

CALL TO ACTION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Public Participation and Civic Space

Open, free, and safe civic space is the cornerstone of a vibrant society built on mutual trust, in which everyone can actively take part. Inclusive and meaningful participation in decision-making means inviting everyone to the table, especially those most marginalized, and ensuring they feel heard and safe to speak openly. It also requires an independent media landscape that allows for diverse views, peaceful disagreement and dissent.

However, these **open spaces are under pressure all over the world**, with the spread of repressive laws and policies undermining and threatening the freedoms of assembly, expression, and association. Journalists, human rights defenders, environmental activists, and protest leaders – especially women – are facing increased restrictions and attacks both online and offline.

The [United Nations Guidance Note on the Protection and Promotion of Civic Space](#) emphasizes that more strategic and effective civic space action hinges on stepping up work around the “3 Ps”: Participation of civil society in UN processes; Protection of civil society through clear protocols and procedures; and Promotion of civic space and participation in national and local decision-making processes.

The Call to Action will contribute to these objectives by:

- 1. Supporting more systematic and inclusive participation of civil society in United Nations** bodies and agencies, with special attention to those previously underrepresented, such as women and young people.
- 2. Promoting laws and policies that truly empower civil society**, protect civic space and enable safe and broad participation, online and offline.
- 3. Stepping up action on online civic space** to ensure an accessible and free internet that enables the free flow of information and debates, and address online threats and attacks.
- 4. Ensuring that UN field presences and leadership, in partnership with civil society organisations, contribute to an enabling environment for civic space** and to more effective protection of civil society actors.

