



**Oral Statement**  
**Adoption of the UPR report of Burkina Faso**  
**Date**  
**Delivered by ...**

Thank you, Mr President.

Mr President, Coalition Burkinabé des Défenseurs des Droits Humains, the West Africa Human Rights Defenders Network and CIVICUS welcome the government of Burkina Faso's engagement with the UPR process. We also welcome passing of a new law on the protection of human rights defenders in June 2017, making Burkina Faso only the second African country to do so.

However, in our joint UPR Submission, we documented that since its last review, Burkina Faso only partially implemented the one civic space recommendation received during its 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle review. Despite several positive developments since the popular uprising of 2014, such as the decriminalisation of defamation and the adoption of a law on the protection of human right defenders, restrictions on the freedom of expression including suspensions of media outlets by the national media regulator and attacks and threats against journalists continue.

A new law on freedom of association, passed in 2015, allows authorities to delay the granting of legal personality in order to conduct a “morality” test on the applicant if deemed necessary. Civil society in Burkina Faso are further concerned about article 56 of the law which establishes a mediation commission, the members of which are not guaranteed to be independent of government.

Despite the new HRD law, in recent years journalists and civil society activists, in particular those critical of the government, have continued to experience threats, intimidation and physical attacks. Freedom of expression has been undermined in recent years, including through the forced closure of some media outlets.

Serious violations of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, including the killing of at least 14 unarmed protestors, took place during a coup d'etat in September 2015.

Mr President, we call on the Government of Burkina Faso to take proactive measures to address these concerns and implement recommendations to create and maintain, in law and in practice, an enabling environment for civil society.

We thank you.