

**Overview of the Human Rights Situation  
in the East and Horn of Africa  
May – October 2017**

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Report submitted to the 61st Ordinary Session of the  
African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)  
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## Introduction

DefendDefenders (the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project) welcomes the opportunity offered by the 61st Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR or the Commission) to highlight some of the current human rights issues in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region for the period of May to October 2017. This report was prepared with the assistance of reports and information sent to DefendDefenders, the secretariat of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, by our members and partners throughout the sub-region.

Disregarding their obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter), over the past six months governments in the sub-region have sought to restrict legitimate expressions of civilian dissent like peaceful demonstrations, as well as targeted civil society through various strategies of repression such as raids.

Grave abuses of human rights continue to abound in crisis areas like **South Sudan**, with extra-judicial killings, sexual violence as a weapon of war, and mass civilian displacement rampant. The United Nations Commission of Inquiry on **Burundi** announced in September that it had grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been and continue to be committed in the country since April 2015.

While **Somalia** has made some strides with regards to protecting human rights, repression of journalists in Somaliland and Puntland remains common, while non-state actors like Al Shabaab have stepped up deadly attacks, including a car bomb that killed more than 300 people in mid-October.

In **Eritrea**, the Government has taken no significant steps to address grave and ongoing human rights violations, and continues to disregard previous ACHPR resolutions and decisions, and recommendations from the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights. Civil and political rights in **Djibouti** remain extremely limited, with journalists, opposition members, and artists perceived to be challenging the authorities subjected to judicial harassment, arbitrary arrest and, in some cases, torture.

The government in **Ethiopia** lifted the 10-month State of Emergency in August, but HRDs and critical voices remain imprisoned without due process, while few of the issues that sparked massive 2015 protests in Oromia and Amhara have been seriously addressed. In **Sudan**, serious threats to civic space continue to hamper efforts by civil society to address major ongoing human rights violations in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile.

Elections in **Rwanda** on 4 August displayed the government's continued willingness to openly suppress freedoms of expression and association, leading the incumbent ruling party to a sweeping victory. Conversely, a disputed election in **Kenya** on 8 August saw a violent reaction from police against largely peaceful protesters which left at least 37 dead and scores more injured as a controversial re-election looms.

The government of **Tanzania** has become increasingly hostile to both civil society and media

professionals, using new laws to shutter or ban critical outlets and target HRDs, especially those dealing with LGBT issues. A controversial proposed amendment to the Constitution of **Uganda** has also sparked protests from both civilians and opposition members – both of which have ended violently in some cases.

## **Recommendations**

In light of the updates and observations contained in this report, DefendDefenders makes the following recommendations for action by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights:

- Call on all member States to ensure the protection of human rights defenders, notably by observing the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other human rights treaties to which most of these countries are signatories, and by adopting national laws for the protection of human rights defenders;
- Call on all member States to adopt specific legislative measures to recognise the status of HRDS, protect the rights of their colleagues and family members, and provide a conducive working environment for civil society, as per Res. 376 (LX) 2017 adopted by the Commission during its 60th Ordinary Session Niamey, Niger;
- Renew calls for the Ethiopian government to allow access to an international, independent and impartial investigation to ensure that those detained under the now-lifted state of emergency are afforded due process and not denied their non-derogable human rights as they are enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and international covenants which Ethiopia had ratified;
- Call upon member States to adopt appropriate laws and measures to give effect to the Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights while Countering Terrorism in Africa, as per Res. 368 (LX) 2017, adopted by the Commission during its 60th Ordinary Session Niamey, Niger;
- Call on the government of Djibouti, ahead of its May 2018 UN Universal Periodic Review, to address recommendations raised by civil society, including removing all undue obstacles to the registration of associations, creating an environment in which independent media can operate freely, and amending the Constitution to include explicit protection of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly;
- Call on all member States who have not done so to deposit the declaration under article 34 (6) of the protocol of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights to allow individuals and NGOs to directly submit their cases to the court;
- Refer Eritrea to the African Union Executive Council for the consistent failure to comply with the decisions and recommendations of the ACHPR; urge the African Union Peace and Security Council to place Eritrea on its agenda and periodically review the situation

of human rights in the country, and urge the African Union to implement the recommendations of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Eritrea;

- Encourage full engagement with the ACHPR by States in the sub-region, especially those in transition or conflict periods, such as Somalia and South Sudan, urging States to invite visits from the ACHPR and to submit periodic reports;
- Call on member States to cease the harassment and arbitrary detention of HRDs, especially those working on LGBT rights, and recognise that the rights contained in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights apply to all people without discrimination on any grounds, including sexual orientation and gender identity;
- Call on the African Union Commission to ensure the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS), to prioritise the prompt establishment of the investigative branch of the HCSS, and call on the Government of South Sudan to cooperate fully with this process;
- Call on the governments of Uganda and Kenya to immediately cease harassment and raids against civil society groups and NGOs, recognizing their rights to free association under the African Charter;
- Call on States to abide by the Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly adopted by the Commission during its 60th Ordinary Session, ensuring that they fulfil their obligations under the African Charter by fully protecting these non-derogable rights.



## Burundi

Burundi's precarious political crisis has continued over the past six months, with refugees fleeing into neighbouring countries and pro-government youth militias like *Imbonerakure* murdering civilians and spreading terror across the country.

In its oral briefing to the UN Human Rights Council on 15 June 2017, the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi expressed concern over the state's ongoing violations of citizens' fundamental rights, as well as human rights abuses committed by state security agents, the *Imbonerakure*, and other armed opposition groups.<sup>1</sup> According to an extensive report released on 4 September 2017, the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Burundi has reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed and continue to be committed in Burundi since April 2015. These crimes take place within the context of serious human rights violations, including extra-judicial executions, arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, sexual violence, inhuman or degrading treatment, and forced disappearances.<sup>2</sup> On 29 September 2017, the UN Human Rights Council voted to extend the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry into human rights in Burundi.

### Freedom of Association

The Burundian government continues to suppress any form of political opposition or dissent. Key civil society leaders wanted by the Burundian justice system were excluded from participating in the inter-Burundian peace dialogue at the end of May 2017 in Entebbe, Uganda.<sup>3</sup> Members of the opposition continue to be arbitrarily detained or disappeared altogether.

Edouard Nzambimana and Ladislav Sabukwigura, members of the National Liberation Front (FNL) party, were arrested on 15 May 2017 in Gitega province.<sup>4</sup> FNL activist Eric Ntirandekura was arrested on 23 May 2017 in Bubanza province – he had previously reported being threatened by members of the *Imbonerakure* militia prior to his arrest.<sup>5</sup>

On 13 June 2017, Aimé Gatore, the representative of PARCEM in the District of Mbuye was arrested by the National Intelligence Service (NIS) agents in Muramvya. Emmanuel Nshimirimana, the representative of the PARCEM in the Province of Muramvya was arrested on

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Human Rights – Office of the High Commissioner, “Oral Briefing by Fatsah Ouguergouz, Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi,” 14 June 2017, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21760&LangID=E%20>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Human Rights – Office of the High Commissioner, “Rapport de la Commission d’enquête sur le Burundi,” 4 September 2017, [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIBurundi/ReportHRC36/A\\_HRC\\_36\\_54\\_AEV.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoIBurundi/ReportHRC36/A_HRC_36_54_AEV.pdf), Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>3</sup> AllAfrica, “Burundi: Exclusion of “Wanted” Civil Society Leaders Causes Controversy At Burundi Peace Talks,” 26 May 2017, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201705270015.html>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>4</sup> SOS Torture Burundi, “Report No. 75,” 20 May 2017, <http://sostortureburundi.over-blog.com/2017/05/report-no.75-of-sos-torture/burundi-published-20-may-2017.html>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>5</sup> SOS Torture Burundi, “Report No. 76,” 10 June 2017, <http://sostortureburundi.over-blog.com/2017/06/report-no.78-of-sos-torture/burundi-published-on-10-june2017.html>, Accessed 20 October 2017.

17 June 2017 by the NIS. The two HRDs were arrested while preparing a workshop aimed at assessing the conditions of detention in the Province Muramvya.<sup>6</sup>

Germain Rukuki, an HRD working with the *Association des juristes catholiques du Burundi* (Association of Catholic Jurists of Burundi), was arrested after police searched his home without a warrant on 13 July 2017. He was detained for 14 days by the *Service National de Renseignement* (SNR), before being transferred to Ngozi prison without having appeared in court. On 17 August 2017, the Court of First Instance of Ntahangwa confirmed that Rukuki will remain in pre-trial detention on charges of "breaching the internal security of the State and rebellion."<sup>7</sup>

SOS Torture Burundi noted the detention of three men by *Imbonerakure* militias on 9 August 2017 in Kayanza province. Emmanuel Nzambimana, Emile Bankuwunguka, and Claude Nizigiyimana are teachers and members of opposition parties who, prior to their arrest, filed an official complaint against the *Imbonerakure*.<sup>8</sup>

On 12 September 2017, the family of prominent opposition *Union pour la paix et la démocratie* member Leopold Habarugira reported his abduction in Bujumbura. Four men are reported to have leapt out of a car and taken him, one of whom was wearing a police uniform. Habarugira was one of the few opposition leaders to have remained in Burundi since the political crisis erupted in 2015 after President Pierre Nkurunziza decided to run for a third term in office.<sup>9</sup>

### Freedom of Expression

Journalists operate in a highly threatening environment in Burundi and face many obstacles from the regime when covering breaking news and developments in an objective and thorough manner.

Antédeste Niragira, correspondent for the German radio and broadcaster *Deutsche Welle* in Burundi, was arrested by the DRC's National Intelligence Agency on 17 May 2017 near the Burundian-Congolese border, while reporting on the conditions in the Kavimvira refugee camp in DRC. He was detained on charges of lacking accreditation and authorisation to enter the refugee camp, and on suspicion of espionage. He was handed over to the Burundian police on 22 May 2017, and released the next day.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Bonesha, "Droits de l'homme : Bujumbura accusé par la CBDDH d'avoir failli à la mission de protéger les défenseurs," 31 July 2017, <http://bonesha.bi/Droits-de-l-homme-Bujumbura-accuse.html>, Accessed 16 October 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Front Line Defenders, "Court confirms pre-trial detention of Germain Rukuki," 21 August 2017, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/germain-rukuki-detained>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>8</sup> SOS Torture, "Report No. 87 of SOS-Torture / Burundi," 12 August 2017, <http://sostortureburundi.over-blog.com/2017/08/report-n-87-of-sos-torture/burundi-published-on-12-august-2017.html>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>9</sup> IWACU, "Family of Habarugira worried about his security," 13 September 2017, <http://www.iwacu-burundi.org/englishnews/family-of-habarugira-worried-about-his-security/>, Accessed 20 October 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Deutsche Welle, "Le correspondant burundais est libre," 24 May 2017, <http://www.dw.com/fr/le-correspondant-burundais-est-libre/a-38954003>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

Joseph Bananeno, a journalist from Radio Maria, was detained on 4 July 2017 on charges of "incitement to public disorder," for sharing information on WhatsApp regarding an armed man who intended to shoot Archbishop Evariste Ndayishimiye in Bujumbura. Bananeno was released two days later after paying a fine of 50,000 BIF (\$28 USD).<sup>11</sup>

CCIB FM+ was temporarily shut down and taken off the air for three months by the National Council of Communication on 28 September 2017 for allegedly airing an editorial documentary critical of the authorities for their silence after the massacre of over 30 Burundian asylum seekers who were shot during a demonstration in Eastern DRC. By the same decision, the National Council of Communication also withdrew the broadcasting licenses of four independent outlets including RPA, *Bonesha FM*, *Radio Renaissance*, and *Télé Renaissance*. The government said the broadcast went against professional ethics as well as the laws governing the press.<sup>12</sup>

On 1 October 2017, the correspondent of *Bonesha FM* in Makamba, Serges Sindayigaya, was arrested and detained under the order of the Governor of Makamba, Gad Niyukuru who demanded the journalist hand over his cell phone. After refusing, the governor reportedly snatched the phone and instructed the police to detain Serges. He was released after several hours.<sup>13</sup>

## **Djibouti**

Djibouti continues to be ruled by one of the most repressive governments in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region, with little to no independent HRDs operating freely in the country. Civil society activists, journalists, and artists continue to suffer attacks from both security and police forces, leading to arrests, arbitrary detentions, and torture.

