JOINT CIVIL SOCIETY SUBMISSION

OHCHR Call for Input – UNGA-81 Thematic Report

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association

Gen-Z Activism and the Future of Civic Space

Submitted by:

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1. Introduction

- Tifa Foundation (Yayasan Tifa) is a civil society organization that promotes the advancement of a society grounded in democratic, just, and ecologically sustainable order. Our work focuses on strengthening civil society movements, advancing just and sustainable natural resource governance, promoting good governance across sectors, and advocating for accountable digital governance in Indonesia. Tifa is coordinating a network of security services for human rights defenders in Indonesia, which distributes physical security, digital security, legal assistance, psychosocial assistance, advocacy, and emergency funds.
- As an implementing partner of the Digital Democracy Initiative, a program focused on strengthening civil society's capacity to protect civic space and advance inclusive digital democracy, Tifa submits this joint submission for the thematic report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Generation Z Activism and the Future of Civic Space (81st UN General Assembly) together with civil society partners in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar, Philippines, and Thailand.
- This submission reflects the experiences of the DDI program and the collective evidence from partner organizations that co-submitted this input. It highlights the intersection between youth activism and digital democracy, particularly how young people's exercise of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association (FoPA) is mediated, enabled, and threatened by digital technology. We address three interrelated objectives in this report: identifying the challenges young people face in engaging in activism; documenting the best practices and mitigation measures they implement; and contributing to the identification of systemic protection gaps in facilitating young people's FoPA rights.

2. Legal Framework

Within the framework of international law and human rights, the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association is guaranteed in Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

(UDHR)[1] and is enforceable through Articles 21[2] and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).[3] While restrictions on these rights are permitted, any such restrictions must meet three cumulative conditions: they must be regulated by law, necessary in a democratic society, and proportionate to a legitimate aim. Furthermore, to ensure the enjoyment of these rights by all, Article 2 of the ICCPR prohibits discrimination in their enjoyment, including on the basis of age.[4] The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, Article 15) further guarantees these rights for those under 18.[5]

The underlying premise of this submission is that FoPA rights apply fully in the digital environment.[6] Report A/HRC/41/41 by the Special Rapporteur (2019) affirms that international law protects FoPA rights whether exercised directly or through digital technologies. The Human Rights Committee's General Comment No. 34 establishes that ICCPR protections encompass digital expression,[7] while General Comment No. 37 on Article 21 (2020) confirms that the right to peaceful assembly extends to online assemblies. Therefore, digital organizing, social media-based mobilization, and online associations are forms of civil action protected under the Covenant.

States bear both a negative obligation to refrain from interfering with digital FoPA rights and a positive facilitation obligation to actively create enabling condition, including in digital spaces.[8] As such, online activism monitoring, internet shutdowns, platform censorship, and cybercrime laws that restrict online organizing are all subject to the ICCPR's limitations test.

3. Challenges: How Digital Technology Mediates and Threatens Youth FoPA Rights

3.1 Digital surveillance and chilling effects on assembly

Across DDI's partner countries in East and Southeast Asia, there is one pervasive threat to young people's right to peaceful assembly in the digital sphere that stands out: digital surveillance.[9,10] The monitoring of social media accounts, the interception of communications, the use of facial

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[1]Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted 10 December 1948) UNGA Res 217A(III) (UDHR) art 20.

[2]International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976) 999 UNTS 171 (ICCPR) art 21.

[3]ICCPR (n 2) art 22.

[4]ICCPR (n 2) art 2.

[5]Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted 20 November 1989, entered into force 2 September 1990) 1577 UNTS 3 (CRC) art 15.

[6]UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, 'Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association in the Digital Era' (2019) UN Doc A/HRC/41/41, para 6.

[7] Human Rights Committee, 'General Comment No 34: Article 19 — Freedoms of Opinion and Expression' (12 September 2011) UN Doc CCPR/C/GC/34, para 12. Note: GC 34 supports the principle that digital expression is protected under the ICCPR; for digital assembly and association specifically, see A/HRC/41/41 (n 6) and Human Rights Committee, 'General Comment No 37 on Article 21 (Right of Peaceful Assembly)' (23 July 2020) UN Doc CCPR/C/GC/37, paras 6–7.

[8]UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association (n 6) para 11.

[9]Amnesty International, '*Being Ourselves is Too Dangerous: State-backed Digital Violence Used to Silence Women and LGBTI Activists in Thailand*' (Amnesty International, May 2024) https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/05/thailand-state-backed-digital-violence-silence-women-lgbti-activists accessed 27 May 2026.

