



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

**Overview of the Human Rights Situation
in the East and Horn of Africa
April 2018 – October 2018**

Report submitted to the 63rd Ordinary Session of the
African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)
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DEFENDDEFENDERS
(THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS PROJECT)

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Introduction & Executive Summary

DefendDefenders (the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project) welcomes the opportunity offered by the 63rd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) to highlight some of the human rights issues in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region for the period of April to October 2018.

This submission 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 (EHAHRD-Net), 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, the free expression of human rights defenders (HRDs) and media, as well as targeted civil society organisations (CSOs) through various strategies of harassment and repression.

Tanzania's assault on civic space continued over the last six months, with the enforcement of new draconian legislation meant to stifle independent voices and hobble CSOs under the guise of public morality and national security.

Violence during a by-election in northern **Uganda** sparked a brutal country-wide crackdown on political opposition figures, independent media, and peaceful demonstrators, highlighting an increasingly authoritarian streak in the country's long-established leadership.

Despite a healthy thawing of international relations in the Horn of Africa, **Eritrea** and **Djibouti** remain two of the most repressive governments in the sub-region, regularly using both legal and extra-legal methods to quash dissent from any critical voices advocating for greater democracy or adherence to basic human rights standards.

A major shakeup in the leadership of **Ethiopia** has brought about significant democratic reforms, yet there remain unresolved issues such as justice and accountability for human rights violations committed against citizens during mass unrest and the State of Emergency proclamations that characterised the preceding years. Similarly, in **Kenya**, despite a public rapprochement of rival leadership figures, little action has been taken to address violations against citizens and HRDs amid violence that consumed the country during the hotly contested 2017 presidential elections.

A peace deal between warring factions in **South Sudan** offers a chance to end years of hostilities that have devastated the fledgling nation, but the situation remains grave and precarious, with significant dangers still threatening HRDs and aid workers. **Burundi**, on the other hand, remains mired in a political crisis, which has forced hundreds of HRDs to flee the country and decimated civil society, a situation compounded by a controversial referendum that saw the ruling party cement its stranglehold on power.

While **Somalia** made strides in establishing a more cohesive central government, the continued repression of journalists in the breakaway republic of **Somaliland** and semi-autonomous Puntland, in addition to insecurity fuelled by non-State actors like Al Shabaab, continue to make the promotion of human rights an uphill battle in the beleaguered nation.

Despite an impressive record of economic growth, small gains made in a recent parliamentary election, and the release of more than 1,000 prisoners, the ruling government of **Rwanda** continues to stifle and intimidate opposition figures. Conversely, a major economic crisis threatens the authoritarian leadership of **Sudan**, paving the way for potential unrest, and repression of demonstrators in the face of staggering inflation and rapidly rising living costs.

Recommendations

In light of the updates and trends observed 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;
- 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 working environment conducive for civil society, as per Res. 376 (LX) 2017 adopted by the Commission during its 60th Ordinary Session Niamey, Niger;
- Call on member States to cease the harassment and arbitrary detention of HRDs, including those working on sexual orientation and gender identity issues, and recognise that the rights in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights are universal;
- Call on the Government on Burundi to implement all relevant resolutions, including ACHPR/Res. 396 (LXII) 2018, and continue to monitor and condemn human rights violations in Burundi, and engage in efforts to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in Burundi in all relevant fora;
- Undertake a fact-finding mission to Tanzania to investigate and document human rights violations, and urge the Government of Tanzania to respect its obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;
- Support the government of South Sudan to immediately establish and operationalise the Hybrid Court for South Sudan to insure transparent accountability for crimes

committed during the civil war; and insure the implementation of the new peace agreement;

- Call on the government of Ethiopia, ahead of its May 2019 UN Universal Periodic Review, to address recommendations raised by civil society, including removing all undue obstacles to the registration of civil society associations, creating an environment in which independent media, and human rights defenders can operate freely in a safe and secure environment;
- 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 rights;
- 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;

Burundi

On 17 May, Burundians voted in a controversial constitutional referendum, the implications of which could entrench the power of the ruling *Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie–Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie* (CNDD-FDD) party and allow President Pierre Nkurunziza to theoretically remain in power until 2035.¹ The referendum drew fierce criticism from opposition parties, civil society, and diplomatic missions as a violation of the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement that brought an end to the country's civil war and which stipulate a ten-year limit for presidential mandates. According to official results, which opposition parties are challenging in Burundi's Constitutional Court, 73 percent voted in favour of the proposed amendments,² but observers reported an overarching sense of fear surrounding the vote.³ Shortly after the referendum, Human Rights Watch published a report documenting extensive violations by state actors and members of the *Imbonerakure* youth militia in the lead up to the vote, including the use of sexual violence and extra-judicial killings.⁴

In a surprise move, President Nkurunziza declared on 7 June that his mandate will end in 2020 and he will support the future President of the Republic.⁵ His announcement came shortly after he signed into law a new constitution that allows him to seek another two terms in office. Some observers noted that this was by no means a clear and firm commitment not to run for president in the upcoming elections.

In an oral update to the UN Human Rights Council (UN HRC) on 27 June, the Commission of Inquiry (CoI) on Burundi highlighted human rights violations, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, violations of civil liberties, and economic and social rights. The CoI highlighted that these violations were facilitated by a continuing environment of threats and intimidation, particularly through speeches by local authorities and members of the ruling

¹ The Guardian, "Burundi votes in referendum over president's 2034 'power grab'," 17 May 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/17/burundi-referendum-presidential-powers-tensions-high>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

² News24, "Burundi opposition appeals referendum result," 25 May 2018, <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/burundi-opposition-appeals-referendum-result-20180525>, Accessed 18 October, 2018.

³ Iwacu, "When voting means protection," 17 May 2018, <http://www.iwacu-burundi.org/englishnews/when-voting-means-protection/>, Accessed 18 October, 2018.

