



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

# “Exiled and in Limbo”

Support Mechanisms for  
Human Rights Defenders in Exile in  
Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda.



## **“Exiled and in Limbo”**

### **Support Mechanisms for Human Rights Defenders in Exile in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda.**

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*"I don't know why they are still after me. I am still scared until today... I received threats while in Kakuma refugee camp and more in Nairobi. I am very cautious. I don't trust anyone. I am always worried that new people I meet could be the ones that were targeting me."*

- Somali journalist in exile in Kenya

*"I try my best to be secure but I'm determined to take the risk because otherwise we will be silent and that is what they want."*

- Eritrean HRD in exile in Uganda

*"I have no plan. We don't know when the crisis will end and while I want to continue my activism I also have to eat. It is hard to be fully engaged when you don't know how to live."*

- Burundian women's rights activist in exile in Rwanda

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## Acronyms

DRA:	Department of Refugee Affairs (Kenya)
HRD:	Human Rights Defender
MIDIMAR:	Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (Rwanda)
NGO:	Non-governmental organisation
OPM:	Office of the Prime Minister (Uganda)
REC:	Refugee Eligibility Committee (Uganda)
RSD:	Refugee Status Determination
UN:	United Nations
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## Foreword

In 2001, I was working in a volatile environment, and realised that if I stayed in my home country Somalia and continued my human rights activism there, I would not survive. I fled the country after hearing that I was about to be attacked, and quickly found myself living as a human rights defender (HRD) in exile. As I spoke with my fellow HRDs in exile, I was struck by the overwhelming financial, legal, and administrative difficulties many faced when trying to continue their human rights work, and the gap in resources available to them. Through my research in 2005, I identified these gaps and realised there was a great need to develop mechanisms to assist HRDs to continue their valuable work while remaining in the region. I founded the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, now called DefendDefenders, to support and protect HRDs in the sub-region.

It has now been nearly 11 years since the organisation was established, and while there have been significant strides in the movement to protect HRDs, there have been equally substantial restrictions of civil society space. Everyday, we are faced with HRDs who are forced to flee their countries as a result of their human rights activities.

Once in exile, many HRDs become stranded in a cycle of poverty that causes HRDs to end their activism, as they struggle to survive without sustainable livelihoods or financial support for their human rights work. Threats persist from their home governments and many face pervasive security risks. Exile can be a traumatising experience for many HRDs, and if authoritative governments continue to tighten their grip on fundamental freedoms, the flow of activists fleeing their home countries will only increase.

Through our protection work, we recognise the unique challenges facing HRDs in exile and their need for additional support, coordination, and advocacy to address this gap. The mass exodus of HRDs from Burundi as a result of the 2015 crisis, clearly demonstrated the need for medium to long-term support for HRDs in exile, which DefendDefenders and our partner organisation have begun to investigate. By undertaking this research, we wish to examine the reasons HRDs flee their countries, the challenges they face while in exile, and provide an overview of the various support mechanisms available.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the individuals who shared their testimonies with our researcher, and appreciate the contributions by our NGO partners, host governments, and the diplomatic community in the compilation of this report. It is our hope that this report will be a useful tool for HRDs to learn about the support mechanisms available to them when struggling with life and work in exile, as well as NGOs, donors, refugee agencies, and the governments of Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, to create an enabling environment for HRDs to continue their vital work in the region.

**Hassan Shire**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hassan Shire', with a stylized, flowing script.

**Executive Director of DefendDefenders**

**Chairperson of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network**

**Chairperson of the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network**

**June 2016**

## About DefendDefenders

Established in 2005, DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project) seeks to strengthen the work of human rights defenders (HRDs) throughout the region by reducing their vulnerability to the risk of persecution by enhancing their capacity to effectively defend human rights. DefendDefenders focuses its work on Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia (together with Somaliland), South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

DefendDefenders acts as the secretariat of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, which represents more than 75 members across the sub-region, and envisions a region in which the human rights of every citizen as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are respected and upheld.

DefendDefenders also serves as the secretariat of the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network (PAHRD-Net). PAHRD-Net was formed as a result of deliberations at the All African Human Rights Defenders Conference ('Johannesburg +10') hosted in April 2009 in Kampala, Uganda. The five functioning sub-regional networks forming the PAHRD-Net are: the North Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (hosted by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies in Egypt), the West African Human Rights Defenders Network (Lome, Togo), the Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (hosted by the International Commission of Jurists, the Africa regional office, Johannesburg, South Africa), the Central Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (Douala, Cameroon), and East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (hosted by East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, Kampala, Uganda). PAHRD-Net is aimed at coordinating activities in the areas of protection, capacity building and advocacy across the African continent.

## Executive Summary

In the East and Horn of Africa sub-region, human rights defenders (HRDs) frequently face grave risks for undertaking the critical work of promoting and protecting civil liberties and the rights of their fellow citizens. All too often, they are forced to leave their country to seek protection. Despite the valuable efforts that place them at such high risk, the needs of HRDs forced into exile as a consequence of their human rights activities are persistently under-resourced.

DefendDefenders has identified at least 350 HRDs from countries in the East and Horn of Africa living in exile in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, however that figure is likely much higher. This report examines the experiences of these HRDs living and working in exile, and aims to provide information on the support mechanisms available to them.

As governments in the sub-region tighten their grip on civic space through the use of repressive legislation and restrictive policies, a growing number of HRDs flee to other countries within the sub-region, the majority of whom reside in Nairobi, Kampala, and Kigali. While the time HRDs spend in exile grows longer, the emergency financial support many HRDs receive, from organisations such as DefendDefenders, is mostly short-term.

HRDs face unique challenges while living in exile compared to the general refugee population, particularly in terms of security. While some HRDs left their countries due to general political instability, the overwhelming majority of HRDs interviewed fled as a result of threats such as harassment, attacks, and arrest. Of those interviewed during this research, 18% fled after being physically attacked, and another 26% left after being arrested or having warrants issued for their arrest. Most HRDs interviewed fled as a result of direct threats to their security, such as death threats, which pushed 46% of those interviewed into exile.

These threats do not always disappear after an HRD leaves his or her country. This research found that 62% of HRDs interviewed reported that they had been threatened while in exile. The majority of these threats were delivered through anonymous phone calls, SMS, social media, and email. The risks are particularly prevalent for HRDs with high profiles or who have continued their human rights activities in exile.

HRDs living as urban refugees, and who consider themselves to be at high risk, often attempt to keep a low profile and avoid integrating with the rest of the refugee community. This tends to isolate them, and limits their access to different



avenues of support. The annexes of this report map out refugee and human rights organisations that provide services to HRDs living in exile as a resource guide for HRDs living in Kampala, Kigali, and Nairobi.

Uganda and Kenya, two of the most stable countries in the sub-region, have long been destinations for HRDs fleeing their countries. With the development of the Burundian political crisis in April 2015, Rwanda has also become a hub. A small portion of HRDs sought refuge in camps and refugee settlements; however, the vast majority have chosen to reside in capital cities. While the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and refugee organisations provide services to refugees living in camps and settlements, urban refugees are expected to be self-sufficient, and there are significantly less support mechanisms available.

The policies and attitudes of the governments of Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda towards refugees and HRDs vary considerably.

In recent years, Kenya has become increasingly hostile towards refugees, particularly those from Somalia. The government's announcement on 6 May 2016 that it was revoking the *prima facie*<sup>1</sup> status of Somalis, declaring its intention to close its refugee camps, and its suspension of the Department of Refugee Affairs – a key body in the management of refugees – is a worrying development for both HRDs and refugees at large.<sup>2</sup> Even before the announcement, HRDs reported suffering from restrictions on movement, difficulties in obtaining official refugee status and work permits, the high cost of living, security risks, and challenges with the Kenyan police.

Uganda is generally regarded as having one of the most welcoming and progressive refugee policies in the world. Numerous HRDs have established prominent regional organisations while living in exile in Kampala, and have been able to operate freely. The Uganda Refugee Act (2006) is generally considered to be a strong model for the protection of refugee rights, yet it also curtails the space for HRDs by prohibiting refugees from undertaking “any political activities,” which according to the officials at the Ugandan Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) could include human rights work. While this portion of the law has not been widely enforced, the lack of a clear definition of “political activities”

1 As defined by UNHCR, “prima facie approach means the recognition by a State or UNHCR of refugee status on the basis of readily apparent, object circumstances in the country of origin or, in the case of stateless asylum seekers, their country of former habitual residence. A prima facie approach acknowledges that those fleeing these circumstances are at risk of harm that brings them within the applicable refugee definition.”

2 UNHCR, “UNHCR appeals to Kenya over decision to end refugee hosting”, 9 May 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/5/5730b5f36/unhcr-appeals-kenya-decision-end-refugee-hosting.html>

is concerning and could have a major impact on the work of HRDs residing in the country.

While HRDs in Uganda and Kenya come from a wide variety of countries in the sub-region, 94% of urban refugees in Rwanda's capital Kigali come from Burundi and began to arrive in April 2015.<sup>3</sup> Prior to the outbreak of the crisis and subsequent influx of Burundian refugees, there were little if any refugee organisations providing assistance to urban refugees. There are a significant amount of Burundian human rights activists and journalists living in Kigali and many have attempted to continue their human rights activities. However, difficulties in obtaining funding, registering organisations, and uncertainty about their future outside of Burundi have been substantial challenges.

The goal of those targeting HRDs is often to silence their criticism. Strengthening support mechanisms for medium to long-term support for HRDs in exile will enable them to continue their vital work to promote and protect human rights in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region.

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3 UNHCR Rwanda, "Where we work: UNHCR's presence in Rwanda", <http://www.unhcr.rw/spip.php?rubrique4>

## Summary of Recommendations

### To Human Rights Defenders

- Carefully consider the country you choose for exile, including factors such as the country's refugee policy, security, cost of living, opportunities for work, language barriers, services available, and the education system;
- Immediately legalise your status upon arrival in exile;
- Conduct a security assessment (or seek assistance) considering potential risks, vulnerabilities, and capacities and develop protocols to mitigate those risks;
- Identify avenues of support and take proactive steps in obtaining services;
- If targeted, report incidents to local police when it is safe to do so, as well as to UNHCR and/or to protection NGOs in the country.

### To Non-Governmental Organisations

- Increase coordination and engagement between human rights and refugee organisations to address protection and service gaps impacting HRDs in exile.
- Provide opportunities for the employment of HRDs through internships, fellowships, and full-time employment;
- Develop internal mechanisms for medium and long-term support of HRDs;
- Engage with host governments on the ability of HRDs to continue their activities in exile through the provision of work permits and the registration of organisations.

### To the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

- Expedite relocation for HRDs that face security risks in the host country;
- Recognise that HRDs face unique protection risks and develop protection strategies to support HRDs continuing their human rights work in exile.

### To Donors

- Provide flexible funding and structural support to assist HRDs in setting up organisations and continuing human rights work in exile.

## **To the Kenyan government**

- Remove restrictions on the freedom of movement of refugees and enable HRDs to continue human rights activities by facilitating access to work permits;
- Ensure protection of refugees at risk and the full implementation of protective measures in the Refugee Act (2006);
- Reinstate the Department of Refugee Affairs and ensure they have adequate resources to respond to the needs of HRDs and refugees at large.

## **To the Ugandan government**

- Amend the Refugee Act (2006) to remove Section 35(d) which prohibits refugees from undertaking political work, to remove restrictions on refugees rights and fundamental freedoms protected under the Ugandan Constitution, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- In conjunction with UNHCR, create protection mechanisms for HRDs living in Kampala, such as the reinstatement of safe houses.

## **To the Rwandan government**

- Amend the NGO law to remove excessive obstacles and to make registration of non-governmental organisations more accessible.

## **To the European Union, and governments of Australia, Canada, Norway, and the United States**

- Prioritise the cases of HRDs at risk in the sub-region and their families for resettlement;
- Implement the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders (2004) and national implementation strategies for the support of HRDs by providing practical support to HRDs in exile, including financial assistance for those seeking to continue their work and/or establish organisations in exile.

## Methodology

This report is based on extensive field and desk research conducted between January and May 2016, and the experience the organisation has gained working with HRDs in exile over the past decade. In producing this report, DefendDefenders' researcher conducted interviews with 50 human rights defenders from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Rwanda, and Burundi living in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, 11 government and diplomatic officials, and 33 representatives from INGOs. Interviews were conducted in English, Amharic, Somali, Arabic, and French with the help of translators when necessary.

DefendDefenders is grateful to all those who contributed to this report through interviews and meetings. To preserve the anonymity of those interviewed, some names and identifying details have been omitted or changed.

# The East and Horn of Africa



Map modified from United Nations Geospatial Information Section

# I. Overview of trends, challenges, and support mechanisms for human rights defenders in exile

Over the last decade, the continued and worsening restrictions on civic space in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region have forced a growing number of human rights defenders into exile. As HRDs make the decision to flee to countries across and beyond the sub-region, the majority choose to relocate to urban areas in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda.

