

PRESS RELEASE – THE OBSERVATORY

Paris – Geneva, October 19, 2010 - The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), launches today a website dedicated to public information on human rights defenders' protection mechanisms and programmes.

Since the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders in 1998, several mechanisms and programmes of protection were created within the various existing inter-governmental organisations: the United Nations, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the European Union. Others are being developed. However, all these mechanisms and programmes have different mandates and different working methods.

In 2008, the Observatory therefore organised the first meeting gathering all human rights defenders' institutional mandate-holders and programmes, in order to draw a state of play of the existing means and techniques of protection, but also to find ways to enhance coordination and complementarities. A second meeting took place in 2009 in Washington, and the Observatory will be holding further follow-up “inter-mechanisms” meetings on an annual basis.

The “inter-mechanisms” website responds to some of the needs expressed by the participants:

- the necessity to increase the visibility of the mechanisms mandates' and activities and of the protection they offer,
- the necessity to facilitate information-sharing and coordinated actions.

The “inter-mechanisms” website is composed of:

- a presentation of the initiative,
- a frontpage, with latest news regarding mechanisms, i.e. on their missions, individual cases they deal with, reports they publish, etc.,
- sections presenting each mechanism mandate and actions,
- a calendar with all important information related to human rights defenders' inter-governmental protection.

This webspace will therefore be a useful tool for institutional mechanisms, international and local NGOs, and human rights defenders themselves.

The “inter-mechanisms” website is accessible on:

<http://www.humanrights-defenders.org>

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