⁴ Human Rights Watch, "We Will Beat You to Correct You: Abuses Ahead of Burundi's Constitutional Referendum," 18 May 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/05/18/we-will-beat-you-correct-you/abuses-ahead-burundis-constitutional-referendum>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁵ News24, "Burundi president surprises with vow to step down in 2020," 11 June 2018, <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/burundi-president-surprises-with-vow-to-step-down-in-2020-20180609>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

party, constituting barely concealed incitement to hostility or violence.⁶ On 28 September, the UN HRC renewed the mandate of the Col, allowing it to continue its investigative work.⁷

On 12 July, the European Parliament adopted a new resolution on Burundi, expressing its concern over impunity, torture, summary executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, and hate speech. The resolution also called on the international community to closely follow the situation in Burundi, and support the continuing investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Among other recommendations, members of the European Parliament demanded “an end to be put to any further payment to the Burundian troops and various contingents from Burundi engaged in UN and AU peacekeeping missions.”⁸

In a joint report launched at the 39th session of the UN HRC, DefendDefenders and the Burundian Coalition of Human Rights Defenders (CBDDH) highlighted the situation of exiled Burundian HRDs. More than three years after the eruption of Burundi’s human rights crisis, “Between Despair and Resilience: Burundian human rights defenders in protracted exile in Uganda and Rwanda” examined the achievements of HRDs, and their professional, security, and socio-economic challenges in order to formulate concrete recommendations for the enhancement of their human rights work.⁹ Another DefendDefenders report published in July, “Headlong Rush,” examines Burundi’s appalling behaviour as a member of the UN HRC and calls on UN member states to commit to principled voting in relation to Council elections.¹⁰

Intimidation, Harassment, and Attacks Against HRDs

On 26 April, HRD Germain Rukuki was sentenced to 32 years in prison on charges including “rebellion, breach of State security, participation in an insurrection, and attack on the Head of

⁶ OHCHR, “Oral briefing by the members of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi to the Human Rights Council,” 27 June 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=23274&LangID=E>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

⁷ DefendDefenders, “Burundi: Government attempts to obstruct UN work are futile,” 28 September 2018, https://www.defenddefenders.org/press_release/burundi-government-attempts-to-obstruct-un-work-are-futile/, Accessed 19 October 2018.

⁸ European Parliament, “JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION,” 4 June 2018, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+MOTION+P8-RC-2018-0333+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=en>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

⁹ DefendDefenders, “Between Despair and Resilience Burundian human rights defenders in protracted exile in Rwanda and Uganda,” September 2018, <https://www.defenddefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Between-Despair-and-Resilience.pdf>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁰ DefendDefenders, “Headlong Rush Burundi’s behaviour as a member of the UN Human Rights Council,” July 2018, <https://www.defenddefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Headlong-rush.pdf>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

State."¹¹ Several CSOs highlighted irregularities in his judicial proceedings,¹² while UN experts described the case as “evidently linked to his work in defending human rights.”¹³ On 18 June, Rukuki was forcibly removed from a hospital by security officials one week after receiving surgery on his leg, before his full recovery. He could not walk unassisted, and his foot was still bandaged.¹⁴

Freedom of Association

On 20 June, an official of the ruling CNDD–FDD party, Melchiade Nzopfabarushu, was released by a Bujumbura Court of Appeal after being originally sentenced to three years in prison for threatening opponents of the constitutional referendum with death in April 2018.¹⁵

On 3 August, members of the *Imbonerakure* militia assaulted Frédéric Bujana, Denis Ncurebugufi, and Désiré Singirankabo in Karusi province. According to SOS-Torture/Burundi the attack was targeted, as the victims were members of *Forces nationales de libération* (FNL) opposition party and accused of campaigning for "No" during the referendum.¹⁶

On 13 August, HRD Nestor Nibitanga was sentenced to five years imprisonment by the High Court of Mukuza in Bujumbura on charges of “undermining state security.” He is accused of reporting on human rights violations on behalf of the *Association Burundaise pour la Protection des Droits Humains et des Personnes Détenues* (APRODH) an organisation that was shut down by the government in 2016. Nibitanga had been arbitrarily detained since 21 November 2017.¹⁷

¹¹ Protection International, “Protection International strongly condemns the wrongful conviction to 32 years in prison for human rights defender Germain Rukuki in Burundi,” 26 April 2018, <https://www.protectioninternationale.org/en/germain-rukuki-sentenced-32-years-prison>, Accessed 18 October, 2018.

¹² OMCT, “Burundi: Prison à perpétuité requise pour M. Germain Rukuki détenu arbitrairement,” 5 avril 2018, <http://www.omct.org/fr/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/burundi/2018/04/d24806/>, Accessed 18 October, 2018.

¹³ OHCHR, “UN experts call for release of Burundi human rights defender Germain Rukuki,” 25 August 2017, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21997&LangID=E>, Accessed 18 October, 2018.

¹⁴ Amnesty International, “UN DÉFENSEUR DES DROITS HUMAINS EN PRISON DEPUIS UN AN,” 19 July 2018, <https://www.amnesty.be/je-veux-agir/agir-en-ligne/ecrire-des-lettres/article/un-defenseur-des-droits-humains-en-prison-depuis-un-an?lang=fr>, Accessed 18 October, 2018.

¹⁵ SOS/Torture Burundi, “SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI REPORT No. 132,” 23 June 2018, http://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SOS_Torture_Burundi_report_NO_132-English.pdf, Accessed 18 September 2018.

¹⁶ SOS-Torture/Burundi, “SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI REPORT No. 139 PUBLISHED ON AUGUST 11, 2018,” 12 August 2018, <http://sostortureburundi.over-blog.com/2018/08/sos-torture/burundi-report-no.139-published-on-august-11-2018.html>, Accessed 18 September 2018.

¹⁷ Frontline Defenders, “NESTOR NIBITANGA DETAINED INCOMMUNICADO,” 3 August 2018, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/nestor-nibitanga-detained-incommunicado>, Accessed 18 September 2018.