DefendDefenders has identified at least 350 HRDs and journalists living in exile in Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda, however the figure is likely to be much higher. Although some of these HRDs have received emergency protection grants from human rights organisations such as DefendDefenders, emergency support is generally restricted to a period of 3 to 6 months, while HRDs could face years in exile.

There are numerous challenges unique to HRDs in exile, that go beyond the general difficulties faced by displaced populations in the region. Specific support mechanisms are needed not only to help HRDs survive, but also to effectively continue their human rights work in the region.

## Why and where do they go?

In the same way that governments in the sub-region present a diverse range of challenges to the work of HRDs, the reasons why HRDs flee their countries, often forced to leave behind their families, friends, and worldly possessions, vary. At times, exile can be the result of specific threats or attacks against an individual. This occurs commonly in the sub-region, especially when HRDs are vocal on critical governance, impunity, and accountability issues, and in countries experiencing conflict. In periods of extreme insecurity, such as Ethiopia after the 2005 post-election crackdown, the South Sudan civil war that broke out in 2013, or the 2015 election-related crisis in Burundi, large portions of civil society fled *en masse*.

At times, entire organisations and media outlets have been targeted, resulting in large numbers leaving the country. In Sudan, a government-fuelled backlash against civil society took place after President Omar al-Bashir's indictment by the International Criminal Court in March 2009. Following the President's indictment, the government shut down three of the country's leading [national NGOs](#)<sup>4</sup>. In Ethiopia, six

<sup>4</sup> The three organisations are SUDO (the Sudan Social Development Organisation), the Amal Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of



newspapers and magazines were shut down and branded as terrorist organisations in August 2014, forcing dozens of journalists into exile.<sup>5</sup> This was also the case in Burundi after the country's radio stations were shut down by the government, damaged, and looted, and major civil society organisations were suspended and had their bank accounts closed down.<sup>6</sup>

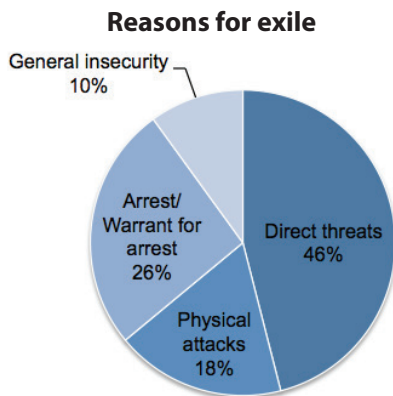
Based on 50 interviews conducted with HRDs living in exile in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, it was found that 46% of HRDs fled their countries after facing direct threats to their security such as intimidation, death threats, and harassment. Another 26% of interviewed HRDs were either previously arrested or had warrants issued for their arrest, and half of those that had been detained reported that they were tortured in detention. 18% of the interviewees reported that they were physically attacked, and the majority of these attacks occurred in or around their homes. The remaining 10% left the country based on general insecurity and difficulties continuing their human rights work.

Violence, and the Khartoum Center for Human Rights Development and Environment.

5 The six newspapers and magazines are Fact, Lomi, Addis Guday, Jano, Afro-Times, and Enqu.

6 DefendDefenders, "Burundi: Soon, there will be no human rights defenders left // Burundi: Bientôt, il n'y aura plus de défenseurs des droits de l'homme", 24 November 2015, <https://www.defenddefenders.org/2015/11/burundi-soon-there-will-be-no-human-rights-defenders-left-burundi-bientot-il-ny-aura-plus-de-defenseurs-des-droits-de-lhomme/>

In most cases, due to the unpredictable nature of their work, HRDs choose their country of destination in a rush and without carefully considering the implications of living in that location. Ease of travel, proximity to their country of origin, as well as connections in the country of destination are often the key considerations, whereas security, opportunities to continue their work, and cost of living are not always factored in.



*Figures based off of 50 interviews with HRDs living in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda.*

Security can rapidly become a concern if a host government has close ties to an HRD's country of origin, or if the host country is unwilling or unable to ensure security. Living among refugees from the same country also presents security risks as information on the whereabouts and activities of an HRD could be more easily gathered. National refugee policies often require refugees to remain in the first country they arrived in, making

it all the more necessary for HRDs to carefully consider their options before leaving their countries.

Cost of living, labour laws and regulations in the host country are other factors that are rarely examined, and yet critical for HRDs in exile. Becoming an urban refugee is inherently more expensive than going to a camp, yet the vast majority of HRDs choose to reside in cities.

Several of the HRDs interviewed in the course of this research chose locations or had locations chosen for them based on their need for medical treatment. Six journalists interviewed from Somalia, Burundi, and South Sudan left their countries to seek medical treatment after being attacked or tortured as a result of their work, and could not safely access medical treatment in their home countries. While each of the journalists was able to obtain medical treatment in exile, many have residual conditions stemming from the attacks.

Amina,<sup>7</sup> a radio reporter from Mogadishu, Somalia, reported being shot eight times in the chest and abdomen by Al Shabaab agents. The attackers then went to the hospital where she was being treated and threatened the medical staff caring for her. For security purposes, she had to be relocated to Nairobi, where she received further treatment before being sent to Kakuma refugee camp.

She is still facing serious medical challenges but cannot afford health care.

Depending on the severity of the incident that prompted them to leave, some HRDs are able to return to their homes after a short period of time for rest and respite after internal or external relocation. In these cases, they often prefer not to seek asylum or refugee status. At other points, HRDs leave their countries but with the anticipation of being able to return after a period of time. Another variable is when conflict is a driving factor in the decision to go into exile. In this scenario, many HRDs will remain in exile for however long it takes for the crisis to resolve itself, as has been the case with the exodus of HRDs from Somalia, and most recently Burundi. This scenario presents long-lasting and complex challenges, as HRDs attempt to plan their personal and professional futures without knowing how long they will have to stay outside of their home countries. Often the most challenging situations are those of chronic exile, when HRDs are not able to return to their countries of origin.

The East African Community has been largely silent on the refugee issue in the sub-region. The only mention of refugees in the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community is in Article 124, which requires that “Partner states undertake to establish common

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7 Pseudonym used

mechanisms for the management of refugees”<sup>8</sup> However, little has been undertaken to implement this clause.

### **Choosing between cities and refugee camps**

The majority of HRDs that go into exile opt to live as urban refugees in capital cities over refugee camps, citing insecurity and the challenges of working from the refugee camps as the primary reasons. However, due to the limited support available and the financial challenges of living in cities, some of the HRDs interviewed were forced to remain in the refugee camps.

In all three countries studied during this research, the majority of humanitarian aid is concentrated in refugee camps, and services in urban settings are therefore limited. Additionally, governments in the sub-region generally discourage refugees from settling in urban areas. Many host governments and aid agencies work under the assumption that refugees who choose to live in an urban setting must be self-sufficient, and therefore limited psychosocial, medical care and educational support mechanisms for refugees are in place in cities. This presents major challenges for refugees with limited to no income, who have to cover the cost of housing, food, medical

care, and education services – all of which are provided by humanitarian agencies and organisations in the refugee camps. For HRDs living in exile for long periods of time, the financial burden of living in cities can result in them choosing to risk returning to their home countries or moving to the refugee camps.

Others decide to go to refugee camps directly; in Uganda this is as a result of the substantial services and livelihood options available in the settlements, and those moving to Kenya from Somalia and South Sudan do so due to the proximity of the camps to the border. In Uganda, the refugee settlements are set up differently from the large camps in Kenya and Rwanda. The Ugandan government, faced with a longstanding refugee crisis stemming from numerous conflicts in the sub-region, has attempted to integrate refugees into local communities by giving them land to build homes and plant crops, and providing access to primary and secondary education. Camps in Kenya and Rwanda generally separate refugee and host communities, and are intended to be temporary mechanisms. In many of the settlements and camps, refugees will choose to reside in the same areas as other members of their communities, potentially making it easier for HRDs to be found, which can jeopardise their safety.

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8 Article 124 (4) Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community (1999), [http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/treaties/en/eac/trt\\_eac.pdf](http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/treaties/en/eac/trt_eac.pdf)

The African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS) was founded by Sudanese HRDs who fled to Uganda after their NGOs in Sudan were forcibly closed. The March 2009 crackdown on civil society in Sudan targeted HRDs for cooperating with the International Criminal Court investigations into Sudanese President al-Bashir. Immediately after their NGOs were shutdown, a group of five Sudanese HRDs registered ACJPS in Kampala. Since then, the organisation has grown to become one of the leading human rights organisations conducting research and advocacy on Sudan, and continues to publish regular reports from their headquarters in Kampala, Uganda.

## Life in exile

### *Continuing human rights work*

The deep commitment of many HRDs to their work leads them to persevere, using the relative safety of exile to speak out openly about human rights abuses in their countries. There are numerous challenges to continuing human rights work as a refugee including security risks, language barriers, work permits and regulations, and the ability to both access and disseminate information.

*“It is better to empower organisations in exile than have them resettle outside of Africa and become silent”<sup>9</sup>*

In some cases, HRDs have set up organisations in exile, allowing them to continue doing public human rights work through their monitoring networks on the ground. However, registration of NGOs by foreign nationals remains a common

challenge throughout the sub-region, which can limit their access to funding. HRDs are concerned about organisations being denied registration or being shutdown because of the geo-political concerns of the host government. At times, an NGO's ability to work on issues unrelated to those in the host country and access to work permits can be limited.

This is particularly challenging in Uganda where the Ugandan Refugee Act (2006) prohibits refugees from engaging on “political activities”, and in Kenya where, despite guarantees of free work permits for refugees in the Kenyan Refugee Act (2006), it is nearly impossible for HRDs to access permits in practice. These challenges are examined closely in both countries' sections in this report.

<sup>9</sup> Interview conducted with Eritrean journalist in Kampala April 2016

*"It is hell being in exile. Especially being an activist and journalist. Being a refugee is the worst but going back to Somalia is like digging my own grave."*<sup>10</sup>

### **Security factors**

Security in their home and host countries was the most significant concern raised by HRDs over the course of this research. HRDs reported receiving intimidating anonymous phone calls and SMS messages, as well as being harassed over social media and email while living in exile. Additionally, some HRDs reported physical encounters where they were threatened directly, had their homes broken into, or were attacked.

*"I don't know why they are still after me. I am still scared until today... I received threats while in Kakuma refugee camp and more in Nairobi. I am very cautious. I don't trust anyone. I am always worried that new people I meet could be the ones that were targeting me."*<sup>11</sup>

Threats against HRDs are at the root of their decision to go into exile, and fear that those threats will follow them even after leaving the country plague the vast majority of defenders.

<sup>10</sup> Interview conducted with Somali journalist in February 2016

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Somalia journalist living in Nairobi in February 2016

DefendDefenders spoke with Abdi<sup>11</sup>, a 29-year-old Somali journalist who had fled to Nairobi in 2008 after his home was attacked. He continued to work for Somali media outlets in Nairobi and told our research team that he received a number of threatening anonymous phone calls, adding that "when someone on the phone describes what you are wearing and where you are located, it makes you feel mentally ill." Furthermore, individuals he believes were linked to extremists reportedly went to his mother's home in Somalia and told her they would kill him if he didn't stop reporting.

In March 2014, three men attacked Abdi while he walking to his home in Eastleigh, Nairobi. He was stabbed in the stomach but was too frightened to go to the hospital. In the days following the attack, Kenyan authorities arrested him for not having the necessary documentation to live outside of the refugee camps. Abdi was transferred to Kakuma refugee camp where he was finally able to receive treatment. He continues to suffer from medical issues as a result of the attack, and while he reported the threats and attack to the Kenyan police, the case remains unsolved.

This is particularly the case for high profile HRDs and those who continue to be vocal about human rights while living in exile. 62% of HRDs interviewed reported that they had been threatened while in exile. The numbers of threats were particularly high among Ethiopians, Somalis, and Rwandans.

Many of the HRDs interviewed fear that agents from their governments will attempt to attack or abduct them. While DefendDefenders has found no documented cases of HRDs being kidnapped or killed in exile in Kenya, Rwanda, or Uganda, there have been attempts reported and members of political opposition movements from Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Burundi have been assassinated and abducted in exile. That alone has created considerable fear among HRDs, whose work is often times perceived as political in nature.

In certain situations, it can be critical for the families of HRDs to also be relocated outside of the country for security purposes. This has been particularly necessary for HRDs from Burundi and Somalia, whose families have been attacked in retribution for the activities undertaken by HRDs in exile. For example, on 6 November 2015, the son of prominent Burundian activist Pierre Claver Mbonimpa was arrested by Burundian police in Bujumbura and found dead hours later.<sup>13</sup>

12 Pseudonym used

13 "EHAHRDP strongly condemns

While these threats are more prevalent for HRDs in exile in the sub-region, they can at times extend to those who are resettled outside of East Africa, especially if they remain vocal on human rights issues in their home countries. For example, Mariam<sup>14</sup> an Eritrean HRD living in Europe, had her home address and personal information shared, and her life threatened on an Eritrean website due to her continued advocacy on the human rights situation in Eritrea.<sup>15</sup> The Eritrean government has been particularly active in targeting HRDs in exile, even outside of sub-Saharan Africa, through intimidation, harassment, and legal proceedings.

