net/reports/workers-rights/> (versions in other UN languages will be uploaded as they become available).

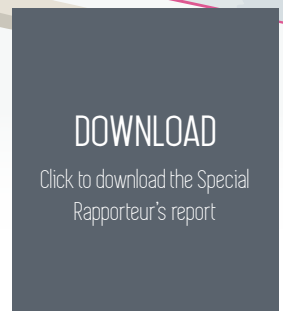
"LABOUR RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THE ABILITY TO EXERCISE THESE RIGHTS IN THE WORKPLACE IS PREREQUISITE FOR WORKERS TO ENJOY A BROAD RANGE OF OTHER RIGHTS."

Special Rapporteur Maina Kiai in his 2016 report to the United Nations General Assembly



Pictured top: A garment factory in Viet Nam (ILO/Aaron Santos)

Pictured bottom: Striking workers in Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America, in 1962 (Kheel Center/Flickr)



The 10 principles checklist: rate your country's management of assemblies



DOWNLOAD

Click to download the implementation checklist

NAIROBI - Special Rapporteur Maina Kiai has published an interactive tool designed to help civil society groups rate the management of peaceful assemblies in their country: [the 10 Principles Implementation Checklist](#).

The checklist draws from the mandate's March 2016 [joint report on managing assemblies](#) with fellow Special Rapporteur Christof Heyns (who served as the UN's top expert on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions until July 2016), and invites users to review a checklist of indicators related to the report.

The 2016 joint report was requested by the Human Rights Council in 2014 – a time when the assemblies were playing an increasingly prominent role on the world stage – to provide clarity on the applicable international human rights standards that apply in the context of assemblies. The practical recommendations in the report were developed after consultations with over 100 experts and more than 50 UN Member States.

The new checklist is a companion publication to the practical recommendations report, designed as an easy-to-use tool to: (1) determine which practical recommendations contained in the report are already in place at the domestic level, and (2) help assess how well domestic and local authorities manage assemblies.

The checklist contains 100 indicators – categorized under 10 overarching principles – relating to the implementation of the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteurs. These indicators take the entire spectrum of “managing an assembly” into account and include the activities and measures before, during and after an assembly or protest takes place.

Users of the checklist are invited to score their country's performance on a scale of 1 to 100 by keeping track of the number of indicators that have been implemented (each indicator has an interactive check-box, so the checklist can be used in PDF format). Fillable scoring boxes are included at the end of each chapter, with a final score sheet at the end of the publication. The Special Rapporteur encourages users of the checklist to

Tweet an image of their score sheet to [@MainaKiai_UNSR](#) – or e-mail it to info@freeassembly.net.

JOINT REPORT

Click to read the original March 2016 report: Joint recommendations on the management of assemblies

Implementation Checklist

A step-by-step checklist for monitoring implementation of the practical recommendations on the management of assemblies report by United Nations Special Rapporteurs Maina Kiai and Christof Heyns (A/HRC/31/66)

SCORE YOUR COUNTRY'S PERFORMANCE ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 100 AND TWEET US AN IMAGE OF YOUR SCORE SHEET AT [@MAINAKIAI_UNSR](#) – OR E-MAIL IT TO info@freeassembly.net.

Pictured: A lineup of police in riot gear, featured on the cover of the report

FACTSHEET

Haven't read the original joint report? Check out our factsheet first – a summary on one page

HUB PAGE

More info on the project to develop practical recommendations for the management of assemblies



South Korea: Kiai calls for investigation into lethal use of water cannon

Minjuwha Baek speaks at an event in Geneva in June 2016. Ms. Baek is the daughter of activist/farmer Nam-gi Baek, who died on Sept. 25 after being hit by a water cannon during a Nov. 2015 protest in Seoul (the scene pictured behind and below Ms. Baek).

GENEVA — The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, [expressed dismay](#) over the Sept. 25 death of South Korean protester Baek Nam-gi, and called for a full and independent investigation into the police's use of a water cannon last year that led to his death.

Mr. Baek, a 69-year old farmer, was knocked to the ground by a water cannon operated by the police while taking part in a peaceful rally in Seoul on Nov. 14, 2015. He had remained in a coma until his passing.

"I express my deepest condolences to the relatives and friends of Mr. Baek Nam-gi for this tragic loss. I had the chance to meet Mr. Baek's daughters in Seoul during my country visit in January 2016 and in Geneva last June. I was very humbled by their courage and determination to seek justice for their father in such harrowing times," Kiai said in his Sept. 28 statement.