[10] Human Rights Myanmar, '*Impact of Digital Surveillance on Civic Space in Myanmar*' (Human Rights Myanmar, February 2026) https://humanrightsmyanmar.org/impact-of-digital-surveillance-on-civic-space-in-myanmar accessed 27 May 2026.

recognition technology during protests, and the use of commercial spyware against young activists have been shown to instill a climate of fear, which hinders participation in demonstrations and suppresses engagement in youth movements.[11] The Freedom House Freedom on the Net 2024 report documents the proliferation of AI-powered surveillance tools across the region, underscoring the structural scale of this threat.[12]

This is evidenced by the experience of Mon youth activists and ethnic minority communities in Mon Region, Myanmar, documented by DDI partner— New Rehmonnya Federated Force (NRFF).[13] Youth activists in this area face dual-front challenges: simultaneous physical repression and digital security risks, following the military junta's deployment of the "Person Scrutinization and Monitoring System" (PSMS), a citizen registration and monitoring database built on a biometric and digital surveillance infrastructure.[14] Compounding this, frequent internet blockages and strict social media monitoring have been systematically imposed. Mon youth activists have also been unable to adequately secure their communications due to limited access to digital security expertise under the military regime. The cumulative effect has been severe: activists have been forced to relocate to safer locations due to security threats, and have faced kinetic targeting by the military junta facilitated through digital surveillance — a direct and documented violation of their rights to peaceful assembly and association under ICCPR Articles 21 and 22.

3.2 Restrictive legislation: incompatible limitations on FoPA

Restrictions on FoPA rights are also driven by the policy frameworks in place. Cybercrime laws, anti-fake news regulations, national security frameworks, and restrictions on foreign funding across the region are enforced in ways that fail to meet the three-part test under the ICCPR.[15] The overly broad definitions of these regulations encompass legitimate political expression and online organizing; the regulations are selectively applied against youth resistance movements; and the disproportionate penalties imposed create a severe chilling effect.[16]

The use of the "foreign interference" narrative as a weapon, targeting internationally supported civil society, further restricts the freedom of association of youth-led groups.[17] In the Philippines, DDI

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[11] UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association (n 6) paras 22–26.

[12] Freedom House, 'Freedom on the Net 2024: The Struggle for Trust Online' (Freedom House, 2024) https://freedomhouse.org/article/fotn-2024-asia-pacific-release accessed 27 May 2026: internet users were arrested for online expression in at least 56 countries globally; national security.

[13] NRFF, input contributed to TIFA Foundation DDI joint submission, May 2026 (on file with TIFA Foundation).

[14] Freedom House, '*Freedom on the Net 2024: The Struggle for Trust Online*' (Freedom House, 2024) https://freedomhouse.org/article/fotn-2024-asia-pacific-release accessed 27 May 2026: internet users were arrested for online expression in at least 56 countries globally; national security frameworks consistently applied beyond their stated scope against youth activists and online critics.

[15] SAFEnet (Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network) and Manushya Foundation, '*Unmasking Digital Oppression: Second Revisions to Indonesia's EIT Law Fuelling Online Repression*' (SAFEnet, December 2023) https://safenet.or.id/2023/12/joint-solidarity-statement-unmasking-digital-oppression-second-revisions-to-indonesias-eit-law-fuelling-online-repression accessed 27 May 2026: between January 2019 and December 2022, at least 1,021 human rights defenders in Indonesia alone faced prosecution under the defamation provisions of the ITE Law; SAFEnet documented 89 further cases between January and October 2023.

[16] Freedom House, '*Freedom on the Net 2024: The Struggle for Trust Online*' (Freedom House, 2024) https://freedomhouse.org/article/fotn-2024-asia-pacific-release accessed 27 May 2026: internet users were arrested for online expression in at least 56 countries globally; national security frameworks consistently applied beyond their stated scope against youth activists and online critics.