On 28 September, the Burundian government announced a three-month ban on several local and international NGOs. Few details were released except that the organisations were provisionally suspended as of 1 October for allegedly violating the January 2017 NGO Law. They will be allowed to reopen, according to the government, if they comply with the country's regulations. The rules include strict control of their finances, the payment of administrative fees, and the implementation of ethnic hiring quotas.¹⁸

On 27 September, the First Instance Division of the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) declined to grant the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), and International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) the leave sought to appear as *amicus curiae* (friends of the Court) in a matter that challenges the Burundian government's order banning the activities and programs of five Burundian NGOs and freezing their accounts.¹⁹

Freedom of Expression

In the run-up to the May referendum, the National Communication Council (NCC) restricted several of the few remaining independent media outlets still operating in the country. On 11 April, Iwacu News was ordered to suspend its online comments section over allegations of "violation of professional standards."²⁰ BBC radio operations were suspended on 4 May 2018, after a guest on the radio made remarks that the NCC considered inappropriate. Voice of America was shut down on the same day for allegedly broadcasting on a banned frequency.²¹ In the same statement, the NCC also warned *Radio France Internationale* (RFI) over recent "untruthful and partisan" remarks, and accused the Burundian station *Isanganiro* of poor verification of sources.²²

¹⁸ Reuters, "Burundi suspends some NGO's for violating new law," 28 September 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-burundi-rights/burundi-suspends-some-ngos-for-violating-new-law-idUSKCN1M81AJ>, Accessed 18 September 2018.

¹⁹ EAC, "Regional Court dismisses Application by NGOs in Burundi seeking leave to Appear as Friends of the Court," 27 September 2018, <https://www.eac.int/press-releases/1226-regional-court-dismisses-application-by-ngos-in-burundi-seeking-leave-to-appear-as-friends-of-the-court>, Accessed 18 September 2018.

²⁰ Human Rights Watch, "No Comment' in Burundi: Debate Silenced at Critical Moment," 20 April 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/04/20/no-comment-burundi>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²¹ Reuters, "Burundi bans the BBC, VOA two weeks before referendum," 4 May 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-burundi-politics/burundi-bans-the-bbc-voa-two-weeks-before-referendum-idUSKBN1I51UK>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²² Human Rights Watch, "International Media Banned During Burundi's Referendum Campaign," 6 May 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/06/international-media-banned-during-burundis-referendum-campaign>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

On 17 August, security agents arrested about 20 people attending a workshop organised by the Burundi Leadership Training Program (BLTP). Although the organisers had an authorising letter signed by the Ministry of Interior, they were also arrested. The police gave no reason for these arrests.²³

Djibouti

Following the adoption of Djibouti's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the UN HRC in September, DefendDefenders and the Djiboutian Observatory for the Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights (ODDH) highlighted the government's unwillingness to accept concrete recommendations, the lack of consistency of some of its replies,²⁴ and the fact that Djibouti has yet to implement recommendations it committed to in its previous 2013 review.²⁵ Djibouti has received experts on the human rights situation in Somalia and Eritrea, but has never accepted any visit requests by other mandate holders concerning its own human rights situation.²⁶

On 12 September, it was reported that Djibouti and Eritrea would normalise relations, ending a decade-long dispute instigated during a 2008 border skirmish that left several dead.²⁷

Intimidation, and Harassment, and Attacks Against HRDs

On 15 April, agents from the country's Information and Security Service briefly detained HRD Kadar Abdi Ibrahim and confiscated his passport without giving any justification for their actions. The incident happened two days after he returned from Geneva, having participated in advocacy activities and events ahead of Djibouti's UPR.²⁸ In an annual report from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres released on 12 September, Djibouti featured on a list of 38

²³ Sos-Torture/Burundi, "SOS-TORTURE/BURUNDI REPORT N ° 140," 18 August 2018, <http://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/SOS-Torture-Burundi-N0-140-English-vesion.pdf>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁴ DefendDefenders, "Djibouti: Implement UN recommendations on human rights," 20 September 2018, https://www.defenddefenders.org/press_release/djibouti-implement-un-recommendations-on-human-rights/, Accessed 18 October 2018.

²⁵ OHCHR, "Universal Periodic Review - Djibouti," 10 May 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/DJindex.aspx>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

²⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Statesnotyetvisited.aspx>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

²⁷ Reuters, "Djibouti, Eritrea agree to normalize ties strained since 2008," 6 September 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eritrea-djibouti-politics/djibouti-eritrea-agree-to-normalize-ties-strained-since-2008-idUSKCN1LM2IM>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

²⁸ FIDH, "Djibouti: Reprisals against human rights defender Kadar Abdi Ibrahim upon his return from an advocacy mission in Geneva," 18 April 2018, <https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/djibouti-reprisals-against-human-rights-defender-kadar-abdi-ibrahim>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

countries the UN said carried out "shameful" practices including harsh reprisals and intimidation against people cooperating with UN human rights mechanisms as well as ill-treatment, detention, surveillance, and public stigmatisation of victims and HRDs.²⁹

Freedom of Association

On 18 October, police searched the home of opposition MoDEL party president Ismael Ahmed Waberi. The following day, Waberi was arrested alongside five other MoDEL leadership figures, including first vice-president Saada Ahmed Houssein, second vice-president Moussa Houssein Hadi, secretary general Kadar Abdi Ibrahim, and party member Yacin Abdillahi Boulaleh.³⁰

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

Police allegedly used tear gas and live ammunition to break up a protest in Tadjourah on 14 May after dozens of protesters gathered to denounce alleged nepotism in the recruitment of new civil servants linked to the construction of a new naval port. Some protesters suffered gunshot wounds, including one who was severely injured, and more than 80 arrests took place, although most detainees were later released.³¹ The right to freedom of peaceful assembly is severely restricted in Djibouti; while Article 15 of the Constitution guarantees "the full enjoyment of public rights and freedoms," the Penal Code broadly criminalises public assemblies considered likely to "disturb public order."

