



The global community is facing a triple planetary crisis that requires urgent collective action at the national and international level. Environmental defenders play a critical role in ensuring the current environmental crisis is addressed. Yet, in my mandate as UN Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders under the Aarhus Convention, I continue to witness the ongoing serious intimidation and reprisals environmental defenders face for seeking to have their voices heard. There is therefore an urgent need to better protect environmental defenders from such threats. I accordingly particularly welcome the inclusion of Principle 43 in the Strasbourg Principles that acknowledges the public's procedural and participatory rights under international law and the right not to be persecuted, penalized or harassed for seeking to exercise these rights. Principle 43 closely mirrors the language of article 3 (8) of the Aarhus Convention, which was the first international instrument to include a binding obligation to protect environmental defenders and which forms the legal basis of my mandate as Special Rapporteur.

**Michel Forst**

United Nations Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders  
under the Aarhus Convention

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# The Strasbourg Principles of International Environmental Human Rights Law