

# Justice **NOW!** Ratify to Protect all Human Rights

CAMPAIGN FOR THE RATIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE INTERNATIONAL  
COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS



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**Human rights violations occur every day in different countries and regions around the world. The victims all have one thing in common – they are denied access to justice.**

## **Take Action Now**

Countless people around the world suffer violations of their economic, social and cultural rights, including violations to their rights to adequate housing, food, water and sanitation, health, work and education. Discrimination in accessing public services such as health, education or food distribution systems, working without any labour protections, and forced evictions are only a few examples of the abuses faced by many people. Access to justice is a right of all victims but in different parts of the world, individuals are unable to hold governments, companies and others accountable for violating their rights. In many countries, many or all economic, social and cultural rights are not recognised or enforceable by law, leaving people with little hope of an effective remedy. Existing remedies may also be ineffective or inadequately enforced.

The United Nations has created a new international mechanism through the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Optional Protocol). Once operational, the Optional Protocol will enable those whose economic, social and cultural rights are violated and who are denied a remedy in their countries to seek justice at the international level. It will also influence decisions by judicial bodies at the national and regional levels and create more opportunities for people to advocate for the enforcement of economic, social and cultural rights within their own countries.

**We, the undersigned organisations and individuals, call on all States of the world to ensure that access to justice and the right to an effective remedy become a reality for all victims of human rights violations. We urge all States to become a party to the Optional Protocol when it opens for signature on September 24, 2009; to ensure that it enters into force as soon as possible; and to take all necessary steps to fully implement the Optional Protocol without delay. We call on those countries that are not yet a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to ratify or accede to this treaty immediately and to also sign to the Optional Protocol in September 24.**

