

African high-level experts join forces against sexual violence ahead of FIDH 39th Congress

Biographies

Commissioner Soyata Maiga

*Vice-Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
Chairperson of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities in Africa*

Commissioner Soyata Maiga is a Malian lawyer and magistrate committed to the defense of women's rights. She is the former Special Rapporteur on Rights of Women in Africa of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

After graduating from the French National School of Magistrates (*école nationale de la magistrature*), she worked as a judge in Mali from 1976 to 1990. She is currently a lawyer and president of the Association of Malian Women Lawyers.

She received the title of Pioneer awarded by the Federation of African Jurists at the 5th Congress of March 2005 in Dakar for her commitments to gender equality and women's rights. She also received the Aoua Keïta price of the Association for the Progress and Defense of Women's Right (APDF) in Bamako in August 2008.

Commissioner Lucy Asuagbor

Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

Madam Lucy Asuagbor, is a Cameroonian and one of the current serving Commissioners of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, where she is *Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa*; formerly *Chairperson of the Committee For The Protection Of The Rights Of PLHIV And Those At Risk, Vulnerable To And Affected By HIV In Africa*, a member of the [Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities in Africa](#), and *Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders*. She is the Country Rapporteur responsible for the promotion of human rights in *Uganda, Nigeria, Benin, Rwanda and Malawi*.

In her personal capacity, she is currently a Judge at the Supreme Court of Yaoundé, Cameroon. She holds a Bachelor of Laws Degree from the University of Lagos-Nigeria, a Masters Degree in International Law from the International Maritime Law Institute –Malta, and a Diploma from the School of Magistracy –Yaoundé.

Mrs. Bineta Diop

AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security

Ms Bineta Diop is a women's rights activist born in Guéoul, Senegal. In 1981, she joined the International Commission of Jurists, a human rights NGO. In Geneva in 1996, she founded Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS). She participated in the development of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and in the

development of the Maputo Protocol. In 2011, Bineta Diop appeared on Time 100, an annual list of the one hundred most influential people published by the American magazine Time. The next year, she was knighted by the Legion of Honour. In 2013, *Fondation Chirac* gave her an award for her actions promoting female involvement in conflict prevention.

Mrs. Pansy Tlakula

*Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa*

Advocate Pansy Tlakula is a South African Lawyer. She studied law at the University of the Witwatersrand before completing her masters at Harvard. She is the former Chief Electoral Officer and former Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of South Africa. She also served as a member of the South African Human Rights Commission. She is now the Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights as well as the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information. In this role, she has been tasked with analysing member states' media laws and policies, and with reporting violations of press freedom. Tlakula has defended the empowerment of women and insisted that moves towards equality not exclude the rights of women.

Mrs. Mahawa Kaba Wheeler

Director of Women, Gender and Development at the African Union Commission (AUC)

Mrs Mahawa Kaba Wheeler is a Guinean women's rights defender. She has extensive professional experience in development programming and humanitarian relief assistance, with particular emphasis on gender, monitoring and evaluation, food security analysis, and mapping and value chain analysis. She worked with leading international organizations, including the UN World Food Program and US government development partners including ACIDI/VOCA and DAI in Sub-Saharan Africa and the U.S. She took office as the Director for Women, Gender and Development Directorate at the African Union Commission in 2015.

Prof Rashida Manjoo

University of Cape Town, Former United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women its causes and consequences

Mrs. Rashida Manjoo is a South African national. She is a Professor in the Department of Public Law at the University of Cape Town. She is the co-convenor of the Human Rights Program in the Law Faculty where she teaches, supervises and advises students. She has served as the Parliamentary commissioner on South

Africa's Commission on Gender Equality, the Des Lee Distinguished Visiting Professor at Webster University, and the Eleanor Roosevelt Fellow with Harvard Law School's Human Rights Program. Mrs. Rashida Manjoo was the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women from June 2009 to July 2015.

She has over three decades of experience in social justice and human rights work. Her research interests include human rights broadly with a particular focus on women's human rights. She has authored a number of journal articles, book chapters and reports on women's human rights, violence against women, transitional justice, and also the impact for women of the recognition of Muslim Personal Laws in South Africa.