"I call for a full and independent investigation into the police's use of water cannon during the rally of November 2015 that unambiguously led to Mr. Baek's death according to video footage available," the expert stated. "The perpetrators should be held accountable and the family of Mr. Baek receive appropriate compensation; in addition, adequate measures must be taken to prevent a similar tragedy from happening in the future", added Kiai.

The Special Rapporteur also reiterated his recommendation made to the South Korean authorities in his [country report of June 2016](#) to "review tactics used for the management of assemblies — including the use of water cannons and bus barricades — to ensure that they are not applied indiscriminately or against peaceful protestors, they do not result in escalation of tensions, and are directed at facilitating rather than preventing the exercise of assembly rights."

He also echoed similar recommendations made in his [joint report with the former Special Rapporteur on the extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Christof Heyns](#), on the proper management of assemblies presented to the Human Rights Council in March this year.

"It is critical that the authorities learn the lessons from this painful tragedy so that it never happens again," the human rights expert stressed.

Finally, the Special Rapporteur called on the authorities to respect the will of the family not to have the body of Baek taken for autopsy. The police and the Prosecutor's Office requested a warrant from the Seoul Central District Court to proceed with an autopsy as the cause of death is allegedly not clear, but it was denied by the court. They have reportedly filed another request.



"I CALL FOR A FULL AND INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION INTO THE POLICE'S USE OF WATER CANNON DURING THE RALLY OF NOVEMBER 2015 THAT UNAMBIGUOUSLY LED TO MR. BAEK'S DEATH ACCORDING TO VIDEO FOOTAGE AVAILABLE. THE PERPETRATORS SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE AND ... ADEQUATE MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN TO PREVENT A SIMILAR TRAGEDY FROM HAPPENING IN THE FUTURE"

Special Rapporteur Maina Kiai in his Sept. 28 statement on the death of South Korea's Baek Nam-gi

Kiai's call was endorsed by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst; the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan Mendez; and the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, Baskut Tuncak.

The Special Rapporteur's original press release is available in [English](#) and [Korean \(unofficial translation\)](#) via our website.

Jordan: UN rights expert Kaye condemns killing of journalist Nahed Hattar

GENEVA — The United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye, has [condemned](#) the killing of Nahed Hattar, a prominent Jordanian journalist and writer who was well-known for his opposition to both the Government and to radical Islam.

Special Rapporteur Maina Kiai endorsed Kaye's statement.

Hattar was shot dead on Sept. 25, 2016, as he was about to enter the court in Amman where he was on trial for sharing on social media a caricature deemed blasphemous by the authorities. Hattar was arrested a number of times in the 1990s, and survived an assassination attempt in 1998.

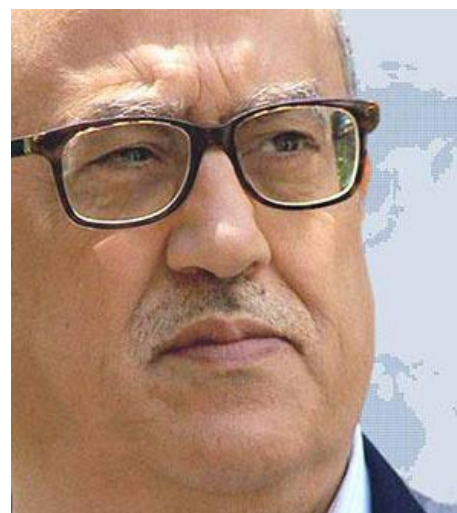
"The killing of Mr. Hattar is appalling, and it is unacceptable that no protection measures had been put in place to ensure his safety, particularly when the threats against him were well known to the authorities," the expert said in his Sept.

27 statement. "I am also concerned to hear reports that the authorities have banned the sharing of information about Mr. Hattar's murder."

Nahed Hattar turned himself in to the police on Aug. 13, 2016, a day after the authorities issued an arrest warrant against him. He was later charged with the crime of 'insulting religion' and 'causing sectarian strife and racism'.

In a recent communication to the Jordanian authorities, a group of UN human rights experts raised concern about Hattar's arrest and the criminalization of the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

"I urge the authorities not only to bring the assailant to justice, but also to bring its legislation into line with international human rights law and to encourage a culture of diverse expression," Kaye stressed.