For example, in the Netherlands, eight court cases have been brought against media houses, the Dutch government, and individuals speaking out against the Eritrean regime by individuals associated with the Eritrean government.<sup>16</sup>

Several exiled HRDs reported attempted break-ins of their homes in Nairobi. While crime is not uncommon in urban areas, some of

assassination of Pierre-Claver Mbonimpa's son and escalating violence in Burundi", EHAHRDP, 6 November 2015, <https://www.defenddefenders.org/2015/11/ehahrdp-strongly-condemns-assassination-of-pierre-claver-mbonimpas-son-and-escalating-violence-in-burundi/>

14 Pseudonym used

15 Interview with Eritrean HRD in March 2016

16 Martin Plaut, "How Eritrea is turning to Dutch courts to silence its critics", The Guardian, 1 March 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/01/how-eritrea-is-turning-to-dutch-courts-to-silence-its-critics>

these incidents appear to have been targeted. For example, in January 2014 an Ethiopian journalist in Nairobi had his laptop stolen at his home, while other valuables were left untouched. A 27-year-old Somali journalist reported that when he went home to his neighbourhood of Nairobi, there were three Somali men trying to get into his home. He pretended to be a different tenant after the men asked questions about the person who lived in his flat. No similar break-in incidents in Kigali or Kampala were reported to the research team.

Most HRDs try to mitigate these security risks by keeping a low profile and avoiding unnecessary movement, particularly in places and at times that might make them more vulnerable. Some also try to continue their work anonymously, and limit the number of those aware of their whereabouts. Most HRDs receiving threats on their phones have reacted by changing SIM cards, and for those facing physical attacks, changing their place of residence is a common security tactic. However, frequent moves can be a major financial burden.

HRDs have also attempted to limit their interactions with other refugees from the same country and tried to relocate to areas away from other refugees in order to avoid individuals who could identify them and pose security risks. Some HRDs continue to use fake names and lie about their country of origin to mitigate

such danger. Fear of threats from agents from their countries has also made HRDs apprehensive about using interpreters when reporting their security concerns to UNHCR, protection organisations, or the host country's authorities.

All too often these incidents go unreported to the police, UNHCR, or NGOs with protection mandates, and in cases where incidents are reported, investigations are generally inconclusive.

### ***Economic factors***

***"I have no plan. We don't know when the crisis will end and while I want to continue my activism I also have to eat. It is hard to be fully engaged when you don't know how to live."*<sup>17</sup>**

As noted above, living in urban areas is financially demanding, especially for those without a regular income. HRDs in Kigali and Nairobi are particularly concerned about the high cost of living and uncertain about how they will survive. One Ethiopian journalist DefendDefenders provided a protection grant to, who was forced to leave the country after the August 2014 crackdown, became homeless and was living on the streets of Nairobi.

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Burundian women's rights activist living in Rwanda in May 2016



Many HRDs were the breadwinners of their families before they were forced into exile. Some are able to bring their families with them, while others cannot afford the relocation costs for their families to join them. Those who are reunited with their families face challenges with supporting them and providing for basic costs, such as food, housing, health care, and school fees in exile.

*"I do not have a home. I have only a mattress that I share with two other people that we lay down on the floor of a salon when it closes at night. The area I'm staying in is not safe but I have no options."*<sup>18</sup>

The majority of HRDs interviewed have difficulties making long term plans without consistent income as they look for a durable solution. While many HRDs received some sort of emergency assistance when they first left their country, most believed that they would continue to receive support, or would be able to return to their home country within a short period of time. Many of the HRDs interviewed were unaware of other avenues of support from refugee organisations and host governments, and as a result had spent money on services that could have been provided to them for free, such as language courses, medical treatment, psychosocial counselling, and education for their children.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with a Burundian journalist living in Nairobi in February 2016

## **Psychosocial factors**

Many HRDs in exile face a range of psychosocial challenges. Some of those interviewed were tortured or attacked in their home countries. Others have difficulty adapting to a new country where they lack support mechanisms and do not necessarily understand the language or culture.

*"Sometimes I think I don't have a future."*<sup>19</sup>

While very few HRDs were physically attacked while in exile, the fear of being targeted was highly prevalent among many interviewees. Many HRDs were living in urban areas and some held prominent positions before being forced into exile, making their new lives all the more difficult to adjust to. Refugees often have their lives frozen in a holding pattern while they wait to be resettled or for things to calm down in their home countries. This can cause depression and distress over feeling a lack of purpose, especially those who are unable to continue their work.

*"I was once respected but now I have to beg."*<sup>20</sup>

Many HRDs do not realise they have been psychologically affected and lack awareness of the benefits of therapy. Emotional wellbeing is

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Somali journalist living in Nairobi in February 2016

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Burundian journalist living in Nairobi in February 2016

frequently neglected, especially if HRDs have security or livelihood needs that take precedent in their minds. Even when HRDs continue to face effects from past traumas, some refuse to attend to their psychosocial needs. The need to reconcile the trauma of what happened in their home country with challenges of their current lives in exile can be difficult to overcome.

## Support Mechanisms

A common issue raised by HRDs in the course of this research was the lack of knowledge of existing support mechanisms and how they could be accessed. This section examines the types of support available and challenges HRDs have encountered to obtain those services. The annexes of this report map out the various services provided by refugee and human rights organisations to assist HRDs in exile.

### *Obtaining services in exile*

While there are limited services available to HRDs in exile, in Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda, they do have access to national services such as medical treatment and education by law. However, in practice, many HRDs have not been able to access these basic services.

An assessment of urban refugees in Nairobi found that they “often pay higher rent than Kenyans, are charged

more for public health services and some schools request an ‘admission fee’ before admitting refugee children, despite the fact that primary education is meant to be free to all.”<sup>21</sup> HRDs interviewed confirmed these challenges, noting that they are often required to pay higher costs than the local community.

In all three countries of this research, refugees in urban areas are permitted to access public health clinics and hospitals. Primary school education is also offered to refugee children living in exile, however the vast majority of refugee children do not attend school, including those of HRDs. In Kigali, 59% of school age refugee students do not attend school because their families cannot afford administration fees and costs of uniforms, school lunches, transport, and books, or simply do not know how to enrol.<sup>22</sup> In Kampala, the Xavier Project found that only 35% of refugee primary-aged children and 18.7% of secondary-aged students attend school.<sup>23</sup> Again, the high

21 Sara Pavanello, Samir Elhawary, and Sara Pantuliano, “Hidden and exposed: Urban refugees in Nairobi, Kenya”, March 2010, Humanitarian Policy Group, <https://www.odhpn.org/resources/docs/5858.pdf>

22 Church World Service and YWCA Rwanda, “Mapping of urban refugees’ access to essential services in Rwanda”, January 2016, [http://cwsglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Rwanda-Urban-Refugee-HH-survey-report\\_3-Feb-2016.pdf](http://cwsglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Rwanda-Urban-Refugee-HH-survey-report_3-Feb-2016.pdf)

23 Xavier Project, “The Limits of Universal Education: Barriers to Enrolment for Urban Refugees in Kampala”, December 2015, [http://www.xavierproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Limits-of-Universal-Education\\_Final-Version.pdf](http://www.xavierproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Limits-of-Universal-Education_Final-Version.pdf)

amount required for school fees and related costs is the primary reason refugee children are unable to attend school. In addition, language can be a significant barrier for students that do not speak the language of the host country or had previously been enrolled in different language systems.

***“The Rwandan government says there is free education for our children but when you go to register you are denied, and they say there are not enough services for Rwandans so why should you get a place?”<sup>24</sup>***

HRDs that do not have proper documentation of their status are often afraid of trying to obtain services they are entitled to. This is particularly a problem in Nairobi where the country’s encampment policy compelling refugees to reside in Kenya’s two refugee camps has left numerous HRDs without legal permission to live outside of the camps.

### ***Protection mechanisms***

Even though HRDs face numerous security risks while in exile, there are a number of protection mechanisms available to them.

In Nairobi, UNHCR manages safe houses, however, the protocols are

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Burundian HRD living in Kigali in May 2016

very strict, and rules such as not communicating with anyone outside of the residence and HRDs have found the restrictions on phones and internet difficult to follow. If anyone in the safe house breaks these directives it can endanger all of the inhabitants, as the location of the safe house could be compromised.

The Ugandan and Kenyan governments contend that it is safer for refugees to live in camps and settlements, which are often in remote locations, and have protection areas that are monitored by the police. In Kenya, both Kakuma and Dadaab have “safe havens”, which are temporary protection areas in the camps. However, these are short-term facilities, and generally endangered individuals are moved to a different camp. In Uganda, each settlement has protection areas that are adjacent to the settlement police post. However, some HRDs have expressed concern that being in a protection area may actually draw more attention to their vulnerability.

A key challenge raised by HRDs was the ability to access UNHCR for protection and resettlement issues and a lack of understanding of UNHCR processes. For example, several highly threatened HRDs from Ethiopia, who experienced torture or were sentenced in absentia, have not been able to obtain their refugee status or make substantive progress on their resettlement cases. Others who have

been threatened and even attacked in Kenya have not been able to obtain meetings with UNHCR to raise their protection concerns.

As noted in above sections, continuing human rights activities in exile could increase security threats facing HRDs. This has resulted in numerous refugee organisations and UNHCR generally advising HRDs to stop their human rights work. While in some cases it may indeed be too dangerous for HRDs to continue to work on human rights while in exile in the sub-region, this is not necessarily the situation of all HRDs. Often the reason HRDs were forced to flee their homes was because individuals were trying to silence their criticism, and by directing HRDs to end their work, the perpetrators of abuses against them achieve their goal. In order to address this, initiatives should be created to facilitate HRDs to continue their work to promote and protect civil liberties in a secure manner.

***"I try my best to be secure but I'm determined to take the risk. Otherwise we will be silent and that is what they want"**<sup>25</sup>*

In addition to protection measures undertaken by UNHCR and host governments, there are also numerous NGOs providing protection support to HRDs in exile. There are at least ten organisations that offer

protection grants to journalists and another eleven that provide grants to HRDs more broadly. Additionally, NGOs such as DefendDefenders, offer training and guidance on both physical and digital security management for HRDs and journalists facing security risks. In Uganda and Kenya, there are also organisations that provide legal and protection support to refugees including Hias Trust, the Refugee Law Project, Kituo Cha Sheria, and the Refugee Consortium of Kenya. Additionally, there are protective fellowships such as Justice and Peace's Shelter City Initiative and the University of York's Protective Fellowship Scheme that offer HRDs the ability to temporarily seek shelter outside of their country while gaining skills to advance their work.

A comprehensive list of fellowships and refugee and human rights organisations providing assistance to HRDs in exile can be found in the annexes of this report.

### **Community support networks**

Even in areas where formal support mechanisms are lacking, refugee communities often form organisations or community associations to continue their work, advocate for the rights of refugees, and share information. They serve as a valuable resource for both HRDs and the broader refugee community, however they often lack financial support and

<sup>25</sup> Interview conducted with Eritrean journalist in Kampala April 2016

**The Darfur Refugee Association** is a registered community-based organisation that was formed in 2010 in Kampala and is run by volunteers with donations from community members. It assists new arrivals to Uganda with registration and provides technical and financial support to Darfuris in need. The association is also involved in protection and advocacy efforts to assist the needs of Darfuris living in Kampala.

resources for developing structures.

unable to provide security.<sup>26</sup>

Churches and mosques at times provide avenues of psychosocial and material support, however, access to these mechanisms can be limited. Some Ethiopians interviewed feared that attending Orthodox churches could amplify risks for them, as government agents and embassy officials also attend these churches. Many Ethiopian HRDs felt separated from their faith for this reason, and avoided attending.

### ***Resettlement***

While many HRDs going into exile have expectations that UNHCR will prioritise their resettlement, the process is long and complicated and many HRDs were unaware of how to navigate the resettlement process and its challenges. Upon arrival in their host countries, refugees are faced with the difficult reality that resettlement often takes many years.

Only 1% of the world's refugees are resettled, and those most highly prioritised are individuals facing imminent threats to their lives or living in locations where the legal systems in place are unwilling or

While many HRDs faced serious risks in their home country, the majority are able to live in the surrounding region without critical security threats. However, it is common for HRDs in exile, particularly those continuing their human rights work, to encounter various levels of harassment and intimidation as detailed in sections above. For the most part, these threats are not considered serious enough for UNHCR to highly prioritise their cases for immediate resettlement. The process was for sexual minorities from Uganda who came under attack after the now annulled Anti-Homosexuality Act (2014) was passed and fled to Kenya has often been expedited, because homosexuality is also illegal in the host country. However, even with the priority status given to sexual minorities, resettlement currently takes at minimum 1.5 years, with exceptions made in cases where there is a proven imminent threat to life. On average, it takes at least 3 to 5 years for HRDs to be resettled and it is not uncommon for cases to take significantly longer. There are numerous HRDs from Somalia that have been living as refugees in Kenya

<sup>26</sup> UNHCR, "Resettlement", <http://www.unhcr.org/resettlement.html>

since 2007 without making significant progress towards resettlement.