[17] Human Rights Watch, ARTICLE 19, Amnesty International and others, '*Thailand: NGO Law Would Strike Severe Blow to Human Rights*' (HRW, 2 April 2021) https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/04/02/thailand-ngo-law-would-strike-severe-blow-human-rights accessed 27 May 2026: joint statement by seven international human rights organisations finding the draft NGO law's restrictions on foreign funding

Partner DAKILA documented that the SIM Card Registration Act strips digital anonymity from youth activists by mandating registration of all SIM cards to verified government identities, granting state actors direct pathways to trace mobilization networks and intercept communications — generating a profound chilling effect on spontaneous civic assembly.[18]

In Indonesia, DDI partner Institut Hijau Indonesia documents through its Speak Justice Program, conducted across 19 regions, that youth activists face disinformation campaigns and risks of criminalization for advocating on environmental protection, Indigenous peoples' rights, and budget transparency, with laws and regulations restricting freedom of expression contributing to widespread self-censorship in digital spaces.[19]

3.3 Platform censorship and internet shutdowns

In exercising their activism in the digital space, young activists often face the removal of content documenting state violations, the suspension of organizational accounts at crucial moments of mobilization, and algorithmic restrictions on youth movement content.[20] Internet shutdowns are also frequently imposed during protests, directly violating the right to peaceful assembly by cutting off activists' access to real-time coordination and documentation tools.[21] The Human Rights Council has affirmed that intentional internet disruptions are inconsistent with international human rights law.[22] This is evidenced by data from the CIVICUS Monitor, which consistently classifies the majority of countries in the region as having a civil society space that is 'restricted,' 'under pressure,' or 'closed'.[23]

3.4 Online harassment, doxxing, and transnational repression

Silencing actions were also targeted at young activists—most of whom are women, LGBTQI+ individuals, and members of ethnic minority groups.[24] Several reports indicate the existence of systematic online harassment, doxxing, and coordinated inauthentic behavior aimed at silencing them.[25] A particularly lethal form is "red-tagging" in the Philippines — the public labelling of activists,

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violate the legality principle under international human rights law, as the vague definition of 'not-for-profit organisations' gives authorities unchecked discretion to restrict civil society.

[18] DAKILA, input contributed to TIFA Foundation DDI joint submission, May 2026 (on file with TIFA Foundation).

[19] Institute Hijau Indonesia, input contributed to TIFA Foundation DDI joint submission, May 2026 (on file with TIFA Foundation).

[20] Amnesty International, '*Philippines: Authorities Increasingly Using Facebook to Stifle Young Activists' Right to Freedom of Expression and Protest*' (Amnesty International, 17 October 2024) https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/10/philippines-authorities-using-facebook-to-red-tag-young-activists accessed 27 May 2026: documents Meta's failure to prevent State-linked red-tagging of youth activists through advertisements, including "terrorist-tagging" of a 21-year-old activist, with content removal used as a tool of repression rather than protection.

[21] Access Now and the #KeepItOn Coalition, '*Emboldened Offenders, Endangered Communities: Internet Shutdowns in 2024*' (Access Now, February 2025) https://www.accessnow.org/internet-shutdowns-2024 accessed 27 May 2026: documents 202 shutdowns in Asia alone in 2024 — the highest ever recorded for the region in a single year — with protests cited as a leading trigger; Myanmar recorded at least 85 shutdowns, Indonesia and other DDI partner countries also appeared on the 2024 list.

[22] Human Rights Council, 'The Promotion, Protection and Enjoyment of Human Rights on the Internet' (1 July 2016) UN Doc A/HRC/32/L.20, preamble: expresses deep concern at "measures aiming to or that intentionally prevent or disrupt access to or dissemination of information online, in violation of international human rights law."

[23] CIVICUS Monitor, 'People Power Under Attack 2024' (CIVICUS, December 2024) https://monitor.civicus.org/globalfindings_2024/asiapacific accessed 27 May 2026. In the 2024 edition, all six DDI programme countries — Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Philippines, and Vietnam — are rated as either 'repressed' or 'closed'; no Southeast Asian country holds an 'open' civic space rating. Civil society is under severe attack in 116 of 198 countries globally.

[24] Amnesty International, '*Being Ourselves is Too Dangerous: State-backed Digital Violence Used to Silence Women and LGBTI Activists in Thailand*' (Amnesty International, May 2024) https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/05/thailand-state-backed-digital-violence-silence-women-lgbti-activists accessed 27 May 2026.