Eritrea

On 28 and 30 April, Eritrea presented its first state report to the 62nd ordinary session of the ACHPR in Mauritania. While this is a positive development, CSOs like Reporters Without Borders raised concerns over the state report's accuracy and credibility, describing the situation of freedom of expression as significantly worse in their own shadow report.³²

²⁹ Al Jazeera, "UN denounces 'shameful' reprisals on activists in 38 countries," 12 September 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/denounces-shameful-reprisals-activists-38-countries-180912085911318.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

³⁰ DefendDefenders, "Djibouti: Release critics, uphold their civil and political rights,"

³¹ Rfi, "Djibouti: une manifestation contre le clientélisme de l'emploi dégénère," 16 May 2018, <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20180516-djibouti-une-manifestation-contre-le-clientelisme-emploi-degenere>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

³² Reporters Without Borders, "RSF unveils 'shadow report' on press freedom in Eritrea," 27 April 2018, <https://rsf.org/en/reports/rsf-unveils-shadow-report-press-freedom-eritrea>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

On 9 July, Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed signed a declaration to end the "state of war" between the two rival nations, triggered during a brutal 1998-2000 border war.³³ It remains to be seen whether the improving relationship with Ethiopia will end the indefinite conscription of Eritreans into National Service, a compulsory programme for all citizens aged 18 to 50 years old, which includes military service. Introduced in 1995, this programme has been likened to modern day slavery by human rights actors.³⁴

In a further thawing on tensions in the Horn of Africa, on 12 September, it was reported that Djibouti and Eritrea would formally normalise relations frozen after a 2008 border skirmish.³⁵ While several States in the Horn of Africa called on the UN General Assembly in September to lift sanctions against Eritrea,³⁶ this regional rapprochement has yet to actually translate into the relaxing of Eritrea's egregious human rights policies.³⁷ In October, Eritrea was elected, without competition in a "clean slate," as a member of the UN HRC in a move decried by international civil society.³⁸

Freedom of Association

On 18 July 2018, the government released 35 detainees held for belonging to unregistered Christian denominations.³⁹ Eritrea has four official religions: Orthodox Christianity, Sunni Islam, Roman Catholicism, and the Evangelical-Lutheran church of Eritrea; membership in any other religious group is illegal. On 10 August, BBC reported that National Security Agency agents arrested Pentecostal Christians who attended an informal sermon by Ethiopian preacher Surafiel Demssie.⁴⁰

³³ BBC, "Eritreans hope for democracy after peace deal with Ethiopia," 17 July 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44848184>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

³⁴ Reuters, "North Korea, Eritrea have world's highest rates of modern slavery: report," 19 July 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-global-slavery-countries/north-korea-eritrea-have-highest-rates-of-modern-slavery-report-idUSKBN1K90KQ>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

³⁵ Voice of America, "Through Regional Diplomacy, Eritrea Normalizes Ties with Djibouti," 9 September 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/through-regional-diplomacy-eritrea-normalizes-ties-with-djibouti/4563681.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

³⁶ Africa News, "Horn of Africa unites on Eritrea sanctions lifting at UNGA," 1st October 2018, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/10/01/horn-of-africa-unites-on-eritrea-sanctions-lifting-at-unga/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

³⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Eritrea: Diplomacy Changes, but Political Prisoners Remain," 3 October 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/10/03/eritrea-diplomacy-changes-political-prisoners-remain>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

³⁸ DefendDefenders, "Eritrea: election to UN rights council is not a shield from scrutiny," 15 October 2018, https://www.defenddefenders.org/press_release/eritrea-election-to-un-rights-council-is-not-a-shield-from-scrutiny/, Accessed 18 October 2018.

³⁹ Africa News, "Eritrea frees 35 people detained on religious grounds," 27 July 2018, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/07/20/eritrea-frees-35-people-detained-on-religious-grounds/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁴⁰ BBC, "Africa this week: Trump's new conditions for ending Zimbabwe sanctions," 10 August 2018,

Freedom of Expression

In light of thawing relations with Ethiopia, One Day SEYOUM, an organisation seeking the release of imprisoned journalist Seyoum Tsehaye, started a viral #QuestionsForIsaias campaign on Twitter, in which users posed questions to President Afwerki about his 25-year dictatorship.⁴¹ Tsehaye, a freelance photojournalist, and his colleagues were arrested on 18 September 2001 in Asmara for demanding democracy in Eritrea.

On 17 September, former Eritrean Finance Minister Berhane Abrehe was arrested by national security agents in Asmara and taken to an undisclosed location.⁴² Berhane had recently released a controversial book criticising the Eritrean president and calling on young Eritreans to rise up for democratic change.⁴³

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

In early March, police in Asmara arrested and detained a large number of people after protests linked to the burial of Haji Musa Mohamed Nur who died in police custody at the age of 93. Many protesters were arrested near the Sheikh Alamin cemetery, where the burial took place, and were taken to the Adi Abeito Prison.⁴⁴ Haji Musa, a former director of a private Islamic school and a co-founder of the Eritrean Liberation Struggle, was arrested in October 2017 and is believed to have died in custody on 1 March.⁴⁵

Ethiopia

In late March, the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) elected Dr. Abiy Ahmed as its new leader following the abrupt resignation of Hailemariam Desalegn. Abiy is

<https://www.bbc.com/news/live/world-africa-45081987>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁴¹ Twitter, "#QuestionsforIsaias," <https://twitter.com/hashtag/QuestionsForIsaias?src=hash>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁴² Voice of America, "Former Top Eritrean Official Arrested After Criticizing President," 20 September 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/former-top-eritrean-official-arrested-after-criticizing-president/4579616.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁴³ HRCE, "Early Monday morning, the Security Agents in Asmera Arrested Mr. Berhane Abrehe, the Former Finance Minister of Eritrea (2000-2012)," 17 September 2018, <https://hrc-eritrea.org/early-monday-morning-the-security-agents-in-asmera-arrested-mr-berhane-abrehe-the-former-finance-minister-of-eritrea-2000-2012/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

