



Side Event on the Margins of the 61ST Ordinary Session of the ACHPR

**Poverty is Not a Crime:
Ending the Penalisation and Criminalisation of Poverty in Africa**

DATE: 2 November 2017

TIME: 13h15

VENUE: Boardroom Kairaba (Kairaba Hotel, Senegambia)

About the Event

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Commission) has recognised that the declassification and decriminalisation of petty offences is an important human rights issue. Many African countries continue to maintain and enforce petty offences. The enforcement of these laws significantly contributes to arbitrary and unlawful arrests, targeting the poor and marginalised. Most of the offences amount to the criminalisation of poverty. In 2017, at its 21st Extraordinary Session, the Commission adopted a resolution, which tasked the Special Rapporteur on Prisons, Conditions of Detention and Policing in Africa to develop Principles on the Declassification and Decriminalisation of Petty Offences in Africa.

This event is an opportunity to provide an update on the efforts of a coalition of civil society organisations that have embarked on a campaign to decriminalise petty offences. A recent constitutional decision in Malawi declaring the provisions criminalising a rogue and vagabond person unconstitutional will also be discussed. The event will also present a platform for participants to discuss and share experiences on the subject.

SPEAKERS

Aquinaldo Mandlate

Southern Africa Litigation Centre

Chumile Sali

African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum

Victor Mhango

Centre for Human Rights Education, Advice and Assistance

