



For immediate release – 17 March 2008

Human Rights Council: ARTICLE 19 Urges Amendment of Proposed Resolution on Freedom of Expression

ARTICLE 19 has expressed its concern about a draft resolution on the right to freedom of opinion and expression which has been circulated by the Group of African States at the tenth session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

In a statement released today, ARTICLE 19 has outlined specific concerns about the timing and content of the draft resolution. In the opinion of ARTICLE 19, the draft resolution is premature in its timing because the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Frank la Rue, is not due for consideration until the Council's June 2009 session. Furthermore, some of the wording of the resolution detracts from its purported objective – the protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

ARTICLE 19 urges Member States to amend the draft resolution in conformity with international human rights law (and specifically the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) before agreeing to its adoption. In particular, ARTICLE 19 urges the Group of African States to postpone the tabling of the draft resolution to the June session of the Human Rights Council. It should follow on from the report from the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, and should do so in accordance with established international human rights frameworks which guarantee the right to freedom of expression.

Alternatively, if the Group of African States insists on moving forward with the draft resolution at this tenth session of the Council, ARTICLE 19 urges its sponsors to amend the language of the draft resolution to conform with established international human rights guarantees on the right to freedom of expression.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- To view ARTICLE 19's statement, go to: <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/press/human-rights-council-article-19-urges-amendment-of-proposed-resolution-on-fr.pdf>
- For more information, please contact Sejal Parmar, ARTICLE 19 Senior Legal Officer tel: +44-207-278 9292; email: sejal@article19.org
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.