

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW



SUBMISSION FOR BURUNDI

NGO Submission

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ABOUT HRF

The Human Rights Foundation (HRF) is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that promotes and protects human rights globally, with a focus on closed societies. HRF unites people in the common cause of defending human rights and promoting liberal democracy. Our mission is to ensure that freedom is both preserved and promoted around the world.

We focus our work on the founding ideals of the human rights movement, those most purely represented in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Human Rights Foundation Center for Law and Democracy (HRF-CLD) is a program of HRF. HRF-CLD promotes legal scholarship in the areas of comparative constitutional law and international law, with a focus on international human rights law and international democracy law.

INTRODUCTION

This submission was prepared by HRF, for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Burundi. In this submission, HRF evaluates Burundi's implementation of recommendations made during its previous UPR, as it relates to the current human rights situation in the country, which is characterized by systematic, widespread, and gross violations of human rights, including: the ongoing curtailment of the freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, freedom of the press, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture, and ill-treatment, and arbitrary arrests, detentions, and violations of due process.

FOLLOW-UP ON THE PREVIOUS REVIEW

1. The most recent UPR of Burundi by the United Nations Human Rights Council

took place on January 18, 2018.¹ The Human Rights Council considered and adopted the outcome of the country's review during its 29th session, on March 19, 2018. A total of 242 recommendations were made to Burundi, with the government accepting 125 recommendations.²

2. As a member state of the United Nations (UN), Burundi has committed to protecting, promoting, and respecting the individual rights and fundamental freedoms laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Burundi has also acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Punishment (CAT). Burundi has ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.
3. Domestically, Burundi's Constitution of 2018 (Constitution) guarantees several human rights (*see infra Burundi's National Framework For Protecting Human Rights*). However, in practice, individuals in Burundi are subjected to human rights violations, not least by the very existence of laws that criminalize and impinge upon their fundamental freedoms.

BURUNDI'S NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

4. Burundi's Constitution contains³ several key provisions relating to the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens.
5. In relation to freedom of expression, Burundi's Constitution states in *Article 31*:

¹ *Burundi, The Universal Periodic Review*, United Nations Human Rights, Office for the High Commissioner, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session29/BI/BURUNDI_Infographic_29th.pdf.

² *Id.*

³ *Burundi Constitution*, 2018, Const. Project (2018). https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Burundi_2018.pdf?lang=en.

Freedom of expression is guaranteed. The State respects freedom of religion, thought, conscience and opinion.

6. In relation to freedoms of assembly and association, Burundi's Constitution states in Article 32:

Freedom of assembly and association is guaranteed, as is the right to form associations or organizations in accordance with the law.

7. In relation to arbitrary detention, Article 39 of Burundi's Constitution states:

No one may be deprived of their freedom if it does not conform to the provisions of law. No one may be charged, arrested, detained, or judged except in cases determined by a law decreed prior to the acts for which they are accused. The right to a defense is guaranteed before all jurisdictions. No one may be deprived, against their will, of the judge that the law assigns to them.

8. In relation to the fundamental rights of physical integrity and liberty, Article 25 of Burundi's Constitution provides that:

All human beings have the right to freedom of their own person, notably in their physical and psychic integrity and freedom of movement. No one may be subjected to torture, nor to punishments or sentences which are cruel, inhuman or degrading.

9. In relation to the prohibition of torture, Burundi's constitution states in Article 25:

All human beings have the right to freedom of their own person, notably in their physical and psychic integrity and freedom of movement. No one may be subjected to torture, nor to punishments or sentences which are cruel, inhuman, or degrading.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

10. Burundi's history is shaped by the two largest communities in the country: the minority Tutsi and the majority Hutu.⁴ In 1962, Burundi gained independence as a constitutional monarchy ruled by King Mwambutsa IV, a Tutsi, as head of state, and Prime Minister Pierre Ngendandumwe, the nation's first Hutu leader,

⁴ History of Burundi, Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Burundi/History>.

