



By the end of April, the Swedish NGO Foundation co-organised a capacity-building seminar together with La Voix des Sans Voix and ADHUC, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) respectively, as well as the International Service for Human Rights, based in Geneva. The seminar was held in the DRC and dealt with the regional African system for human rights. Last year, a similar seminar was held in Haiti, then with the Inter-American system for human rights in focus. Both initiatives are part of a South-South exchange which aims at strengthening the knowledge and use of the various international and regional regulations and mechanisms for human rights.

The seminar convened about 40 participants, primarily lawyers and human rights organisations from various parts of the DRC, but also government authority representatives, among them the Chancellor of Justice. Moreover, delegations from the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) and Haiti, international organisations and journalists took part in the meeting. Among the contributors was the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the spokesperson of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the DRC, the International Center for Transitional Justice, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the UN Mission in the country, MONUC.

Apart from the aim to provide an introduction to the African and the UN systems for human rights, including the special mechanisms for women's rights and the rights of human rights defenders within both systems, the roles and mandates of the ICC and the basics of international humanitarian law were also dealt with. The seminar will be followed up and has already resulted in plans for producing a parallel report in cooperation with local partners to be presented at the African Commission on human and peoples' rights, and to provide relevant Special Rapporteurs with information.

Per Bjälkander

Translation by Isabelle Nilsson