In Kenya, only 3,000 refugees are resettled each year according to UNHCR, which amounts to only 0.5% of the country's total refugee population. Additionally, the current waiting period for an initial interview as part of the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) process is two years for average cases. Many HRDs feel that their cases should be fast tracked given that their exile was a result of their human rights work; however, many refugee agencies are reluctant to consider HRDs as a special group and believe it to be an ethical dilemma to prioritise groups of refugees. Oftentimes, they will leave it to the future host countries to determine what category of refugees they will offer resettlement to.

*"I'm so disappointed and hopeless. My case is clear but nothing is happening with my resettlement. What am I supposed to do?"<sup>27</sup>*

While there has been a significant focus on the refugee crisis in Europe, the crisis has also had an impact on refugees in the East and Horn of Africa. European governments have begun to reallocate funding to provide for refugees within their countries, which has had a causal impact on those needing assistance in the sub-region.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Somali HRD living in Kampala in April 2016

It has also made resettlement and accessing visas increasingly difficult on HRDs seeking to travel or resettle to Europe.

The refugee crisis has resulted in European governments increasingly funding and reportedly making agreements with authoritarian governments such as Sudan and Eritrea, reinforcing their abusive policies.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the amount of refugees being accepted from countries that formerly had *prima facie* status or were highly prioritised has dramatically decreased. For example, in the past, the UK government accepted 95% of Eritreans applications for asylum but that has now decreased to 28%.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> IRIN, "Sudan and Eritrea crackdown on migrants amid reports of EU incentives", 25 May 2016 <https://www.irinnews.org/news/2016/05/25/sudan-and-eritrea-crackdown-migrants-amid-reports-eu-incentives> 25 May 2016 <https://www.irinnews.org/news/2016/05/25/sudan-and-eritrea-crackdown-migrants-amid-reports-eu-incentives>

<sup>29</sup> The Guardian, "Should Europe pay to stop refugees fleeing oppressive Eritrea?" 28 April 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/28/eu-plan-to-pay-millions-to-eritrea>

## II. Human rights defenders in exile in Kenya

*“Living in Nairobi is difficult because of security, fear, and the state of being hungry. I cannot afford to send my children to school.”<sup>30</sup>*

Nairobi hosts over 63,000 of Kenya’s nearly 600,000 refugees.<sup>31</sup> The majority of HRDs in exile in Kenya are from Somalia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, but there are also numerous HRDs from Uganda, Sudan, Burundi, and Eritrea.

Unlike many of the other groups of HRDs in exile, a large number of Somali HRDs have been able to continue their work due to the numerous Somali media outlets based in or with existing branches in Nairobi. A group of Somalis have also formed the Somali Exiled Journalist Network Association (SEJNAS), which provides advice for exiled journalists, assists them with the visa and refugee process, refers cases to UNHCR, and helps exiled journalists apply for support. According to SEJNAS there are currently an estimated 86 Somali journalists living in Kenya, the majority of which fled after threats or attacks, primarily from extremist

groups such as Al Shabaab.<sup>32</sup>

There are currently at least 38 Ethiopian journalists living in exile in Nairobi, the majority of which fled after the Ethiopian government initiated a severe and targeted crackdown against journalists in 2014.<sup>33</sup> Very few have been able to find employment or a durable solution since they arrived in Kenya.

*“In Somalia you only fear to die but in Kenya the problems are security, finances, support... actually things are worse here.”<sup>34</sup>*

By contrast, Sudanese and South Sudanese HRDs do not feel like they are currently at high risk in Nairobi. Some HRDs have become community leaders and organise community events such as local concerts and sports tournaments, while three of those interviewed have worked to register their own NGOs in Kenya. As a South Sudanese student activist noted, *“I feel very safe here and am not afraid of being vocal.”*

32 Interview with Somali journalist in Nairobi in February 2016

33 Interview with Somali journalist in Nairobi in February 2016

DefendDefenders, “Caught up in bitter contests: human rights defenders working in the context of elections in Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi, and Uganda,” September 2015, <https://www.defenddefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Caught-Up-in-Bitter-Contests.pdf>

34 Interview with Somali journalist in Nairobi in February 2016

30 Interview with Burundian journalist living in Nairobi in February 2016

31 UNHCR, “Kenya Factsheet April 2016”, 30 April 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/KenyaOperationalFactSheetApril2016.pdf>



"Somali journalists in exile in Nairobi are now facing a lot of fear and asking themselves many questions: Where will their future be? How can they stay in safe? Where will they move? With the closure of Dadaab what will happen to those living as urban refugees? Kenyan police have started asking those of us in Eastleigh for identification cards, and when we show the refugee cards and mandate, police start to harass us. In addition to that, there are new Somali journalists that arrived in Nairobi, and they have not been able to register as refugees. Journalists are still fleeing from the country as they look for safety. There are 30 Somali journalists living in Dadaab. They are very worried. They can't go back to Somalia."<sup>35</sup>

## Refugee policy in Kenya and its impact on HRDs

Refugee policy, rights, and status in Kenya are governed by the Refugee Act (2006), which established mechanisms for the management of refugees through the Department of Refugee Affairs (DRA), the Refugee Affairs Committee, and the Refugee Appeals Board. While the Act provides for refugees' rights, such as the ability to legally work, it also further regulates freedom of movement by requiring refugees to obtain movement passes in order to travel outside the camps. Also problematic is the fact that the full implementation of the Act has been limited. Additionally, the DRA is constrained by lack of resources and capacity.

In practice, the Kenyan government has been increasingly hostile towards refugees, viewing them as security risks and a drain on the economy.

On 6 May 2016, the government disbanded the DRA, revoked the *prima*

*facie* status of Somali refugees, and announced it would close its refugee camps, which are among the largest in the world. The government amended its position on 11 May, announcing that it would only close Dadaab camp.<sup>36</sup> The Kenyan government claims that the "camps are a dire threat to our people's security,"<sup>37</sup> and the move has increased the negative perception of refugees among nationals. There has already been an intensification of harassment and reported increased extortion of refugees by police forces.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Kenyan Ministry of Interior "Government statement and update on the repatriation of refugees and scheduled closure of Dadaab refugee camp", 11 May 2016, <http://www.interior.go.ke/?p=3113>

<sup>37</sup> Karanja Kibicho, "As the Kenyan minister for national security, here's why I'm shutting the world's biggest refugee camp", The Independent, 9 May 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/as-the-kenyan-minister-for-national-security-heres-why-im-shutting-the-worlds-biggest-refugee-camp-a7020891.html>

<sup>38</sup> Elsa Buchanan, "Kenya: Refugees face police persecution and death after disbanding of Department of Refugee Affairs", IBI Times, 17 May 2016, <http://www.ibitimes.co.uk/kenya-refugees-face-police-persecution-death-after-disbanding-department-refugee-affairs-1560474>

<sup>35</sup> Somali journalist living in Nairobi June 2006

## Kenya's vast refugee camps

Kenya is home to the world's largest refugee camp. With a population of 327,320, if Dadaab were considered a city, it would be the third largest in Kenya.<sup>39</sup>

Kenya has an encampment policy, which means that legally all refugees are required to reside in camps. In order to live in Nairobi, refugees must obtain official permission or risk being arrested, fined, and forced to return to the camps. Additionally, by not having permission, refugees open themselves up to harassment by the police. At times permission is granted for those facing protection risks in the camps, which is common for HRDs, or seeking economic opportunities or medical treatment in urban areas. For HRDs living in Nairobi without permission, they can apply for official approval and documentation at UNHCR's office in Nairobi without having to return to the camps.

The Kenyan government has attempted to tighten this policy in recent years. In December 2012, the government announced that it would create a structured encampment policy due to the "unbearable and uncontrollable threat to national security" posed by refugees.<sup>40</sup> This policy would have forced all asylum seekers and refugees to relocate to Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps, closed all registration centres in urban areas, and ordered all refugee organisations to cease providing services to urban refugees. The Kenyan High Court ruled in July 2013 that the directive violated the rights of refugees.<sup>41</sup> However, since that time there have been numerous attempts by the Kenyan government to limit both the amount of refugees allowed in the country, and the rights afforded to refugees.

39 UNHCR, "Refugees in the Horn of Africa: Somali Displacement Crisis" 30 April 2016, <http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/region.php?id=3>

40 Department of Refugee Affairs, "Press Statement", December 2012, [https://admin.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related\\_material/Department%20of%20Refugee%20Affairs%20press%20statement%2013%20December%202012.pdf](https://admin.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/Department%20of%20Refugee%20Affairs%20press%20statement%2013%20December%202012.pdf)

41 Human Rights Watch, "Reversal of last year's court ruling on urban refugees in Kenya is quite stunning", 17 July 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/17/reversal-last-years-court-ruling-urban-refugees-kenya-quite-stunning>

While the DRA is closed, there is no mechanism for refugees to register or obtain work permits and travel documents. The shutdown has had a dire impact on refugee's medical needs, as the DRA is no longer authorised to sign referral papers or movement papers for refugees to go outside of the camp to receive medical treatment.<sup>42</sup> Somali refugees have faced particularly high levels of scrutiny from the Kenyan government due to security concerns.

Many of the HRDs interviewed were afraid of Kenyan police and have had negative interactions with the police in the past, including harassment and attempted extortion. This was especially prevalent for individuals from the Horn of Africa and those that did not have proper documentation. Several of those interviewed noted that they limited their travel in the city to avoid encountering police.

### **HRDs working in exile**

Despite numerous constraints, some HRDs have been able to undertake human rights work both in Nairobi and the refugee camps. For example, in 2008 a group of journalists living as refugees in Kakuma established KANERE: Kakuma News Reflector, an independent news magazine that reports on rights and issues affecting refugees in the camp. KANERE was able to register as national NGO, however continues to face funding

constraints that have limited the frequency and quantity of issues produced.<sup>43</sup>

While refugees have the right to obtain Class M work permits for free, HRDs and refugee organisations have noted that the administrative process is extremely challenging and only 2% of refugees have been able to obtain work permits.<sup>44</sup> This has been a major frustration among HRDs who wish to obtain gainful employment while in Kenya.

According to UNHCR, in order for refugees to obtain a work permit, they must have refugee status, a recommendation letter from the Department of Refugee Affairs (DRA), and approval from immigration officials. As long as DRA is suspended, permits cannot be granted. With the current wait time of two years for the initial RSD interview, it could be a substantial period of time before HRDs are able to legally work.

<sup>42</sup> Somali journalist living in Nairobi June 2016

<sup>43</sup> Kakuma News Reflector, "About KANERE", <https://kanere.org/about-kanere/>

<sup>44</sup> Refugee Consortium of Kenya, "Myths and Truths: The facts about refugee self-sufficiency and economic contribution in Nairobi", April 2016, <http://www.rckkenya.org/index.php/reports/item/1390-research-report-myths-and-truths>

### III. Human rights defenders in exile in Uganda

Uganda is the third largest host of refugees in Africa, and is generally regarded as having welcoming and progressive refugee policies.<sup>44</sup> According to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), as of May 2016, there are 525,968 refugees in Uganda, including 76,210 in Kampala.

Kampala has been a hub for HRDs from the sub-region, particularly Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, and Eritrea. Many HRDs living in Kampala have faced various levels of threats from their home countries while living in exile. For example, one HRD who wrote an article about the lack of democratic principles in Rwanda while in Kampala received numerous death threats and was forced to go into hiding. Organisations working on refugee protection shared that some HRDs had reported incidents of surveillance, phones being tapped, and being beaten by foreign agents, most commonly from Rwanda, Eritrea, and Ethiopia.

While HRDs in Nairobi all noted negative interactions with the Kenyan police, in Kampala, HRDs have not generally found the police to be a source of hostility. However, as with incidents reported by Ugandans,

follow up on cases by police is often insufficient.

#### HRDs working in exile

A number of organisations have successfully been founded by HRDs in exile at the community, regional, and international level, including DefendDefenders. Following the mass exodus of HRDs after President al-Bashir's indictment by the International Criminal Court in 2009, Sudanese activists used Kampala as a base to develop a strong civil society network of organisations in exile. In addition to the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies and Darfur Refugee Association, there are six other NGOs based in Kampala that operate with a significant focus on Sudan.

Several Burundian HRDs have also begun to relocate from Kigali to Kampala, and some have set up offices there. Organisations can be registered as community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, and companies limited by guarantee.

