

Invitation to a side event at the 19th session of the Human Rights Council on:

“Dalit human rights defenders in South Asia - addressing common and unique challenges”

8 March 2012, 11:30-13:00, Palais des Nations (Room XXVII)

Sponsored by the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism
(IMADR)



The side event aims at sharing examples of the common and unique challenges faced by Dalit human rights defenders working in South Asia, thus providing a regional perspective on the problems faced by those who are at serious and immediate risk defending the rights of marginalized people.

At the event the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders will share her perspectives on action to ensure enhanced protection of Dalit human rights defenders; an issue which the Rapporteur is deeply disturbed by following her visit to India in 2011. In the mission report (A/HRC/19/55/Add.1) she expresses concern, among other things, about the fact that *“from the dominant caste, Dalits’ rights defenders reportedly face, inter alia, death threats, beatings and caste-based insults in public places, direct and indirect destruction of their property/belongings; and filing of false cases against them”*.

Dalit human rights defenders from affected countries (India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh) will present their experiences and views on what can be done to prevent and tackle the common and unique challenges facing these persons working at the national, regional, and international level to combat a culture of impunity.

Panelists (tentative):

- Mrs. Margaret Sekkaggya, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders
- Mr. Paul Divakar, General Secretary, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights Defenders, India
- Ms. Durga Sob, Director, Feminist Dalit Organisation, Nepal
- Mr. Abul Bashar, Coordinator, Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement
- Ms. Nimalka Fernando, President, International Movement against Racism and Discrimination, Sri Lanka
- Ms. Manjula Pradeep, Executive Director, Navsarjan Trust, India
- Mr. Bijo Francis, Asian Legal Resource Centre, India

The side event is co-sponsored by the Asian Legal Resource Centre and organized in association with the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, and the International Dalit Solidarity Network.