



EAST AND
HORN OF
AFRICA
HUMAN RIGHTS
DEFENDERS
PROJECT
(EHAHRDP)

DEFENDERS IN FOCUS

The Bi-Annual e-Newsletter for members and partners of
the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network

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The EHAHRDP Capacity Building team successfully conducted two workshops:

Advocacy, Communication and Social Media Training

The five-day training for the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders in Uganda, held from 31st March to 4th April, with participants from all regions of the country. The human rights defenders (HRDs) were trained on advocacy strategies necessary for engagement with regional and international human rights mechanisms. The HRDs also explored new and emerging technologies that can be used to advance human rights and mobilise communities for human rights promotion.

Capacity Building



▲ Participants of the training of the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders in Uganda.

Fourth Annual Focal Point

The Focal Point meeting was held on May 5th - 6th at Speke Resort in Munyonyo. This meeting brought together EHAHRDP's focal persons from each of the countries in the sub region to strategize on the organization's present and future operations in its member countries. The meeting also strengthened networking amongst members, focal persons and the Secretariat to enhance the organization's ability to serve its members and other HRDs throughout the sub-region.

During the meeting it was recommended that EHAHRDP should consider appointing a 'Coalitions Officer', whose sole mandate would be to specifically follow up with the different coalitions as a way of enhancing interaction and networking.

The focal persons compiled a comprehensive report on the situation of HRDs in their respective countries within the thematic areas chosen by the secretariat, for instance: description of the current legal, social, political and cultural environment; ongoing or past

violation of HRDs' rights; and the situation of Women Human Rights Defenders. The reports highlighted the importance of re-enforcing efforts to increase attention given to human rights defenders especially in Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, where the systematic attacks against them and the dire conditions in which they operate when carrying out their work is alarming. On conclusion of the two day meeting, EHAHRD Network drafted a declaration mapping out the issues discussed and the way forward.

INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE

THIS PAGE: Capacity Building

PAGE 2: Advocacy and Research

PAGE 3: Protection and
Security Management

PAGE 4: Pan African
Human Rights Network

PAGE 5: Information Technology

PAGE 6: Somalia Project

Advocacy and Research

Thas been an exciting six months for the Advocacy and Research Program, with a number of significant achievements in advocating for the challenges faced by human rights defenders in their work.

EHAHRDP continues its active engagement at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, and attended sessions in March and June 2014. Perhaps the greatest achievement during this period was the establishment a Commission of Inquiry, in June 2014, into the human rights violations committed by the Eritrean government against its own people- only the third such Commission in the UN's history. In parallel, the vital mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea was renewed. EHAHRDP's entire advocacy team attended the 27th Session of the Human Rights Council, including Executive Director Hassan Shire, Advocacy & Research Officer John Foley, and Advocacy Assistant Estella Kabachwezi. The team was actively involved in extensive campaigning around the human rights situation in South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Burundi, and hosted a number of successful side events.

EHAHRDP participated in the 55th ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights in April 2014, where three progressive and timely resolutions were adopted. Resolution 273 expands the scope of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders to include monitoring, documenting, and reporting on reprisals against human rights defenders who engage with the African human rights system. Resolution 281 is on the right to peaceful demonstrations. This is in the context of increasing legal and de facto restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly across the continent (and certainly in this sub-region). Lastly a landmark resolution condemning all human rights violations, including systemic attacks by state and non-state actors, against persons on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Resolution 275 specifically acknowledges the rights of human rights defenders working on these issues across Africa.

The adoption of these resolutions demonstrates the effort of the ACHPR- the regional body mandated to monitor human rights issues in Africa, in protecting and promoting

fundamental human rights and freedoms for all.

After three years at EHAHRDP, Rachel Nicholson left the organisation in May to take up a new position as East Africa campaigner at Amnesty International in Nairobi. Rachel will be greatly missed, and we wish her every success in her new role. Since January, the advocacy team has been ably supported by Eleanor Jenkin, Senior Advisor for the Initiative on Human Rights Fact Finding at the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at New York University. Eleanor is working on a multi-country project focused on human rights fact-finding techniques, and will be based with EHAHRDP until the end of the year.

Please check our website, www.defenddefenders.org for up to date information on our activities, including details of our many press statements and urgent interventions on human rights defenders at risk across the region. Also follow the team on Twitter: @EHAHRDP, Hassan (@Hassan_shire), John (@JohnEHAHRDP) and Estella (@Kaka_estella)

In Memoriam

Osman Hummaida

Sadly, EHAHRD Network lost one of its founding members on 17th April 2014. Osman was a leading Sudanese human rights defender and an inspiration to countless activists in the international and African human rights communities. EHAHRDP, African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) and his family held a memorial ceremony on 28th June 2014 to celebrate his life and memory. EHAHRDP named its boardroom in his honour and planted a tree..