[25] UN Women Asia-Pacific, '*FAQs: Trolling, Stalking, Doxing and Other Forms of Violence Against Women in the Digital Age*' (UN Women, November 2024) https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2024/11/faqs-trolling-stalking-doxing-and-other-forms-of-violence-against-women-in-the-digital-age accessed 27 May 2026: documents that doxxing, astroturfing, coordinated harassment, and violent

student leaders, and cultural workers as communist terrorists — documented by DDI partners DAKILA and Mindanao Climate Justice (MCJ) as a state-orchestrated online-to-offline pipeline that functions as an explicit precursor to arrests, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings. The Talaingod 13 case, arising from a 2018 humanitarian mission in Mindanao, illustrates how digital vilification and criminal prosecution converge: volunteer educators, Indigenous youth defenders, and humanitarian workers were subjected to years of red-tagging culminating in conviction in July 2024, generating a documented chilling effect on student leaders and Indigenous youth organizers across the Philippines.[26] In this regard, the State has a positive obligation under Articles 21 and 22 of the ICCPR to protect individuals from third-party interference with the right to freedom of opinion and expression (FoPA), including online attacks by state-affiliated actors. Therefore, this submission aligns with the OHCHR's call for specific input highlighting transnational repression as an issue for young activists, where young diaspora activists also face digital surveillance, coercion from family, and coordinated attacks by their c-ountries of origin, which violate their FoPA rights regardless of their physical location.[27]

3.5 Intersecting vulnerabilities of marginalized youth

Girls and young women, LGBTQI+ youth, Indigenous youth, ethnic and religious minority groups, and youth in areas with limited internet access face compounded barriers to exercising their FoPA rights online.[28,29] Institut Hijau Indonesia's Speak Justice Programme data from 19 regions documents that women and Indigenous youth activists face heightened barriers to digital civic participation, including targeted harassment, exclusion from decision-making processes, and intersecting risks of criminalization, beyond those faced by youth activists as a whole. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has emphasized that States must create an enabling environment for youth civic participation in digital spaces.[30] Compounding structural inequalities in digital civic spaces constitutes a systemic failure to fulfil States' positive facilitation obligations toward the most vulnerable young people, not merely a technical access issue.

4. Good Practices and Countermeasures

Despite these challenges, youth activists and civil society organizations have developed innovative countermeasures that demonstrate the resilience of digital civic space when adequately supported:

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threats are among the most common forms reported, with young women and girls, LGBTQI+ individuals, and women of colour at heightened risk.

[26] Mindanao Climate Justice, input contributed to TIFA Foundation DDI joint submission, May 2026 (on file with TIFA Foundation).

[27] UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, 'Surveillance and Human Rights' (2019) UN Doc A/HRC/41/35, para 26.

[28] UNICEF, '*Bridging the Gender Digital Divide: Challenges and an Urgent Call for Action for Equitable Digital Skills Development*' (UNICEF Data, May 2023) https://data.unicef.org/resources/ictgenderdivide accessed 27 May 2026: in low-income countries, 90% of adolescent girls aged 15–24 are offline compared to 78% of adolescent boys; female youth are nearly 13% less likely to own a mobile phone than male youth in the same household; for every 100 male youth with digital skills, only 65 female youth have equivalent skills.

[29] OECD Development Centre, '*SIGI 2024 Regional Report for Southeast Asia: Time to Care*' (OECD, 2024) https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2024/03/sigi-2024-regional-report-for-southeast-asia accessed 27 May 2026: documents that women in Southeast Asia living in rural areas or belonging to ethnic minorities face heightened and compounded barriers to digital access and participation.

[30] Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'General Comment No 25 on Children's Rights in Relation to the Digital Environment' (2 March 2021) UN Doc CRC/C/GC/25, para 37.

- Digital security capacity building for youth-led organizations which equipping activists with practical operational security skills to continue organizing safely under surveillance conditions.[31] DDI partner—NRFF in Mon Region, Myanmar demonstrates this in practice. Following the 2021 military coup and the junta's deployment of advanced surveillance infrastructure, NRFF provided digital security training and video production skills to 15 Mon youth activists and ethnic minority community members. Participants adopted encrypted communication channels, implemented strict data hygiene practices, including a policy against storing sensitive coordination records on mobile devices and gained skills to document and amplify marginalized community voices through a do-no-harm approach. NRFF's experience also highlights a critical constraint: applying these skills in remote areas with limited internet access and electricity remains a significant challenge, underscoring that capacity building must be accompanied by structural investment in digital infrastructure
- Encrypted communications and VPN adoption increasingly become standard among youth activist networks in higher-risk contexts, protecting associational communications under ICCPR Article 22.[32]
- Youth-led human rights documentation initiatives capturing State conduct at assemblies in real time, creating accountability records for legal challenges and international advocacy.[33]
- There are multi-stakeholder digital governance dialogues. In select contexts, bringing youth activists, governments, and technology platforms together to address civic space concerns collaboratively.[34] Partner organizations also document innovative context-specific approaches: in the Philippines, DAKILA and allied cultural organizations deploy creative resistance — using art, satire, internet memes, and digital illustration to bypass algorithmic censorship and counter authoritarian propaganda, lowering the barrier to civic participation for Gen-Z movements in a climate of fear. In Mindanao, MCJ's Panalipod Program integrates digital security awareness, legal accompaniment, and rapid-response mechanisms into community-based collective protection, while the Duyog Program provides psychosocial support and wellbeing practices to sustain activist resilience. In Indonesia, Institut Hijau Indonesia's community-based dialogue approach creates safe spaces for youth to connect local democratic challenges with broader accountability structures, with cross-sectoral coalition-