### Freedom of Association

The *Ligue Djiboutienne des Droits Humains* (LDDH) continued to document government repression through a series of arbitrary arrests and detentions in the northern regions of the country, specifically in the Tadjoura Region. Deputy Principal of *Collège de Tadjourah*, Adbo Chehem Bourhan, was arrested on 17 April 2017 by the local gendarmerie brigade and subjected to a physical interrogation. The following day, two young men, Ahmed Omar Daoud and Mohamed Ali Halopyta, were also arrested in Tadjoura. LDDH also reported that Fatouma Idriss Ali, Daoud's wife, was also arbitrarily arrested on 21 April 2017.

### Freedom of Expression

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<sup>11</sup> SOS Médias Burundi, "Bujumbura: Le journaliste de Radio Maria est libre," 6 July 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/sosmediasburundi/posts/1516248011770566>, Accessed 20 October 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Daily Nation, "Burundi radio station suspended for criticising killings," 30 September 2017, <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/Burundi-radio-station-suspended-criticising-killings/1066-4118228-dxgn1o/index.html>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>13</sup> SOS Médias Burundi, "Radio correspondent bonesha fm arrested," 1 October 2017, [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=1598253840236649&id=912887052106668](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1598253840236649&id=912887052106668), Accessed 16 October 2017.



No privately-owned or independent media outlet operates within the country. *La Voix de Djibouti*, the country's only independent media outlet, continues to broadcast from outside Djibouti.

Two online activists were detained in June and repeatedly harassed in the months that followed. Chehem Abdoukader Chehem, nicknamed Chehem Renard, was arrested on the night of 5 June 2017 by agents of the *Service de Recherche et de la Documentation* at his home. Blogger Omar Mohamed Nour, better known by his pen name Omar Zohra, was also arrested by security agents the following night on 6 June 2017. Both were held incommunicado in an unknown location and later released on 18 June 2017. The two men had been active on Facebook, engaging the public in debate.<sup>14</sup> Sources indicate that they were arrested shortly after publishing videos and news posts on alleged corruption within the first family of Djibouti. Omar Zohra curated a popular Facebook page called '*Avec Djpolitique News Sur Face*', in which he often publicly criticised both government and opposition politicians. The pair reported being harassed by authorities for several months due to their activities, and this is the third time they have been arbitrarily arrested by security agents in the past year, with Zohra claiming to have been tortured. In July 2017, the pair reported that their passports and identity cards had been confiscated by security forces.

### Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

In mid-June 2017, a youth protest over access to employment opportunities in the new Port of Tadjourah was cut short when security officials detained protesters at the Tadjourah Gendarmerie headquarters. Although several dozen protesters were arrested, only the names of Ali Chehem Ali, Mohamed Ali Issa, and Ali Hassan Ali are known for certain – all three had been previously arrested for protesting over access to jobs in the region. It is unclear how long the protesters were detained, or if they were officially charged with a crime.<sup>15</sup>

Local sources also indicate that police forces fired on a crowd of demonstrators in early October 2017, leaving an unknown number of civilians injured in the slums of Boulduqo in Balbala, a suburb of Djibouti City.

### Eritrea

Eritrea remains one of the most closed and repressive countries in the sub-region, with no independent civil society, political opposition, or independent media able to function freely.

On 15 June 2017, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, Sheila B. Keetharuth, presented her report to the UN Human Rights Council in which she concluded that the government of Eritrea has made no effort to address the human rights concerns highlighted by the UN Commission of Inquiry.<sup>16</sup> On 6 July 2017, the European Parliament adopted a strong

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<sup>14</sup> CIVICUS Monitor, "Crackdown on Critical Voices Intensifies," 19 July 2017, <https://monitor.civicus.org/newsfeed/2017/07/19/crackdown-critical-voices-intensifies-djibouti/>, Accessed 26 September 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Ligue Djiboutienne des Droits Humains, "Répression de la FAIM," 19 June 2017, <http://www.iddh.net/repression-de-la-faim/>, Accessed 26 September 2017.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Human Rights – Office of the High Commissioner, "Eritrea accused over catalogue of human

resolution condemning, among other issues, Eritrea's systematic, widespread, and gross human rights violations, and called on the Eritrean government to put an end to the detention of the opposition, journalists, religious leaders, and innocent civilians. The resolution also referenced Eritrea's inhumane unlimited national service in light of many refugees fleeing into Europe on a daily basis.<sup>17</sup>

### Freedom of Association

The Eritrean government continues to repress religious freedom for unregistered – and in some cases registered – religious communities. In early May 2017, ten Christians, four women and six men, were reportedly arrested by security officers from a home in Ginda, about 45 kilometres northeast of Asmara. According to Open Door USA, they were being held at the Ginda Police Station without charge. The Christian persecution watchdog noted that many Christian prisoners in Eritrea are locked up in shipping containers with little ventilation and have died as a result.<sup>18</sup>

### Freedom of Expression

On 3 May 2017, World Press Freedom Day, UNESCO awarded its prestigious Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize to Dawit Isaak, a journalist with Swedish and Eritrean dual nationality who has been imprisoned in Eritrea for 15 years without ever speaking to a lawyer or seeing a judge. In 1993, Dawit founded the independent newspaper *Setit*, in the capital, Asmara. In 2001, his newspaper published an open letter calling for elections and the implementation of the promised constitution. The ensuing crackdown saw Dawit and ten other journalists arrested, seven of whom have since died in detention. The fate of Dawit and the other three – Emanuel Asrat, Temesgen Gebreyesus, and Seyoum Tsehaye – remains unclear, despite repeated requests from his family and the Swedish government.<sup>19</sup> On 6 July 2017, the European Parliament voted through a resolution calling for the immediate release of Dawit Isaak.<sup>20</sup>

On 6 June 2017, London-based charity One World Media presented Radio Erena with an award for their commitment to reporting politics, social issues, and local culture in the face of great adversity. The station, created by exiled HRD Biniam Simon, has been broadcasting by satellite

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rights abuses – New report,” 15 June 2017,

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21751&LangID=E>, Accessed 26 September 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Parliament of the European Union, “European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2017 on Eritrea, notably the cases of Abune Antonios and Dawit Isaak,” 6 July 2017,

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P8-TA-2017-0309&language=EN&ring=B8-2017-0470>, Accessed 26 September 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Open Door USA, “10 Christians Arrested in Eritrea,” 13 May 2017, <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/stories/10-christians-arrested-eritrea/>, Accessed 26 September 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Reporters Without Borders, “Jailed Eritrean journalist awarded UNESCO press freedom prize,” 30 March 2017, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/58de053b4.html>, Accessed 26 September 2017

<sup>20</sup> Parliament of the European Union, “European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2017 on Eritrea, notably the cases of Abune Antonios and Dawit Isaak,” 6 July 2017, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2017-0309+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>, Accessed 20 October 2017.

from France since 2009.<sup>21</sup>

## **Ethiopia**

Ethiopia's Parliament lifted the country's 10-month state of emergency on 4 August 2017, imposed in October 2016 after hundreds of people were killed in anti-government protests demanding wider political freedoms. The government's emergency powers brought mass detentions, politically motivated criminal charges, and numerous restrictions on people's movement and communication. Despite this, thousands remain in detention without charge, none of the protesters' underlying grievances have been addressed, and politically motivated trials of key opposition leaders, artists, journalists, and others continue.<sup>22</sup>

### Freedom of Expression

On 16 May 2017, Ethiopian opposition politician Yonatan Tesfaye was found guilty of encouraging terrorism for comments he made on Facebook. The former senior official in the opposition *Semayawi* party, was arbitrarily arrested in December 2015 for comments he posted on Facebook, in which he criticised the government's response to protests in the Oromia region. The authorities objected to several posts including one in which he said the government used "force against the people instead of peaceful discussion."<sup>23</sup> He was sentenced to six years and three months in prison.

On 24 May 2017, the Ethiopian Federal High Court's convicted Getachew Shiferaw, editor of the news website *Negere Ethiopia*, on charges of inciting subversion. He was originally arrested without charge on 25 December 2015, and his case postponed several times. He was eventually charged under the country's anti-terrorism law before the charge was reduced to inciting others to obstruct an official from performing his constitutional duties. It was alleged that Getachew, in an exchange of private messages on Facebook, told journalist and activist Abebe Gellaw that it would be a "good alternate method of struggle" for Gellaw to intervene publicly against former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Getachew denies the communication took place, and will appeal the verdict. The editor faces a maximum sentence of ten years in prison.<sup>24</sup>

From 30 May to 8 June 2017, the Internet was shut down in Ethiopia during the exam period for students. Authorities said that the digital blackout was to prevent a repeat of an incident in 2016 when activists leaked an official exam online and called for the postponement of the exams due to a school being shut down in Oromia. Selective access to the Internet, however, was available for diplomatic missions, international institutions, and banks. The government has blocked

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<sup>21</sup> Reporters Without Borders, "Radio Erena receives 2017 One World Media special award," 6 June 2017, <https://rsf.org/en/news/radio-erena-receives-2017-one-world-media-special-award>, Accessed 26 September 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Human Rights Watch, "State of Emergency Ends in Ethiopia," 7 August 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/07/state-emergency-ends-ethiopia>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Amnesty International, "Ethiopia: Terrorism Verdict for Facebook Posts is a Shameful Affront to Freedom of Expression," 16 May 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2017/05/ethiopia-terrorism-verdict-for-facebook-posts-is-a-shameful-affront-to-freedom-of-expression/#>, Accessed 26 September 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Ethiopian high court convicts editor of inciting s," 24 May 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/05/ethiopian-high-court-convicts-editor-of-inciting-s.php>, Accessed 26 September 2017.