Sudan: Charges against rights activists could bring death penalty

GENEVA — A group of United Nations human rights experts, including Maina Kiai, [has called on the Sudanese authorities](#) to drop charges carrying the death sentence brought against six people linked to a prominent Khartoum-based organisation, Training and Human Development (TRACKS).

The six, who were detained some three months ago but are yet to face trial, have been charged with criminal conspiracy, undermining the constitutional system, waging war against the State, espionage, and terrorism by the Sudanese State Security Prosecution Office. All these charges carry the death penalty.

"The death penalty is an extreme form of punishment. If used at all, it should only be imposed after a fair trial that respects the most stringent due process guarantees as stipulated in international human rights law," said UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions Agnes Callamard in the Aug. 31 statement. "I am seriously concerned that any trial of these six people would not uphold such principles."

The six individuals have faced constant targeting by agents from the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) over the past two years. Their offices have been raided twice, and their documents, equipment and passports confiscated. In addition, they say they have been summoned, detained and tortured several times at the NISS office, where they were questioned about the organization's activities.

"The charges brought against them appear to be directly linked to their work in the defence of human rights, while exercising their rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association," said the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai.

"Sudan ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a binding instrument, which enshrines the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association and this sentence is likely to have a chilling effect among activists and human rights defenders in Sudan," he added.

The human rights experts have already jointly raised their concern to the Sudanese authorities about the ongoing harassment of TRACKS members and, more broadly, about the increasing targeting and prosecution of human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, in Sudan for undertaking their peaceful and legitimate human rights activities.

The six facing charges are Mr. Khalafalla Mukhtar, Director of TRACKS; Ms. Arwa Elrabie, Mr. Midhat Hamadan, and Mr. Alhassan Kheiri, TRACKS' employees; and Mr. Mustafa Adam and Ms. Raye Imany Leyla who are affiliated to the organisation.

The full statement – along with a list of experts endorsing it – is [available here](#).

Photo: Roger P. Marks/Flickr

DR Congo: UN experts deeply condemn new violent repression of protests

GENEVA — Two United Nations human rights experts [urged the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo \(DRC\)](#) on Sept. 23 to put an immediate end to the disproportionate use of force against the exercise of the freedoms of peaceful assembly and expression in the country.

According to information received, more than 80 people have been reportedly killed, hundreds injured, thousands arrested and at least 225 demonstrations have been squashed or banned since protests began in January 2015 against proposed reforms to the electoral law that could allow current President Joseph Kabila to stay in office beyond the constitutional limit of two terms. Details are still being verified and other sources report much higher figures.

Human rights defenders, journalists and opposition leaders have reportedly been particularly targeted by the Congolese National Police, the National Intelligence Agency, the Republican Guard and the armed forces.

“The DRC security forces have repeatedly used excessive force to quash protests related to proposed presidential elections, firing teargas and live ammunition into crowds of protestors and inflicting numerous casualties,” said the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai.

“People’s demand for a legal and peaceful political transition should not be met with excessive force and paid in blood. They ought to be celebrated and respected,” noted the new UN Special Rapporteur on summary executions, Agnes Callamard. “Indiscriminate firing into a crowd is unlawful. Firearms and other potentially lethal weapons should never be used simply to disperse a demonstration,” she added.

“Demonstrations should ordinarily be managed with no resort to force, unless in exceptional circumstances of imminent threat of death or serious injury, and even in such cases force shall always be subject to the requirements of necessity and proportionality,” she said.

President Kabila’s final term in office is due to expire in December and elections are due in late November, but the National Electoral Commission has said that it will not be possible to hold them then.

“We urge the Government to immediately halt the violent repression of protests and to release protestors who have been arrested for exercising their legitimate rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly,” Kiai said.

The UN Special Rapporteurs also called for an international independent and interdisciplinary investigation to assist in shedding light on these allegations.

“The renewed violent repression of protests and the increasing crackdown on civil society —

“THE RESILIENCE OF A DEMOCRACY CAN BE JUDGED, IN LARGE PART, BY HOW SUCCESSFULLY IT DEALS WITH CHALLENGES TO THOSE IN POWER, AND THE PEACEFUL TRANSITION FROM ONE LEADER TO THE NEXT”

Special Rapporteur Maina Kiai in his Sept. 23 statement on the Democratic Republic of Congo

including the targeting of key human rights activists — suggest that the Government considers civil society as a threat and is simply engaging in a systematic campaign to silence dissenting voices,” noted Kiai.

