



4th Asia Environmental Human Rights Defender Forum

- *Conservation, Biodiversity and Human Rights*

27-29 October 2025, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Recognizing the important role of Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) in promoting and protecting the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and the need to raise awareness of the risks they face, the [Asia-Pacific Environmental Human Rights Defenders \(EHRD\) Forum](#) was convened in [2021](#), [2022](#) and, [2023](#). These meetings have successfully connected hundreds of EHRDs from the Asia-Pacific region and facilitated peer-to-peer learning on a variety of topics such as advocacy, data collection and digital security. The 4th Asia EHRD Forum will take place in person on 27-29 October 2025 in Chiang Mai, Thailand under the theme of *Conservation, Biodiversity and Human Rights*.

The Forum has the following objectives;

- Serve as a safe space for EHRDs to discuss ongoing challenges and regional trends in the promotion, protection and fulfillment of environmental and human rights, including the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.
- Provide a platform for peer learning, knowledge sharing, movement building, joint action and mutual support amongst EHRDs across Asia.
- Promote the sharing of good practices, success stories and information on addressing violations of environmental and human rights.
- Build capacity among EHRDs on the interlinkages between biodiversity, conservation, land and environmental and human rights.
- Provide a space for EHRDs to strengthen their networks across sub-regions and strengthen their access to justice, legal aid, rights to redress and effective remedy.

Thematic focus

The 4th Asia EHRD Forum will focus on the critical interlinkages between conservation, biodiversity and human rights. Healthy ecosystems and biodiversity are essential for human rights, health, and prosperity, yet the world faces unprecedented biological diversity loss on a scale never before seen in human history. This biodiversity crisis unfolds alongside interconnected challenges including climate change, pollution, and deepening inequality.

EHRDs, in particular Indigenous Peoples, often work to safeguard ecosystems and support communities who depend on nature and its critical ecosystem services. Despite their crucial role,

EHRDs face increasing risks. According to the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, Asia-Pacific ranks as one of the most dangerous regions for defenders challenging corporate harm over the past decade. According to data released in 2025, 89% of defenders attacked were land and environmental defenders and one in five attacks were on Indigenous Peoples. In some countries, conservation strategies have been associated with human rights violations such as forced eviction, displacement and loss of access to Indigenous lands. These challenges underscore the urgent need for rights-based approaches to conservation that recognize the voices and leadership of EHRDs.

Format

The 4th Asia EHRD Forum will be held in-person in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The venue is yet to be confirmed.

Language

The 4th Asia EHRD Forum will be conducted in English, with opportunities for translation to other languages subject to available funding.

Target participants

The target audience is EHRDs and those who support the work of EHRDs from Asia with 150 to 200 participants. Limited sponsorship may be available for in-person participation.

The event aims to be gender balanced and inclusive, seeking the involvement and meaningful engagement of defenders from groups in vulnerable situations, including local community members, Indigenous Peoples, persons living with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, women, youth, and other groups in vulnerable situations.

Registration and Participation

An [expression of interest form](#) has been created using a secure link. The expression of interest will be open until **10 July 2025**. Following expression of interest, participation in the event will be subject to an approval and registration process. Please note that we will try to accommodate individuals and organizations that support EHRDs, but priority will be given to creating a space of dialogue for the direct participation of environmental human rights defenders in Asia.

Criteria for participation include:

- EHRDs: individuals who, in a peaceful manner, strive to protect and promote human rights relating to the environment, including water, air, land, forest, flora and fauna.
- Individuals who directly support the work of EHRDs through technical, legal or other assistance.
- Representative participation for those from groups in vulnerable situations, Indigenous Peoples, women and youth will be taken into consideration.
- Gender and geographical diversity will be taken into consideration.

Organisers and Partners

The 4th Asia EHRD Forum will be convened by the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN Women together with the co-organising partners Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact Foundation (AIPP), Asia Research Institute for Environmental Law (ARIEL), Asia Pacific Network for Environmental Defenders (APNED), Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, EarthRights International, Global Witness, the Goldman Environmental Prize, Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI), Publish What You Pay (PWYP), Women4Biodiversity, and Youth Empowerment Climate Action Platform (YECAP).