



25 June 2012: For immediate release

International Mandates Deplore Attacks on Freedom of Expression

Today, the 13th annual Joint Declaration by the four specialised mandates of the UN, OAS, OSCE and African Commission tasked with promoting and protecting freedom of expression was launched in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. This latest Declaration, prepared with the assistance of the Centre for Law and Democracy and ARTICLE 19, expresses "abhorrence over the unacceptable rate of incidents of violence and other crimes against freedom of expression".

"Many of these attacks are vile crimes in their own right," said Toby Mendel, Executive Director of CLD, who participated in the launch event. *"But inasmuch as they aim to silence those who report on human rights abuse, organised crime, corruption and other wrongdoing, they are attacks on the right of everyone to seek and receive information and ideas."*

The Joint Declaration elaborates in some detail the measures States should take to combat the climate of impunity that exists in many of the countries where these crimes take place. The fact that so few States have put in place special legal measures to combat these crimes highlights the lack of real resolve to address the problem.

The Declaration specifically calls on States to:

- Specifically recognise in law the serious nature of crimes against freedom of expression.
- Provide protection to those who are at risk of being targeted.
- Conduct independent, speedy and effective investigations where such crimes do occur.
- Ensure that appropriate redress is available to victims.

The Joint Declaration is available in English, Arabic, French, Spanish and Russian at: <http://www.law-democracy.org/?p=2089>.

For further information, please contact:

Toby Mendel
Executive Director
Centre for Law and Democracy
email: toby@law-democracy.org
tel: +1 902 431-3688
www.law-democracy.org