[31] EngageMedia, '*Rules of Engagement: Challenges and Learnings from Digital Rights Defenders in South and Southeast Asia*' (EngageMedia, 2023) https://engagemedia.org/2023/rules-of-engagement-challenges-and-learnings-from-digital-rights-defenders-in-south-and-southeast-asia accessed 27 May 2026: documents a regional co-learning session at DRAPAC23 bringing together 32 representatives from South and Southeast Asian digital rights organizations to share experiences of digital security capacity building for civil society, including practical training on censorship circumvention, secure communications, and safe data management — identifying key challenges and effective approaches for at-risk and marginalized communities.

[32] EngageMedia, 'Digital Rights in Asia-Pacific' (EngageMedia, 2024) <https://engagemedia.org/digitalrights> accessed 27 May 2026; EngageMedia and SAFEnet, DRAPAC VPN Project (Digital Defenders Partnership, 2024) https://www.digitaldefenders.org/drapac-vpn-project-launches-to-protect-human-rights-defenders-from-censorship-and-surveillance accessed 27 May 2026: VPN access distributed to human rights defenders across six Southeast Asian countries facing government surveillance and platform restrictions.

[33] FORUM-ASIA, 'Defending in Numbers 2023–2024: Reclaiming Civic Space, Unbroken Voices' (FORUM-ASIA, July 2025) https://forum-asia.org/din2324 accessed 27 May 2026: documents digital surveillance, authoritarian resurgence, and impunity across Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka, with students and pro-democracy advocates among the primary targets.

[34] Asia Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum, '*APrIGF 2024 Synthesis Document*' (APrIGF, August 2024) https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/52/29857 accessed 27 May 2026: documents the 2024 APrIGF in Taipei bringing together nearly 1,000 experts from over 63 countries including government agencies, civil society organizations, and private companies such as Google, Meta, and Microsoft, with dedicated sessions on content governance, human rights, and internet resilience; the forum included a parallel Asia Pacific Youth IGF bringing youth activists into the multi-stakeholder process.

building across women's, Indigenous, environmental, and media groups strengthening inclusive civic engagement.

5. Systemic Protection Gaps and Conclusions

On the basis of the evidence presented in this submission, TIFA Foundation's DDI and co-submitting organizations identify the following systemic protection gaps in the facilitation of young people's FoPA rights in digital spaces:

- The absence of digital-specific FoPA protection frameworks at national level.

  Most States in the region lack explicit legal recognition that FoPA rights apply in digital environments, creating a governance vacuum exploited to restrict youth activism online.
- The normalization of digital surveillance

  Commercial spyware, social media monitoring, and facial recognition at protests are deployed without adequate legal basis, judicial oversight, or accountability mechanisms, in direct violation of ICCPR Articles 17, 21, and 22.
- Legislation incompatible with the ICCPR limitation test

  Cybercrime laws, anti-fake news frameworks, and foreign funding restrictions are structurally incompatible with international human rights standards and applied disproportionately against youth activists. Indonesia's revised ITE Law (2024) illustrates that legislative amendments without structural reform do not resolve this gap.
- Platform governance gaps

  First, the absence of binding human rights obligations for digital platforms creates conditions in which content moderation arbitrarily restricts youth FoPA rights without effective recourse. Second, and critically, platforms are actively weaponized by state-linked actors to target activists through red-tagging, terrorist-tagging, and coordinated inauthentic behavior, and platforms have failed to prevent this.
- The participation gap for marginalized youth

  Compounding structural inequalities in digital civic spaces constitutes a systemic failure to fulfil States' facilitation obligations toward the most vulnerable young people.
- Inadequate protection from transnational digital repression

  No binding international mechanisms exist to protect diaspora youth activists from digital surveillance, harassment, and coercion by their countries of origin.