“The rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association are essential to the democratic process, both during the election period and between elections,” Special Rapporteur Kiai said, [quoting his 2013 report](#) on the exercise of these rights in the context of election periods.

“States have the responsibility to ensure the full exercise of these rights in general, and even more so during election periods. The resilience of a democracy can be judged, in large part, by how successfully it deals with challenges to those in power, and the peaceful transition from one leader to the next”, the expert underscored.

Kiai further stressed that electoral periods often increase political tensions, but it is especially around this time that authorities should protect and facilitate fundamental expressive freedoms.

“There is clearly a political crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but a threat to the government does not equal a threat to the State. It is imperative at times such as these that authorities give space to allow individuals to raise their voices to express their views and aspirations,” he added.

The full press release is available in [English](#) and [French](#).

A Democratic Republic of Congo related protest in Manchester, United Kingdom, in 2012 (photo: [Grey World/Flickr](#))

Assembly & association rights: By the numbers

A man waves a flag at a Sept. 12, 2016, protest against parliamentary elections in Belarus, which opposition groups say were rigged (photo: [Marco Fieber/Flickr](#))

2

Number of opposition candidates who won Parliamentary seats in Belarus' Sept. 11 elections (the first opposition candidates to win seats in 20 years)

1.8

Percentage of the 110 total seats in Parliament that the opposition now controls

21

Number of communications sent by the Special Rapporteur to the Government of Bangladesh since 2011, each seeking further information on alleged violations of assembly and association rights

0

Number of substantive responses to these communications since 2011

70

Estimated number of protesters arrested during a "wild crackdown" by authorities in the Chinese village of Wukan in September, a place once seen as a cradle of grassroots democracy

Number of political prisoners in Bahrain, according to activist Nabeel Rajab's "letter from a Bahraini jail," which was published by the New York Times on Sept. 4, 2016

4,000

Days after the letter's publication that fresh charges were brought against Rajab for "deliberate dissemination of false news and spreading tendentious rumours that undermine the prestige of the state and its stature"

1

Estimated number of people who came to Srinagar's main government hospital with eyes ruptured by lead pellets – which were used by security forces against protesters in Kashmir – in July and August 2016

570



Photo: Unión Nacional de Educadores (UNE)

Ecuador: UN rights experts condemn 'legal death' of prominent teachers association UNE

GENEVA — A group of United Nations human rights experts, including Maina Kiai, on Sept. 27 [condemned](#) the use of the domestic legislation in Ecuador to dissolve the National Union of Teachers (UNE), the largest teachers trade union in the country. The UNE, founded in 1950, was dissolved through the application of Executive Decree N. 739, which regulates the operation of social organizations.

"Executive Decree N. 739 establishes overly broad restrictions to freedom of expression and freedom of association, and allows State authorities to dissolve associations based on ambiguous criteria," the experts noted. "We are deeply concerned that this legislation indeed provides the executive with discretionary power to suppress the voice of civil society in the country."

The experts stressed that all people should enjoy the right to freedom of association recognized by international law and enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Ecuador ratified in March 1969.

"The right to freedom of association is a fundamental right, to which only a very limited number of restrictions may apply," said the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, while stressing that "the right to freedom of association is at the core of democratic principles and necessary for activists to have a collective impact on the society."

"With the effective dissolution of the UNE, the most important association of teachers in the country, we are concerned that teachers are deprived of a major tool to raise their voice and concerns, and it might have a chilling effect on civil society and human rights defenders in general" said Michel Forst, UN Special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.

"Teachers are a vital part of the educational system. Depriving teachers of one of the main channels for expressing their collective concerns is not only detrimental to their freedom of expression, but equally to Ecuador's system of education", added David Kaye, UN Special rapporteur on the protection and promotion of the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

"The forced dissolution of an association is one of the severest types of restrictions to freedom of association, which can only be justified in the most exceptional cases. It must be prescribed by law, under strict compliance with the principle of legality, be proportional and necessary in a democratic society" Kiai stressed.

The UN experts warned that, given the recent activities undertaken by the union, the dissolution is likely to be related to their human rights work. "In fact, it seems that the decision is arbitrary, political and lacks any logical connection to a legitimate State interest," they noted.