Internet access on three occasions since November 2015.<sup>25</sup>

Ethiopian authorities also continued to crack down on artists perceived as critical of the regime. In June 2017, seven producers and artists of a music video on YouTube were charged with terrorism for producing “inciting” audio-visual materials and “uploading them on YouTube.” Group members, predominantly of Oromo ethnicity, were arrested in December 2016 and held in detention without charges until June. Among those arrested were singer Seenaa Solomon, Elias Kiflu, Gemechis Abera, Oliyad Bekele, Ifa Gemechu, Tamiru Keneni and Moebol Misganu.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, on 4 September 2017, authorities blocked pop singer Tewodros Kassahun, popularly known as Teddy Afro, from launching his acclaimed album ‘Ethiopia.’ The artist's historically and politically conscious music has previously drawn the ire of the government.<sup>27</sup>

On 17 July 2017, the Ethiopian Human Rights Project announced on Twitter that a court has granted bail at 50,000 Ethiopian Birr (\$1,844 USD) for journalist Elias Gebru, who had been detained since 18 November 2016 and held without official charge or due process.<sup>28</sup>

According to classified documents leaked by U.S. whistle blower Edward Snowden and published on 13 September 2017 by The Intercept, since 9/11 the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) has expanded a clandestine network of eavesdropping outposts with the Ethiopian government, designed to listen in on the communications of Ethiopians and their neighbours across the Horn of Africa in the name of counterterrorism. In exchange for local knowledge and an advantageous location, the NSA provided Ethiopian authorities with technology and training integral to electronic surveillance, which were then used to commit human rights abuses in the region.<sup>29</sup>

### Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

On 18 April 2017, Ethiopia's state-affiliated Human Rights Commission (EHRC) confirmed in its second oral update that 669 people died, including 63 policemen, in the wave of anti-government protests that began in November 2015 in the Oromia and Amhara regions. They insisted that police used “proportionate force” in most areas during the unrest, and blamed much of the violence on opposition groups.<sup>30</sup> International civil society groups insist the number of

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<sup>25</sup> Article 19, “Ethiopia: Third Internet shutdown follows imprisonment of two human rights activists,” 6 June 2017, [https://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/38775/en/ethiopia:-third-internet-shutdown-follows-imprisonment-of-two-human-rights-activists?utm\\_source=ARTICLE+19+Mailing+List&utm\\_campaign=59f1014df7-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_06\\_06&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_c3bf82663f-59f1014df7-291287697](https://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/38775/en/ethiopia:-third-internet-shutdown-follows-imprisonment-of-two-human-rights-activists?utm_source=ARTICLE+19+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=59f1014df7-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_06_06&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c3bf82663f-59f1014df7-291287697), Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Global Voices, “Ethiopian Musicians Charged With Terrorism for ‘Inciting’ Song Lyrics,” 14 July 2017, <https://globalvoices.org/2017/07/14/ethiopian-musicians-charged-with-terrorism-for-inciting-song-lyrics/>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>27</sup> BBC, “Ethiopian pop star Teddy Afro's album launch stopped by police,” 4 September 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-41147682>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>28</sup> The Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Project, “Court grants 50k birr bail for Journalist Elias Gebiru,” 17 July 2017, <https://twitter.com/EHRProj/status/886927068113629185>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>29</sup> The Intercept, “How the US built a secret surveillance network for Ethiopia,” <https://theintercept.com/2017/09/13/nsa-ethiopia-surveillance-human-rights/>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Reuters, “Ethiopia unrest killed 669 in three regions: report,” 18 April 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us->

dead is much higher, and question the EHRC methodology, which has yet to be made public. On 18 May, the European Parliament passed a resolution calling for a United Nations-led independent investigation into the killing of protesters.<sup>31</sup> This followed a 4 May 2017 declaration in which UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called for his team to be able to independently investigate affected regions of the country, which were previously denied.<sup>32</sup>

A tax increase for "Category C" taxpayers, which includes small and medium businesses with an annual turnover of up to 100,000 Ethiopian Birr (\$3,688 USD), led to protests and strikes across the Oromia region in late July 2017, despite the country's State of Emergency ban on assemblies.<sup>33</sup> Businesses in parts of the wider Oromia region as well as in Addis Ababa closed their doors in protest over the tax increase. Protesters reportedly attacked two government-owned vehicles in Ambo city on 13 July 2017. Reports indicated that police also dispersed a youth-organised protest in Kofele.<sup>34</sup>

On 12 September 2017, 18 people died and thousands fled deadly protests in eastern towns of Ethiopia. The protests came after weeks of tension and clashes on the border of the Oromo and Somali regions. Activists accused a special police unit from the neighbouring Somali region, known as Liyu police, of killings and human rights violations. The government has blamed the clashes on an ongoing border dispute between the Oromo and their neighbours in the Somali region of Ethiopia.<sup>35</sup>

## **Kenya**

The lead-up to Kenya's presidential election on 8 August 2017 saw a significant crackdown on the rights to free association, expression, and peaceful assembly, with harassment of political opposition groups and targeting of journalists. The announcement of the election results on 11 August and claims of fraud from the opposition resulted in mass demonstrations in Nairobi's informal settlements of Mathare, Kibera, Babadogo, Dandora, Korogocho, Kariobangi and

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[ethiopia-unrest/ethiopia-unrest-killed-669-in-three-regions-report-idUSKBN17K243](#), Accessed 26 September 2017.

<sup>31</sup> Parliament of the European Union, "European Parliament resolution of 18 May 2017 on Ethiopia, notably the case of Dr. Merera Gudina," 18 May 2017, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2017-0219+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>, Accessed 26 September 2017.

<sup>32</sup> United Nations Human Rights – Office of the High Commissioner, "Opening remarks by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein at a press conference during his mission to Ethiopia," 4 May 2017, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21582&LangID=E>, Accessed 26 September 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Addis Standard, "News: new Tax Hikes Pushing Ethiopians to Protest the Government," 17 July 2017, <http://addisstandard.com/news-new-tax-hikes-pushing-ethiopians-to-protest-the-government/>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>34</sup> Horn Affairs, "Ethiopia: Strikes, unrest in multiple cities of Oromia," 18 July 2017, <http://hornaffairs.com/2017/07/18/ethiopia-strikes-unrest-multiple-locations-cities-oromia/>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>35</sup> Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia, "Ethiopia: Addressing the alarming conflict in the border areas of Oromia National Regional State and Ethiopia's Somali Regional State," 14 September 2017, <https://ahrethio.org/2017/09/14/ethiopia-addressing-the-alarming-conflict-in-the-border-areas-of-oromia-national-regional-state-and-ethiopia-somali-regional-state/>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

Kwangware, as well as Manyatta, Kondele, Nyamasaria in Kisumu County.<sup>36</sup> The ensuing violent police crackdown, sometimes with live ammunition, left 37 Kenyans dead, including a 9-year-old girl, and a six-month old baby that was “clobbered” by security forces.<sup>37</sup>

In a historic ruling on 1 September 2017, Kenya's Supreme Court declared the presidential election results “invalid, null and void” due to substantial irregularities and illegalities which affected the integrity of the poll. The Court also ordered a repeat of the election within 60 days, with 26 October confirmed as the new voting date. The lead-up to the controversial re-election has seen renewed protests and crackdowns in opposition strongholds.

### Freedom of Association

On 26 May 2017, the African Court of Human and Peoples’ Rights in Arusha ruled in favour of the Ogiek community of Kenya following an eight-year legal battle. The Court found that the Kenyan government violated seven separate articles of the African Charter in a land rights case that dates back to colonial times. The Ogiek, 35,000 of whom are the victims in the landmark case, live in the Mau Forest Complex in the Rift Valley of Kenya and have been routinely subjected to arbitrary forced evictions from their ancestral land without consultation or compensation for decades. This is the first time the African Court, in operation since 2006, has ruled on an indigenous peoples’ rights case.<sup>38</sup>

A rise in threats and acts of intimidation against opposition and ruling party supporters in Navaisha, Nakuru county, was reported ahead of the elections, with authorities accused of being unwilling to investigate the threats.<sup>39</sup>

On 14 August 2017, the NGO Coordination Board within the Kenyan government revoked the Kenya Human Rights Commission's (KHRC) official registration on the grounds of alleged tax evasion, the operation of four illegal bank accounts, and the employment of foreigners without valid work visas. KHRC has refuted the allegations stating that the organisation was allegedly deregistered to prevent it from issuing a legal petition challenging the 8 August election results. Similar allegations were previously levelled against the KHRC, and these issues were adjudicated before the high Court of Kenya in 2015 (KHRC vs. NGO Coordination Board 495 of 2015<sup>40</sup>), which ruled that deregistration of the organisation and the freezing of their accounts was unconstitutional, null, and void.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Amnesty International, “Kill Those Criminals: Security Forces Violations in Kenya’s August 2017 Elections,,” 16 October 2017, <http://www.amnestykenya.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/AFR3272492017ENGLISH.pdf>, Accessed 17 October 2017.

<sup>37</sup> Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, “Mirage at Dusk: A Human Rights Account of the 2017 General Elections,,” 9 October 2017, <http://knchr.org/Portals/0/PressStatements/KNCHR%20PRESS%20STATEMENT-%20ELECTION%20REPORT%202017.pdf?ver=2017-10-09-114042-250>, Accessed 17 October 2017.

<sup>38</sup> Minority Rights, “Huge victory for Kenya’s Ogiek as African Court sets major precedent for indigenous peoples’ land rights,,” 26 May 2017, <http://minorityrights.org/2017/05/26/huge-victory-kenyas-ogiek-african-court-sets-major-precedent-indigenous-peoples-land-rights/>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>39</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Kenya: Intimidation Reports as Voting Nears,,” 3 July 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/03/kenya-intimidation-reports-voting-nears>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>40</sup> KHRC vs. NGO Coordination Board, Petition 495 of 2015, <http://kenyalaw.org/caselaw/cases/view/121717/>, Accessed 20 October 2017.

<sup>41</sup> CIVICUS Monitor, “Human Rights NGOs Face Closure and Possible Arrest of Their Leadership,,” 16 August

In addition to KHCR, on 15 August 2017 the NGO Coordination Board ordered the Directorate of Criminal Investigations to immediately shut down the African Centre for Open Governance (AfriCOG) and arrest its directors. The NGO Coordination Board claimed that AfriCOG was operating without proper registration under the 1990 NGO Coordination Act, which could carry a prison sentence of 18 months. The NGO Coordination Board also advised the Bank of Kenya to freeze all bank accounts and funds of AfriCOG. Executive Director of AfriCOG, Gladwell Otieno, had asked the courts to compel the Independent Election and Boundaries Commission to open the electoral roll for public scrutiny prior to the August election. The NGO Coordination Board has no mandate over AfriCOG's operations as it is registered under the Companies Act. Civil society organisations in Kenya can be registered under several laws. The Kenya Revenue Authority, together with Kenya Police officers, attempted to gain entry into the AfriCOG offices on 16 August 2017 without prior notice and with defective supporting documentation.<sup>42</sup>

### Freedom of Expression

A joint report issued on 30 May 2017 by Human Rights Watch and Article 19 outlined how journalists and bloggers reporting on corruption, disputed land acquisition, counterterrorism operations, and the 2007-2008 post-electoral violence, among other sensitive issues, faced intimidation, beatings, and job loss. Ahead of the August 2017 elections, the government of Kenya routinely attempted to obstruct critical media with legal, administrative, and informal measures, including threats, intimidation, harassment, online and phone surveillance, and in some cases, physical assaults.<sup>43</sup>

Emmanuel Namisi, a broadcast journalist for the Royal Media group, was assaulted at a Bungoma club on the night of 5 June 2017. Namisi said that men he identified as bodyguards of Kenneth Lusaka, governor of the western Kenyan county of Bungoma, threatened and assaulted him. He said the men were angry at a story he had written alleging they played a role in the death of a woman at a political rally three nights prior.<sup>44</sup>

Walter Menya, a journalist for the Sunday Nation newspaper, was arrested on 18 June 2017 on charges of "soliciting a bribe to write a damaging story" in relation to an article he wrote on the involvement of three senior public officials in providing illegal funding for President Kenyatta's campaign. He was later released on bail on 20 June 2017.<sup>45</sup>

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2017, <https://monitor.civicus.org/newsfeed/2017/08/16/kenya-deregistration-human-rights-CSOs/>, Accessed 4 October 2017.

<sup>42</sup> CIVICUS Monitor, "Human Rights NGOs Face Closure and Possible Arrest of Their Leadership," 16 August 2017, <https://monitor.civicus.org/newsfeed/2017/08/16/kenya-deregistration-human-rights-CSOs/>, Accessed 4 October 2017.

