



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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## Advocacy and Research

### Corridors of Power- UN Human Rights Council

As always, EHAHRDP enabled a number of HRDs from across the sub-region to access regional and international human rights mechanisms. During this period, we actively engaged at the 27th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. EHAHRDP's advocacy team supported national level human rights defenders from South Sudan and Ethiopia to attend the Human Rights Council, and facilitated a number of high-level meetings with key international decision makers.

We hosted major side events with our close partners on Ethiopia, Sudan, and South Sudan, to highlight the deteriorating working environment for human rights defenders in these countries.



Hassan Shire and John Foley at the UNHRC

We also engaged with the new Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in Somalia, Mr. Bahame Tom Nyanduga. We took a leading role in the high-level panel discussion on South Sudan, and EHAHRDP's Executive Director

Hassan Shire led a high level meeting with President Obasanjo, the Chair of the

African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan, and South Sudanese HRDs. We delivered a number of oral statements, further drawing attention to the challenges facing human rights defenders during our various interactions with the UN HRC. For further information on our engagement at the 27th Session of the UNHRC, please see Hassan Shire's blog:

<http://www.defenddefenders.org/2014/10/blog-post-reflections-27th-session-un-human-rights-council/>

### New Publication



Human Rights Council Sept 2014

Our research department closely informs all of EHAHRDP's advocacy actions. From our research findings, we are able to identify challenges faced by human rights defenders and decide the best course of action to highlight these issues, and advocate for change. In 2014, we focused on South Sudan owing to the crisis that many South Sudanese human rights defenders have endured since the outbreak of widespread armed conflict on 15th December 2013. Our latest research publication, "For us Silence is not an option: Human Rights Defenders and the South Sudan Civil War", documents the worsening circumstances under which human rights defenders in South Sudan work. This report lays out concrete recommendations to South Sudanese and international actors, to address the myriad challenges faced by civil society

in South Sudan. This report serves as an addendum to our December 2013 publication, "Change will not come until we talk about reality", and was launched in partnership with Amnesty International, Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (our focal point organization in South Sudan), and the Committee to Protect Journalists at a major public event in Nairobi on 15th December 2014.



EHAHRDP South Sudan Report 2014



Free Pierre Claver Green Campaign

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# Capacity Building

Capacity building is a core pillar of EHAHRDP's activities. We continue to build the capacity of human rights defenders within the sub-region on ways to protect themselves in cases of imminent danger to their lives and work. Human rights defenders (HRDs) are trained to develop security plans for their organisations, and on the available national, regional and international mechanisms for their protection.

During this period, we successfully conducted 2 major training workshops targeting specific groups of HRD's in Burundi, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

## Staff Retreat



*Staff Retreat 2014*

Between 27th and 28th November 2014, EHAHRDP staff convened a staff retreat designed to enable staff members reflect on the achievements, challenges and lessons learnt in the past year, and plan for 2015. Extensive discussions were held on how to ensure that issues and challenges affecting HRDs are brought to the fore across all of EHAHRDP's departments and activities.

## Board Meeting



*Board members in Kampala on 31st Oct*

As the governing body of EHAHRDP, the board of directors came together on 31st October, 2014 in Kampala to strategize, approve annual reports and annual work plans, discuss the success and challenges of the organization and to make recommendations for a way forward

## Claiming Spaces: 'Tactical Tools for Human Rights Defenders in Burundi'



*Bujumbura Claiming Spaces 2014*

This was a 5-day forum that brought together 70 human rights defenders from different parts of Burundi from 8th to 12th December, 2014 at Le Panoramique Hotel in Bujumbura, Burundi.

The aim of the forum was to strengthen the capacity of civil society, to increase the awareness of human rights defenders on their rights, and to equip them with practical tools to ensure respect for their rights by taking advantage of opportunities to engage at the regional and international level.

A press conference was organised on the International Human Rights Day, 10th December 2014, where EHAHRDP's Executive Director, Mr. Hassan Shire, spoke alongside Benjamin Moreau from the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, and Frère Emmanuel Ntakarutimana, president of the National Independent Commission for Human Rights. Mr. Shire gave recommendations to the government and the national human rights institution on this symbolic day. He articulated a vision of Burundi where civil society organisations and citizens effectively used the African Court on Human and People's Rights, so as to end the culture of impunity.

The EHAHRDP team also attended the Manirumva award ceremony, organised by OLUCOME to celebrate the life of Ernest Manirumva, a well-known human rights defender and former vice-president of OLUCOME. Ernest Manirumva was brutally murdered in 2009 as a result of his work. He defended fellow Burundians during Burundi's violent civil war, and was a leading and internationally respected human rights defender.