as head of government.⁵

11. Between 1965 and 1972, Burundi's elected prime minister was deposed, triggering violent turmoil, two coups, and the massacre of approximately 120,000 Hutus in the wake of an uprising in the South.⁶ Following another coup, between 1976 and 1993, two more leaders were deposed, and one was assassinated, plunging the country into a prolonged civil war.⁷ In 1995, a successful coup put the Tutsis in power, and they entered into the Arusha Agreement with the Hutus, which mandated a power-sharing arrangement, including the partition of state positions between communities.⁸
12. Pierre Nkurunziza, a Hutu, was elected in 2005,⁹ and again in 2010, with more than 90% of the vote, after the withdrawal of all six of his competitors.¹⁰ In 2015, Nkurunziza announced his intention to force a third unconstitutional term, sparking mass protests and a failed military coup, which were met with a brutal and widening crackdown on dissent. Despite widespread opposition, Nkurunziza pressured the country's Constitutional Court judges to back his third term bid.¹¹ Nkurunziza was re-elected with a landslide victory in elections condemned by international observers and human rights groups.¹²
13. Following Nkurunziza's re-election, political persecution marked by targeted assassinations, torture, enforced disappearances by security forces plunged the country into a bloody political and humanitarian crisis with hundreds of thousands of Burundians fleeing to nearby countries.¹³ This led the UN Human Rights Council to establish a Commission of Inquiry on Burundi to investigate

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Burundi Profile*, BBC (Dec. 3 2018), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13087604>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Britannica*, *supra* note 4.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ BBC, *supra* note 6.

¹² Jessica Hatcher, *Burundi's president Pierre Nkurunziza wins third term in disputed election*, *The Guardian* (Jul. 24 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/24/burundi-pierre-nkurunziza-wins-third-term-disputed-election>.

¹³ *Burundi Situation*, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (Jul. 31 2020), <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/burundi-situation.html>.

human rights violations and abuses committed since April 2015.¹⁴ The Commission's mandate includes determining whether human rights violations may constitute international crimes, identifying alleged perpetrators and ensuring accountability. Moreover, following calls for an International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation,¹⁵ Nkurunziza's regime initiated Burundi's withdrawal from the ICC in October 2016.¹⁶

14. In 2018, the ruling party pushed constitutional amendments which extended the length of the President's term from five to seven years, with a limit of two consecutive terms.¹⁷ In 2020, his party named Evariste Ndayishimiye as its presidential candidate.¹⁸ Elections took place with no independent international observers, and Ndayishimiye was elected amid reports of killings, arbitrary arrests, beatings, and voter intimidation.¹⁹

FREEDOMS OF EXPRESSION, ASSEMBLY, AND ASSOCIATION

15. The freedoms of expression, assembly, and association are all guaranteed by Burundi's Constitution, as well as the UDHR and ICCPR, but in practice, are restricted by the Burundian regime.

16. In September 2018, the government suspended almost all international NGOs (130)²⁰ operating in the country for three months,²¹ basing this action on a 2017

¹⁴*Commission of Inquiry on Burundi*, United Nations Human Rights Council, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-i-burundi/co-i-burundi>.

¹⁵ Britannica, *supra* note 4.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *World Report 2021: Burundi*, Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/burundi>.

²⁰ *Burundi Country Report 2022*, BTI, <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/BDI>

²¹ *Burundi: Suspension of NGOs will throw vital services into disarray*, Amnesty Int'l (Oct. 2 2018), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/10/burundi-suspension-of-ngos-will-throw-vital-services-into-disarray/>.

law that requires local staff to have a ratio of 60% Hutus and 40% Tutsis.²² Moreover, in February 2019, Burundi forced the closure of the UN office.²³ In February 2020, the Minister of Patriotic Training and Home Affairs, Pascal Barandagiye, directed international NGOs to submit detailed and sensitive personal data of all their employees.²⁴ For Burundian nationals, this included listing the community to which every employee belongs.²⁵

17. In the lead-up to the May 2020 elections, the main opposition party, the National Congress for Liberty (CNL), faced many obstacles in opening new party offices, and in other locations, over 18 offices were vandalized and destroyed.²⁶ Throughout the campaign period, local administration officials prevented the CNL from holding some campaign rallies.²⁷

18. In March 2021, Minister of the Interior, Community Development and Public Security Gervais Ndirakobuca, organized a meeting of representatives of local groups regarding the role of NGOs in community development.²⁸ Ndirakobuca warned the organizations against “implementing a so-called foreign agenda in Burundi.”²⁹

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

²² Vince Chadwick and Christin Roby, *Turmoil for International Aid Groups in Burundi over ethnic quotas*, Devex (Jan. 21 2019), <https://www.devex.com/news/turmoil-for-international-aid-groups-in-burundi-over-ethnic-quotas-94125>

²³ *Burundi: Prioritise Human Rights in election season*, Amnesty Int'l (Apr. 27, 2020), https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr16/2214/2020/en/?utm_source=annual_report&utm_medium=pdf&utm_campaign=2021&utm_term=english

²⁴ *Burundi: Drop demand on international NGOs to disclose ethnic identity of employees*, Amnesty Int'l (Feb. 27, 2020), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/02/burundi-drop-demand-on-international-ngos-to-disclose-ethnic-identity-of-employees/>.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ Amnesty International Report 2020/21, Amnesty Int'l, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/English.pdf>; PTI, *Burundi opposition says 18 offices vandalized in two months*, Devdiscourse (Aug. 18 2019), <https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/politics/637750-burundi-opposition-says-18-offices-vandalized-in-two-months>.