The dissolution takes place in the context of an increasingly restricted space for associations, media and human rights defenders in Ecuador, stressed the experts.

"We urge the Ecuadorian authorities to reverse the dissolution process of UNE and to ensure the enjoyment of the rights to freedom of expression and of association in the country", they said. "Ecuador needs to align its legislation with the best practices emanating from international human rights norms and standards."

The experts have already raised their concerns to the Government and asked for further clarifications on the case. They also expressed their willingness to provide technical assistance to the authorities in this matter.

The full press release is available via our website in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

USA: "Indigenous peoples must be consulted prior to pipeline construction"

GENEVA — The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, has [called on the United States](#) to halt the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline as it poses a significant risk to the drinking water of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and threatens to destroy their burial grounds and sacred sites.

Special Rapporteur Maina Kiai endorsed her Sept. 23 statement, along with a number of other UN experts.

Tauli-Corpuz's call came after a temporary halt to construction and the recognition of the need to hold 'government-to-government consultations' made by the US Departments of the Army, Justice and of the Interior. The 1,172 mile (1,890 km) pipeline is being built by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Energy Transfer LLC Corporation.

"The tribe was denied access to information and excluded from consultations at the planning stage of the project and environmental assessments failed to disclose the presence and proximity of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation," the expert stressed.

"The United States should, in accordance with its commitment to implement the [Declaration on the rights on indigenous peoples](#), consult with the affected communities in good faith and ensure their free, and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands, particularly in connection with extractive resource industries," Tauli-Corpuz said.

The Special Rapporteur also warned that tribal leaders and community members who have turned to peaceful protests to halt the pipeline's construction have been reportedly intimidated, harassed and prosecuted. "The US authorities should fully protect and facilitate the right to freedom of peaceful assembly of indigenous peoples, which plays a key role in empowering their ability to claim other rights," she highlighted.

The Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from the Bakken/Three Forks oil fields in North Dakota to Illinois, crossing four states. The pipeline is planned to run underneath Lake Oahe, close to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's reservation.

For the full statement, please [see our website](#).



Photo: Peg Hunter/Flickr



The Special Rapporteur addresses participants – via a pre-recorded video – at the OSCE-ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw on Sept. 21, 2016. See item below (photo: Daniel Wellman)

Special Rapporteur news in brief: September-October 2016

Official visit to Turkey confirmed for January 2017

The Special Rapporteur has accepted an invitation from the Government of Turkey to make an official visit to the country January 23-27, 2017. Planning for the mission will begin next month. In the meantime, the Special Rapporteur warmly welcomes suggestions and tips in advance of the visit.

Maina Kiai to be honored by the United Nations Foundation on Oct. 19

Special Rapporteur Maina Kiai will be honored by the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) and the United Nations Foundation (UNF) at [their Global Leadership Awards in New York City on Oct. 19](#). Fellow honorees at the event will include US President Barack Obama; Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of the World Food Programme; the Walgreens Boots Alliance and Sony Pictures for the Angry Birds Happy Planet Campaign.

Interviews with the Special Rapporteur

The Heinrich Boell Foundation published an in-depth interview with Maina Kiai in September in which the Special Rapporteur discusses his June 2016 report on fundamentalism and what motivates his work, among other things (the interview, which was conducted earlier in 2016, is available in [English](#) and [German](#)). The Dutch website Vice Versa also published an interview with the Special Rapporteur in October, [which is available here](#) (Dutch only). Kiai also recorded a video message for attendees at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)'s Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw in September. The video ([available here](#)) was shown to the audience before the session focusing on assembly and association rights.

UN Workshop on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

The Special Rapporteur was in Geneva on Oct. 4-5 to participate in a workshop examining the [role of regional mechanisms in promoting and protecting human rights](#). The workshop was organized by the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights with the objective of developing concrete proposals for interaction between regional human rights

mechanisms, civil society and human rights defenders. It was the fifth in a series of workshops mandated by the Human Rights Council.