*Burundi Claiming Spaces participants show off their certificates*

## Resource Extraction Workshop for HRDs in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania (18th – 19th August 2014)

As East Africa's burgeoning mineral, oil and gas sectors continue to grow in economic importance, HRDs are increasingly engaging with



*Resource Extraction training participants*

government and the private sector over land, health, environmental, compensation, revenue, and transparency related issues. In order to build the capacity of HRDs working in the resource extraction sectors, EHAHRDP organised a two-day workshop on protection mechanisms, security management, regional and international law, and advocacy tools for 15 HRDs from Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya from 18th – 19th August 2014 in Kampala, Uganda. The workshop targeted 5 HRDs from each country working on issues of transparency, accountability, corporate social responsibility, and environmental justice and community rights.

At the end of the two-day training, participants confidently demonstrated that they had grasped the knowledge transferred to them and were keen on using this knowledge to improve their work environment.

# Protection and Security Management

Human rights defenders often come under attack for daring to stand up and speak truth to power. They are often threatened, harassed, beaten, tortured, jailed and put in solitary confinement as they continue to defend the rights of others. Ensuring the safety and protection of HRDs is an integral part of EHAHRDP's Protection Program. Defenders who come under the program often need much more than financial support. Amongst the support offered is legal, medical, and psychosocial support, depending on the circumstances of each case. Working with other organizations, partners and human rights defenders to ensure comprehensive and holistic support if extended to human rights defenders is key in ensuring success of protection efforts.

In October 2014, one of our close partners in Somalia, Peace and Human Rights Network (PHRN) suffered a major challenge when their security management officer Mohamed Dahir Mo'alim was wounded in a deadly Al-Shabab attack in a Mogadishu café, as he was meeting with colleagues over work related issues. Mohamed sustained serious head and leg injuries.

EHAHRDP, in collaboration with its local and international partners who extended financial and technical support evacuated Mohamed to Nairobi where he underwent life-saving surgery. In December 2014, Mohamed was discharged from hospital and is now recovering. He is looking forward to resuming his active work of training HRDs in Somalia on how to better protect themselves in a complex and hostile environment.



*Mohamed Dahir recovering in hospital*

## Security Management

Throughout September 2014, our Security Management department was able to build the capacity of HRDs working in Kenya, Tanzania and South Sudan, through conducting training of trainers sessions in physical and digital security management. The aim of these sessions was to equip HRDs with knowledge and skills in security management, and the necessary tools for planning, designing, and conducting effective security management so as to minimize the risks faced while carrying out their work.



*Rwanda security management training in Kampala 2014*

As a result of these training sessions, participants demonstrated the ability to transfer acquired knowledge and skills through simulation exercises. They will now be able to disseminate the knowledge acquired through conducting trainings in security management in their countries. In appreciation of EHAHRDP

team's efforts, one trainee from the Eastern coast of Kenya wrote:

*"I am very grateful to the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders for giving me this wonderful opportunity to learn about security management in the context of human rights work. The training has expanded my thinking about the subject and I believe I am now a better human rights defender in many aspects. I look forward to putting into practice what I have learned particularly to improve the impact of my organization, and ensure security not just for our communities but for human rights defenders as well. From the knowledge garnered from this training, I am confident of doing a great job of training others in Kenya and Africa as a whole. I thank you for organizing and undertaking this training in a professional and systematic way. The training was enriching and fun at the same time"*

With these trainings, HRDs are able to recognize the importance of security management, introduce tools for assessing risks and threats, and put in place robust security strategies and most importantly share the skills with partners.



*Participants discuss during a security management training*

# Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network

## Bringing a continental flavour to Kampala



*Members during the second counterpart meeting in Kampala*

The Pan African Human Rights Defenders network (PAHRDN) held its 2nd counterpart meeting in Kampala, Uganda from 27 to 29 October 2014. The event was attended by representatives from the five sub-regional networks, who contributed to the 2015 work plan for PAHRDN. The meeting was aimed at identifying achievements and challenges, sharing best-practices, and deciding on joint activities and strategies for the year ahead.