²⁷ *Burundi: Prioritise human rights in election season*, Amnesty Int'l (Apr. 27, 2020), https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr16/2214/2020/en/?utm_source=annual_report&utm_medium=pdf&utm_campaign=2021&utm_term=english.

²⁸ *Burundi: Entrenched Repression of Civil Society, Media*, Human Rights Watch (May 26, 2021), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/26/burundi-entrenched-repression-civil-society-media>.

²⁹ *Id.*

19. Repressive press laws curtail and criminalize aspects of legitimate independent journalism in Burundi. For example, a 2013 media law limits the protection of journalistic sources and bans the publication of any content the government deems to undermine “national unity, public order and security,” or “the national economy or stability of the national currency.”³⁰
20. On Election Day in May 2020, the government shut down social media sites and messaging applications, limiting journalists’ ability to report on the voting.³¹
21. The government crackdown also targeted international media:
 - In May 2018, Burundi’s state-run national media regulatory agency, the National Communication Council (CNC) imposed a six-month ban on British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio broadcasts and Voice of America (VOA),³² in retaliation for content aired on the stations that was critical of the government.
 - In April 2019, the CNC extended VOA’s suspension indefinitely and withdrew the BBC’s operating license.³³ Authorities only lifted the ban on the BBC in March 2022.³⁴
 - In August 2021, the President publicly attacked a reporter for the French public broadcaster Radio France Internationale (RFI), Esdras Ndikumana, accusing him of inflating the number of COVID-19 cases in the country, using RFI to “promote poverty in the country,”³⁵ and “hating the country in which he was raised.”³⁶

³⁰ *Burundi: Concerns About New Media Law*, Human Rights Watch (Apr. 25, 2013), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/04/25/burundi-concerns-about-new-media-law>.

³¹ *Burundi blocks social media access during presidential elections*, Committee to Protect Journalists (May 20, 2020) <https://cpj.org/2020/05/burundi-blocks-social-media-access-during-president/>.

³² *Burundi media regulator suspends BBC and VOA, warns other broadcasters*, Committee to Protect Journalists (May 7, 2018), <https://cpj.org/2018/05/burundi-media-regulator-suspends-bbc-and-voa-warns/>.

³³ *Burundi media regulator bans BBC and VOA*, Committee to Protect Journalists (Apr. 2 2019) <https://cpj.org/2019/04/burundi-media-regulator-bans-bbc-and-voa/>.

³⁴ *Burundi Lifts Ban on BBC After Almost 3 Years*, VOA (Mar. 30, 2022) <https://www.voanews.com/a/burundi-lifts-ban-on-bbc-after-almost-3-years/6508449.html>.

³⁵ *Burundian President attacks RFI reporter covering surge in Covid cases*, Reporters Without Borders (Sept. 2, 2021) <https://rsf.org/en/burundian-president-attacks-rfi-reporter-covering-surge-covid-cases>.

³⁶ *Burundi 2021*, Amnesty Int’l, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/burundi/report-burundi/>.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

22. Enforced disappearances are a widespread and systematic practice in Burundi. Since the 2015 crisis, Burundian authorities have forcibly disappeared members of opposition parties and those who are perceived to be a threat to the government. Between 1980 and 2021, the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances examined 250 cases.³⁷ Most of those who were forcibly disappeared during this period were never found, despite international pressure.³⁸
23. One of the most high-profile cases of enforced disappearances in Burundi is that of Jean Bigirimana, a journalist with news outlet *Iwacu*, who went missing in 2016 after he received a call from an intelligence source.³⁹ The government has failed to provide a credible accounting of Bigirimana's fate.
24. Cases of enforced disappearances have increased in the last two years, since the election of Évariste Ndayishimiye as President.⁴⁰ Dozens of bodies of forcibly disappeared people have been found by the Rusizi River, "sometimes with bullet or knife wounds, bruises, or with their hands tied behind their backs."⁴¹ Many witnesses who saw the bodies being discovered said that local officials, members of the Imbonerakure (the youth wing of the ruling party), and police officers buried the bodies without investigating.⁴²

³⁷ *Report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances at its forty-eighth session, 13 September - 1 October 2021*, Human Rights Council Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, 30 (August 4, 2021), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/215/21/PDF/G2121521.pdf?OpenElement>.