⁴⁴ OHCHR, "Eritrea: UN expert says more arrests, detentions after elderly school chief dies in custody," 14 March 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22823&LangID=E>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁴⁵ Awate, "Close to a Thousand-People Arrested at Haji Musa's Funeral," 5 May 2018, <http://awate.com/close-thousand-people-arrested-haji-musas-funeral/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

a former minister and Ethiopia's first Prime Minister from the Oromo ethnic group since the ruling party took power in 1991. Since April, he has introduced sweeping reforms, including releasing hundreds of political prisoners, unbanning several political groups, and establishing a Ministry of Peace.⁴⁶ Despite these improvements, Ethiopia's relaxing of authoritarian control has also been accompanied by renewed ethnic tensions.⁴⁷ On 5 October, the EPRDF coalition voted to extend Prime Minister Abiy's chairmanship, cementing his authority as leader of the country.⁴⁸ In early June 2018, the government lifted the State of Emergency imposed in February following the abrupt resignation of the former Prime Minister.⁴⁹

On 9 July, Prime Minister Abiy and Eritrean President Afwerki signed a declaration to end the "state of war" between the two nations.⁵⁰ In early September, Prime Minister Abiy announced that troops on both sides would withdraw from the Eritrean border, several months after the two former rivals officially opened the border following two decades of tensions.⁵¹

On 4 October, for the 33rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group, CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia (AHRE), DefendDefenders, Committee to Protect Journalists, Article 19, Consortium of Ethiopian Rights Organizations (CERO), and Pen International, submitted a joint report for Ethiopia's review.⁵²

Freedom of Association

On 4 April, 19 political activists were released without charge. They were arrested on 24 March after travelling to Bahir Dar to discuss the formation of a new political party. Among those arrested were Dr. Dessalegn Chane (a professor at Bahir Dar University), Gashawu Mersha, Yesuf Ibrahim (a lawyer and former university lecturer), Temesgen Tessema (a lecturer at Wolo

⁴⁶ BBC, "Eritreans hope for democracy after peace deal with Ethiopia," 17 July 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44848184>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁴⁷ AHRE, "Ethiopian government must protect citizens from ethnically targeted attacks," 17 September 2018, <https://ahrethio.org/2018/09/17/ethiopian-government-must-protect-citizens-from-ethnically-targeted-attacks/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁴⁸ Twitter, Fitsum Arega @fitsumaregaa, <https://twitter.com/fitsumaregaa/status/1048199371618222083/photo/1>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁴⁹ Al Jazeera, "Ethiopia lifts state of emergency imposed in February," 5 June 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/ethiopia-lifts-state-emergency-imposed-february-180605081810759.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁵⁰ BBC, "Eritreans hope for democracy after peace deal with Ethiopia," 17 July 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44848184>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁵¹ Associated Press, "The Latest: Ethiopia, Eritrea to withdraw border troops," 11 September 2018, <https://www.apnews.com/8ae56c14b183414cb1c57ea33bde5194>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁵² DefendDefenders, "Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Joint Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review 33rd Session of the UPR Working Group," 4 October 2018, <https://www.defenddefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/CIVICUS-Joint-UPR-Submission-Ethiopia-.pdf>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

University), Belete Molla (a lecturer at Addis Ababa University), Nigatu Asress (a journalist at Amhara Regional TV), Belete Kassa (a former editor-in-chief of Qelem Qend newspaper), and Kassu Hailu (a lecturer at Enjibar University).⁵³

Bashir Makhtal, a Canadian citizen imprisoned in Ethiopia for more than 11 years, was returned to Canada on 21 April.⁵⁴ He was sentenced to life in prison in 2009 after being accused of being a member of the banned Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) separatist group, a charge he denied.⁵⁵

On 27 May, authorities pardoned opposition leader Andargachew Tsige, who was found guilty of "terrorism" and sentenced to life in prison in absentia in 2009 over his role in the opposition group Ginbot 7. Andargachew, who has British citizenship, was pardoned "under special circumstances" along with 575 other prisoners.⁵⁶ He had been on death row for over three years after he was seized at an international airport in Yemen in June 2014 and transferred into Ethiopian custody shortly thereafter, where he was held in solitary confinement for over a year.⁵⁷

On 12 July, the President of the beleaguered Somali region, Abdi Mohamoud Omar, announced that his provincial government had released thousands of inmates who had been jailed for their involvement with the ONLF. He proceeded to say that plans were underway to turn the prisons into schools and hospitals.⁵⁸

On 7 August, the Ethiopian government signed an agreement to end hostilities with the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).⁵⁹ This followed the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire by the group in early July, after Parliament removed it from a contentious list of banned terrorist groups

⁵³ Addis Standard, "NEWS: DESPITE PROMISES OF RELEASE ON INDIVIDUAL BAIL, REARRESTED JOURNALISTS, BLOGGERS AND OPPOSITION POLITICIANS REMAIN IN POLICE CUSTODY," 4 April 2018, <https://addisstandard.com/news-despite-promises-of-release-on-individual-bail-rearrested-journalists-bloggers-and-opposition-politicians-remain-in-police-custody/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁵⁴ CBC, "Canadian man imprisoned for 11 years in Ethiopia returns to Toronto," 21 April 2018, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/bashir-makhtal-ethiopia-prison-canada-home-1.4630222>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁵⁵ Amnesty International, "Amnesty International Welcomes Canadian Citizen Bashir Makhtal's Release from Ethiopian Prison and Return to Canada," 21 April 2018, <https://www.amnesty.ca/news/amnesty-international-welcomes-canadian-citizen-bashir-makhtal%E2%80%99s-release-ethiopian-prison-and>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁵⁶ Al Jazeera, "Andargachew Tsige pardoned by Ethiopia," 26 May 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/andargachew-tsige-pardoned-ethiopia-180526163642586.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁵⁷ Reprieve, "Andy Tsege is pardoned by Ethiopia," 26 May 2018, <https://reprieve.org.uk/case-study/andargachew-tsege/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁵⁸ Reuters, "Ethiopian rebel group declares ceasefire in wake of reforms," 12 July 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-politics/ethiopian-rebel-group-declares-ceasefire-in-wake-of-reforms-idUSKBN1K22H0>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁵⁹ Al Jazeera, "Ethiopia signs deal with Oromo rebels to end hostilities," 7 August 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2018/08/ethiopia-signs-deal-oromo-rebels-hostilities-180807184317117.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

maintained by the previous government since 2008, which also included Ginbot 7 and the ONLF.⁶⁰