<sup>43</sup> Article 19, "Not Worth the Risk: Threats to Free Expression Ahead of Kenya's 2017 Elections," 30 May 2017, [https://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/38766/en/%E2%80%9Cnot-worth-the-risk%E2%80%9D:-threats-to-free-expression-ahead-of-kenya%E2%80%99s-2017-elections?utm\\_source=ARTICLE+19+Mailing+List&utm\\_campaign=dfea5d30c9-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_05\\_30&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_c3bf82663f-dfea5d30c9-291287697](https://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/38766/en/%E2%80%9Cnot-worth-the-risk%E2%80%9D:-threats-to-free-expression-ahead-of-kenya%E2%80%99s-2017-elections?utm_source=ARTICLE+19+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=dfea5d30c9-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_05_30&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c3bf82663f-dfea5d30c9-291287697), Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>44</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Kenyan journalist threatened and assaulted," 8 June 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/06/kenyan-journalist-threatened-and-assaulted.php>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Reporters Without Borders, "Kenyan election campaign hits journalists and media freedom," 8 July 2017,

In early June 2017, the Communications Authority of Kenya released guidelines against the dissemination of “undesirable bulk political SMS and social media content” ahead of the August polls. The 12-page document gave authorities guidance for regulating speech over a number of channels, including text messaging, voice calls, blogs, document sharing sites, online discussion forums, and social networking sites. Authorities were concerned with the possibility that inflammatory claims could spread in ethnic languages, thus, the guidelines bared sending bulk content on telecommunications networks in any languages other than English or Swahili.<sup>46</sup> The guidelines were criticised for being unnecessarily restrictive, as broadcasters could be held accountable for all content aired on their platforms and social media users were required to be “polite, truthful and respectful” and to adopt a “civilised” tone when posting political content.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, on 17 July 2017, Communications Authority of Kenya Director-General Francis Wangusi warned that local administrators of WhatsApp groups could be held responsible for the spread of falsehood and hate speech on their networks.<sup>48</sup>

At least 10 journalists were assaulted and harassed while covering the post-election violence that broke out after the disputed results were announced on the evening of 11 August 2017. On 12 August, Kenya Television Network journalist Duncan Khaemba was reporting live from Nairobi's Kibera slum when he was arrested with his colleague Otieno Willis for allegedly possessing a helmet and body armour without a proper license – Kenya's Firearms Act (1954) classifies bulletproof vests as firearms and stipulates a license for their possession.

Matina Stevis, a correspondent with the Wall Street Journal, alleged she was hit over the head by security forces with a wooden stick on 12 August. Neil Shea, a freelance journalist shooting a documentary in Kibera, said he was attacked by four or five security officers who beat him and destroyed his camera. Similarly, Simon Achola, a reporter with the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation said that security personnel took his phone and deleted his photographs of the protests. Several other journalists such as freelance reporter Caleb Kingwara and Nation Media group Evans Habil, said they were attacked by civilians while covering the events after the election.<sup>49</sup> In the western city of Kisumu, an opposition stronghold, police officers blocked journalists from approaching demonstrators altogether.<sup>50</sup>

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<https://rsf.org/en/news/kenyan-election-campaign-hits-journalists-and-media-freedom>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>46</sup> The Messenger, “New guidelines in Kenya against ‘undesirable’ political speech on social media,” 12 July 2017, <https://messengerfrica.com/2017/07/12/new-guidelines-in-kenya-against-undesirable-political-speech-on-social-media/>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>47</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, “Kenya seeks to restrict political commentary on social media ahead of elections,” 5 July 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/07/kenya-seeks-to-restrict-political-commentary-on-so.php>, Accessed 27 September.

<sup>48</sup> The East African, “Kenya identifies 21 online hate monger groups,” 17 July 2017, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Kenya-identifies-online-hate-monger-groups/2558-4018534-11nukry/index.html>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>49</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, “Kenyan journalists harassed, detained reporting on election violence,” 17 August 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/08/kenyan-journalists-harassed-detained-reporting-on-.php>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>50</sup> The Star, “Outcry after police block journalists from covering Kisumu demos,” 10 August 2017, [https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/08/10/outcry-after-police-block-journalists-from-covering-kisumu-demos\\_c1614476](https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2017/08/10/outcry-after-police-block-journalists-from-covering-kisumu-demos_c1614476), Accessed 27 September 2017.



Kenyan MP Paul Ongili, better known as Babu Owino, was arrested and charged with two counts of subversion and uttering abusive words against President Kenyatta after comments he made during an opposition rally on 25 September 2017.<sup>51</sup>

### Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

The Standard newspaper reported on 17 July 2017 that national security units had shipped crowd-control equipment, such as vehicles, guns and tear gas, into Kenya in anticipation of potential violent demonstrations following the August elections.<sup>52</sup>

Police used batons and lobbed tear gas canisters to disperse two rival groups as protests erupted in opposition strongholds on 26 September 2017. The demonstrations were meant to force out electoral commission officials accused of mismanaging the 2017 presidential election.<sup>53</sup>

On 28 September 2017, hundreds of University of Nairobi students protesting against the detention of opposition member Paul Ongili Owino clashed with police around their campus. Videos later emerged showing students being dragged from their dormitories and beaten by security forces.<sup>54</sup> Administrators closed the university on 3 October citing fears for students' safety in a planned protest over the beatings.<sup>55</sup>

At least one person died on 2 October 2017 during protests in Siaya town, west of Nairobi, against the national electoral commission. That same day, police fired tear gas at demonstrators who lit fires and blocked roads in Nairobi, and opposition stronghold Kisumu in western Kenya.<sup>56</sup>

### Rwanda

Presidential elections took place in Rwanda on 4 August 2017, with incumbent President Paul Kagame winning a third term in office in a landslide victory with 98.63 per cent of the vote,

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<sup>51</sup> Daily Nation, "Babu Owino faces subversion, uttering abusive words charges," 26 September 2017, <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Babu-Owino-charged-court/1056-4112452-ihdaiw/index.html>, Accessed 4 October 2017.

<sup>52</sup> The Standard, "More tear gas, guns arrive to deal with mass protests after August elections," 17 July 2017, <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001247838/more-tear-gas-guns-arrive-to-deal-with-mass-protests-after-august-elections>, Accessed 27 September 2017.

<sup>53</sup> The East African, "Opposition supporters stage anti-IEBC demos in Nairobi, Kisumu," 26 September 2017, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Nasa-supporters-stage-demos-want-IEBC-CEO-out/2558-4112754-8qgen7z/index.html>, Accessed 4 October 2017.

<sup>54</sup> NTV, "Video clips of police beating University Students emerge," 28 September 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SktLYvQc878>, Accessed 4 October 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Reuters, "University of Nairobi closed as anger rises over police brutality," 3 October 2017, <http://www.africareview.com/news/Kenya-poll-protests-leave-one-dead/979180-4121040-stft2fz/index.html>, Accessed 4 October 2017.

<sup>56</sup> Africa Review, "Kenya opposition poll protests leave one dead," 2 October 2017, <http://www.africareview.com/news/Kenya-poll-protests-leave-one-dead/979180-4121040-stft2fz/index.html>, Accessed 4 October 2017.

according to the country's National Electoral Commission. While observers maintain the election was free and fair, concerns remain over the disqualification and intimidation of several independent candidates. A report by Amnesty International released on 7 July 2017 documented how opposition politicians, journalists and HRDs have faced restrictions on their rights to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly in the two decades since the genocide.<sup>57</sup> Partner organisations in the country report that Rwandan civil society and media have been largely silent on many irregularities of the presidential elections campaign.

### Freedom of Association

On 12 May 2017, the body of Jean Damascene Habarugira, a member of the United Democratic Forces party (FDU-Inkingi), was found 60 kilometres from where he had disappeared three days earlier.<sup>58</sup> According to the FDU-Inkingi, Habarugira was assassinated because of his opposition to the government's agricultural planning policy in his home area of Ngoma, in the east of the country.<sup>59</sup>

On 27 June 2017, the National Election Council announced that three independent presidential candidates, Diane Shima Rwigara, Fred Barafinda Sekikubo, and Gilbert Mwendata, failed to garner 600 signatures (with a minimum of 12 from each of the 30 districts in Rwanda), disqualifying them from running in the presidential election.<sup>60</sup>

Other candidates reported harassment during their campaigns. Frank Habineza of Rwanda's Green party was verbally harassed with phone calls mocking his attempt to run against Kagame.<sup>61</sup> Independent candidate and former journalist, Phillipe Mpayimana, alleged that several lists of signatures he had collected were stolen in Rusizi and Kamonyi districts.<sup>62</sup>

Rwigara alleged that local leaders targeted her supporters with intimidation and threats while collecting signatures. She also told reporters that up to 10 of her representatives had been arrested and threatened with "treason charges" but later released with no charge.<sup>63</sup> On 31 August 2017, Rwigara and some of her family members were reported missing, after police indicated

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<sup>57</sup> Amnesty International, "Setting the Scene for Elections: Two Decades of Silencing Dissent in Rwanda," 7 July 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr47/6585/2017/en/>, Accessed 28 September 2017.

<sup>58</sup> Amnesty International, "Setting the Scene for Elections: Two Decades of Silencing Dissent in Rwanda," 7 July 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr47/6585/2017/en/>, Accessed 28 September 2017.

<sup>59</sup> FDU-Inkingi, "Rwanda: Assassination of Mr. Damascène Habarugira, Member of the FDU-Inkingi," 11 May 2017, <http://www.fdu-rwanda.com/en/english-rwanda-assassination-mr-damascene-habarugira-member-of-the-fdu-inkingi/#more-5821>, Accessed 20 October 2017.

<sup>60</sup> The East African, "Rwanda's independent candidates fail to get enough signatures," 27 June 2017, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Independent-candidates-fail-signatures-Rwanda/2558-3990184-gfkwik/index.html>, Accessed 28 September 2017.

<sup>61</sup> QZ, "Rwanda's opposition candidates finally have a voice—but no real shot at the presidency," 30 June 2017, <https://qz.com/1017766/rwandas-paul-kagame-faces-election-with-more-outspoken-opposition-like-diane-shima-rwigara/>, Accessed 28 September 2017.

<sup>62</sup> The East African, "Rwanda independent candidates allege harassment," 5 June 2017, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Rwanda-independent-candidates-allege-govt-harassment--/2558-3956496-10cqiaiz/index.html>, Accessed 28 September 2017.

<sup>63</sup> The East African, "Rwanda independent candidates allege harassment," 5 June 2017, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Rwanda-independent-candidates-allege-govt-harassment--/2558-3956496-10cqiaiz/index.html>, Accessed 28 September 2017.

that she was being investigated for alleged forgery and tax evasion. Although the police first denied having taken them into custody, the police confirmed on 4 September that Rwigara, her mother and sister were arrested on tax evasion charges, and that Rwigara was facing additional charges of forgery of signatures in the supporting documents she submitted in order to run as a presidential candidate. The trio was again arrested on 22 September, and Rwigara now faces more serious charges that include treason, inciting revolt, and revealing sensitive information.<sup>64</sup> All three have been denied bail while the trial is ongoing.

Several members of unregistered opposition parties and other political opponents have been threatened, arrested, or forcibly disappeared since August 2017.<sup>65</sup> Seven members of the FDU Inkingi including Vice-President Boniface Twagirimana and others leaders of the party like Leonille Gasengayire, Fabien Twagirayezu, Nsabayaremye Gratien, and Theophile Ntirutwa were arrested on 6 September. Jean Marie Vianney Kayumba Vice-Chairman of PDP-Imamzi was also arrested on the same day.<sup>66</sup>

### Freedom of Expression

In May 2017, the National Electoral Commission introduced a mandatory vetting process for social media messages posted by candidates in the presidential election that would require all candidates to seek prior approval before posting messages online. On 31 May, however, the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority dismissed the process after receiving widespread criticism from within the country as well as from the US, UK and the EU.<sup>67</sup>

### Somalia/Somaliland

While newly elected Prime Minister Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, better known as Farmajo, has boasted that he would “eradicate” al-Shabaab within two years, the militant group has stepped up its attacks on military installations and civilian targets across the country in the last six months. These attacks came amid repeated warnings from the UN that the drought-stricken region is at risk of a massive famine that could endanger the lives of millions.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> The East African, “Diane Rwigara arrested again, now faces treason charges,” 26 September 2017, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Diane-Rwigara-now-faces-treason-charges/2558-4111148-view-asAMP-405ma9z/index.html>, Accessed 28 September 2017.