DDI partner—NRFF's operational experience in Mon Region and adjacent areas of Myanmar illustrates the most extreme manifestation of these gaps. Under the military junta, the protection gaps identified above are not merely structural — they are actively weaponized. Basic civic organizing and digital freedom have been criminalized, forcing human rights defenders and youth activists into hiding, subjecting them to arrest, restricting access to vital resources, and in documented cases resulting in killing.[35] Targeted internet blackouts in ethnic areas and active conflict zones sever emergency coordination and isolate vulnerable communities at their most critical moments. Critically,

[35] NRFF documentation.

no functional human rights mechanisms exist under the junta, leaving civil society organizations and ethnic communities promoting civic space and digital democracy without any legal remedy.

In the Philippines, MCJ and DAKILA identify two additional protection gaps absent from existing frameworks: first, the absence of specific protections for youth environmental and climate justice defenders operating in militarized resource-conflict areas, who face compounded digital and physical risks when documenting extractive industry operations and ancestral land violations; and second, the absence of accountability frameworks for red-tagging and terrorist-tagging, despite the Philippine Supreme Court's recognition of red-tagging as a threat to life, liberty, and security. In Indonesia, Institut Hijau Indonesia identifies a systemic "accountability gap" — characterized by weak oversight of public institutions and inaccessible complaint mechanisms — that leaves youth activists without effective recourse when their rights are violated in both digital and offline civic spaces. This gap manifests across the ITE Law prosecutions, environmental advocacy criminalization, and exclusion from development consultation processes documented in Section 3.

6. Recommendations

TIFA Foundation's DDI and co-submitting organizations urge the Special Rapporteur to include the following recommendations in the thematic report:

To States

- Explicitly recognize in national legislation that FoPA rights apply in full in digital environments, and ensure digital civic space is actively protected and facilitated as part of States' positive obligations under ICCPR Articles 21 and 22.
- Repeal or substantially amend cybercrime laws, anti-fake news legislation, and national security frameworks applied to restrict legitimate online youth activism, to comply with the ICCPR three-part limitation test.
- Establish binding legal frameworks governing digital surveillance, including mandatory judicial oversight, prohibition of commercial spyware against peaceful activists, and independent accountability mechanisms which consistent with ICCPR Articles 17, 21, and 22, and support the development of a binding international instrument governing the export and deployment of surveillance technology to prevent its use against peaceful activists across borders.
- Prohibit internet shutdowns as a tool to suppress or disrupt peaceful assemblies, consistent with Human Rights Council resolutions A/HRC/32/L.20 and 38/7.
- Protect diaspora youth activists from transnational digital repression, and refrain from deploying digital tools to surveil, harass, or coerce citizens exercising FoPA rights abroad.
- Create formal, adequately resourced channels for youth activists, particularly from marginalized communities to participate as equal partners in digital governance and policy-making.
- Adopt clear legal and institutional measures prohibiting red-tagging, terrorist-tagging, and state-sponsored stigmatization of activists, journalists, and civil society organizations; repeal or substantially amend counter-terrorism frameworks — including the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 (Philippines) — that create chilling effects on peaceful youth activism, environmental

advocacy, Indigenous rights work, and humanitarian action; and adopt specific legislation recognizing environmental, climate justice, and Indigenous rights defenders as human rights defenders entitled to dedicated protection measures (Philippines, Mindanao Climate Justice).

- Establish independent public oversight mechanisms monitoring government conduct; guarantee accessible budget transparency; and ensure public consultations on development and environmental impact assessments are conducted in a participatory, inclusive, and meaningful manner (Indonesia, Institut Hijau Indonesia).