On 15 September, the OLF leadership returned to Addis Ababa from exile in Eritrea, along with some 1500 OLF fighters.⁶¹ Similarly, nearly 2000 Ethiopian rebels with the Tigray People's Democratic Movement (TPDM) returned from Eritrea in October after signing the peace agreement with the Ethiopian government in August.⁶²

On 16 October, Ethiopian police arrested Henok Aklilu, a young attorney and HRD, and his friend activist Michael Melak. They were accused of organising and inciting instability, opposing Addis Ababa's administration and attending meetings and training sessions at the Embassy of the State of Palestine. They were allegedly arrested while preparing to establish a youth association in Addis Ababa.⁶³

Freedom of Expression

On 5 April, 11 journalists, bloggers, and activists were released from detention. They were arrested by Ethiopian security forces on 25 March while attending a private meeting in Addis Ababa at the home of journalist Temesgen Desalegn. They had also allegedly displayed a flag that differs from the official national banner at the meeting.⁶⁴ Blogger Seyoum Teshome, who was arrested on 8 March, was also released in mid-April.⁶⁵

In a positive step, mobile Internet services that had been blocked for months, notably in the protest-heavy Oromia, Amhara, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), were restored in early April 2018. All Internet and telephone services in the country are controlled by state-owned Ethio Telecom.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Al Jazeera, "Ethiopia removes OLF, ONLF and Ginbot 7 from terror list," 5 July 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/ethiopia-olf-onlf-ginbot-7-terror-list-180630110501697.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018

⁶¹ Al Jazeera, "Thousands of Ethiopians hail return of once-banned Oromo group," 15 September 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/thousands-ethiopians-hail-return-banned-oromo-group-180915112057665.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁶² Africa News, "About 2,000 Tigray rebels return to Ethiopia from Eritrea," 10 October 2018, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/10/10/about-2000-tigray-rebels-return-to-ethiopia-from-eritrea/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁶³ AHRE, "Arbitrary detention of activists signals prevailing rights violations," 21 October 2018, <https://ahrethio.org/2018/10/21/arbitrary-detention-of-activists-signals-prevailing-rights-violations/>, Accessed 23 October 2018.

⁶⁴ CPJ, "Ethiopia arrests at least five journalists during state of emergency," 26 March 2018, <https://cpj.org/2018/03/ethiopia-arrests-at-least-five-journalists-during-pho>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁶⁵ Citizen TV, "Ethiopia releases 11 jailed anti-government bloggers," 6 April 2018, <https://citizentv.co.ke/news/ethiopia-releases-11-jailed-anti-government-bloggers-and-journalists-196003/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁶⁶ Africa News, "Ethiopia closes Maekelawi prison, restores internet across the country," 7 April 2018,

On 22 June, Ethiopian authorities allowed access to 264 previously blocked websites, news outlets, and blogs, including diaspora-based outlets like the Oromia Media Network and Ethiopian Satellite Television and Radio.⁶⁷

On 13 July, a news crew from state-owned Dire Dawa Mass Media Agency was attacked in Meiso, Oromia State, by a group of unknown people who accused them of being spies. The news crew, who were travelling to Addis Ababa to cover a visit by the Eritrean president, were then taken to the police station by the attackers and later released. However, their driver Suleiman Mahamed, who left the police station alone after being released, was again assaulted in a separate attack which left him in a coma state. He died in hospital on 19 July due to injuries sustained to his head and ribs.⁶⁸

In early August, the Ethiopian government cut off Internet connections in the eastern parts of the country, the first time they have done so since lifting the State of Emergency in June 2018.⁶⁹ The shutdown was allegedly in response to ongoing violence in the Somali region.⁷⁰

On 10 October, the government cut off Internet connection for several hours when 200 protesting soldiers, some of them armed, arrived at the Prime Minister's office unannounced allegedly to demand a pay rise.⁷¹

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

On 14 September, police fired tear gas in Addis Ababa to disperse crowds in the wake of clashes between OLF supporters and some residents of the city.⁷² The clashes were sparked by objections to OLF supporters displaying the flag and colours of their movement. Police also confirmed that five people were killed on 17 September during clashes between security forces and demonstrators in Addis Ababa, who were marching to protest the killings and violence of

<http://www.africanews.com/2018/04/07/ethiopia-closes-maekelawi-prison-restores-internet-across-the-country/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁶⁷ CPJ, "Ethiopia allows access to over 260 blocked websites," 22 June 2018, <https://cpj.org/2018/06/ethiopia-allows-access-to-over-260-blocked-website.php>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁶⁸ CPJ, "In Ethiopia, driver for news crew dies from injuries after attack," 23 July 2018, <https://cpj.org/2018/07/in-ethiopia-driver-for-news-crew-dies-from-injurie.php>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁶⁹ Reuters, "Internet in eastern Ethiopia shut down after regional violence," 8 August 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-internet/internet-in-eastern-ethiopia-shut-down-after-regional-violence-idUSKBN1KTOT4>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁷⁰ Quartz Africa, "Ethiopia has resorted to its old habit of blocking the internet to quell internal unrest," 8 August 2018, <https://qz.com/africa/1351277/ethiopia-internet-shutdown-in-eastern-somali-region/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁷¹ BBC, "Abiy Ahmed: Protesting Ethiopian soldiers wanted to kill me," 18 October 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45903244>, Accessed 23 October 2018.

⁷² Africa News, "Ethiopia riot police deployed, Addis deserted amid flag clashes," 14 September 2018, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/09/14/ethiopia-riot-police-deployed-addis-deserted-amid-flag-clashes/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

the prior two days.⁷³ The Oromo are the largest ethnic group in the country and were at the centre of massive protests that began in 2016 amid claims that the central government had politically and socially disenfranchised them for decades.⁷⁴ In the days following the violence, some 3,000 youths were arrested, with nearly 1,200 detained at the Tolay Military Camp for a “rehabilitation education.” At least 1,000 of the detained were released on 18 October.⁷⁵ Rights groups denounced these arrests as contrary to government promises of reform and commitment to the protection and respect of fundamental human rights.