#### Refugee Policy in Uganda

The Refugee Act (2006) governs refugee policy in Uganda and is generally considered to be a progressive model with strong provisions for refugee rights; however, it also curtails the space for

<sup>44</sup> UNHCR, "Uganda hosts record 500,000 refugees and asylum-seekers", 18 December 2015, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2015/12/567414b26/uganda-hosts-record-500000-refugees-and-asylum-seekers.html>

HRDs by prohibiting refugees from undertaking “any political activities,” activities within Uganda, whether at local or national level.” The Act does not define what is encompassed in the term political activities, and it has been interpreted by OPM officials interviewed to include human rights work. Despite the legal constraints involved with undertaking political work, officers interviewed from refugee organisations, the OPM, and UNHCR did not know of any cases where the law has been invoked or refugees have faced consequences for conducting human rights work.

While Uganda has been innovative in developing settlements to create self-sustainability among refugees, these are located in rural areas. HRDs recognise the benefits of the settlements and having access to their support mechanisms, however,

the majority have found that residing in them is inconvenient for the continuation of their human rights work. Additionally, Kampala offers a strong support network of HRDs and NGOs due to the large amount of organisations based there.

HRDs interviewed generally found the refugee process in Uganda to be relatively easy to navigate compared to Kenya, and many were resettled to a third country within just a few years. However, one HRD interviewed told DefendDefenders that his refugee status had been denied for lack of evidence of persecution, and stated that he had to pay 1,000,000 UGX to brokers to facilitate the approval of his status. Refugee organisations in Kampala noted that numerous refugees have raised similar accusations of corruption.



HRDs working in DefendDefender's resource centre in Kampala.

## IV. Human rights defenders in exile in Rwanda

In Nairobi and Kampala, HRDs come from a wide variety of countries in the sub-region, while the HRD community in Kigali is primarily from Burundi, following the outbreak of the crisis in April 2015. Prior to 2015, there were little if any refugee organisations providing assistance to urban refugees, due to the generally small number of refugees in Rwanda.

As of March 2016, over 253,451 Burundians have fled the country, over 75,000 of which have sought refuge in Rwanda, as a result of an election-related crisis fuelled by President Pierre Nkurunziza's decision to run for a third term in office.<sup>45</sup> Civil society and opposition groups denounced this as contrary to the spirit of the Constitution and Arusha agreements, which ended the country's civil war, and spurred widespread protests that were violently repressed and a failed *coup d'état*.

There are over 25,000 urban refugees in Kigali, 23,400 of which are from Burundi.<sup>46</sup> While Burundian HRDs have also fled to other countries in the sub-region, the majority chose to live in Kigali due to its proximity to

Burundi, similarities in language and culture, and the relative safety the city offers compared to others in the region.

Despite these advantages, Burundian refugees in Rwanda also expressed concern about the high cost of living, and the deteriorating relationship between the Burundian and Rwandan governments. On 12 February 2016, the Rwandan government announced that it would immediately begin an initiative to relocate Burundian refugees to third countries, claiming that "for Rwanda, the growing risks to our national security from the Burundian impasse and misunderstandings in our foreign relations are unacceptable."<sup>47</sup> In May 2016, Rwanda expelled an estimated 1,500 Burundians for allegedly illegally entering the country.<sup>48</sup> While all of the HRDs interviewed living in Rwanda have registered with UNHCR, they feared there would be repercussions on their ability to live outside of the camps in the future.

All of the HRDs living in Rwanda interviewed for this research noted the difficulties of the high cost of

45 OCHA, "Burundi Humanitarian Snapshot", 24 March 2016 <http://reliefweb.int/report/burundi/burundi-humanitarian-snapshot-24-march-2016>

46 UNHCR Rwanda, "Where we work: UNHCR's presence in Rwanda", <http://www.unhcr.rw/spip.php?rubrique4>

47 BBC, "Rwanda seeks to expel Burundian refugees", 12 February 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35558082>

48 Al Jazeera, "Rwanda Expels Over 1,500 Burundians as Relations Fray", 17 May 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/rwanda-expels-1500-burundians-relations-fray-160516135324484.html>

living and the poor exchange rate of the Burundian Franc. In addition, many raised the substantial cost of education and the difficulties encountered when enrolling their children in schools in Rwanda.

A survey conducted by Church World Service and Young Women's Christian Association of Rwanda found that humanitarian and emergency assistance were lacking for urban refugees in Kigali. According to the survey, 83% of Burundians living in Kigali are unemployed, and of those working only half had full time employment.<sup>49</sup>

*"I want to integrate into the Rwandan society rather than be isolated in a camp. As an activist, there is still work to do and the camp has too many restrictions. You cannot move freely and hold meetings. It is better for us as HRDs to be in the city."<sup>50</sup>*

### **Working in exile and getting support**

Many HRDs have continued their activities while living in Rwanda. A small portion of Burundian journalists have gotten jobs with Rwandan

<sup>49</sup> Church World Service and YWCA Rwanda, "Mapping of urban refugees' access to essential services in Rwanda", January 2016, [http://cwsglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Rwanda-Urban-Refugee-HH-survey-report\\_3-Feb-2016.pdf](http://cwsglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Rwanda-Urban-Refugee-HH-survey-report_3-Feb-2016.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Burundian HRDs living in Kigali interviewed in May 2016

**Radio Inzamba** was established in July 2015 by Burundian journalists living in Kigali that were forced to flee due to security threats, and after their radio stations were shut down and destroyed by the government. Over 20 journalists contribute to Radio Inzamba, which broadcasts a 15-minute news program daily in both French and Kirundi via social media.

The radio station has experienced challenges in Rwanda as it does not have a legal status, which has limited its ability to access funding. This has resulted in much of the staff operating on a voluntary basis.

media organisations, while Burundian organisations such as Maison Shalom have registered their NGOs in Rwanda, and initiated new programs of work. Many HRDs noted the difficulties in obtaining funding for their media and human rights organisations since very few are registered or have bank accounts in Rwanda.

HRDs noted that due to the uncertainty of the circumstances they live in and the fact that their NGOs and media houses in Burundi had been shut down, donors have been unwilling or unable to provide funding. In some cases, organisations have managed to obtain funds from international donors, diaspora



members, and business owners to implement projects, however HRDs noted that staff salaries were often excluded. After their staff fled Burundi, some newspapers and organisations continued to pay at least a portion of staff salaries while HRDs worked in Kigali. However, after the Burundian government froze the bank accounts of several NGOs in November 2015, the majority of HRDs lost their only source of income.<sup>51</sup>

### The large influx of Burundian HRDs

<sup>51</sup> DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, "Burundi: Soon, there will be no human rights defenders left // Burundi: Bientôt, il n'y aura plus de défenseurs des droits de l'homme", 24 November 2015, <https://www.defenddefenders.org/2015/11/burundi-soon-there-will-be-no-human-rights-defenders-left-burundi-bientot-il-ny-aura-plus-de-defenseurs-des-droits-de-lhomme/>

to Kigali in such a short period of time led to the unique development of support mechanisms and increased coordination among protection organisations. A number of NGOs working to provide financial assistance to HRDs in exile were in frequent communication to avoid gaps and duplication of efforts. Many HRDs perceive the aid that is being provided as being haphazard and unfairly distributed, noting that while some have received substantial support, others feel as they have received relatively little. This issue was raised among other groups of HRDs as well, whose expectations of continued support are often unfeasible. However, of those interviewed, nearly all had received one-time financial assistance from protection organisations.



Burundian refugees register in Kigali, Rwanda.



## V. Conclusion

Human rights defenders in the East and Horn of Africa regularly face significant security risks as a result of their work to promote human rights and civil liberties in the region. These threats can become so severe that HRDs are forced to flee their countries and go into exile. Despite their courageous efforts that placed them at such high risk, the needs of HRDs living in exile as a consequence of their human rights activities remain unmet.

While there are many organisations that provide emergency support for HRDs, there are few avenues for assistance beyond their first 3 to 6 months in exile. Indefinite support is unrealistic, however, attention must be dedicated to helping HRDs become self-sustainable in exile. This can be done in a variety of ways such as identifying jobs, fellowships, and education opportunities, assisting HRDs in accessing organisational grants, ensuring HRDs know about the various resources available to them, or providing recommendations on how emergency grants could be used to invest in items that can generate income.

HRDs in the sub-region have paid a high price for undertaking work to promote human rights and democratic principles, and should be given guidance and support to continue their work in exile.

It is necessary to recognise that the situation of HRDs differs from that of general refugees, and specific protection considerations should be adopted to ensure that they are able to live and continue their work in exile. This will enable more HRDs to remain in the region rather than seek resettlement in a third country, at a time where refugee resettlement is increasingly restrained.

Often the goal of the perpetrators of threats against HRDs in their countries of origin is to silence their criticism. By bolstering support for HRDs to continue their work in the region, it ensures that the voices of HRDs are not lost and that activism on critical human rights issues in the East and Horn of Africa can continue.

## VI. Recommendations

### *To Human Rights Defenders*

#### **Before fleeing**

- Determine whether there are options for incountry relocation before considering exile;
- Carefully consider the country you choose for exile, including factors such as that country's refugee policy, security, cost of living, opportunities for work, language barriers, services available, and the education system.

#### **After arriving**

- Immediately legalise your status;
- Create a contingency plan in case your period of exile could extend long-term;
- Conduct a security assessment considering potential risks, vulnerabilities, and capacities and develop protocols to mitigate those risks (if you do not know how to, seek assistance from NGOs working on security issues);
- Keep a low profile and avoid unnecessary movement and risks that could further endanger yourself;
- Identify avenues of support and take proactive steps in obtaining services;
- If targeted, report incidents to local police when it is safe to do so, as well as to UNHCR and/or to

protection NGOs in the country;

- If working online in exile consider using anonymity software such as Tor Browser in order to prevent leaking your location.

### *To Non-Governmental Organisations*

- Increase coordination and engagement between human rights and refugee organisations to address protection and service gaps impacting HRDs in exile. Provide opportunities for the employment of HRDs through internships, fellowships, and full-time employment;
- Increase financial support for psychosocial assistance and integrate psychosocial support into trainings;
- Increase shelter assistance for HRDs needing to relocate due to security risks in the country or provide assistance for rental costs;
- Develop internal mechanisms for medium and long-term support of HRDs;
- Engage with host governments on the ability of HRDs to continue their activities in exile through the provision of work permits and the registration of organisations;

### ***To the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees***

- Recognise that HRDs face unique protection needs and develop protection strategies to support HRDs continuing their human rights activities in exile;
- Increase awareness among refugees of the various services UNHCR provides particularly in terms of protection and resettlement processes and how refugees can access those services.
- Facilitate secure housing for HRDs at high risk either through safe houses or by having resources available to provide financial assistance when HRDs change residences due to security risks;
- Expedite relocation for HRDs that face security risks in the host country;

### ***To Donors***

- Provide flexible funding and structural support to assist HRDs in setting up organisations or continuing human rights work in exile;
- Allow organisations flexibility in dispersing grants and determining what grants can cover to provide to medium to long-term solutions for HRDs in exile.

### ***To the Kenyan government***

- Reinstate the Department of Refugee Affairs and ensure they have adequate resources to respond to the needs of HRDs and refugees at large;
- Remove restrictions on the freedom of movement of refugees and enable HRDs to continue human rights activities by facilitating access to work permits;
- Ensure protection of refugees, including HRDs, at risk and full implementation of protective measures in the Refugee Act (2006);
- Recognise the significant role of HRDs in contributing to peace and security in the East and Horn of Africa, and facilitate their integration into Kenyan society;
- Ensure police are knowledgeable about the rights of refugees in Kenya, investigate cases of harassment and extortion by police, and hold those responsible for these abuses accountable.

### ***To the Ugandan government***

- Amend the Refugee Act (2006) to remove Section 35(d) which prohibits refugees from undertaking political work, which imposes limits on refugees rights

and fundamental freedoms protected under the Ugandan Constitution, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

- In conjunction with UNHCR, create protection mechanisms for HRDs living in Kampala such as the reinstatement of safe houses;
- Investigate allegations of corruption in the asylum and refugee processes.

### ***To the Rwandan government***

- Amend the NGO law to remove excessive obstacles and to make registration of non-governmental organisations more accessible.

### ***To the European Union , and governments of Canada, Norway, Australia, and the United States***

- Prioritise the cases of HRDs at risk in the sub-region and their families for resettlement;
- Implement the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders (2004) and national implementation strategies for the support of HRDs by providing practical support to HRDs in exile, including financial assistance for those seeking

to continue their work and/or establish organisations in exile;

- Ensure that country missions not only monitor the situation of HRDs from that country but also HRDs living there in exile.

### ***To the East African Community***

- Create policies permitting freedom of movement, residence, and employment for refugees from the East African Community residing as refugees in member states.