<sup>65</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Rwanda: Post-Election Political Crackdown,” 28 September 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/28/rwanda-post-election-political-crackdown>, Accessed 17 October 2017.

<sup>66</sup> FDU-Inkingi, “The Arrest of Former Presidential Hopeful Ms. Diane Rwigara, FDU-Inkingi and PDP-Imanzi Members Kicks off the Political Programme of President Kagame,” 6 September 2017, <http://www.fdu-rwanda.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/P5-Press-release.Arrest-Rwigare-FDU-Pdp-Members.pdf>, Accessed 17 October 2017.

<sup>67</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Dwindling Options for Opposition Candidates in Rwanda,” 1 June 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/01/dwindling-options-opposition-candidates-rwanda>, Accessed 28 September 2017.

<sup>68</sup> United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, “Somalia Still Under Threat of Famine, Warns Top US Official,” 5 September 2017, <https://unsom.unmissions.org/somalia-still-under-threat-famine-warns-top-un-official>, Accessed 24 October 2017.

## Freedom of Expression

Authorities in Somaliland arrested Mohamed Adan Dirir, editor of the online news service Horseed Media, after he asked a question to Health Minister Saleban Isee at a 24 May 2017 press conference. His question was allegedly critical of the minister's performance, and implied the minister's work may have been impaired by alcohol, which is banned in Somaliland. Mohamed was detained without charge for over a week, despite the fact that the Somaliland Constitution requires authorities to charge or release suspects within 48 hours of their arrest.<sup>69</sup>

On 7 June 2017, the Media Association of Puntland issued its first annual report, in which it outlined how media outlets and media practitioners in the semi-autonomous region have been systematically victims of government censorship, intimidation, harassment, and unlawful closure.<sup>70</sup>

On 2 July 2017, journalist and founder of Puntlandone.com, Ahmed Ali Kilwe, was arrested by security forces in Garowe in connection to a 23 June Facebook post in which he criticised the president of Puntland's use of public funds.<sup>71</sup> According to the Media Association of Puntland, counterterrorism police arrested Ali Kilwe by order of the president for allegedly "posting articles impertinent to the Puntland President."<sup>72</sup> He was released on 16 July.<sup>73</sup>

On 6 August 2017, Omar Saeed Mohammed, a journalist for the news website Horseed Media and the privately-owned Somali Cable TV channel, was arrested by security forces in Garowe. He was held incommunicado until his bail release on 12 August. The arrest was purportedly linked to a Facebook post Omar wrote on the alleged involvement of the Puntland president in a counterfeit money-printing scam.<sup>74</sup>

*Goobjoog* Media journalist Omar Ali Hassan Serbiya was arrested on 8 July 2017 at Egal Airport in Hargeisa, Somaliland, after arriving from Mogadishu where he is based. The journalist was held in an undisclosed location, without officially being charged. Somaliland's Interior Minister Yasin Mohamud said that the arrest was in response to views Omar Ali had expressed on social

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<sup>69</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Somaliland journalist held without charge for asking question at press conference," 1 June 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/06/somaliland-journalist-held-without-charge-for-aski.php>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>70</sup> Media Association of Puntland, "Annual Report 2016," 7 July 2017, <http://mediapuntland.org/app/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-FINAL-MAP-ANNUAL-REPORT-FINANCIAL-AUDITED-STATEMENTS1.pdf>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>71</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Puntland journalist jailed after criticizing president," 7 July 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/07/puntland-journalist-jailed-after-criticizing-presi.php>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>72</sup> Media Association of Puntland, "Puntland: President uses 'political weight' to subvert freedom of expression," 8 July 2017, <http://mediapuntland.org/puntland-president-uses-political-weight-to-subvert-freedom-of-expression/>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>73</sup> Media Association of Puntland, "Puntland: MAP eulogizes release of online journalist, demands for an end towards Gov't's unjust campaign against independent journalism," 17 July 2017, <http://mediapuntland.org/1327-2/>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>74</sup> Media Association of Puntland, "MAP Celebrates release of Journalist, demands Govt to retreat it's attacks against Journalism work," 12 August 2017, <http://mediapuntland.org/1350-2/>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

media that purportedly threatened the "security and stability" of Somaliland.<sup>75</sup> The authorities released him on 11 July.<sup>76</sup>

On 6 July 2017, the Hargeisa Regional Court suspended five websites: (1) karinnews.com, (2) baraarugnews.com, (3) saylactoday.com, (4) haleelews.com, and (5) suradnews.com. According to the order, the Criminal Investigation Department and Hargeisa Regional Office of the Attorney General requested the suspension of the websites for publishing "false news against the clans that live together in the Republic of Somaliland [and] propaganda against the officials of the State of the Republic of Somaliland." The suspended websites were neither informed of the charges nor given the opportunity to defend themselves.<sup>77</sup>

On 10 September 2017, a suicide bomber attacked a café in Beldweyne where members of the press often gather, killing Somali broadcast journalist Abdullahi Osman Moalim, working for Radio Codka Hiiraan and the state-owned broadcaster Jubbaland TV. Abdullahi and a group of other journalists were waiting in the café for a press briefing that was due to take place nearby. Two other journalists with Radio Codka Hiiraan were injured in the attack, and Abdi Shakur Mohamed Hassan, who works for Star FM Radio and Saab TV, and Abdulkadir Omar Ibrah, a correspondent for RTN TV and Simba Radio, sustained minor injuries and were later discharged from the hospital.<sup>78</sup>

Mohamed Adan Dirir, the editor of Horseed News and owner of the news website Saylactoday was arrested while covering a press conference at the Ministry of Education in Hargeisa on 16 September 2017. According to court documents, Mohamed was accused of false news and instigating the public to disobey the law. Mohamed's arrest is allegedly linked to a series of online articles in which he allegedly accused a consortium of private schools of mismanagement and misconduct.<sup>79</sup>

Freelance video journalist Ali Nur Siad-Ahmed was killed in a massive truck bomb attack in Mogadishu on 14 October 2017 that left more than 300 civilians dead – estimates of the death toll vary wildly. Journalists Abdulkadir Mohamed Abdulle of Voice of America, Mohamed Omar Bakay of Goobjoog Radio, Abdullahi Osman of Mandeeg Radio, as well as freelance journalists Abdiqani Ali Adan and Ahmed Abdi Hadi were also wounded in the attack.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "TV journalist detained in Somaliland," 11 July 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/07/tv-journalist-detained-in-somaliland.php>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>76</sup> Somalia Focus, "Somaliland releases the arrested journalist in Hargeisa on bail," 11 July 2017, <http://somaliofocus.com/somaliland-releases-the-arrested-journalist-in-hargeisa-on-bail/>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>77</sup> Human Rights Centre Somaliland, "Hargeisa Regional Court suspended five websites," 15 July 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/HumanRightsCenterHargeisaSomaliland/posts/650427951828380>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>78</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Somali journalist dies after suicide bomber targets café," 14 September 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/09/somali-journalist-dies-after-suicide-bomber-target.php>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>79</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Somaliland journalist detained on false news accusation," 27 September 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/09/somaliland-journalist-detained-on-false-news-accus.php>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>80</sup> Union of Somali Journalists, "Journalists among victims of massive truck bombing in Mogadishu," 16 October 2017, <http://www.nusoj.org/journalists-among-victims-of-massive-truck-bombing-in-mogadishu/>, Accessed 20 October 2017.

## Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) handed back the main campus of Somalia's National University in Mogadishu to the central government on 12 July 2017. The campus has been used as a base by AMISOM for 10 years, starting off as a small Forward Operating Base, and later developing into a battalion headquarters to coordinate operations against Al Shabaab in the capital.<sup>81</sup>

## Sudan

In May 2017, Aristide Nononsi, the UN-mandated independent expert on the human rights situation in Sudan, raised concern over the lack of democratic reforms as an obstacle to ensuring the protection and promotion of human rights across the country. In a statement published on 22 May, Nononsi drew attention to the continued restrictions on civic space, and in particular, to the plight of a number of high-profile Sudanese activists.<sup>82</sup>

## Freedom of Association

The tenth annual Sudan Freedom of Association and Expression report, issued in July 2017 by the Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organisations, detailed 15 instances where freedom of association had been obstructed. Office closures, arbitrary arrests, interrogations, and spurious prosecutions accounted for 73% of the total violations reported. Other categories included the use of laws (13%) and extra-judicial harassment (14%), including threats, surveillance, physical or sexual assaults as well as destruction of property.<sup>83</sup>

On 29 August 2017, HRDs Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, Hafiz Idris, Tasneem Taha Zaki, Abdelmukhles Yousef Ali, Abdelhakim Noor, and Mubarak Adam Abdullah were issued presidential pardons. All six had been charged with criminal offenses as a result of their human rights activities.<sup>84</sup> Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, a prominent rights defender, along with nine other defenders, was detained for more than eight months. He was charged with two other Darfuri human rights defenders with “undermining the constitutional system” and “waging war against the state,” both of which carry either the death penalty or life imprisonment. The charges, dropped in August, are believed linked to allegations that the men helped in the production of

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<sup>81</sup> AMISOM, “AMISOM hands over premier university to the Federal Government of Somalia,” 11 July 2017, <http://amisom-au.org/2017/07/amisom-hands-over-premier-university-to-the-federal-government-of-somalia/>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>82</sup> United Nations Human Rights – Office of the High Commissioner, “Sudan / Human rights: UN expert calls on the Government to adopt urgent democratic reform,” 22 May 2017, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21651&LangID=E>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>83</sup> Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organisations, “Sudan Freedom of Association and Expression,” July 2017, [https://gallery.mailchimp.com/dfd42f039063b9cb770e8695e/files/e2bbb4fd-6f57-4bcd-bccf-e8710d587c04/2017\\_Q2\\_Sudan\\_Freedom\\_of\\_Association\\_Expression\\_Watch\\_English.pdf?ct=t\(Civil\\_Society\\_Watch\\_Issue\\_54\\_17\\_2016\)&mc\\_cid=729d045f23&mc\\_eid=4be5d5e660](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/dfd42f039063b9cb770e8695e/files/e2bbb4fd-6f57-4bcd-bccf-e8710d587c04/2017_Q2_Sudan_Freedom_of_Association_Expression_Watch_English.pdf?ct=t(Civil_Society_Watch_Issue_54_17_2016)&mc_cid=729d045f23&mc_eid=4be5d5e660), Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>84</sup> Frontline Defenders, “Presidential pardon issued for six HRDs,” 30 August 2017, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/mudawi-ibrahim-adam-detained>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

Amnesty International's 2016 report on the use of chemical weapons in Jebel Marra. At least two of the detained men were severely beaten, and another forced to confess under torture.<sup>85</sup>

### Freedom of Expression

Between 17 and 19 June 2017, *Akhar Lahza* newspaper was confiscated due to an opinion article written by Abdulkah Al-Sheik that offered advice to the President. On 10 July the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) confiscated printed copies of *Alzawia* and *Alzaim* sport newspapers after warning newspapers not to publish news of the Sudan Football Association's suspension following government interference in its internal administration. Similarly, on the morning of 13 July, the NISS prevented the distribution of printed copies of *Algareeda* newspaper without explanation or prior notice.<sup>86</sup>

On 10 July 2017, Amel Habani, a journalist with *Al Tagheer* online newspaper, was found guilty of threatening and insulting a public servant, and sentenced to a fine of 10,000 Sudanese Pounds (\$1,500 US) or face imprisonment for four months. Habani declined to pay the fine and was released when the Sudanese Journalist Network campaigned to raise funds and paid the fine instead.<sup>87</sup>

On 12 July 2017, Izzeldien Dahab, a journalist with *Algareeda* newspaper, was summoned and interrogated by the Press and Publications Prosecutor of Khartoum in connection with an article he published 10 April regarding corruption in the Ministry of Finance in South Darfur. He was charged under Article 17 (defamation) of Sudanese Cybercrime Act (2007).<sup>88</sup>

### Freedom of Assembly

At least five people were killed and 29 others sustained gunshot wounds when Sudanese security forces opened fire on a crowd of protestors at the Kalma camp for internally displaced persons in Nyala, South Darfur on 22 September 2017, shortly before a planned visit by Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir.<sup>89</sup>

### South Sudan

Despite several attempted ceasefires, violence in South Sudan has increasingly split along ethnic

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<sup>85</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, "22 NGOs call for strong, action-oriented resolution on Sudan at UN Human Rights Council," 21 September 2017, <http://www.acjps.org/22-ngos-call-for-strong-action-oriented-resolution-on-sudan-at-un-human-rights-council/>, Accessed 19 October 2017.