On 28 September, five men were charged with terrorism in connection to a grenade attack which killed two and injured over a hundred at one of Abiy’s political rallies in June.⁷⁶

Kenya

After months of violence following the hotly contested August 2017 elections and the controversial October 2017 rerun, President Uhuru Kenyatta and his rival Raila Odinga publicly shook hands and pledged reconciliation in early April 2018.⁷⁷ However, this rapprochement between the ruling party and opposition did not necessarily lead to justice for protesters killed in post-election violence, nor to a reversal of the flagrant crackdown on freedom of expression and association that has since taken place.

Intimidation, Harassment, and Attacks Against HRDs

In June 2018, Human Rights Watch accused Kenyan officials of routinely harassing and threatening HRDs advocating for accountability after the unrest that engulfed the 2017 general elections. Most of the incidents reported by HRDs include threats of arrest, warnings against posting information about police brutality, home and office raids, and confiscation of laptops

⁷³ AHRE, “Ethiopian government must protect citizens from ethnically targeted attacks,” 17 September 2018, <https://ahrethio.org/2018/09/17/ethiopian-government-must-protect-citizens-from-ethnically-targeted-attacks/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁷⁴ AHRE, “Ailing Civic Space in an Authoritarian State: The State of Human Rights Defenders and Cost of Dissent in Ethiopia,” January 2018, <http://www.ethiotion.com/Pdf/01302018%20AilingCivicSpace.pdf>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁷⁵ Amnesty International, “Ethiopia: Mass arbitrary arrests and detentions of youth threaten a new era of human rights gains,” 24 September 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/09/ethiopia-mass-arbitrary-arrests-and-detentions-of-youth-threaten-a-new-era-of-human-rights-gains/>, Accessed 22 October 2018.

⁷⁶ BBC “Ethiopia attack: Five charged for trying to kill PM Abiy Ahmed,” 28 September 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45678760>, Accessed 21 October 2018.

⁷⁷ Daily Nation, “With a handshake, Kenya leaves behind divisive poll,” 10 April 2018, <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/politics/Uhuru-Kenyatta-and-Raila-Odinga-handshake/1064-4379964-os1fhtz/index.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

and other items. There have reportedly been up to 15 activists who have endured these intimidation tactics since the elections.⁷⁸

In late August, a Kenyan lawyer filed a petition at the ICC in The Hague to officially investigate crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the eviction of families from Mau Forest.⁷⁹ The indigenous Ogiek community, who live in the Mau forest complex, allege that they have been forcibly evicted from their ancestral lands without compensation for decades. In May 2017, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights ruled that the Kenyan government had violated the Ogiek people's rights to land, religion, culture, development, and non-discrimination.⁸⁰

On 30 August, several CSOs collaborated to mark the international day of victims of enforced disappearances by launching Missing Voices, a website that will help document cases of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions in Kenya.⁸¹

Freedom of Expression

Rafiki, a Kenyan film that explores a love story between two young women, was banned in Kenya on 26 April ahead of its debut at the Cannes Film Festival. The Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) justified the ban asserting that the film "seeks to legitimise lesbian romance," while homosexual sex is against the law in Kenya.⁸² The KFCB also accused the film's Kenyan director, Wanuri Kahiu, of contravening the Film and Stage Plays Act (2012),⁸³ which states that alterations to the script of a production can only be made after the permission of the licensing officer. They accused her of changing the script to include content to "celebrate the resilience of the youngsters involved in lesbianism," after the licensing of the film.⁸⁴ Kahiu was threatened

⁷⁸ Human Rights Watch, "Kenya: Police Threaten Activists Reporting Abuse," 4 June 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/04/kenya-police-threaten-activists-reporting-abuse>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁷⁹ Daily Nation, "Mau evictions: ICC receives petition against the State," 22 August 2018, <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/ICC-receives-petition-on-Mau-evictions/1056-4723510-ji7mgd/index.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁸⁰ Reuters, "African Court rules Kenya violates forest people's land rights," 26 May 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-rights-ogiek/african-court-rules-kenya-violates-forest-peoples-land-rights-idUSKBN18M1ZC>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁸¹ Twitter, "MissingVoicesKE," <https://twitter.com/MissingVoicesKE>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁸² BBC, "Kenya bans *Rafiki* ahead of Cannes debut over lesbian scenes," 27 April 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-43922780>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁸³ CAP 222, Film and Stage Plays Act, Revised Edition 2012, http://www.kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/FilmsandStagePlaysAct_Cap222.pdf

⁸⁴ Kenya Film Classification Board, "Statement by the Kenya Film Classification Board Chief Executive Officer Dr. Ezekiel Mutua, MBS on the Banning of the Film *Rafiki*," 27 April 2018, <http://kfcg.co.ke/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/CEO-STATEMENT-ON-RAFIKI-RESTRICTION-27-4-2018.pdf>

with arrest, yet denied the charges.⁸⁵ In September 2018, Kahiu sued the KCFB on grounds of damage to her career, which led to the ban being temporarily lifted on 21 September by the High Court in Nairobi, allowing the film to be screened for a single week and qualify for Academy Award nominations.⁸⁶ In her ruling, Justice Wilfirda Okwany stated that Kenyan society is not so weak that its moral foundation will be shaken by seeing such a film.⁸⁷

On 29 May, The High Court in Nairobi temporarily suspended 26 sections of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Bill,⁸⁸ which was signed into law by the President on 16 May 2018, after an appeal by the Bloggers Association of Kenya, among others.⁸⁹ While the objective of the law was to address issues including cybercrime, cyber bullying, phishing, and fake news, the plaintiffs contend that it contains provisions which threaten freedom of expression, the right to privacy, and the right to a fair trial. On 3 July, the suspension of the 26 provisions was extended to October when the Court will hear an application by the Attorney General to have the suspension lifted on the basis that it was erroneously issued.

