

The current special rapporteur: Maina Kiai, Kenya (2011-17)

Mr. Maina Kiai is the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association. He took up his functions on 1 May 2011, for an initial period of three years. His mandate was renewed in 2014 for an additional three years.

A lawyer trained at Nairobi and Harvard Universities, Mr. Kiai has spent the last twenty years campaigning for human rights and constitutional reform in Kenya – notably as founder and Executive Director of the unofficial Kenya Human Rights Commission, and then as Chairman of Kenya's National Human Rights Commission (2003-2008), where he won a national reputation for his courageous and effective advocacy against official corruption, in support of political reform, and against impunity following the violence that convulsed Kenya in 2008, causing thousands of deaths.

From July 2010 to April 2011, Mr. Kiai was the Executive Director of the International Council on Human Rights Policy, a Geneva-based think-tank which produces research reports and briefing papers with policy recommendations. Mr. Kiai was also the Director of Amnesty International's Africa Programme (1999-2001), and the Africa Director of the International Human Rights Law Group (now Global Rights, 2001-2003). He held research fellowships at the Danish Institute for Human Rights (Copenhagen), the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (Washington), and the TransAfrica Forum (Washington).

He currently works as co-director of [InformAction](#), a community organizing NGO in Kenya.

Mr. Kiai has regularly been an advocate informing and educating Kenyans through various media about their human rights. In 2014, [Freedom House](#) awarded Kiai its Freedom Award for [his work in Kenya](#). The award was begun in 1943 "to extol recipients' invaluable contribution to the cause of freedom and democracy." In October 2016, Kiai [received](#) the [United Nations Foundation's](#) Leo Nevas Award for his work as Special Rapporteur. The award recognizes "those who have served as agents of change in advancing international human rights."