

Artsfex Vision, Aims and Activities

I. Vision

The Arts and Freedom of Expression Network (ARTSFEX) is an international, civil society network of organisations and individuals actively concerned with the right of artists to freedom of expression, as well as on issues relating to human rights and freedoms generally, as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international conventions incorporating issues of freedom of expression. ARTSFEX, on behalf of and in collaboration with its members, exists to promote, protect and defend artistic freedom and freedoms of assembly, thought, opinion and expression in and across all art disciplines, globally.

II. Aims

1. Information exchange, awareness raising and monitoring

- a) To exchange, distribute and, where necessary, research information relevant to the promotion, protection and defence of artistic freedom globally;
- b) Through its members, to monitor and analyse censorship in the arts worldwide, to identify trends and create an understanding of the mechanisms and effects of censorship and persecution of artists and cultural operators due to their creative work;
- c) To raise awareness about free expression issues and highlight best practice, including through the production of publications and materials in collaboration with member organisations.

2. Advocacy

- a) Through its members to support individual artists and cultural operators at risk;
- b) Through its members to hold governments accountable to their obligations under the relevant international conventions and national laws and provide policy recommendations, generated by its members, to decision-makers;
- c) To mobilise local, regional, continental and international resources in support of the promotion and defence of freedom of artistic expression globally.

3. Facilitating networking and collaboration

- a) To serve as a platform for new partnerships, alliances, projects and collaborations at the intersection of arts and culture, human rights and social justice;
- b) To facilitate networking and collaboration between human rights defenders in the arts and between the arts and other areas of human rights activity in support of artistic freedom worldwide;
- c) To strengthen existing and to help build and consolidate new organisations to promote and defend freedom of artistic expression especially in regions and countries where these are absent.

III. Activities ARTSFEX activities, on behalf of and in collaboration with its members, may include

PHASE 1

1. Communication: To create, maintain and improve a range of information and communication tools to raise awareness, improve strategic effectiveness and facilitate appropriate actions. ARTSFEX relies on member organisations and other partners to ensure the accuracy and reliability of information being distributed.

- a) To build and populate a website to disseminate ideas, research, stories of violations and information concerning artistic freedom of expression provided by network members and others;
- b) To diffuse media releases, policy statements, marketing material, etc. on behalf of its members;
- c) To carry out a mapping exercise of existing initiatives related to artistic freedom of expression;
- d) To develop and maintain a database of incidents of attacks on arts, artists and cultural workers;
- e) To build and constantly improve a master database of national, regional and global databases of relevant stakeholders;
- f) To produce, translate and distribute regular newsletters and information alerts;
- g) In collaboration with members, to publish interviews with artists currently or formerly at risk and human rights defenders to raise public awareness of issues.

2. Direct action

- a) To facilitate collaboration between ARTSFEX members for mutual support of each other's actions (protest actions, petitions, support letters to governments, regional and international bodies and others in support of particular goals);
- b) To collaborate on and exchange ideas on planning and executing campaigns to promote freedom of artistic expression generally and in support of artists and cultural operators at risk in particular;
- c) In collaboration with members, to engage with government and others in power of influence, as a means of pressure in support of artists at risk and freedom of artistic expression;
- d) In consultation with ARTSFEX members, to identify cases for rapid action in support and in defence of artists at risk or in support of freedom of artistic expression generally; also to identify cases for action which may not have come to the attention of members, suggesting action in consultation with them;
- e) With the assistance of network members, to direct individual artists and cultural operators at risk to existing information, funding and other resources for emergency and on-going support and to facilitate their relationship with relevant funders and defenders of human rights as appropriate.

PHASE 2

3. Capacity building

- a) To set up an exchange of best practices;
- b) To facilitate the exchange of expertise between local, regional and national organizations;
- c) To work with arts organisations to build their capacity to incorporate the defence of artists' rights in their activities;
- d) To collaborate with members to assist in the creation and dissemination of toolkits for a range of strategic stakeholders to promote and defend artists' rights;
- e) To support the development of organisations and leadership to advocate for artists' rights;
- f) To facilitate networking and collaboration between human rights defenders and thinkers operating in the arts arena.

4. Seminars and conferences

- a) To co-organise, with members, regular regional/global capacity building seminars, training and workshops to share information and trends in censorship and other relevant matters and to disseminate the results of such seminars;
- b) To co-commission research in support of policy campaigns in collaboration with members organisations.

