

# Current challenges and opportunities for women human rights defenders:

How can the international community better support their work?

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6:30-8:00 pm

Conference Room 4, UN Headquarters, New York



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Permanent Mission of Honduras  
to the United Nations



INTERNATIONAL SERVICE  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



UNITED NATIONS  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
SPECIAL PROCEDURES  
SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS, INDEPENDENT EXPERTS & WORKING GROUPS

URGENT ACTION FUND  
FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

## Panellists:

- **H. E. Ambassador Mr. Kai Sauer**, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations
- **Andrew Gilmore**, Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights
- **Ivana Radačić**, Chair of the UN Working Group on discrimination against women in law and in practice
- **Rasha Jarhum** (Peace Track Initiatives), Yemen
- **Weaam Youssef** (Gulf Centre for Human Rights), Syria
- **Haydee Castillo** (Las Segovias), Nicaragua
- **Shereen Essof** (Jass Southern Africa), Zimbabwe
- **Hala al-Karib** (Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), Sudan
- **Wai Wai Nu**, (Justice for Women), Myanmar
- **Michel Forst**, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders
- **Ms. Nina Nordström**, Director of the Unit for Human Rights Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

## About:

Women human rights defenders lead movements that have swept the globe calling for gender equality and an end to gender-based violence against women, but also struggling for peace, social justice against corruption and protecting the environment. They have filled the streets, the airwaves, and the internet with their vigour and experiences, bringing to light facts truths that are too often veiled. They are raising their voices, frequently at great personal risk, to stand up for human rights and justice for all. Often these women are at the forefront of challenging social and cultural norms that limit women's human rights.

The current global context of unchecked authoritarianism as well as the rise of populism, the power of corporate greed and the influence of fundamentalist groups has accelerated closing the space for civil society to operate freely. States must live up to their commitments to protect women human rights defenders, who are increasingly under attack and inadequately protected.