## Annex I. Organisations providing assistance to urban refugees

### Organisations in Nairobi, Kenya

#### Education

##### Windle Trust Kenya

- 10 Amboseli Road off Gitanga Rd in Lavington
-  +254 (0)202 606 516-9; + 254 (0)721 551 451; +254 (0)708 988 642
-  windle@windle.org; brkasaya@windle.org
-  www.windle.org
-  Delivers scholarships for undergraduate and post-graduate studies for refugees registered with UNHCR to enrol in public or private universities in Kenya.

##### Xavier Project

- **Kawangware Hub:** Kivuli Centre on Kabiria Road;  
**Umoja/Kayole Hub:** Next to HIAS offices Nasra Gardens Estate Kayole Spine Road near Naivas Stage;  
**Kasarani Hub:** Near the ACK Church past Hunters estate, near Kasarani-Mwiki Road. Near Hunters or Garage Stage.
-  +254 (0)772 500 506
-  info@xavierproject.org; education@xavierproject.org
-  www.xavierproject.org
- 
  - Provide education sponsorship in early childhood development, primary school, and secondary school assistance for children with refugee status documentation;
  - Offers free adult literacy courses in Kiswahili, English and Math each lasting three months;
  - Holds workshops for women's empowerment on leadership, entrepreneurship, small business accounting, and gender based violence;
  - Holds workshops for women's empowerment on leadership, entrepreneurship, small business accounting, and gender based violence

- Through Tamuka Hub, runs community centres with computer classrooms, libraries, and internet-access points
- Offers the opportunity for refugees to write for a monthly online and print newsletter on issues related to refugees in Uganda and Kenya.

### Legal assistance

#### Kituo Cha Sheria

- Jogoo Road Plaza, 2nd Floor Opposite Kobile Petrol Station
- +254 (0)202 451 631; +254 (0)720 806 531; +254 (0)736 867 241
- fmp@kituochasheria.or.ke
- Walk-ins accepted Monday-Friday 8AM-5PM
- www.kituochasheria.or.ke
- Offers free legal representation as well as legal advice to refugee and asylum seekers;
- Assists refugees in obtaining legal refugee documents;
- Conducts security interviews for UNHCR and provides referral services to other refugee organisations.

#### Refugee Consortium of Kenya

- Haki House, Ndemi Road, Kilimani, Nairobi;
- Buruburu Arcade, 4th Floor, Buruburu, Nairobi.
- +254 (0)720 943 164; +254 (0)733 860 669; +254 (0)703 820 361
- refcon@rckkenya.org
- www.rckkenya.org
- Provides legal counselling and representation in the Refugee Status Determination and asylum processes;
- Offers basic psychosocial support and counselling to asylum seekers and refugees that have experienced torture or SGBV.

## Health and counselling support

### Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

- Green House Clinic in Eastlands on Juja Rd near the Oil Libya petrol station;
- Lavender House Clinic in Eastlands on Juja Rd near the Oil Libya petrol station;
- Kibera South Health Centre around Laini Saba area
- Silanga clinic in Kibera.



+254 (0)202 400 330; +254 (0)720 115 087-8;

**Emergency hotline for SGBV:** +254 (0)711 400 506



<http://www.msf.org/kenya>



- MSF operates four clinics that offer various services on a walk-in basis and provide free medical care for both Kenyans and refugees;
- The Green House clinic provides care and treatment for those with drug-resistant tuberculosis ;
- The Lavender House offers medical treatment for trauma response and victims of SGBV;
- Both of the Kibera clinics provide comprehensive medical care.

### Centre for Victims of Torture



Sarit Centre, Westlands



+254 (0)205 202 114



[CVT@CVT.org](mailto:CVT@CVT.org)



<http://www.cvt.org/>



- Offers direct mental health counselling to refugees in Nairobi who are severely traumatised as a result of torture or war trauma;
- Provides specialised physical therapy services to manage pain or other forms of impairment caused by torture, improve joint mobility and regain function in daily living.

### Public health facilities in Nairobi

#### Public clinics



- Mbagathi – Kenyatta Market, Near Kibera;
- Kangemi – Behind shops after bus stop;
- Westland's – Next to old Safaricom House;
- Eastleigh – Along 4th street;
- Kahawa west - Near bus stop;



- Kasarani – DO's near seasons stage;
- Kayole I – Corner of Kayole 1;
- Kayole II – DO's place near club 2000;
- Umoja – Near Egesa club/Catholic church;
- Riruta – Opposite shell petrol station along route number 2;
- Rongai – Rongai behind Kware stage;
- Kitengela – Behind the shopping centre;
- Ruiru – Ruiru near the police station;
- Waithaka health centre;
- Langata health centre;
- Karen health centre.

### District hospitals

- Mbagathi – Kenyatta Market, Near Kibera;
- Kiambu – Kiambu town;
- Mama Lucy Kibaki – Umoja/Kayole road;
- Mathare Mental – Opposite Muthaiga police;
- Pumwani Maternity – Califonia, Eastleigh;
- Thika – Thika town;
- Kenyatta National Hospital.

## Livelihoods, emergency, protection and resettlement support

### Danish Refugee Council

- Lower Kabete Road Ngecha Road Junction;
- Buru Buru Arcade 5th Floor Rooms 21-22;
- Eastleigh- PCEA Training Centre Kabiria in Kivuli Center;



+254 (0)204 180 403-5; +254 (0)800 720 181



drc@drc.dk



www.drc.dk



- Provides practical livelihood interventions and consumption support;
- Offers skills development through professional and vocational skills training and enterprise development.

## RefugePoint



<http://www.refugepoint.org/>



- After identifying eligible clients, RefugePoint provides people safe shelter, emergency food aid, and counseling;
- The medical clinic complements this outreach with free basic health care, medicine, and subsidised referrals to hospitals and specialists;
- RefugePoint uses a case management model to connect refugees to other existing services, and helps refugees develop a plan towards self-reliance;
- Refugees must be referred from partner organisations, walk in not permitted.

## Hias Trust



- Muchai Drive, off Ngong road in Hurlingham;
- Kanwangware, along Ngina road, St. Austine's Nursery School;;
- Eastleigh Juja Road A Estate, House No. 70;
- Kayole Nasra Estate, behind Bee Centre.



+254 (0)202 720 114; +254 (0)722 284 703; +254 (0)733 703 726



[info@hiasafrica.org](mailto:info@hiasafrica.org)



[www.hiasafrica.org](http://www.hiasafrica.org)



- Provides protection and psychosocial support;
- Offers social assistance including emergency safe housing, food assistance, and medical referrals;
- Provides vocational training;
- Assists refugees in the resettlement process.

## Jesuit Refugee Services



Gitanga Road, behind Mary Immaculate Hospital



+254 (0)723 747 498



[kenya@jrs.net](mailto:kenya@jrs.net)



[www.jresa.org](http://www.jresa.org)



- Provides counselling and medical assistance to refugees and asylum seekers;
- Delivers emergency food and non-food assistance;
- Offers scholarships in early childhood, secondary, and higher education;
- Runs vocational training and small business loans.

## Peace Brigades International – Kenya Project

- Nairobi, Kenya
- ☎ +254 (0)725 650 740
- ✉ [kenyateam@peacebrigades.org](mailto:kenyateam@peacebrigades.org)
- 💻 <http://www.pbi-kenya.org/field-projects/pbi-kenya/about-pbi-kenya/>
- ⓘ
  - Physical accompaniment of HRDs to places they may face heightened risk (e.g. fact finding missions, collection of evidence on site, police stations, court hearings, community forums, etc.);
  - Strategic advocacy for HRDs with the aim of raising their profiles, raising awareness regarding their cases, and increasing pressure on actors/aggressors involved;
  - Personalised and inclusive risk assessment and security planning workshops.

## UNHCR- Nairobi

- Lynwood Court, off Waiyaki Way Westlands
- ☎ +254 (0)204 232 509; +254 (0)204 322 000
- ✉ <http://www.unhcr.org/ke/>
- 💻
  - [kennarst@unhcr.org](mailto:kennarst@unhcr.org) to follow up on resettlement cases;
  - [kennarsd@unhcr.org](mailto:kennarsd@unhcr.org) to follow up on refugee status determination;
  - [kennapt@unhcr.org](mailto:kennapt@unhcr.org) to follow up on protection cases;
  - [kenna@unhcr.org](mailto:kenna@unhcr.org) for any general UNHCR issues.
- 👁 UNHCR's office hours are between 8am to 4:45pm Monday – Thursday and 8am – 2pm on Fridays. UNHCR offers protection reception days on Thursdays from 8am – 10am at UNHCR's office in Westlands.

## Department of Refugee Affairs

- Castle Building James Gichuru road, Lavington
- ☎ +254 (0)204 348 147; +254 (0)204 348 145
- ✉ <http://www.refugeeaffairs.go.ke>
- 💻 [refugeeaffairs@kenya.go.ke](mailto:refugeeaffairs@kenya.go.ke)

## Organisations in Kampala, Uganda

### Education and resource centres

#### Windle Trust Uganda

- Plot 726, Mawanda road, Kamwokya
- ☎ +256 (0)414 531 142; +256 (0)312 260 951
- ✉ windle@utlonline.co.ug
- 💻 <http://www.windletrust.ug/home/>
- ❶ Delivers scholarships for undergraduate and post-graduate studies for refugees registered with UNHCR to enrol in public or private universities in Uganda.

#### Xavier Project

- **Headquarters:** Hanlon road, Nsambya  
**Tamuka Hub:** Rubaga
- ✉ [info@xavierproject.org](mailto:info@xavierproject.org); [education@xavierproject.org](mailto:education@xavierproject.org)
- 💻 [www.xavierproject.org](http://www.xavierproject.org)
- ❶
  - Provides education sponsorship in early childhood development, primary school and secondary school assistance. In take for courses are in July and January;
  - Through Tamuka Hub, runs a computer centre with internet access and classes on intro to computers, managing money for business, career development, web design, graphic design and video editing, and citizen journalism.

#### Finnish Refugee Council

- **Headquarters:** Plot 19, Martyr's Drive, Ntinda  
**Resource Centre:** Plot 182, Namasole Road, Makindye
- ✉ +256 (0)787 420 583
- 💻 <http://pakolaisapu.fi/en/>
- ❶
  - Delivers skills training in incoming generating activities;
  - Offers adult education in functional literacy and English language training combined with practical and thematic topics relevant for refugees;

- 
- Organising courses on business skills, provides training and mentoring refugee groups and associations;
  - Runs a resource centre with a library and computers in Makindye.
- 

### **Young African Refugees for Integral Development (YARID)**

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• Gogonya road, Nsambya

+256 (0)756 511 335

✉ yariduganda@gmail.com

💻 <http://www.yarid.org/>

• YARID is a refugee-run organisation that offers a variety of courses for free including:

- English courses: Five-months English courses Monday-Friday from 8am-10am. Courses begin in late January and late June but refugees can join at any point. There is also an evening English course from 4pm-6pm Monday-Thursday;
  - YARID also offers classes in business, literacy, and computer training and runs two 6-month women's empowerment projects in tailoring and handcraft making;
  - YARID offers a free meeting place and internet access point at their headquarters in Nsambya.
- 

### **Pan-African Development Education and Advocacy Programme (PADEAP)**

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• Plot 1938, Senyonga road, block 15, Kabalagala


+256 (0)415 335 42; +256 (0)312 284 119


✉ info-ug@padeap.net

💻 [www.padeap.net](http://www.padeap.net)

- PADEAP offers legal, psychosocial, and education assistance to refugees and also house a resource centre and library;
  - Runs courses in adult English literacy for 30,000 UGX as well as computer classes and an accelerated program for integration of refugee children into the Ugandan system;
  - Offers individual and group psychosocial support;
  - Provide legal accompaniment for police follow up and legal advice.
-


## Refuge and Hope

 Mitala Road in Kansanga, past Kansanga Secondary School

 +256 (0)781 699 872

 [info@refugeandhope.org](mailto:info@refugeandhope.org)

 [www.refugeandhope.org](http://www.refugeandhope.org)

-  • Offer six-month English classes for 70,000 UGX for at a variety of skill levels. Intake is in January and July;
- Provide emergency assistance such as rent and food support
- Train women in cooking and sewing;
- Offer a emergency shelter program for women lasting up to nine weeks as a place of healing for women who have experienced trauma
- Provide counseling and assistance through the organisations social workers;
- Run courses in computer, business, and entrepreneurship skills.

