

OEA/Ser.P
AG/RES. 1818 (XXXI-O/01)
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HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN THE AMERICAS: SUPPORT FOR
THE INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND ORGANIZATIONS OF CIVIL
SOCIETY WORKING TO PROMOTE
AND PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE AMERICAS

(Resolution adopted at the third plenary session, held on June 5,
2001;
subject to review by the Style Committee)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN resolution AG/RES. 1711 (XXX-O/00), "Human
Rights Defenders in the Americas," which instructs the Permanent
Council to promote the examination of this matter in the context of
the dialogue on strengthening and enhancing the inter-American
human rights system, and to report on the implementation
thereof;

CONSIDERING:

That in the context of the dialogue on the functioning of the
system, and pursuant to the mandate contained in operative
paragraph 3 of resolution AG/RES. 1711 (XXX-O/00), on February
28, 2001, the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs of the
Permanent Council held a meeting at which it considered the topic
and engaged in constructive dialogue that involved representatives
of various regional and national nongovernmental human rights
organizations active in member states; and

That in its recent annual reports, the Inter-American Commission
on Human Rights (IACHR) has expressed its grave concern over
the situation of human rights defenders in the region, and has
recommended that the member states should take the necessary
steps to protect the life, personal security, and freedom of
expression of those who work to ensure respect for fundamental
rights, in accordance with the collective commitment expressed in
OAS General Assembly resolutions AG/RES. 1671 (XXIX-O/99) and
AG/RES. 1711 (XXX-O/00);

BEARING IN MIND the practice of the IACHR in this area, and the
measures it has taken to protect the fundamental rights of
defenders;

RECALLING:

That at the Second Summit of the Americas, held in Santiago,
Chile, the Heads of State and Government affirmed that "respect
for and promotion of human rights and the fundamental freedoms
of all individuals is a primary concern of our governments"; and
that while at the Third Summit of the Americas, held in Quebec,
Canada, they pledged to "seek to promote and give effect to the

United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders"; and

That the OAS General Assembly has stated its consistent views on this subject, reiterating its recommendation that member states "grant the necessary guarantees and facilities to enable non-governmental human rights organizations to continue contributing to the promotion and protection of human rights, and that they respect the freedom and safety of the members of such organizations";

RECOGNIZING the important work, at both the national and regional levels, of human rights defenders in the Americas, as well as their valuable contribution to the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms;

CONCERNED over the persistence in the Americas of situations that directly or indirectly prevent or hamper the work of individuals, groups, or organizations working to protect and promote fundamental rights; and

AWARE of the need to observe the essential aims, principles, and standards set forth in inter-American and international instruments in this area,

RESOLVES:

1. To reiterate its support for the work carried out, at both the national and regional levels, by human rights defenders; and to recognize their valuable contribution to the protection, promotion, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Americas.
2. To deplore acts that directly or indirectly prevents or hampers the work of human rights defenders in the Americas.
3. To urge member states to step up their efforts to adopt the necessary measures, in keeping with their domestic law and with internationally accepted principles and standards, to guarantee the life, personal safety, and freedom of expression of human rights defenders.
4. To invite member states to publicize and enforce the instruments of the inter-American system and the decisions of its bodies in this matter, as well as the United Nations Declaration on the right and responsibility of individuals, groups, and institutions to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.
5. To request the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to continue to pay due attention to the situation of human rights defenders in the Americas and to consider preparing a comprehensive study in this area which, inter alia, describes their work, for study by the pertinent political authorities.
6. To instruct the Permanent Council to follow up on this resolution and to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-second regular session on the implementation thereof.