<sup>86</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, "Crackdown on Media Freedoms: May-July 2017," 14 August 2017, <http://www.acjps.org/crackdown-on-media-freedoms-may-july-2017/>, Accessed 20 September 2017.

<sup>87</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, "Crackdown on Media Freedoms: May-July 2017," 14 August 2017, <http://www.acjps.org/crackdown-on-media-freedoms-may-july-2017/>, Accessed 20 September 2017.

<sup>88</sup> African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies, "Crackdown on Media Freedoms: May-July 2017," 14 August 2017, <http://www.acjps.org/crackdown-on-media-freedoms-may-july-2017/>, Accessed 20 September 2017.

<sup>89</sup> African Centre of Justice and Peace Studies, "Deadly force used to disperse protest against Sudanese President at Darfur IDP camp", 28 September 2017, <http://www.acjps.org/deadly-force-used-to-disperse-protest-against-sudanese-president-at-darfur-idp-camp/>, accessed 19 October 2017.

lines, with massive human rights violations being committed by nearly every armed group involved in the conflict. Rape and sexual violence have been described as widespread weapons of war. The Agreement on the Resolution of Conflicts in South Sudan has effectively collapsed, and neither it nor the proposed national dialogue have brought about a shred of transitional justice to the country.

More than 2 million refugees have fled to six neighbouring countries, though most of them are in Uganda, while more than 4 million have been displaced by the fighting. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has warned that another US\$1.4 billion is needed to provide "life-saving aid" to refugees until the end of the year, highlighting the very real possibility of a famine that could kill thousands.<sup>90</sup>

### Freedom of Association

On 22 May 2017, President Salva Kiir announced that he was no longer running the national dialogue he initiated in December 2016. Both international and domestic observers have criticised Kiir's decision to act as "patron" of the dialogue – he abdicated this role so citizens would have more faith in the process.<sup>91</sup>

A report issued by Human Rights Watch on 31 May 2017 outlined how people with disabilities and older citizens in South Sudan face greater risks of being caught in fighting and greater challenges in getting necessary humanitarian assistance. Throughout the conflict, Human Rights Watch has documented numerous cases of people with disabilities and older people being shot, hacked to death, or burned alive in their houses by belligerents.<sup>92</sup>

On 19 August 2017, unknown armed men briefly abducted South Sudan rebel spokesman Paul Lam Gabriel in Uganda, but released him after police intervened.<sup>93</sup>

### Freedom of Expression

On 8 June 2017, the South Sudan Media Authority banned 20 foreign journalists from entering or operating in the country for "unsubstantiated and unrealistic stories" with the potential to incite hate and violence in the country. The authority did not provide specific names or agencies included in the ban.<sup>94</sup> The ban was lifted in late June.<sup>95</sup>

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90 UNHCR, "Over US\$1.4 billion needed for South Sudan refugees in 2017," 15 May 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/5/591966294/us14-billion-needed-south-sudan-refugees-2017.html>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

91 Voice of America, "President No Longer Runs South Sudan National Dialogue," 1 June 2017, <https://www.voanews.com/a/president-no-longer-runs-south-sudan-national-dialogue/3883157.html>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

92 Human Rights Watch, "South Sudan: People with Disabilities, Older People Face Danger," 31 May 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/31/south-sudan-people-disabilities-older-people-face-danger>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

93 Sudan Tribune, "S. Sudan rebel spokesperson abducted in Uganda, released," 19 August 2017, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article63292>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

94 Reporters Without Borders, "South Sudan closes its borders to foreign reporters," 12 June 2017, <https://rsf.org/en/news/south-sudan-closes-its-borders-foreign-reporters>, Accessed 24 October 2017.



Adil Faris Mayat, head of South Sudan's state-owned national TV broadcaster SSBC, was arrested on 10 July 2017 for not providing live coverage of President Kiir's speech on 9 July commemorating independence. Although Mayat attributed the failure to technical problems, the government considered it a "clear case of sabotage." He was held incommunicado until his release on 19 July and was later fired from his position on 25 July.<sup>96</sup>

On 17 July 2017, South Sudanese authorities blocked access to several online news sites and blogs, including Paris-based Sudan Tribune and Dutch-backed Radio *Tamazuj*, as well as the popular blogs *Nyamilepedia* and *Paanluel Wel*. Minister of Information Michael Makuei Lueth accused the online news resources of publishing "subversive" content.<sup>97</sup>

American journalist Christopher Allen was killed on 26 August 2017 while reporting on fighting between government and rebel forces in Kaya, near the borders with Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Allen had been embedded with opposition forces for two weeks. South Sudan army spokesman Lul Ruai Koang said journalists who enter the country with rebel forces would not be protected stating that "anybody who comes attacking us with hostile forces will meet his fate."<sup>98</sup>

## **Tanzania**

In the last six months, Tanzania has witnessed a massive shrinking of civic space, including an indefinite ban of political rallies, arbitrary arrests of legislators and members of the opposition, a ban on live coverage of parliament, and a crackdown on independent media and government critics.<sup>99</sup>

### **Freedom of Association**

On 3 June 2017, Olengurumwa Onesmo, National Coordinator of the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), and John Baraka, Coordinator of the Tanzania Students Networking Programme (TSNP), were arbitrarily arrested at the Blue Pearl Hotel while attending

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95 News 24, "S Sudan to lift ban on foreign journalists: media official," 22 June 2017, <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/s-sudan-to-lift-ban-on-foreign-journalists-media-official-20170622>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

96 Reporters Without Borders, "Journalist held incommunicado for past week in South Sudan," 18 July 2017, <https://rsf.org/en/news/journalist-held-incommunicado-past-week-south-sudan>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

97 Committee to Protect Journalists, "South Sudan authorities block access to at least four media websites," 20 July 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/07/south-sudan-authorities-block-access-to-at-least-f.php>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

98 Committee to Protect Journalists, "US freelancer Christopher Allen killed while reporting in South Sudan," 29 August 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/08/american-freelancer-killed-while-reporting-in-south-sudan>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>99</sup> DefendDefenders, "Tanzania: Stop threatening rights groups," 6 July 2017, [https://www.defenddefenders.org/press\\_release/tanzania-stop-threatening-rights-groups/](https://www.defenddefenders.org/press_release/tanzania-stop-threatening-rights-groups/), Accessed 20 October 2017.

a book launch organised by another NGO. They were later released.<sup>100</sup> On 20 September 2017, Olengurumwa was subjected to a second round of interrogations by security agents regarding his citizenship status.<sup>101</sup>

Over the last six months, anti-LGBTI rhetoric from the government in Tanzania has intensified. In a speech on 22 June 2017, President John Magufuli condemned NGOs working on LGBTI rights issues, saying that the organisations have “brought [Tanzania] drugs and homosexual practices that even cows disapprove of.”<sup>102</sup> At a rally in the capital Dodoma on 25 June, Home Affairs Minister Mgiwgulu Nchemba threatened organisations campaigning for LGBTI rights, vowing to deregister such organisations and imprison activists. “Those who want to campaign for gay rights should find another country that allows those things,” Nchemba stated.<sup>103</sup>

On 27 June 2017, two civic leaders were gunned down in Kibiti district. Village Chairman Khamis Mtima and executive officer Shamte Makawa were killed by unknown assailants in Mangwi village.<sup>104</sup>

On 6 July 2017, a group of 22 international civil society organisations released a joint statement calling on the Tanzanian government to end the threats against civil society, particularly LGBTI rights advocates. They also urged the government to provide pregnant girls with assistance in finishing their education.<sup>105</sup>

Two HRDs, Bibiana Mushi and Nicodemus Ngelela, were arrested on 12 July 2017 on charges of Disobedience of Statutory Duty under Section 123 of the Tanzanian Penal Code, which can carry a sentence of two years if found guilty. Mushi and Ngelela were leading a capacity building workshop for local government officials serving in regions with a prevalence of extractive industries when they were unexpectedly arrested.<sup>106</sup>

On 7 September 2017, opposition MP and President of the Tanganyika Law Society Tundu Lissu survived an assassination attempt by unknown assailants in the capital city of Dodoma. Lissu had

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100 World Organisation Against Torture, “Tanzania: Arbitrary arrest and subsequent release of Mr. Ole Ngurumwa Onesmo and Mr. John Baraka,” 8 June 2017, <http://www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/tanzania/2017/06/d24383/>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

101 Front Line Defenders, “Tanzania: Administrative harassment of human rights defender Onesmo Olengurumwa,” 21 September 2017, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/file/4122/download?token=jIgFMOMO>, Accessed 20 October 2017.

102 News24, “Tanzania vows to arrest those 'protecting' gay interests,” 26 June 2017, <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/tanzania-vows-to-arrest-those-protecting-gay-interests-20170626>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

103 Reuters, “Tanzania threatens crackdown on LGBT advocates,” 26 June 2017, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-tanzania-lgbt/tanzania-threatens-crackdown-on-lgbt-advocates-idUKKBN19H1OD?il=0>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

104 AllAfrica, “Tanzania: Two Civic Leaders Shot in Kibiti Village,” 28 June 2017, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201706280780.html>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

105 Human Rights Watch, “Tanzania: Stop Threatening Rights Groups,” 6 July 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/06/tanzania-stop-threatening-rights-groups>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

106 Frontline Defenders, “Judicial harassment of two human rights defenders,” 14 July 2017, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/judicial-harassment-two-human-rights-defenders-0>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

been a major critic of the ruling party.<sup>107</sup>

On 16 September 2017, twenty people were arrested on Zanzibar for alleged homosexuality. The 12 women and eight men were picked up in a hotel where they were receiving training about HIV/Aids education programmes.<sup>108</sup>

On 17 October 2017, 13 LGBT HRDs were arrested while attending an internal meeting at the Peacock Hotel in Dar es Salaam. The meeting was organised by the Community Health Education Services and Advocacy (CHESA), a Tanzanian NGO. They were released on bail and no charges have been filled against them.<sup>109</sup>

### Freedom of Expression

On 15 June 2017, the Minister of Information, Sports and Culture, Harrison Mwakyembe, suspended the daily newspaper *Mawio* for a period of two years under the Media Services Act (2016). This came after the newspaper published information and photos linking two former Tanzanian presidents to corruption in the mining industry. A presidential order was made at the same time as the information was published prohibiting Tanzanian media from mentioning former presidents in connection to the mining scandal.<sup>110</sup> Simon Mkina, *Mawio*'s editor-in-chief, reported receiving anonymous threatening calls on his mobile phone in the days following the newspaper's suspension.<sup>111</sup> A court had previously ordered *Mawio* to be shut down indefinitely in January 2016 but the High Court overturned that ruling in March 2017 after an appeal.

