

**By Virtue
of Being Human:**
Launch of the
SOGIE ACHPR
Strategy

**Concept
Note**

**29 APRIL
2025**

Time:
16:00-17:30 (GMT)

Venue (In-person):
Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International
Conference Centre, Banjul, The Gambia

Occasion:
An African Civil Society Engagement (ACSE) SOGIE Advocacy
Working Group Side Event at the 83rd Ordinary Session of the
African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights,
Banjul, The Gambia



INTRODUCTION

The African Civil Society Engagement (ACSE) initiative is a coalition of organisations and individuals working to enhance civil society participation in the African human rights system. Among its thematic pillars, the advancement of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) rights has emerged as a key area of focus, given the persistent and increasing threats faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals across the continent. The ACSE SOGIE Advocacy Working Group Strategy and Operational Guidelines represent the third attempt by African civil society to revitalise and institutionalise SOGIE advocacy at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).

This launch event, taking place during the 83rd Ordinary Session of the ACHPR, marks a formal unveiling of the strategy and signals a new phase of coordinated regional engagement.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The landscape of SOGIE advocacy in Africa has shifted significantly in recent years. While the adoption of Resolution 275 in 2014 marked a high point in the recognition of rights violations based on real or imputed sexual orientation and gender identity, subsequent institutional pushback has hampered sustained engagement. The

withdrawal of observer status from the Coalition of African Lesbians and the denial of status to other progressive organisations has signalled a troubling trend toward exclusion. Simultaneously, the rise of anti-rights actors and populist narratives has emboldened backlash against queer communities. In this context, civil society has an urgent role to play in reconstituting engagement with the ACHPR and building an organised, intersectional, and resilient advocacy platform. The SOGIE Advocacy Working Group and its new strategy aim to provide a blueprint for this effort, detailing the governance, thematic priorities, and operational mechanisms necessary to sustain and scale advocacy for LGBTIQ+ rights within the African regional human rights framework.

OBJECTIVES OF THE LAUNCH EVENT

- To formally present the ACSE SOGIE Advocacy Working Group Strategy and Operational Guidelines to ACHPR stakeholders, civil society actors, and regional allies.
- To highlight the strategic context and historical evolution of SOGIE advocacy within the African human rights system.
- To amplify the voices of organisations

and individuals at the forefront of LGBTIQ+ advocacy across Africa.

- To catalyse renewed commitment to coordinated action and resource mobilisation around the implementation of the strategy.
- To initiate a wider conversation on the role of the ACHPR in ensuring rights protection for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

FORMAT AND METHODOLOGY

The event will be conducted as a panel session featuring four speakers drawn from the founding organisations that led the development of the strategy. Each panellist will reflect on specific themes within the strategy, including governance and structure, advocacy and campaigns, capacity strengthening, and legal engagement. Following the panel, an open floor discussion will invite feedback, expressions of solidarity, and suggestions for implementation. A printed and digital version of the strategy will be circulated to attendees.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE PANEL SESSION

- What are the key opportunities and challenges for revitalising SOGIE advocacy at the ACHPR?
- How can organisations do advocacy before a mechanism that for ten years has been unable to protect the rights of LGBTIQ+ organisations? Remembering the withdrawal of CAL observer status and denial of observer status applications of organisations because the ACHPR deemed them to be LGBTIQ+ organisations and on the basis that they advocate for rights that are not protected in the charter?
- What are the issues that organisations must prioritise in this new iteration of the work?
- How can civil society ensure sustainable and coordinated engagement with the African human rights system?
- What strategic measures are necessary to counter anti-rights actors and protect LGBTIQ+ voices?
- How can the working group build legitimacy, visibility, and influence within regional and international spaces?
- What kind of partnerships, funding models, and accountability mechanisms are needed to operationalise the strategy effectively?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- A formal public launch of the ACSE SOGIE Advocacy Working Group Strategy and Operational Guidelines.
- Increased awareness among ACHPR stakeholders and civil society about the strategy's goals and structure.
- Strengthened collective ownership of the strategy among founding and prospective members.
- Mobilisation of new partners, allies, and donors toward the implementation of the strategy.
- Documentation of reflections and feedback from participants to inform the working group's next steps.