³⁸ *Behind the gate" a rise in torture and disappearances*, Burundi Human Rights Initiative, 17, https://burundihri.org/english/november_2021.php.

³⁹ Muthoki Mumo, *When Burundian journalist Jean Bigirimana disappeared, his colleagues tried to solve the case*, Committed to Protect Journalists (Aug. 12, 2021) <https://cpj.org/2021/08/burundian-journalist-jean-bigirimana-disappeared-colleagues-tried-to-solve-case/>.

⁴⁰ *Burundi: Allegations of Killings, Disappearances, Torture*, Human Rights Watch (Sept. 17, 2021), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/17/burundi-allegations-killings-disappearances-torture>.

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch, *supra* note 40.

⁴² *Id.*

EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS, TORTURE, AND ILL-TREATMENT

25. Extrajudicial killings, torture, and ill-treatment remain pervasive in Burundi, with total impunity for perpetrators of such practices. The most prominent and emblematic example of this impunity remains the unsolved 2009 torture and murder and prominent anti-corruption activist Ernest Manirumva.⁴³ The trial took place in 2012, lasting only three days, and did not hold senior figures of the Burundian security services or high-level police suspects accountable, as the prosecutor ignored leads and recommendations from the Burundian commission of inquiry and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation.⁴⁴
26. Since August 2020, executions, disappearances and reports of torture have increased in provinces⁴⁵ which have been the theater of attacks perpetrated by Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)-based armed groups and ensuing government reprisals.⁴⁶ In an effort to seek individuals suspected of being involved or having collaborated in the armed attacks, intelligence forces have targeted members from the CNL and the former Burundian Armed Forces and their family members.
27. In October 2021, Claude Nzeyimana, a member of the CNL in the Kayanza province was killed. He was allegedly taken by three armed men in police uniforms, detained, and found hours later with three bullet wounds in his head.⁴⁷

⁴³ *Burundi: 10 years On, Justice Denied for Murdered Activist*, Human Rights Watch (Apr. 9, 2019), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/04/09/burundi-10-years-justice-denied-murdered-activist>.

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ Burundi Human Rights Initiative (@BHRI_IDHB) Twitter (Dec. 8 2020, 3:28 AM), https://twitter.com/BHRI_IDHB/status/1336226064947945475.

⁴⁶ *Burundi: Behind a façade of normalization, grave human rights violations continue, and the democratic space remains closed*, United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/09/burundi-behind-facade-normalization-grave-human-rights-violations-continue?LangID=E&NewsID=27472>.

⁴⁷ *Burundi: Suspected Opponents Killed, Detained, Tortured*, Human Rights Watch (May 18 2022), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/18/burundi-suspected-opponents-killed-detained-tortured>.

28. Over 55 cases of torture were reported by the Burundi Human Rights Initiative in 2021. And there seems to be a clear pattern: members of the CNL are abducted by National Intelligence Service (SNR) agents or police, detained, and oftentimes tortured. Detainees are frequently accused of collaborating with armed groups, and are tortured to extract confessions from them, or to gain information on other individuals.⁴⁸
29. In November 2021, Augustin Matata, a well-known CNL member, was arrested and driven away by an unidentified man in civilian clothes.⁴⁹ Witnesses said that a local Imbonerakure pointed him out to the unidentified man.⁵⁰ He was detained at SNR headquarters, where he was so badly tortured, he eventually died in hospital.⁵¹ Another detainee was a witness to Matata's beatings: he said the beatings happened three times per day, and that SNR agents wanted Matata to reveal the names of combatants, locations of weapons caches, and why he refused to collaborate with the ruling party.⁵²
30. According to the Commission of Inquiry into Burundi, in the lead-up to the 2020 elections, SNR agents, the Imbonerakure, and the police committed frequent acts of torture, including sexual violence, aimed at "intimidating, controlling, repressing or punishing women and men for their supposed or actual political opinions, their refusal to join the ruling party or their links with an armed movement."⁵³
31. In December 2021, the UN Committee against Torture deplored Burundi's "lack of cooperation in the individual complaints procedure and its failure to implement the Committee's decisions in all cases where human rights violations were found."⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Burundi Human Rights Initiative, *supra* note 38, at 5.

⁴⁹ *Id.* at 6.

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ *Burundi: UN Torture Committee deploras lack of cooperation in torture complaints procedure*, United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner (Dec. 21, 2021), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/12/burundi-un-torture-committee-deploras-lack-cooperation-torture-complaints>.