On 10 July 2017, Halima Mdee, a lawmaker from the opposition Chadema party, was charged with insulting the president. Police detained Mdee in Dar es Salaam on 4 July, after she spoke critically of President John Magufulia's ban on schooling for pregnant girls at a press conference on 3 July. Despite the arrest order specifying a 48-hour detention, Mdee was held for six days before her court appearance. She was granted bail on 7 August.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders-Kenya, "Joint Press Statement on the Attack and Shooting of Tundu Antiphias Lissu Human Rights Defenders, MP and the President of the Tanganyika Law Society (TLS) (Tanzanian Bar Association)," 19 September 2017, <http://nchrk.org/joint-press-statement-on-the-attack-and-shooting-of-tundu-antiphias-lissu-human-rights-defender-mp-and-the-president-of-tanganyika-law-society-tls-tanzanian-bar-association/>, Accessed 20 October 2017.

<sup>108</sup> BBC, "Zanzibar arrests 20 over homosexuality," 16 September 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-41292920>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>109</sup> Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, "SAHRDN Condemns Arbitrary Arrests and Detention in Tanzania," 20 October 2017, <http://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-africa-byo-120222.html>, Accessed 24 October 2017.

<sup>110</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Tanzania imposes two-year publishing ban on newspaper," 16 June 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/06/tanzania-imposes-two-year-publishing-ban-on-newspa.php>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>111</sup> Daily Nation, "Editor of suspended Tanzanian newspaper threatened," 19 June 2017, <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/Editor-suspended-Tanzanian-newspaper-threatened/1066-3976802-5r3pnwz/index.html>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>112</sup> IPP Media, "Kawe Legislator Charged with Offensive Language Against President Magufuli," 11 August 2017, <http://www.ippmedia.com/en/news/kawe-legislator%20charged-offensive-language-president-magufuli>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

On 20 September 2017, the *Mwanahalisi* weekly newspaper was banned for a period of 24 months after publishing an article entitled "*Tumuombe nani, Magufuli au Tundu Lissu?*" (Whom should we pray for, Magufuli or Tundu Lissu?). Editor Jabir Idrissa says the ban came abruptly, with authorities claiming that the newspaper had been publishing seditious materials purposely to create dissent against the government. This was also the second time the newspaper was banned. In June 2016, the High Court lifted a ban imposed by the government in 2012 for publishing content which was claimed to be a threat to the country's security.<sup>113</sup>

On 29 September 2017, the government banned local weekly tabloid *Raia Mwema* for 90 days for publishing an article entitled "*Uraisi Utamshinda John Magufuli*" (John Magufuli is presidency doomed to fail).<sup>114</sup>

## Uganda

The Ugandan government has been considering amending the Constitution to remove presidential age limits through a private member's bill in parliament, which would allow President Yoweri Museveni to stand again in the 2021 election for a sixth term. The proposed constitutional amendment would be the second major change to Uganda's 20-year-old constitution to favour Museveni's continued stay in power – a 2005 amendment removed term limits after his two elective terms. The proposed amendment has sparked public debate and protests among the general public, university students, and opposition members. Civil society has come under increasing attack for activities perceived as being in opposition to the amendment – three NGOs were raided by police, while many others are now being investigated by the NGO Bureau and were asked on 15 October to turn over financial information.<sup>115</sup>

### Freedom of Association

A United States district court ruled on 5 June 2017 that Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG)'s case against U.S.-based anti-gay activist Scott Lively be dismissed. While Lively's "crackpot bigotry" is largely ignored in Western countries, his campaign against the LGBTI community found a home in Uganda, where his radical views were readily adopted by many, including lawmakers.<sup>116</sup> The court explained that it's ruling was on the issue of whether Lively's actions on American soil in pursuit of his campaign in Uganda were sufficient to bestow a U.S. court jurisdiction to hold him accountable, which they were not. In a key passage, the court made clear that "anyone reading this memorandum should make no mistake. The question before the court is not whether the defendant's actions in aiding and abetting efforts to demonise, intimidate, and

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<sup>113</sup> DefenceWeb, "Tanzania shuts down another 'days numbered' newspaper," 20 September 2017, [http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=49326&catid=74&Itemid=30](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49326&catid=74&Itemid=30), Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>114</sup> The East African, "Dissenting voices silenced in Magufuli regime," 30 September 2017, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Dissenting-voices-silenced-in-Magufuli-regime/2558-4118490-smdcusz/index.html>, Accessed 3 October 2017.

<sup>115</sup> CIVICUS, "Joint Statement: Grave concern over recent raids on Ugandan civil society groups," 10 October 2017, <http://civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/media-releases/2974-joint-statement-grave-concern-over-recent-raids-on-ugandan-civil-society-groups>, Accessed 20 October 2017.

<sup>116</sup> Mother Jones, "Meet the American Pastor Behind Uganda's Anti-Gay Crackdown," 10 March 2014, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/03/scott-lively-anti-gay-law-uganda/2/>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

injure LGBTI people in Uganda constitute violations of international law. They do.”<sup>117</sup>

On the evening of 23 June 2017, Irumba Erasmus, coordinator of the Twerwaneho Listeners’ Club (TLC) activities in Rwebisengo District, and his friend Vide Kanyoro were extra-judicially murdered by officers of the Uganda Police Force and Uganda People’s Defence Forces after a scuffle. Security forces allege that the two had been attempting to buy 25 million Uganda Shillings (\$6,931 US) worth of military ammunition. Irumba had recently been investigating two high-profile corruption cases, although it is unclear if his killing was related to his work. TLC believes that Irumba was killed to prevent him from revealing incriminating information against the officials involved, either obtained during the altercation or beforehand. Four other TLC staff members are currently facing spurious charges related to the possession of explosive devices and poison brought against them in connection with a land dispute. The officers in question have been formally charged with the murders.<sup>118</sup>

On 20 September 2017, police and state security officials stormed Action Aid Uganda's head office in Kansanga, Kampala. All staff in the office at the time were prevented from leaving, as the police thoroughly searched the premises, went through documents, and confiscated some staff members' cellphones and laptops.<sup>119</sup> The Great Lakes Institute for Strategic Studies (GLiSS) offices in Kampala were also raided and cordoned off by police officers, while GLiSS Executive Director Godber Tumushabe was not allowed to leave the premises.<sup>120</sup> On 2 October, police raided the offices of the UHURU Institute, during which they cordoned off the premises and confiscated computers and phones belonging to staff.<sup>121</sup>

The ruling National Resistance Movement party planned to initiate a parliamentary debate on the constitutional amendment on 21 September 2017; however, chaos in the parliament ensued. The government’s decision to surround the building with security forces ahead of the debate also sparked outrage, with many MPs being frisked and all but denied access to parliament by heavily armed security officers.<sup>122</sup> As a result, the bill was postponed and supposed to be introduced for parliamentary debate on 26 September, but chaos again erupted in the House when the Speaker allowed the motion, while MPs accused each other of having weapons and others threw chairs

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<sup>117</sup> United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts, “Sexual Minorities Uganda V. Scott Lively: Memorandum and Order Regarding Defendant's Motion for Summary Judgement,” 5 June 2017, [https://ccrjustice.org/sites/default/files/attach/2017/06/350\\_2017-06-05\\_ORDER%20granting%20Def's%20MSJ\\_2.pdf](https://ccrjustice.org/sites/default/files/attach/2017/06/350_2017-06-05_ORDER%20granting%20Def's%20MSJ_2.pdf), Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>118</sup> DefendDefenders, “Uganda: Police Authorities must conduct impartial and transparent investigations into the extra-judicial killing of HRD,” 30 June 2017, [https://www.defenddefenders.org/press\\_release/uganda-police-authorities-must-conduct-impartial-and-transparent-investigations-into-the-extra-judicial-killing-of-hrd/](https://www.defenddefenders.org/press_release/uganda-police-authorities-must-conduct-impartial-and-transparent-investigations-into-the-extra-judicial-killing-of-hrd/), Accessed 20 October 2017.

<sup>119</sup> The Monitor, “Police raid offices of civil society organisations,” 20 September 2017, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Police-search-Action-Aid-Uganda-offices-Kansanga/688334-4104798-xserjw/index.html>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>120</sup> AllAfrica, “Uganda: Police Seize Computers, Phones From Staff Before Leaving ActionAid Offices,” 20 September 2017, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201709220067.html>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>121</sup> CIVICUS, “Joint Statement: Grave concern over recent raids on Ugandan civil society groups,” 10 October 2017, <http://civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/media-releases/2974-joint-statement-grave-concern-over-recent-raids-on-ugandan-civil-society-groups>, Accessed 20 October 2017.

<sup>122</sup> The East African, “Echoes of 1966 as guns return to parliament over Constitution,” 23 September 2017, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Echoes-of-1966-as-guns-return-to-parliament/2558-4108694-10nrrdz/index.html>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

and threatened to exchange punches. The motion was again postponed.

More violence erupted in the House the very next day on 27 September, as members of the Special Forces Command stormed the building to physically evict 25 MPs who were suspended from their roles by Speaker Rebecca Kadaga. Members used microphone stands, chairs, and fists to protect their suspended colleagues, some of whom were violently dragged out of the chamber. Kadaga then suspended House business with heavy military and police presence around the government building.

### Freedom of Expression

On 4 May 2017, the Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda released a report entitled “Tough Times: Political Intolerance Stifles Media” which detailed 135 violations and deplorable conduct of state agencies throughout 2016. The report also outlined the various Ugandan laws used to prosecute journalists, and violent incidents against media throughout the year. In this report, Ugandan police topped the list of violators of journalists’ rights, with 83 recorded violations accounting for 61% of the 2016 total.<sup>123</sup>

On 3 May 2017, World Press Freedom Day, Kampala Metropolitan police spokesperson Emilian Kayima told journalists to stop putting up fights whenever they are under investigation or arrested by police. “When we come to investigate you or even to arrest you, do not put up a fight. The fight ought to be in the right place, and that is the courts of law,” he said.<sup>124</sup> On the same day, journalists were arrested by the police and kept in cells for trying to organise parallel activities to those of their association, the Uganda Journalists Association (UJA). The arrested journalists included: Moses Bayola, Secretary General the UJA, his deputy Dan Mukisa, Issa Kigongo, a reporter with Bilal Radio, Jonathan Tusingwire from Pearl FM, Issa Nakabale from Urban TV, Philip Onyango from Mama FM and Ronald Kabuye, Metro FM. They were arrested in Kampala as they marched to their intended venue for the day’s celebrations. Emilian Kayima, the Kampala Metropolitan Police spokesperson stated that the journalists were arrested because they didn't give police prior notification about their procession.<sup>125</sup>

On 29 May 2017, Radio Hoima in Western Uganda was switched back on air by the Uganda Communications Commission after paying a fine of two million shillings (\$550 US). The radio was arbitrarily switched off for three days after allegedly broadcasting sectarian statements, a claim it denies.<sup>126</sup>

On 8 June 2017, courts dismissed the case against Mungu Richard Jakisa, a Radio North