## Creating a pool of trainers



*Pan-Africa Physical and Digital security training in Kampala*

The PAHRDN secretariat held a number of 'training of trainers' sessions, to equip members from the sub-regional networks with physical and digital security skills which they in turn could pass on to fellow HRDs within their networks. This initiative has been widely successful. HRDs from across the continent are now trained in practical tools and techniques for reducing risks associated with their work. Many have been trained on risk/threat analysis, security planning, secure digital technology, Panic Button, GPG mail encryption, and

mobile device security. The trainings were conducted throughout the year for Burundian, Kenyan, Rwandese, Sudanese and Ugandan HRDs, as well as protection and security management officers from sub-regional networks based in Cameroon, Egypt, Togo, and Zimbabwe.

## 2nd Annual African Human Rights Defender Award



*EHAHRDP delegation at the ACPHR*

PAHRDN's African Human Rights Defender Award seeks to acknowledge the work of HRDs from all over Africa who have had a fundamental impact on the protection of human rights, equality, and dignity for all. The 2013 African Human Rights Defenders Award was extremely successful, and nominations were opened for the recipient of the 2014 award. To acknowledge the crucial work of HRDs throughout 2014, nominations are still being accepted.

For more information please see [\(link to the call\)](#)

## Back to the drawing board



*Free zone9 Bloggers Campaign*

We continued to actively participate in the study group of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, on Freedom of Association and Peaceful Assembly along with a number of other human rights

organisations. The Study Group's report, in both English and French, was finalised during this period, and work was continued on the Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa, which will ultimately follow from the report.

## A common vision

PAHRDN envisages a continent where the working environment is favourable for HRDs, and aims to function as a network guided by effective coordination and communication.

Take part in our media campaigns and support the work of your networks by becoming a member. You can also visit us on our social media pages and be a part of the cyber discussion. Send us your comments and ideas to help us improve our outreach programs on Facebook [@panafricandefenders.com](#), or on Twitter [@panafricannet](#)

# Information Technology

## Protecting emails and social media accounts against hacking

In many of the trainings that the digital security team has carried out, human rights defenders have confessed to having their emails and social media accounts hacked. Account hacking is a very serious problem that has caused even very large corporations billions in damages, loss of clients, loss of market shares, loss of prestige and unauthorized disclosures. Individuals have been threatened and held ransom by criminals who try to extort payment in return of not posting information contained in hacked email addresses. Celebrities have been embarrassed by having their private documents and contacts publicly exposed. Human rights defenders may lose sensitive information which can put lives at risk.

Everyone can ensure safety of their email and social media accounts by using “Two factor authentication”. Two factor authentication is a very simple but extremely strong user authentication system used by Gmail, Yahoo, Facebook, Yahoo, WordPress and many other internet giants to protect the accounts of their clients.

The system requires that for a user to access an account, they must know something (their password) and they must have something (their mobile phone).



To set it up, you enter your mobile phone number and ask the email or social media service to require additional authentication at login. This means that in addition to your password, you will require a number code that will be sent by that particular email or social media service

to your mobile phone in order to login to any new device or computer.



This guarantees that even if someone has access to your user-name and password, they will not be able to access your account because they will not be able to get the code on your phone to complete the requirement to gain access to the account.

There are several complications in this process, and you should carefully read setup instructions. If you are travelling and are not connected on your phone number, or if you lose a phone or SIM card, there are backup methods such as a backup phone number, backup verification codes, and an application that works on your smart-phone which can generate codes for you.

To get started by securing your Google account, go to <http://security.google.com> and look for ‘Two Step Verification’.

One of the ways that email accounts and social media accounts are hacked is through a hacker obtaining the user-name and password of the account. This can be done using several methods- looking over the shoulder of a person typing in a password, using a hardware key logger secretly plugged into the computer or laptop, or through sending a malicious link through email which installs a software key logger or using password guessing software.

Once an attacker has a matching pair of user-name and password, they can access any email or social media account and use it to attack the owner and their contacts. ‘Two factor authentication’, or ‘two step verification’ are simple and effective processes to manage these risks. For further information, please contact [ict@defenddefenders.org](mailto:ict@defenddefenders.org)

## Digital Security Trainings

In November 2014, EHAHRDP in partnership with Deutsche Welle Academia carried out three simultaneous digital security trainings for Bloggers, Media Practitioners and Human Rights Defenders with regional partners in Kenya, Tanzania and Burundi. The major objectives of the trainings were to introduce the basic concepts of digital security, to raise awareness of strategies to manage some of the digital security risks and to analyse the basic security practices related to technology, digital media and information technology.



*Dar es Salaam Digital Security Training*



*Mombasa Digital Security Training*



*Digital Security Training participants in Burundi*