Upcoming & other news

- **Side event on assembly and association rights in the workplace:** The Solidarity Center, in cooperation with a number of other partner organizations, will hold an event in New York on Oct. 21, from 9 am to 2 pm, to discuss and debate the Special Rapporteur's recent report on assembly and association rights in the workplace. The event will take place one day after the Special Rapporteur presents the report to the General Assembly. Final details are still being worked out, but keep an eye on our [Twitter feed](#) for updates.
- **Final Human Rights Council report:** The Special Rapporteur's final report to the Human Rights Council is tentatively slated to be a survey of the positive contributions of civil society over history. An expert consultation for the report is planned for late November. The report will be presented by Maina Kiai's successor to the Council's 35th session in June 2017. We will be posting more information – including a questionnaire to submit information for the report – on [freeassembly.net](#) in the coming months.
- **Southeast Asia academic visit:** The Special Rapporteur is planning a study visit to Southeast Asia in early December, to meet with civil society and gain a better understanding of how the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association are promoted and protected in the region. The tentative country list includes Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, the Philippines and Indonesia.
- **99 Problems posters:** The mandate has printed copies of a handful of posters from the popular "99 Problems" series. Currently available posters include: [Chut Wutty](#), [NGO Access to the UN](#), [Foreign Funding to NGO](#), [Peaceful Dissent](#) and [Human Diversity](#) (click titles for links to the images). If you'd like us to mail you some, drop us a line at info@freeassembly.net. We are also planning to print a selection of our labor-related 99 Problems posters – keep an eye on Twitter for details. And remember: We are still soliciting your ideas and designs for other posters and artwork as part of our [#FOAAat50 campaign](#), celebrating 50 years of the international rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.

World Briefing

Assembly & association rights in the news

Gabon

Protests erupted in the capital of Libreville on Aug. 31 after President Ali Bongo was declared winner of a presidential election that the opposition says was rigged. Some protesters allegedly set fire to the country's National Assembly building, while opposition leader Jean Ping said two people were killed when government forces attacked his party's headquarters.

Ethiopia

More than 50 people were killed in a stampede after police fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse an anti-government protest during an Oromo festival. The deaths marked the latest bloodshed as the result of the government's crackdown on protests, which has killed at least 500 people since November 2015.

United States

The country saw a new wave of Black Lives Matter protests after police killed African-American men in North Carolina, Oklahoma and California. On Sept. 28, FBI Director James Comey announced that his agency would finally release a database to track police use of deadly force nationwide. Meanwhile, a growing number of players in the country's popular National Football League began kneeling and raising their fists during pre-game national anthem ceremonies to draw attention to racial inequality.

Poland

A proposal by the recently-elected conservative government to ban all abortions set off a wave of successive protests in September and October. By Oct. 5, the government signaled that they would back off of their plans. The minister of science and higher education said that the protests had "caused us to think and taught us humility."

Venezuela

Hundreds of thousands of people marched through the capital of Caracas on Sept. 2, calling for the removal of President Nicolas Maduro. The Committee to Project Journalists reported that at least six journalists had been denied entry into the country prior to the protests, ostensibly to prevent them from reporting. Days later, President Maduro was chased at a political event on Margarita Island by a crowd of angry protesters.

Egypt

A court froze the assets of five prominent human rights activists, including Hossam Bahgat, and three NGOs in September. They are accused of illegally receiving foreign donations, and face up to 25 years in prison if convicted. Meanwhile, there were concerns that the country's new NGO law – which could be enacted soon – would usher in a "no human rights era."

Reprisals

Ban Ki-moon appointed a special representative to receive, consider and respond to allegations of intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders and other civil society actors engaging with the UN.

Elsewhere

Hundreds of thousands of people rallied across Germany and Austria on Sept. 17, urging their governments not to sign new trade agreements (see photo at right) • Oman human rights defender Said Jadad was released from prison • Tanzania's main opposition party called off a "day of defiance" march because police declined to grant permission for the protest • Hong Kong student leader Joshua Wong was denied entry to Thailand, where he was to speak at a conference; meanwhile, his compatriots in the protest movement won seats in the city's legislature • Special Rapporteur Michel Forst urged Azerbaijan to not take a "punitive" approach towards civil society his official visit to the country • Swaziland's Suppression of Terrorism Act, which has been used by government to ban political groups, was been declared unconstitutional by the country's High Court • Two farmers were killed and 42 were injured in September when the Indian police opened fire on a crowd protesting a thermal plant • Kenya operationalized its 2013 Public Benefit Organizations Act, a move which some say will make life easier for NGOs

A protest against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) in Berlin, Germany, on Sept. 17, 2016 (photo: Ruben Neugebauer/Campact)