## Legal assistance

### Refugee Law Project


 Plot 7 and 9 Perryman Gardens, Old Kampala

 +256 (0)414 343 556; +256 (0)414 235 330

 [info@refugeelawproject.org](mailto:info@refugeelawproject.org)

 <http://refugeelawproject.org/>

 Walk in system Monday - Thursday 9am - 10:30am to schedule appointments

-  • Free legal aid: Representation in criminal court trials and at police stations, document refugee testimonies, assistance in appeal process, provide mediation services in civil cases, and bail for refugees arrested
- Free English education for adults: In-take for courses in December and May
- Mental health and psychosocial support: Free counselling at family, group and individual level. Also organises refugee support groups
- Provide medical support to survivors of GBV
- Trainings on media and communications tools
- RLP can help refugees register support groups or human rights organisations and assist them in applying for funding and provide mentorship

## Uganda Law Society



Plot 5A, Acacia Avenue, P.O.Box 426, Kampala



+256 (0)414 342 424; +256 (0)414 342 431



uls@uls.or.ug



<http://www.uls.or.ug/>



As part of the ULS Pro-Bono Project, ULS provides:

- Legal representation in court;
- Legal advice and counselling;
- Under its Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism offers mediation, negotiations, reconciliations, and arbitration.

## Medical assistance

### African Centre for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV)



Owen road, near Mulago hospital



+256 (0)800 202 791; +256 (0)312 263 918/620



actv@actvuganda.org



<http://www.actvuganda.org>



ACTV provides medical treatment and rehabilitation, mental health and psychosocial support and counselling, and legal advice for victims of torture

## Public hospitals



- **Naguru Hospital:** also known as the China-Uganda Friendship Hospital;
- **Mulago Hospital:** referral only;
- **Butabika Hospital:** specialized and general mental health services.






## KCCA clinics








- Makindye Barracks;
- Kisenyi Health Centre;
- Kawala Health Centre;
- Kitebi Health Centre.

## Emergency assistance, livelihoods, protection and resettlement

### Jesuit Refugee Service

-  Old Gaba Road, behind the U.S. Embassy
-  +256 (0)414 266 264
-  uep.kampala@jrs.net
-  <http://www.jrsea.org/Advocacy?LID=354&L=EN>
- 
  - Food assistance for newly arrived documented asylum seekers in emergency situations for a limited period of time;
  - Rent assistance for the most vulnerable newly arrived asylum seekers, especially those with big families;
  - Refugees can access medical support for urgent medical case;
  - JRS Kampala offers free English language classes, and skills training in income generating activities in the following areas: driving, catering, hairdressing, IT, soap-making and candle-making.

### Hias Trust

- 
  - Kansanga, Church Road
  - Nsambya, near the Joint Medical Store
  - Rubega, near the Rubega Cathedral and Kabaka Roundabout
-  +256 (0)312 202 174; +256 (0)414 501 341
-  <http://www.hias.org/>
-  Walk in system for Nsambya and Rubega offices Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5pm
- 
  - Legal support: resettlement, advocacy, capacity building;
  - Psychosocial: individual, group, and couple counselling, and support groups;
  - Livelihoods: scholarships for vocational schools, micro grants for businesses;
  - One time rent support for three months in emergency situations
  - Information sessions on things like the refugee process when groups request.



## InterAid


- Off Kabaka Anjagala Road near the Kabaka's Palace
- ☎ +256 (0)414 347 545; +256 (0)414 347 022
- ✉ info@interaiduganda.org
- 💻 <http://www.interaiduganda.org/>
- 👁 8am - 3pm"
  - Monday - Congolese;
  - Tuesday - Eritreans, Sudanese, and South Sudanese;
  - Wednesday - Ethiopians and Rwandans;
  - Thursday - Somalis and Persons With Disabilities.
- 📍
  - Medical: supplemental medications and care that government health facilities cannot provide;
  - Livelihood: one time food assistance support;
  - Legal: follow up on arrested and detained refugees, provide legal counselling on laws of Uganda, provide court fees and transport for civil cases;
  - Screen and refer cases to UNHCR;
  - Refer protection cases to OPM.


## UNHCR - Kampala

- - **Headquarters:** Prince Charles Drive Kololo;
  - **Branch office:** Sir Apollo Kagga Road.
- ☎ +256 (0)141 231 231
- ✉ ugaka@unhcr.org
- 💻 ugaka@unhcr.org
- 👁 UNHCR schedules appointments to meet refugees and asylum seekers in Kampala at the offices of InterAid and the Branch Office Extension. Each nationality is given a specific day that appointments can be made in person at InterAid and the Branch Office:
  - Monday - Congolese;
  - Tuesday - Burundians, Eritreans, Sudanese, South Sudanese;
  - Wednesday - Rwandans, Ethiopians;
  - Thursday - Somalis & persons living with disabilities.

## Office of the Prime Minister- Refugee Directorate

 Plot 43 Sir Apollo Kagwa Road

 +256 (0)141 231 231


 OPM is responsible for managing refugee registration and the refugee status determination process. Appointments can be made in person on the follow dates:

- Monday - Somalis;
- Tuesday - Congolese;
- Wednesday - Sudanese, South Sudanese, Eritreans, Kenyans, and Burundians;
- Thursday - Rwandans, Ethiopians, and Somalis;
- Friday - New births, file merging, transfer of files.


## Organisations in Kigali, Rwanda

### Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)

 +250 (0)252 574 774; +250 (0)252 574 770


 [info@adra.org.rw](mailto:info@adra.org.rw)


 <http://www.adrarwanda.org>

 Provide scholastic materials and financial assistance for tuition fees and uniforms every Tuesday from 9AM-5PM at their warehouse in Gikondo.


### Africa Humanitarian Action


 [rwanda@africahumanitarian.org.rw](mailto:rwanda@africahumanitarian.org.rw)

 [www.africahumanitarian.org](http://www.africahumanitarian.org)

 In collaboration with UNHCR and MIDIMAR, AHA is responsible for providing primary health services to camp and urban based refugees.


### UNHCR - Kigali

 Opposite MTN Center, Nyarutarama, BP 867, Gasabo

 +250 (0)252 589 822

 [rwaki@unhcr.org](mailto:rwaki@unhcr.org)


 <http://www.unhcr.rw/>

 In Kigali, UNHCR has reception days every Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:00am to 1:00pm at the Africa Humanitarian Action Health Centre in Kimihurura

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### Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR)

 KN 3 Road - KN 1 Av Pension Piazza

 Toll free: 170

 <http://www.midimar.gov.rw>


 [info@midimar.gov.rw](mailto:info@midimar.gov.rw)

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## Annex II. Organisations providing assistance to human rights defenders in exile

### Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de l'Homme

● Lyon, France


 + 33 (0)437 371 011

 [www.aedh.org](http://www.aedh.org)

-  The fund aims to protect HRDs and respond rapidly to their calls for help when they are threatened or persecuted. The way that AEDH intervene depends on the local context, the amount of danger the HRDs are in and the nature of their request. It can consist of:
- Helping HRDs leave their country if they are threatened with arbitrary arrest, kidnapping or assassination, and if their only option is to leave the country or the region where they live;
  - Helping HRDs settle in the country to which they have fled
  - Providing legal assistance to those who have been wrongly arrested or are being falsely accused;
  - Covering medical expenses in cases where HRDs have been subjected to violence or torture or ill treatment;
  - Intervening in the courts of the country of origin to ensure that HRDs' safety is guaranteed.


### Article 19

● Nairobi, Kenya

 +254 (0)727 862 230


 [kenya@article19.org](mailto:kenya@article19.org)

 [www.article19.org](http://www.article19.org)

-  ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa operates an Emergency Support Fund (<https://ejournalistdefencenetwork.org/Article19/article19-emergency-support-fund-for-journalists-in-distress.html>) to help journalists in distress from Rwanda, Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. The support is provided on a one-off basis and includes medical and legal assistance. In some cases, it can be extended to members of the journalists' family if they are also affected. It can also help with relocation when a journalist is forced to flee his/her country.


## Canadian Journalists for Free Expression

 Toronto, Canada

 +1 (0)416 515 9622

 [cjfe@cjfe.org](mailto:cjfe@cjfe.org)


 <http://www.cjfe.org>

 CJFE's Journalists in Distress Fund provides humanitarian assistance to journalists around the world, whose lives and well-being are threatened because of their work. The amount granted typically ranges from \$500 to \$1500 CAD. Journalists are eligible for a maximum of two separate grants from CJFE.

The funds supports areas such as: legal fees, medical expenses, transportation costs when fleeing a dangerous situation, Financial support for the families of journalists who have been killed or imprisoned, and Resettlement costs within first year of arriving in a final safe country.


## Civil Rights Defenders

 Stockholm, Sweden

 +46 (0)854 527 730


 [info@civilrightsdefenders.org](mailto:info@civilrightsdefenders.org)

 <https://www.civilrightsdefenders.org/our-work/>


 The Civil Rights Defenders emergency fund helps support human rights defenders who need to relocate temporarily, to protect important communication or documents and to create security solutions.


## Committee to Protect Journalists

 New York, United States of America

 +1 (0)212 465 1004

 [www.cpj.org](http://www.cpj.org)


 [JournAsst@cpj.org](mailto:JournAsst@cpj.org)

 CPJ's Journalist Assistance program provides direct support to individuals who are working to disseminate news in dire situations or who are being persecuted for their reporting through the Gene Roberts Fund for Emergency Assistance. Some examples of CPJ's work include:

- Helping get medical care for journalists who have been attacked in retaliation for their work, or for journalists who have been mistreated in prison;
- Supporting journalists forced to go into hiding or relocate to escape threats from local officials, militia, or criminal gangs;
- Contributing to legal funds for journalists facing prison or legal action;
- Evacuating journalists at risk into temporary safe havens, usually in their home country.


## DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)

 Kampala, Uganda

 Emergency: +256 (0)783 027 611

 [protection@defenddefenders.org](mailto:protection@defenddefenders.org)

 [www.defenddefenders.org](http://www.defenddefenders.org)

 DefendDefenders monitors a 24 hour/day emergency line for HRDs in need of immediate assistance. After verifying the cases of HRDs, DefendDefenders can provide emergency protection grants for the support of HRDs in distress as well as their families. These grants can include emergency relocation, medical treatment, legal costs, and therapy.

DefendDefenders also hosts the Floribert Chebeya Bahizire Resource Centre, which offers a range of human rights literature as well as computers and internet services. DefendDefenders also offer printing and photocopying services for the HRD's and there is an IT assistant who sits in the Resource Center to help them with any problems they have and guide them when needed.

## Digital Defenders Partnership

- Netherlands
- ✉ ddp@hivos.org
- 💻 <https://www.digitaldefenders.org/#subsection-emergency-grants>
- ❗ Digital Defenders Partnership is managed by Hivos and provides emergency Grants to critical internet users facing an urgent digital emergency in internet repressive environments. These grants provide direct (legal) advice and financial and other support to individuals with emergencies relating to cyber attacks, compromised accounts and devices, and secure connections.

## Doha Centre for Media Freedom


- Doha, Qatar
- ☎ +97 (0)466 423 028
- ✉ assistance@dc4mf.org
- 💻 [www.dc4mf.org](http://www.dc4mf.org)
- ❗ Emergency Assistance (EA) provides direct support, within its means, to journalists who urgently need help, as a result of their work. The EA team assists professional journalists to find sustainable solutions to continue reporting as quickly as possible, with advice, publicity and/or financial means. Journalists can request assistance for medical aid, legal support or other urgent needs. No funds will be granted for ongoing expenses.

## FIDH

- Paris, France
- ☎ + 33 (0)143 552 078; +33 (0)143 555 505
- ✉ obs@fidh.org
- 💻 [www.fidh.org](http://www.fidh.org)
- ❗ FIDH, under the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, provides emergency material support to at risk human rights defenders working in the most difficult circumstances. Costs eligible for financial support or direct material support include the following: physical security, digital security, communications, capacity building in security, secure transportation, legal support, medical support (including psycho-social support and rehabilitation), humanitarian assistance (including family support), urgent relocation, urgent monitoring, reporting or advocacy).


### Free Press Unlimited

● Amsterdam, Netherlands

 +31 (0)613 067 684


 reportersrespond@freepressunlimited.org

 www.freepressunlimited.org

 Reporters Respond gives financial aid to journalists, producers and cameramen and women who are at risk because of their profession. Reporters Respond provides help as soon as possible. This fast, small scale, financial support can help prevent more serious damage and enables journalists, producers and cameramen and women to continue to do their job.


### Freedom House

● Headquarters in Washington, DC with field offices in Uganda and Kenya

 +1 (0)202 296 5101

 emergency.assistance.inquiries@gmail.com

 www.freedomhouse.org

 The Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund provides emergency financial assistance to civil society organisations (CSOs) under threat or attack and advocacy support responding to broader threats to civil society. Lifeline provides small, short-term emergency grants for medical expenses, legal representation, prison visits, trial monitoring, temporary relocation, security, equipment replacement, and other types of urgently needed expenses. By definition, emergency assistance is finite and given to address a time-sensitive threat.



## The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)



[www.eidhr.eu](http://www.eidhr.eu)



The emergency fund for human rights defenders at risk managed under the EIDHR allows the Commission to give direct small grants of up to 10,000 euro per grant to human rights defenders, be it individuals or organisations, who are in need of urgent support.

This urgent support may take any form that is considered necessary, for instance to cover the fees for the legal representation of defenders, to cover medical expenses, to purchase security material for offices or homes, to pay for the evacuation of a HRD to another country, to support the operations of a human rights organisation which finds itself in a dire financial situation, etc.