Osman at the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) Office, in Kampala.

Protection and Security Management

Protection Support to Families of Human Right Defenders

Human rights defenders (HRDs) are often targeted for attack on the basis of their work of protecting and promoting fundamental human rights and freedoms. Their families are often placed in the line of fire, especially when the HRDs are inaccessible.

The support offered by our program to HRDs extends to their families; especially in cases where the HRD is no longer able to work due to the risk faced, has been forced to leave, is imprisoned or is killed. This support ranges from financial assistance, psychosocial support and family reunification in cases where families have been separated.

A human rights defender recently wrote to EHAHRDP to express appreciation for the support extended to him and his family:

"Dear EHAHRDP,

I formally register my appreciation for the timely assistance that you gave to me and my family.

...Without such funds, God only would have known the fate of my wife and my baby girl delivered through caesarean section on the 16th March, 2014.

...I am not yet set to go back because the situation is not yet safe for me.

Thank you very much for assisting my family. I still believe God will continue to intervene in my life to keep moving and also change the hearts of our leaders to bring peace in our country.

God bless you all."

Security Management

Security management officers (SMOs) work closely with HRDs to develop their capacity on security management. Trainings on physical and digital security aim to equip HRDs with basic tools to help them analyse their working environment, conduct risk assessments, and develop security strategies.

In January 2014, SMOs conducted a follow up training for community based organisations in Fort Portal, Uganda and the surrounding areas working on anti-corruption issues and community conflicts. The objective of this activity was to assess the impact of their first training in March 2013. The HRDs discussed the importance of implementing successful strategies such as networking and sharing security

incidents amongst themselves.

In March 2014, SMOs delivered a training session on security management during the Sudanese youth training in Egypt organized by Safer World. Participants expressed the importance of security management in a volatile environment like Sudan where the state systematically target HRDs. One of the participants said:

"This was my first training on security management. During demonstrations in Khartoum in September 2013, HRDs were killed, detained and tortured by police and national security. At the time, we did not think about our security, we did not undertake a risk assessment, nor did we think about security strategies to mitigate risks"

In June 2014, a group of Ugandan NGOs in Bunyoro region, Uganda working on different issues including natural resources extraction, environment protection, good governance, transparent service delivery, and women and gender development were trained on security management and digital security. Each organization assessed their risks and developed an action plan to improve their security.

In addition SMOs provide 'training-of-trainers' ('TOTs') for HRDs, these trainings are intended to provide HRDs with expert knowledge on security management, and the necessary tools to train others on planning, designing, and conducting effective security management trainings.

The first TOT this year took place in January 2014 for Sudanese HRDs and focused on security management knowledge, digital security tools and training skills. During simulation sessions, participants demonstrated the ability and confidence to carry out future trainings in their country.



Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network

Throughout 2014 to date, the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network (PAHRDN) has actively given protection support to the most at risk human rights defenders across the continent. During this period, this support has been particularly focused on defenders from Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Swaziland- all countries where HRDs continue to come under attack.

During the 55th ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights in Luanda Angola, PAHRDN introduced the African human rights defenders identity cards for its network members. The identity card aims at increasing visibility for the project and profile of the most at risk HRDs.

EHAHRDP and PAHRDN were also part of a consultative meeting of the Study Group on Freedom of Association and Assembly held on 27th April 2014 in Angola. By way of background, in 2009 the ACHPR initiated a study on the laws governing freedom of association and practices that violate freedom of association in Africa. The Study Group, comprising EHAHRDP and seven other NGOs and supported by PAHRDN, presented its final report at this session of the ACHPR, who adopted the report during its private deliberations.

In July, PAHRDN delegates travelled to Washington DC on an



▲ First week of Security Management training, at the Landmark Hotel in Muyenga, Kampala.

advocacy mission aimed at rallying support from US political leaders on issues concerning human rights violations in the region ahead of the US/ Africa Heads of State Summit. Joseph Bikanda (PAHRDN Coordinator), John Foley (EHAHRDP's Advocacy & Research Officer), Ziad Tawab (Deputy Director of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies), Maximillienne Ngo Mbe (Executive Director of REDHAC), Arnold Tsunga (Chairperson of the Southern African Human Rights Defenders

Network), and Imam Baba Leigh (Winner of the 2013 African HRD Awards) were among the delegates.



► Imam Baba Leigh from the Gambia, West Africa winner of the Human Rights Defenders Shield 2013



What's New
Mr. John Foley was appointed as the new Advocacy and Research Officer replacing Ms. Rachel Nicholson who joined Amnesty International.

