



REPUBLIQUE DU SENEGAL
Un Peuple – Un But – Une Foi
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

**OPENING STATEMENT OF THE
73rd ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN
COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS**

**BY
PROFESSOR ISMAILA MADIOR FALL
ATTORNEY GENERAL, MINISTER OF JUSTICE**

*Banjul, The Gambia, 21 October
2022*

- **Your Excellency, President of the Republic of The Gambia;**
- **Excellency, Mr. Vice President;**
- **Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly**
- **Esteemed Cabinet Ministers**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament**
- **Distinguished Delegates of African Union Member States;**
- **Mr. Chairman of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;**
- **Honourable Commissioners, members of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;**
- **Distinguished representatives of African Union Organs;**
- **Mr. Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Action;**
- **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Diplomatic Corps**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of National Human Rights Institutions**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations;**
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols duly observed.**

At the outset of my remarks, I would like to express, on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Macky SALL, President of the Republic of Senegal and current Chairperson of the Assembly of the African Union, our sincere gratitude to His Excellency the President of the Republic of The Gambia, to the Government and people of The Gambia, for the legendary hospitality and the excellent facilities made available to us since our arrival here in Banjul.

In coming to take part in this 73rd session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), coinciding with its 35th anniversary, His Excellency President Macky SALL has instructed me to reiterate to you, Senegal's unwavering commitment to African instruments for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, 35 years is a significant milestone in the life of an individual and an institution. Beyond the festivities, this celebration is an opportunity for us to revisit our accomplishments, but also and above all to turn towards the future and to examine the enormous challenges that lie ahead.

**Your Excellency, President of the Republic,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Charter is one of the greatest peace projects in the history of Africa, as evidenced by the content of its provisions, through the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined therein, which constitute the very foundations of justice, lasting peace, collective solidarity and a desire to live together.

Flagrant, massive or systematic violations of human rights represent a threat to peace and international security. It is for this reason that a strong monitoring mechanism such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, ensuring respect for human rights, contributes to the stability, security and peace of the peoples of Africa.

This 73rd session is being held in a particularly difficult context, characterized by a proliferation of multifaceted crises with their attendant human rights violations. This context of fragility is particularly marked by an increase in conflict zones. After the Horn of Africa, the countries of the Sahel, the Gulf of Guinea and West Africa have increasingly become targets of terrorist attacks.

The north of Togo, Benin and Côte d'Ivoire are no longer safe from terrorist incursions. Central Africa, already hit in its western part by the Boko Haram phenomenon, is experiencing an expansion of Islamist terrorism in its eastern part, compounding the conflicts that have been raging there for several decades.

The perpetration of military coups in West Africa undermines an already highly turbulent political environment in the subregion.

**Your Excellency, President of the Republic,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As we celebrate the 35th anniversary of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights today, the duty of memory and recognition invites us to pay tribute to the role of all those who have worked unremittingly to make the Commission a solid and effective regional instrument for the promotion and protection of human rights on African soil.

Today, thanks to the Commission's mechanisms, the African continent can boast of being a place where democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights are alive and kicking.

Among its achievements, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has succeeded in reducing torture in places of deprivation of liberty and in accelerating the process of adopting texts on the protection of the rights of refugees, the rights of migrant workers, the rights of children and the rights of women. It has also succeeded in advancing civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights throughout the African continent.

It is therefore appropriate for me to salute the essential contribution of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa.

The new projects that are taking shape today relate to the rights of older persons and the rights of people living with disabilities. According to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, more than one billion people, or 15% of the world's population, have a disability.

It is clear that with the political will of African leaders and the increasingly demanding aspirations of the African people, these rights will very soon become a reality in our continent.

**Your Excellency, President of the Republic,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The theme of this 73rd session, which deals with the issue of nutrition, invites us to reflect together on ways and means of strengthening resilience in terms of food security and food sovereignty.

The world is facing a food crisis of unprecedented proportions. According to World Food Programme (WFP) figures, 345 million people in 82 countries are facing growing food insecurity.

The repercussions of the war in Ukraine, coupled with the climate shock and economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic have left many vulnerable families around the world, but particularly in Africa, struggling with famine and worsening malnutrition.

The food and nutrition issue is one of the crucial challenges of our continent, because according to the FAO, about 23% of Africans are undernourished and 40% of children under five years of age suffer from malnutrition or stunting. In addition, according to demographic projections, the world population will reach 9.6 billion in 2050, with a relatively young population for Africa.

Thus, as indicated at the Kigali dialogue between the FAO and the African Union Commission, it is imperative to enhance support to African countries in order to accelerate progress towards improving food security. This will certainly involve regulating agricultural commodity markets and supporting the

capacity of all countries to feed themselves through strategies based on the right to food.

Your Excellency, President of the Republic, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In view of all these difficulties, we must develop a synergy of actions in our public policies in order to safeguard our peace and stability, which is the guarantee of sustainable growth and development.

I would add that the fulfilment of human rights is a permanent struggle and the magnitude of the task we face is immense.

Your Excellency, President of the Republic, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cannot conclude my remarks without once again expressing, on behalf of His Excellency, President Macky SALL, President of the Republic of Senegal and current Chairperson of the Assembly of the African Union, our deepest appreciation to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights for its various and constant contributions to the promotion of human rights in Africa.

President Macky SALL firmly believes that with the involvement of all stakeholders, we can together overcome the challenges and improve the human rights situation on the continent for the well-being of the people.

On this note, I would like, on behalf of His Excellency, President Macky SALL, to declare open the 73rd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human Rights and wish you every success in your work.

I thank you for your kind attention.