Requests to use the small grants mechanism or emergency facility for HRDs should be addressed to your delegation or to the EIDHR team providing us with some information about the particular case to assist: name of the defender(s), background on the case(s), amount of grant requested, and for what purpose. The information received will be dealt with in confidentiality.

### Frontline Defenders



Dublin, Ireland



+353 (0)121 237 550



[info@frontlinedefenders.org](mailto:info@frontlinedefenders.org)



[www.frontlinedefenders.org](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org)



Frontline offers protection grants that can pay for provisions to improve the security and protection of human rights defenders and their organisations, including, but not limited to:

- Improving physical security of an organisation or individual, digital security and communication security;
- Supporting legal fees for HRDs who are being judicially harassed;
- Paying for medical fees for HRDs who have been attacked or who have suffered a medical condition as a result of their peaceful human rights activities;
- Providing family assistance for imprisoned HRDs or family members who are at risk because of a HRD's activities.

### International Media Support



Copenhagen, Denmark



+45 (0)883 270 00



info@mediasupport.org



www.mediasupport.org



The Safety Fund managed by IMS for the Danish Union of Journalists provides support for journalists victimised as a direct result of their journalistic work. Support is given only in the short-term, and no longer than 6 months, covering the immediate needs of the individual or his/her close relatives. The Fund is used in cases where:

- Individual journalists are targeted or victimised as a direct result of their work;
- A journalist has been killed or rendered otherwise incapable of sustaining his/her family;
- A journalist is in need of immediate protection as a result of a direct threat (relocation, safe houses, evacuation out of the country or region);
- Urgent legal or medical assistance is required.

### International Federation of Journalists



Brussels, Belgium



+32 (0)223 522 08



ifj@ifj.org




www.ifj.org



The Safety Fund is an integral part of the IFJ Safety Programme, which includes casework, protests, campaigns, provision of information and production of various publications. As the Safety Fund provides immediate financial relief to a particular journalist, the Safety Programme strives all year round to highlight and improve the plight of all journalists.


### Media Legal Defence Initiative (MLDI)

● London, United Kingdom

 +44 (0)203 752 5550


 [info@mediadefence.org](mailto:info@mediadefence.org)


 [www.mediadefence.org](http://www.mediadefence.org)

 MLDI will provide legal aid to ensure that journalists, bloggers and media outlets have an effective legal defence when cases are launched against them. MLDI strongly believe that legal cases are often brought against journalists with no purpose other than to harass and silence them, and wants to ensure that journalists have the means to defend such cases.


### Prisoners of Conscience

● London, United Kingdom

 +44 (0)207 407 6644


 [info@prisonersofconscience.org](mailto:info@prisonersofconscience.org)

 [www.prisonersofconscience.org](http://www.prisonersofconscience.org)


 Offers modest relief and rehabilitation grants for individuals and/or their families who are prisoners of conscience, suffered persecution for their conscientiously held beliefs. The grants can be for items such as basic essentials, basic furniture, counseling/therapy sessions, medical needs, etc.


### ProtectDefenders.eu

● Brussels, Belgium

 +353 (0)1210 0489 (emergency hotline)

 [contact@protectdefenders.eu](mailto:contact@protectdefenders.eu)

 [www.protectdefenders.eu](http://www.protectdefenders.eu)

 ProtectDefenders.eu is a consortium of 12 international civil society organisations implementing the European Union human rights defenders mechanism. The organisation provides emergency assistance and temporary relocation grants, and offers limited financial support to local human rights organisations.

## Reporters Sans Frontières

- Paris, France
- ☎ +33 (0)144 838 466
- ✉ assistance2@rsf.org
- 💻 www.rsf.org

- ❗ Follows and supports the asylum applications of journalists in exile and their attempts to find a new home, and help them forge a new role for themselves. In cooperation with other NGOs that support journalists and defend human rights, RSF helps:
  - The victims of violence connected with their reporting to obtain appropriate medical care;
  - Wrongfully prosecuted journalists to pay their legal fees;
  - Threatened journalists to find a safe refuge;
  - Journalists to resolve their most urgent needs if they decide to flee abroad because of threats and persecution;
  - Families of journalists to cope with the consequences of the reprisals to which their loved-ones have been exposed.

## Rory Peck Trust

- London, United Kingdom
- ☎ + 44 (0)203 219 7867/7865
- ✉ africa@rorypecktrust.org; assistance@rorypecktrust.org
- 💻 www.rorypecktrust.org
- ❗ Provides modest, targeted grants for freelance journalists or their family to cover expenses such as medical and rehabilitation costs, emergency subsistence, legal advice, and relocation costs as well as online resources for journalists in exile in Uganda and Kenya at <https://rorypecktrust.org/resources/exile>

### **Urgent Action Fund Africa for Women's Human Rights**



Nairobi, Kenya



+254 (0)726 577 560; +254 (0)202 301 740



info@urgentactionfund-africa.or.ke



<http://urgentactionfund-africa.or.ke/>



Urgent Action Fund-Africa provides urgent financial and technical support for the protection of women's rights activists who are persecuted as a direct result of their activism. UAF-Africa makes small grants intended to enable a short-term intervention in the course of a long-term strategy and respond to most urgent requests within 24 hours.

### **World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)**



Geneva, Switzerland



+41 (0)228 094 939



grants@omct.org




[www.omct.org](http://www.omct.org)



OMCT material assistance and emergency support aim at responding to emergency requests for assistance submitted by human rights defenders and organisations at risk. These can cover medical support (including psycho-social support and rehabilitation); legal support; social assistance (including family support); physical security; digital security; communications; capacity building in security; secure transportation; support to temporary relocation where necessary; etc.

## Annex III. Fellowships programs

### Justice and Peace Shelter City Initiative

- The Hague, Middelburg, Maastricht, Nijmegen, and Utrecht in the Netherlands
-  <http://en.justiceandpeace.nl/human-rights-defenders-and-security/shelter-city-initiative>
- ❗ Shelter City is a national initiative of Justice and Peace in collaboration with Dutch cities, focusing specifically on the protection of Human Rights Defenders. When Human Rights Defenders are severely being threatened because of their work, they can apply for a three-month temporary shelter in one of the six Dutch Shelter Cities. In these six cities about 15 Human Rights Defenders per year can be provided rest and respite.

Throughout their stay in The Netherlands, the Human Rights Defenders may continue their work in safety. Furthermore, they are able to extend their network of civil society organizations and political contacts within The Hague, Brussels and further. The Human Rights Defenders also follow trainings to strengthen their skills while increasing public awareness in the Shelter Cities by speaking about human rights and the work they do at public events and workshops.

### National Endowment for Democracy Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellowship

- Washington, DC United States of America
-  <http://www.ned.org/fellowships/reagan-fascell-democracy-fellows-program/>
- ❗ The Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellowships support democratic activists, scholars, and journalists from around the world to conduct independent research, build individual capacity, and exchange ideas to strengthen democratic development in their countries, regions, or fields of expertise. The Program hosts fellows for five-month fellowships in the spring and fall of each year, bringing fresh insights and perspectives to Washington, DC.

## University of York Centre for Applied Human Rights Protective Fellowship

● York, United Kingdom

 <https://www.york.ac.uk/cahr/defenders/protective-fellowship/> /

① Through the Centre for Applied Human Rights Protective Fellowship Scheme, HRDs are invited to come to York for periods ranging from three to six months. During this time they benefit both from time away from a difficult environment, and from educational resources designed to increase their effectiveness and their ability to influence policy and practice when they return home.

The Centre accepts up to ten human rights defenders as visiting fellows every year. The focus of the Scheme is on defenders who face risk in their working environment and have a need for human rights training that the Centre can provide. Nominations to the fellowships are accepted from recognised civil society organisations working in human rights and/or specifically with human rights defenders. A call for nominations usually goes out in April and the fellows are expected to arrive in York in either mid-September or early January.

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## Annex IV. Processes for legalising refugee status

### Kenya<sup>45</sup>

1. Appear before the Commissioner of the Department of Refugee Affairs within 30 days of entry to Kenya to apply for recognition as a refugee. Applicants undergo a security and medical screening before providing their civil and bio data.
2. Applicants are given a waiting slip with a serial number attached to an R1 form, which is then produced when refugees come to collect their asylum seeker pass after two months. The asylum seeker pass is issued to asylum seekers before they undergo the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) process and is valid for one year.
3. If denied, the Commissioner notifies applicants within 14 days.
4. After obtaining the asylum seeker pass, asylum seekers must submit an application with the UNHCR office for the RSD process to begin.
5. If approved, applicants are issued a refugee identity card, which is valid for five years and can be renewed subsequently.

### Uganda

1. Report to the Criminal Intelligence Division in Old Kampala Police Station to register for intention to seek asylum and receive a card with an individual reference number.
2. Report to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) immediately after to secure an appointment for registration, which will be indicated on the back of the card and in the appointment book at OPM.
3. On the scheduled date, report to OPM with all family members and identifying documents for registration. Each registered household will be issued with a Temporary Asylum Seeker Attestation bearing their file and case number, which is valid for three months and renewable twice for a total of nine months.
4. OPM then gives appointments for interviews for Refugee Status Determination (RSD).
5. The Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) adjudicates on RSD to make a decision, which is then communicated by OPM.

<sup>45</sup> While the Department of Refugee Affairs was suspended at the time of writing, this section provides an overview of the process that was in place prior to the shut down.



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6. If approved, individuals are given a refugee identity card, which is valid for a period of five years.
  7. If denied, asylum seekers have 30 days to file an appeal and REC reviews the application for a second time. If rejected again, the case is referred to the Refugee Appeals Board.

## Rwanda

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1. On arrival, go to nearest District Authority to register a request for asylum.
2. Register for temporary residence with nearest immigration office within 15 days of arrival.
3. After obtaining a residence permit, apply for refugee status with Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs and the National Refugee Council processes applications.
4. If approved, a refugee identity card is provided which gives refugees the right to stay in Rwanda.
5. If denied, individuals can appeal the case with the High Court of the Republic within 15 working days from the day they were notified of the decision. If the appeal is denied, individuals will have to leave Rwanda within 60 working days, renewable only once.

## Annex V. Digital security resources

### Digital safety learning resources

Digital First Aid Kit (<https://www.digitaldefenders.org/digitalfirstaid/>) aims to provide preliminary support for people facing the most common types of digital threats. The Kit offers a set of self-diagnostic tools for human rights defenders, bloggers, activists and journalists facing attacks themselves, as well as providing guidelines for digital first responders to assist a person under threat.

Surveillance Self-Defense (<https://ssd.eff.org/>) is Electronic Frontier Foundation's guide to defending yourself and your friends from surveillance by using secure technology and developing careful practices.

Security in a Box (<http://securityinabox.org/>) is a guide to digital security for activists and human rights defenders throughout the world.

### Access Now Digital Security Helpline

The Digital Security Helpline is a free of charge resource for civil society around the world. It offers real-time, direct technical assistance and advice to activists, independent media, and civil society organisations, including:

- Rapid response on digital security incidents

- Personalised recommendations, instructions, and follow-up support on digital security issues
- Help assessing risks and creating organisational or community security strategies
- Guidance on security practices and tools for organisations, communities, groups, and individuals
- Support for securing technical infrastructure, websites, and social media against attacks
- Referrals, capacity-building, in-person consultations, and training
- Education materials in multiple languages

The Digital Security Helpline is operated by a global team who are available 24/7, responsive to incidents in a rapid, efficient, and uniform manner, and multilingual (fluent in English, Arabic, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Filipino). Contact them at: [help@accessnow.org](mailto:help@accessnow.org)

### DefendDefenders Digital Safety Helpline

If you encounter suspicious emails, file attachments, links, instant messenger behaviour, or computer behaviour which you suspect may be related to a digital safety threat against you, contact [helpline@defenddefenders.org](mailto:helpline@defenddefenders.org) for digital safety advice, analysis, and referral. Support is available in English and French.



DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project) seeks to strengthen the work of human rights defenders throughout the sub-region by reducing their vulnerability to the risk of persecution and by enhancing their capacity to effectively defend human rights.

DefendDefenders is the secretariat of EHAHRD-Net, a network of over 75 human rights organisations in the eleven countries of the sub-region: Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia (together with Somaliland), South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.



WITH FUNDING FROM  
AUSTRIAN  
DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION

**Brot**  
für die Welt



East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project  
Human Rights House, Plot 1853, Lulume Rd., Nsambya  
P.O Box 70356 Kampala Uganda  
Phone: +256-312-265-820  
Fax: +256-312-256-822

Email: [program@defenddefenders.org](mailto:program@defenddefenders.org), [executive@defenddefenders.org](mailto:executive@defenddefenders.org)  
Web : <http://www.defenddefenders.org>



[facebook.com/defenddefenders](https://facebook.com/defenddefenders)



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