To Digital Platforms

- Adopt transparent, consistent, and rights-respecting content moderation policies that do not disproportionately restrict youth activist expression, including documentation of human rights abuses at assemblies.
- Establish accessible, timely, and effective appeals mechanisms for content removal and account suspension decisions affecting youth activists and civil society organizations.
- Proactively detect, prevent, and refuse to facilitate state-linked harassment campaigns, including red-tagging, terrorist-tagging, and coordinated inauthentic behavior, before such campaigns translate into offline physical harm against youth activists. This must include deployment of localized human content moderators with knowledge of national sociopolitical contexts, local languages, and cultural nuances.
- Publish transparency reports disaggregated by country and content category, including specific disclosure of whether removed content relates to human rights documentation or political activism, to enable civil society accountability monitoring.
- Resist and legally challenge government requests to remove content or share user data where such requests lack proper legal basis or target protected civic expression.
- Engage meaningfully with youth-led civil society, including organizations from the Global South — in the governance and design of platform policies affecting civic space.
- Support independent media and citizen journalism initiatives that expand public access to diverse, reliable information in contexts where local media face political capture (Indonesia)

To the Special Rapporteur and the International Community

- Explicitly affirm in the thematic report that FoPA rights apply fully in digital environments, and that digital threats, including surveillance, shutdowns, platform censorship, and transnational repression which constitute violations of ICCPR Articles 21 and 22.
- Address State-sponsored stigmatization of youth activists as a FoPA violation in its own right in the thematic report, building on the UNGA-79 report (A/79/263) on protecting FoPA rights from stigmatization.
- Develop specific international guidance on the protection of youth activists in digital environments.
- Call for an immediate moratorium on the export, sale, and use of digital commercial surveillance technology until human rights safeguards are in place, and a binding international instrument to replace inadequate voluntary frameworks.
- Ensure the thematic report includes a dedicated intersectional analysis of compounded barriers facing marginalized youth activists in digital spaces.

- Call on States to develop National Action Plans for youth civic participation, including digital civic space — with timelines, monitoring mechanisms, and youth co-design requirements.

7. Submitting Organizations

This submission is jointly presented by the following organizations. Each co-submitting organization has contributed evidence, case studies, and recommendations from their national context, and endorses the findings and recommendations of this submission.

Organization	Country	Mandate / Focus	Contact
TIFA Foundation — DDI	Indonesia (Regional)	Digital democracy, civic space and youth activism across East & Southeast Asia	debora@Tifafoundation.id alfiana@Tifafoundation.id
Cambodian Center for Human Rights	Cambodia	Promoting and protecting human rights — primarily civil and political rights — democracy and the rule of law for the benefit of all those living in Cambodia by inspiring and empowering people to understand and advocate for their rights and by protecting those whose rights are violated.	info@cchrcambodia.org
Public Virtue Research Institute	Indonesia	Promoting and Protecting Human Rights for Youth	zipnazip@proton.me
New Rehmonnya Federated Force (NRFF)	Myanmar	New Rehmonnya Federated Force (NRFF) is dedicated to establish a federal democratic union in Myanmar specifically advocating for self-determination, protection of human rights for Mon people and coexisting communities and promoting civic spaces with the leading of Mon Youth Activists. Our organization	nrff.mon@gmail.com

		focuses on regional governance, resist against dictatorship and authoritarians and coordinate with regional democratic alliances to ensure civic protection and accountability.	
Institut Hijau Indonesia	Indonesia	Institut Hijau Indonesia is an independent non-governmental organization committed to strengthening democracy, social justice, and ecological sustainability in Indonesia. Through civic education, youth leadership development, community organizing, and policy engagement, the Institute works to expand democratic space and promote inclusive, accountable, and environmentally just governance.	m.ichlassul.amal@gmail.com
Knowledge for Development Foundation (K4D)	Thailand	Digital & Data Rights, Civic Space, Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)	info@knowledge4development.org
DAKILA - Philippine Collective for Modern Heroism, Inc. (DAKILA)	Philippines	An organization of artists, cultural workers, educators, and advocates building a movement of modern heroism by creating innovative platforms through art, media, and popular culture for human rights advocacy, social change	tristan@dakila.org.ph

		campaigns, and creative activism.	
Mindanao Climate Justice (MCJ)	Philippines	Mindanao Climate Justice (MCJ) is a Mindanao-based civil society organization advancing climate justice, human rights, environmental protection, and democratic civic participation among Indigenous Peoples, Moro communities, youth, women, and Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs). MCJ strengthens youth leadership, citizen journalism, community documentation, collective protection, research, and advocacy initiatives that promote environmental justice, civic space, and the rights of marginalized communities across the Philippines.	info@mindanaoclimatejustice.org
Perkumpulan Warga Muda Berdaya	Indonesia	Youth Civic Participation, Youth Activism, Youth Policy, Community	wargamudaberdaya@gmail.com