

April 17, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We welcome your decision to host the first ever U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit this August in Washington, DC. The Summit is an important step in your administration's efforts to engage more constructively with a host of leaders from across Africa. We believe it offers an unprecedented opportunity to fulfill your commitment to stand in support of civil society organizations and individuals on the frontlines of advancing human rights and democratic change.

At the United Nations General Assembly in September 2013, you were unequivocal in your support for civil society freedoms, and we write to you today to ensure that this ideal plays a major role in the Summit agenda. The U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit is a crucial platform to highlight your commitment to integrating human rights and good governance concerns into our relations with African countries, much as we do in other regions of the world.

Across Africa, systematic attacks on human rights have become increasingly common. A spate of repressive laws, including limits to peaceful protest and restrictions on the independence of NGOs, as well as outright violence, intimidation, and harassment are the latest indicators of this trend. By providing official space during the Summit for participation by African civil society activists, you will send a strong and clear message that the U.S. considers these independent voices to be an equally vital part of the conversation.

We look forward to the opportunity to work with you and your staff on how best to integrate civil society voices and human rights concerns into the official Summit program. We are readily available to help identify potential participants and key issues to address.

Thank you very much for your time and for your attention to this important issue.

Sincere regards,

Amnesty International
Freedom House
Open Society Foundations
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights

Action Aid USA
Africa Freedom of Information Center (Uganda)
African Centre for Democratic Studies (Sierra Leone)
African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (Sudan)
African Democracy Forum
African Lawyers for Defense of Civil Society (Sierra Leone)
African Women's Economic Policy Network (Uganda)

Al Khatim Adlan Centre for Enlightenment and Human Development (Sudan)
American Exceptionalism Media Project
Anti-Voter Apathy Project (Zambia)
Assistance Mission for Africa (South Sudan)
Associação SCARJoV (Angola)
The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (The Gambia)
Association pour le Progrès et la Défense des Droits des Femmes (Mali)
Avocats Sans Frontières Mali (Mali)
Blue Nile Center for Human Rights and Peace (Sudan)
Bulawayo Agenda (Zimbabwe)
Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (Botswana)
Center of Studies and Research for Democracy, Economics, and Social Development (Mali)
Center for Faith and Human Rights
Center for Natural Resource Governance (Zimbabwe)
Centre for Research and Development (Zimbabwe)
Citizens Governance Initiatives (Cameroon)
CIVICUS
Clinique Juridique DEME SO (Mali)
Coalition Malienne Pour La Cour Penale Internationale (Mali)
Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme au Mali (Mali)
Committee to Protect Journalists
Concertation Nationale de la Société Civile du Togo (Togo)
Conduit Consulting (Nigeria)
East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (Uganda)
Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (Uganda)
EG Justice
Election Resource Centre (Zimbabwe)
Enough Project
Federation of Women Lawyers (Lesotho)
Foreign Policy in Focus
Foundation for Democratic Process (Zambia)
Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (Uganda)
Freedom of Informations Coalition (Sierra Leone)
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Global Financial Integrity
Global Integrity
Global Witness
Groupe Pivot / Droits et Citoyenneté des Femmes (Mali)
Gweru East Trust for Development (Zimbabwe)
Heartland Alliance on Human Needs & Human Rights
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights Foundation
Human Rights Watch
Humanity in Action
ICON Afrique (Nigeria)
Institute for Accountability in Southern Africa (South Africa)
The Institute for Young Women Development (Zimbabwe)
Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (Nigeria)
International Budget Partnership

International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
Inuka Kenya Trust (Kenya)
The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (Zambia)
Les Mêmes Droits pour Tous (Guinea)
LGBT Voice (Tanzania)
Maka Angola (Angola)
Malawi Electoral Support Network (Malawi)
Malawi Law Society (Malawi)
Maranatha Hope (Nigeria)
Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa (Kenya)
Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (South Africa)
Open Society Initiative for West Africa (Senegal)
Operation Young Vote (Zambia)
Organization Union de Jeunes pour la Paix et le Développement (Burundi)
Oxfam America
Pair Educateurs et Promoteur sans Frontière (Cameroon)
Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network (Uganda)
Partners for Democratic Change
Police Accountability Consortium (Sierra Leone)
Publish What You Pay – United States
Rencontre Africaine Pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (Guinea)
Réseau des Défenseurs des Droits Humains en Afrique Centrale (Cameroon)
Sexual Minorities Uganda (Uganda)
Shalom Project (Zimbabwe)
Sierra Leone Policy Watch (Sierra Leone)
Society for Democracy Initiatives (Sierra Leone)
Southern Africa Litigation Centre (South Africa)
Tanzanians Against Corruption (Tanzania)
Tribune Jeune pour le Droit au Mali (Mali)
Terre Des Jeunes Du Burundi (Burundi)
Uganda Journalists Union (Uganda)
Uganda Media Development Foundation (Uganda)
Union Régionale des Travailleurs de Gao (Mali)
United Methodist General Board of Church and Society
Victory Siyanqoba Trust (Zimbabwe)
Women of Zimbabwe Arise (Zimbabwe)
Women's Institute for Leadership Development (Zimbabwe)
The Women's Trust (Zimbabwe)
Young African Leaders Initiative (Zambia)
Young Stars Foundation (Nigeria)
Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (Zimbabwe)
Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (Zimbabwe)
Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (Zimbabwe)

cc:

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