⁵⁴ *Id.*

ARBITRARY ARRESTS, DETENTIONS, AND VIOLATIONS OF DUE PROCESS

32. Arbitrary arrests, detentions, and violations of due process and the right to a fair trial are pervasive in Burundi, particularly for human rights activists and journalists.
33. The case of human rights defender Germain Rukuki illustrates violations of the right to a fair trial. In July 2017, Rukuki was arrested without a warrant and illegally detained for two weeks in the cells of the SNR intelligence service, before being transferred to Ngozi Prison.⁵⁵ He was charged with participating in an insurrectional movement, undermining state security, and rebellion, on the basis of his human rights work with ACAT-Burundi (Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture), but the state prosecution failed to present any evidence to prove the charges.⁵⁶ In April 2018, he was sentenced to 32 years in prison.⁵⁷ The irregularities in Rukuki's trial were so blatant that Burundi's own Supreme Court overturned his conviction on appeal in June 2020.⁵⁸ His sentence was reduced from 32 years to one year in jail and a fine, and he was freed.⁵⁹
34. In a similar case, in October 2020, lawyer and human rights defender Tony Germain Nkina was arrested in Kabarore commune, when he was visiting a client.⁶⁰ He was sentenced to five years in prison, on charges of collaborating with the RED-Tabara Burundian rebel group based in the DRC, a common

⁵⁵ *Burundi: Once again, human rights defender Germain Rukuki's right to a fair trial is violated*, International Federation for Human Rights (May 21, 2021), <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/Africa/burundi/burundi-once-again-human-rights-defender-germain-rukuki-s-right-to-a>.

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ *Human Rights Defender Germain Rukuki Finally Released*, Front Line Defenders, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/human-rights-defender-germain-rukuki-finally-released>.

⁵⁸ *Burundi: Germain Rukuki's prison sentence cut from 32 years to one*, Amnesty Int'l (June 22, 2021), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2021/06/burundi-germain-rukukis-prison-sentence-cut-from-32-years-to-one/>.

⁵⁹ International Federation of Human Rights, *supra* note 55.

⁶⁰ *Burundi: Lawyer's Conviction a Travesty of Justice*, Human Rights Watch (Oct. 8, 2021), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/08/burundi-lawyers-conviction-travesty-justice>.

accusation used by the government against critics and opponents.⁶¹ During the trial, the prosecution failed to show any credible evidence, and no witnesses appeared in court.⁶²

35. In February 2021, the Supreme Court published a June 2020 decision which issued life sentences for 34 people for their alleged involvement in the May 2015 attempted coup d'état.⁶³ This includes 12 human rights defenders and journalists in exile,⁶⁴ who were convicted alongside five lawyers and civil society representatives, in absentia, and all their assets were seized and auctioned off in November 2020 to cover the 2.8 million dollars of damage and interests awarded to the State and the ruling party.⁶⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

36. HRF calls on Burundi's government to:

- a) Cooperate fully with the newly appointed Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burundi, Fortuné Gaetan Zongo, and grant him access to the country for independent monitoring and investigations;
- b) Cooperate with the UN Committee against Torture in the individual complaints procedure, in line with Burundi's obligations under Article 22 of the CAT and implement the Committee's decisions in all cases where human rights violations were found;
- c) Urgently and publicly condemn and order the end of crimes committed by security forces and ruling party youth members against Burundians; conduct credible and transparent investigations into gross human rights

⁶¹ *Id.*

⁶² *Id.*

⁶³ *Burundi: Entrenched Repression of Civil Society, Media*, Human Rights Watch (May 26, 2021), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/26/burundi-entrenched-repression-civil-society-media>.

⁶⁴ *Id.*

⁶⁵ *Oral briefing of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi*, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, (Sept. 23, 2021) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2021/09/oral-briefing-commission-inquiry-burundi?LangID=E&NewsID=27530>.

violations and hold all perpetrators to account;

- d) Protect the due process rights of every accused person to a fair, speedy, and public trial;
- e) Ensure that individuals who have been arbitrarily detained absent compelling evidence of criminal conduct, in violation of their rights to the freedom of expression and association, are released, and that those in detention receive humane treatment in accordance with the CAT;
- f) Unconditionally and immediately release all human rights defenders, including journalists, detained for exercising their fundamental rights to the freedoms of the press, association, peaceful assembly and expression, and drop all charges against them;
- g) Ensure the safety and physical integrity of human rights defenders, journalists, and political opponents, and repeal legal and policy measures that unwarrantedly limit freedom of association and the work of NGOs; and
- h) Repeal or amend laws to ensure that vaguely-worded and ambiguous clauses relating to national security, national unity, or public order are clearly defined or removed, so they cannot be applied in an arbitrary manner to stifle legitimate and peaceful dissent, freedom of the press, and freedom of expression.