EHAHRDP provides internship opportunities for students seeking to gain professional experience in the human rights field. We are pleased to welcome two interns to the team: Clementine de Montjoye from Science Po-PSIA, France and Osama Butt from York University, Canada. Muna Ahmed from Kampala International University, Uganda recently concluded her two months internship with EHAHRDP.



Information Technology

Button App into our syllabus. We believe that the App will improve security for HRDs who have recently become more vulnerable to attacks from both state and non-State actors within the region and the world over. Amnesty International supports this cause and has facilitated the purchase of 132 Smart phones for Human Rights Defenders at risk within our network. Please visit www.panicbutton.org for more information.

Resource Centre

The Floribert Chebeya Bahizire (1963-2010) Centre, named after a prominent HRD from the Democratic Republic of Congo, is a space for HRDs in exile in Uganda to continue their work in a safe environment. The defenders are offered free internet services, printing and photocopying service and at times on request are offered training on internet security. The centre is open from Monday to Friday 10am – 1pm and 2pm- 4:30pm



▲ A graphic depiction of how Amnesty International's Panic Button App works.

Panic Button App For Human Rights Defenders

In partnership with the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network (PAHRD-Net) and the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP), Amnesty International provided training to human rights defenders from eleven countries across the East and Horn of Africa on how the Panic Button mobile application can enhance their safety in the context of their work.

Panic Button is an SMS alert application that enables human rights defenders and other individuals at risk send a distress signal in case of emergency. The system was developed and financed by Amnesty International in conjunction with Google.

► the App will improve security for HRDs who have recently become more vulnerable to attacks from both state and non-State actors

The application is currently functioning on smart phones (Android version 4 and above) It undergoes 3 stages before becoming fully functional: Installation, Set Up and Adding emergency contacts. A signal is actively triggered by rapidly pressing the phones' power button. In times of grave danger or imminent arrest, one can send a message to 3 emergency contact persons without raising suspicion of his/her captors. Location coordinates taken from the phone's geographic tracking device are sent as a Google map link in the message. The icon for the Panic Button App is disguised as a calculator and creates the illusion that is difficult to discern in case the phone is confiscated.

EHAHRDP has become a regional training expert on security management and digital security for human rights defenders. This was an opportunity to build our training capacity by introducing the Panic

Upcoming Activities

27th session of the UN Human Rights Council, 8th – 26th September 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland.

NGO Forum, 10th-12th October 2014 in Niamey, Niger

56th Ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, 14th – 30th October 2014 in Niamey, Niger

Sub regional training for defenders working on natural resource extraction: 18th and 19th August, 2014

Claiming Space: Tactical tools for Human Rights Defenders in Burundi: 8th- 12th December, 2014

Digital security training and the Natalia Project in collaboration with Civil Rights Defenders: 8th - 12th September, 2014

Somalia Protection Program

Physical and digital training for Somali HRDs

Peace and Human Rights Network (PHRN), our partner organisation in Somalia, conducted its first physical and digital security management training of Somali HRDs in Mogadishu in June 2014, with the assistance of EHAHRDP's security and IT team.

The training comprised Somali HRDs working in Mogadishu on various human rights issues such as protection, monitoring and evaluation, gender-based violence and peace and reconciliation. The participatory training focused on introduction of security management, both physical and personal security and basic digital security (including the use of secure databases to store and transmit information). Participants also had the opportunity to share challenges, best practices and familiarize themselves with the organizations

present in order to create stronger synergies in their human rights and advocacy activities.

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The PHRN team facilitated a session on Panic button SMS alert application- a new initiative between Amnesty International and EHAHRDP that will give HRDs the chance to strengthen their

security practices in their everyday human rights work. This was after attending the training of trainer's session on Panic button in Kampala, Uganda, PHRN team incorporated a very illustrative and interactive component on the application in their training in Mogadishu and as a result, participants were comfortable and confident in using the application and transferring the knowledge to other HRDs.

The program expects to engage with Somali law enforcement officers, media, judiciary and HRD organizations in the next three months. Strategic advocacy training for Somali HRDs will follow to enhance accountability relating to human rights violations and to support HRDs to align their advocacy efforts.

EHAHRDP is preparing to host a high-level conference on human rights mechanisms in Mogadishu, Somalia. The conference will focus on improving the cooperation and coordination of HRDs, the government, relevant international actors and implementing human rights at a national level. This will also give EHAHRDP and Somali HRDs a platform to follow up on the implementation of human rights commitments by both state and non-state actors.



▲ Digital security training session for HRDs during a workshop in Somalia.

▲ Somalis enjoying peace on the beach