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<sup>123</sup> Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda, “Tough Times: Political Intolerance Stifles Media,” 4 May 2017, [https://hrnjuganda.org/?wpfb\\_dl=66](https://hrnjuganda.org/?wpfb_dl=66), Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>124</sup> The Monitor, “Do not fight with police, Kayima tells journalists,” 3 May 2017, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Do-not-fight-with-police--Kayima-tells-journalists/688334-3911216-14hqc8uz/index.html>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>125</sup> Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda, “Uganda police in brutal arrest of journalists on world Press Freedom Day,” 4 May 2017, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=3517>, Accessed 24 October 2017

<sup>126</sup> Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda, “UCC finds radio station innocent, switches it back on after two million shillings payment,” 30 May 2017, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=3567>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

journalist in Lira District in Northern Uganda. Prosecutors alleged that on 13 February 2016, Mungu and four others defaced President Museveni's electoral posters ahead of the election. That same night, Mungu had been moderating a broadcast with four politicians analysing the presidential candidates' debate when police officers raided the radio station, arrested them, and detained them for four nights before releasing them on bail.<sup>127</sup>

A group of Uganda Peoples Defence Forces and plain-clothed men attacked NBS Television journalists Sabiti Joseph, Stephen Musoke, and Bonny Ojok on 12 June, ordering them to delete footage of the arrest of the locals in Pabbo subcounty, Amuru District. It is alleged that the police officers did not want the journalists to expose the violent arrests of local youths.<sup>128</sup>

On June 20 2017, the editor of the Red Pepper tabloid, Ben Byarabaha, was questioned by the Uganda Police media crimes unit over alleged "offensive communication" for publishing stories about the health of the Inspector General of Police, General Kale Kayihura. Byarabaha was interrogated for six hours by the Assistant Commissioner of Media Crimes, Emmanuel Mbonimpa. Charges of "offensive communication" were preferred against him under the Computer Misuse Act, and Byarabaha said police had further questioned him on his sources for the story but he did not reveal them.<sup>129</sup>

The Uganda Media Centre, the media regulatory authority appointed by the president, announced on 27 June 2017 that a team of state security officers and IT experts has been set up to scan profiles on Facebook and other social networks in order to find posts critical of the government and the nation.<sup>130</sup>

On late June 2017, the Uganda Media Council banned the Dutch film 'The Dinner Club' saying it "depicts and glorifies homosexuality." The council noted extensive moral objections to the film, and listed four scenes where homosexuality is positively shown and quoted from a scene in which heterosexual marriage is disparaged.<sup>131</sup>

On 13 July 2017, Uganda's Inspector General of Police Gen Kale Kayihura warned that he will not allow politicians to take the debate over the controversial presidential age limit to universities and villages, citing reports that opposition leaders had been inciting youth and university students to cause confusion about the age limit bill. "Age limit debate is strictly in parliament, but not in schools or villages. It is supposed to be debated in parliament and should be among MPs," he said.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda, "Court Dismisses Charges against Lira based Journalist," 8 June 2017, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=3589>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>128</sup> Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda, "Security personnel order journalists to delete footage," 13 June 2017, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=3599>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>129</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Newspaper editor interrogated in Uganda," 21 June 2017, <http://cpj.org/2017/06/newspaper-editor-interrogated-by-authorities-in-ug.php>, Accessed 29 September 2017.

<sup>130</sup> Reporters Without Borders, "Uganda creates unit to spy on social networks," 30 June 2017, <https://rsf.org/en/news/uganda-creates-unit-spy-social-networks>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>131</sup> BBC, "Uganda bans Dutch film for 'glorifying homosexuality,'" 16 May 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39934636>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>132</sup> The Observer, "Kayihura 'bans' age limit debate in universities," 14 July 2017, <http://www.observer.ug/news/headlines/53841-kayihura-bans-age-limit-debate-in-universities.html>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

On 24 August 2017, police officers at Katwe Police Station threw stones at five journalists covering a fire at the staff quarters of that same police station. The journalists who were attacked are Nassaka Joweria with Kingdom TV, Ivan Mbadhi of BBS TV, Rachel Mabala a writer for the Daily Monitor, Carol Nakibule with Delta TV, and Muhumuza Julius of Dream TV.<sup>133</sup>

In the lead-up to the parliamentary discussion on the constitutional amendment, several journalists were arrested, harassed, and assaulted. On 13 September 2017, police officers assaulted and confiscated the equipment of journalists in Entebbe covering the opposition party's campaign against the age limit amendment. Ssebalamu Kigongo of Bukedde TV station was manhandled by security forces, and Sande Ssebagala of NBS TV was assaulted, his shirt torn, and his camera confiscated.<sup>134</sup>

Police also arrested and detained five journalists on 20 September 2017 who were covering a press conference organised by youth activists, including Akatuhurira Nelson and Livingstone Matovu of B24 TV, Bulegeya Ronnie of Dream Television, Kyambadde Lawrence of Salt Media, and Titus Jjemba of BBS TV.<sup>135</sup>

Four journalists covering the protests on 26 September 2017 were also arrested: Denis Engena with NBSTV, freelance journalist Martin Ongom, Robert Kalibongo, and Isaac Otwii, a freelance journalist with the Daily Monitor.<sup>136</sup>

After brawls in parliament drew international attention in late September 2017, the Uganda Communications Commission issued a statement warning radio and TV stations against broadcasting live content that "promotes a culture of violence among the public," saying it would take action against anyone violating broadcasting guidelines by suspending or revoking broadcasting licences.<sup>137</sup> On 26 September, the UCC ordered broadcasters, especially television stations, to immediately stop and refrain from broadcasting live feeds of ongoing debates in Parliament over the age limits that wound up in fistfights. The Commission claimed such broadcasts were in contravention of Section 31 of the Uganda Communications Act (2013). In response, 230 journalists under their umbrella body 'Uganda Press Freedom Network' issued a statement expressing their dismay with the conduct of the UCC on 2 October.<sup>138</sup> On 5 October, the UCC lifted the ban.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda, "Police stones journalists as they cover staff quarters on fire," 24 August 2017, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=3790>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>134</sup> Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda, "Police Officers assault journalists, Confiscate their gadgets," 13 September 2017, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=3826>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>135</sup> Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda, "Police arrests journalists covering opponents of age limit removal," 20 September 2017, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=3846>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>136</sup> New Vision, "Journalists arrested for covering age limit protests," 27 September 2017, [https://www.newvision.co.ug/new\\_vision/news/1462452/journalists-arrested-covering-age-limit-protests](https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1462452/journalists-arrested-covering-age-limit-protests), Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>137</sup> Uganda Communications Commission, "Guidelines on Live Broadcasts," 26 September 2017, <https://twitter.com/Agenongar/status/912987807718686720>, Accessed October 2017.

<sup>138</sup> African Centre for Media Excellence "Ugandan journalists push back against regulator," 2 October 2017, <https://acme-ug.org/2017/10/02/ugandan-journalists-push-back-against-regulator/>, Accessed 24 October 2017.

<sup>139</sup> African Centre for Media Excellence, "Live TV coverage ban lifted, but conditions don't satisfy Uganda broadcasters," 6 October 2017, <https://acme-ug.org/2017/10/06/live-tv-coverage-ban-lifted-but-conditions-dont->



Attempts are being made to enact laws that further criminalise, or threaten to curtail freedom of expression. The Uganda Communications Amendment Bill 2016 (UCA Amendment Bill), signed in April 2017, remove the involvement of Parliament in the approval of regulations on the media and communications industry. The amendment poses a serious threat to freedom of expression and media in particular.

### Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

On 29 June 2017, police backed by armed Uganda People's Defence Forces fired live bullets in the air to disperse angry opposition supporters chasing after a car believed to be transporting pre-ticked ballot papers from Kasangati Resort Center. Opposition supporters had earlier mounted a siege on the premises accusing ruling officials of using the facility as a base for election rigging activities.<sup>140</sup>

The police on 7 July 2017 detained three men for staging a mock funeral for President Museveni, parading a coffin in the south-western city of Mbarara in protest of plans to remove the presidential age limit.<sup>141</sup> On 18 July police in Kampala arrested two people accused of burning tires and T-shirts with President Museveni's picture on it in protest over the proposed amendment.<sup>142</sup>

On 19 July 2017, Uganda police announced the arrest of 56 people, the majority of whom are opposition party members, for "holding unlawful assemblies."<sup>143</sup> On 20 July, police then arrested Democratic Party President Nobert Mao, Secretary General Gerald Siranda and Hakim Kizza, after they met to launch the anti-amendment campaign at the party's main office. The group was planning to hold a demonstration as part of the campaign, when they were taken to the central police station. All were later released from police custody.<sup>144</sup>

The authorities banned any anti-amendment protests (#agelimitug and #agelimit) on 21 September 2017. In a statement justifying the ban, Police Chief Kale Kayihura claimed that "the planned protest was intended to cause violence and mayhem", and instead Kayihura urged

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[satisfy-ugandan-broadcasters/](#), Accessed 24 October 2017.

<sup>140</sup> The Monitor, "Police fire live bullets to disperse angry crowd," 29 June 2017, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Police-fire-live-bullets-to-disperse-angry-crowd/688334-3992602-xj6q6ez/index.html>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>141</sup> Premium Times, "Uganda Police detain three for staging President Museveni's mock funeral," 7 July 2017, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/foreign/africa/236188-uganda-police-detain-three-staging-president-musevenis-mock-funeral.html>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>142</sup> The Monitor, "Two arrested for burning Museveni T-shirts over age limit," 18 July 2017, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Two-arrested-burning-Museveni-s-T-shirts-over-age-limit/688334-4019808-15oxdoj/index.html>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>143</sup> Reuters, "Ugandan police arrest 56 for holding illegal meetings," 20 July 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-uganda-politics/ugandan-police-arrest-56-for-holding-illegal-meetings-idUSKBN1A52AX>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>144</sup> The Monitor, "VIDEO: Police arrest Mao over demonstration on age limit," 20 July 2017, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Police-arrest-Mao-over-demonstration-on-age-limit/688334-4024010-hcj7sc/index.html>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

demonstrators to use "indoor meetings" to express their opinions.<sup>145</sup>

Hundreds of students at Makerere University who had planned a march to the Parliament to deliver a petition defied the ban on 21 September 2017. In response, armed police officers used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the students. Five students were arrested and police sealed off the opposition party Forum for Democratic Change's office to prevent a similar march to the parliament.<sup>146</sup> The mayor of Kampala, Erias Lukwago, was arrested on the same day at his home after he and several other city officials planned to hold a procession from city hall to the city square to launch their campaign against removing the constitutionally-mandated presidential age limit.<sup>147</sup>

Despite the ban on peaceful assemblies, by 26 September 2017 age limit protests had spread to Mbale, Arua, Mbarara, Masaka, and Pader. Several key opposition members were arrested, including six members from the Forum for Democratic Change, four-time presidential candidate, Dr Kizza Besigye, and East African Legislative Assembly Member Fred Mukasa Mbidde.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Daily Nation, "Uganda bans protests amid bid to scrap presidential age limit," 21 September 2017, <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/Uganda-demos-ban-presidential-age-limit/1066-4105468-d4yw19z/index.html>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>146</sup> The Monitor, "Student shot over anti-age limit protests," 21 September 2017, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Student-shot-over-anti-age-limit-protests/688334-4105846-833v3u/index.html>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>147</sup> The Monitor, "Lukwago arrested over age limit," 21 September 2017, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Lukwago-under-house-arrest-over-age-limit/688334-4105342-ljyw1c/index.html>, Accessed 2 October 2017.

<sup>148</sup> The Monitor, "Besigye, Mbidde arrested," 26 September 2017, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Besigye-Mbidde-arrested-police/688334-4112750-e4h1whz/index.html>, Accessed 2 October 2017.