On 31 July, during a parliamentary session, two journalists with the privately-owned People Daily newspaper were criticised and threatened with being barred from covering future parliamentary proceedings, and summoned to a legislative committee. The summons was allegedly in connection to stories Dinah Ondari and Anthony Mwangi published on 30-31 July accusing MPs of taking and soliciting bribes from organisations and individuals they were meant to be investigating.⁹⁰

On 16 August, two Nation Media Group journalists were assaulted by security guards and construction workers while trying to cover a story related to an ongoing construction project, which had encroached on public land. Laban Walloga and Karim Rajan were then put into a car and taken to Bamburi Police Station where they were arrested. They were released the same evening after complaints by CSOs.⁹¹

⁸⁵ The Hindu, "Kenyan filmmaker Wanuri Kahiu fears arrest," 11 May 2018, <https://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/movies/kenyan-filmmaker-fears-arrest/article23854026.ece>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁸⁶ The East African, "Kenyan 'Rafiki' film ban lifted for a week," 21 September 2018, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/magazine/Kenyan-Rafiki-film-ban-lifted-for-a-week/434746-4770672-rsxepuz/index.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁸⁷ The Guardian, "Kenya briefly lifts ban on gay film to allow for Oscar submission," 21 September 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/21/judge-rules-banned-kenyan-gay-film-rafiki-can-be-screened-for-seven-days>, Accessed 22 October 2018.

⁸⁸ Kenya Law, "Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act," 16 May 2018, <http://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/ComputerMisuseandCybercrimesActNo5of2018.pdf>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁸⁹ The East African, "High Court suspends portions of Kenya cybercrime law," 29 May 2018, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Court-suspends-portions-of-Kenya-cybercrime-law/4552908-4586250-1kaa55/index.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁹⁰ CPJ, "Kenyan parliamentarians harass journalists following corruption allegations," 3 August 2018, <https://cpj.org/2018/08/kenyan-parliamentarians-harass-journalists-followi.php>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁹¹ Pulse, "Boinnet takes action after 2 NMG journalists were beaten," 17 August 2018,

On 3 September, Sharon Otieno and photojournalist Barrack Oduor were abducted and attacked as they went to meet a story source, a meeting which later turned out to be an orchestrated ambush. It later emerged that Otieno, who had a relationship with the county governor, Okoth Obado, was seven months pregnant, and had contacted Oduor to make the story public.⁹² Oduor escaped the kidnapping by jumping out of a moving vehicle, while Otieno's body was later found dumped in Kodero Forest, apparently stabbed to death.⁹³

In October, the Kenyan government introduced a 15 percent excise duty tax on Internet services through a new Finance Bill, which came into effect on 15 October. This levy limits freedom of expression online and makes it increasingly difficult for citizens to access information on matters of public concern.⁹⁴

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

Police arrested two environmental activists on 25 May during a protest against plans to set up a coal-fired power plant at Kwasasi, Lamu County. The two activists, Walid Ahmed Ali and Ishaq Abubakar Khatib, were picked up by police on the streets of Lamu Old Town. Both work with Save Lamu, an environmental activism group. The group had sought permission to demonstrate but their request was rejected by police who deemed the protest "unlawful."⁹⁵

On 29 May, activist and protest organiser, Mildred Atty Owiso, went missing two days before a nationwide anti-corruption demonstration scheduled for 31 May.⁹⁶ It later emerged that she had been abducted by men in plainclothes, driven to an undisclosed location, and questioned. Five hours later, she was released and warned by the abductors to stay off social media and stop organising protests.⁹⁷ The demonstration was part of a series of protests organised by an

<https://www.pulselive.co.ke/news/local/boinnet-orders-probe-on-assault-of-2-nmg-journalists-in-shanzu-id8735518.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁹² Daily Nation, "Sharon Otieno's last moments before she was murdered," 6 September 2018, <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Sharon-Otieno-last-moments-before-being-killed-in-knife-attack--/1056-4745874-fyls66z/index.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁹³ Standard Digital, "Sharon Otieno's murder timeline: What we know so far," 24 September 2018, <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001296711/sharon-otieno-s-murder-timeline-what-we-know-so-far>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁹⁴ IT Web Africa, "Kenyatta slaps tax on internet and money transfer charges," 21 September 2018, <http://www.itwebafrica.com/ict-and-governance/256-kenya/244877-kenya-uhuru-slaps-tax-on-internet-and-money-transfer-charges>, Accessed 23 October 2018.

⁹⁵ Daily Nation, "Police arrest two in Lamu coal plant protest," 25 May 2018, <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/lamu/Police-arrest-2-anti-Lamu-coal-plant-protester/3444912-4579706-ymfm8l/index.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁹⁶ Kenyans, "Anti-Corruption Protest Organizer Mildred Atty Owiso Goes Missing," 21 August 2018, <https://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/29842-anti-corruption-protest-organizer-mildred-atty-owiso-goes-missing>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁹⁷ Daily Nation, "Atieno Owiso: My five-hour ordeal in abductors' hands," 30 May 2018, <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Mildred-Atieno-Owiso-abduction/1056-4586612-jk5owpz/index.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

all-female group to raise awareness of a massive corruption scandal within the National Youth Service and National Cereals and Produce Board.⁹⁸

On 23 August, dozens of Kenyans took to the streets to show solidarity and protest the detention of Ugandan pop star turned MP, Robert Kyagulanyi, popularly known as Bobi Wine, and thirty two others. The protestors converged at the city's Uhuru Park and marched to the Ugandan Embassy in demonstrations that were peaceful and not suppressed by Kenyan security forces.⁹⁹

Rwanda

Freedom of Association

The trial against former presidential candidate Diane Rwigara and her mother continues, despite being repeatedly delayed. The two have been charged with “inciting violence, insurrection, or trouble among the population,” as well as several tax related offences.¹⁰⁰ On 18 June, authorities auctioned off almost USD \$2 million of Rwigara's family tobacco business to recover tax arrears. Diane, a presidential candidate in the 2017 general election, alleges that charges against her are politically motivated. Since announcing her decision to run for presidency, Diane and her family have experienced unending threats and attacks from authorities intended to intimidate and harass them. She has been in detention since September 2017.¹⁰¹

In a rare development, two Green Party opposition candidates were elected to parliament for the first time during elections held on 5 September.¹⁰² Another small party, PS Imberakuri, also won two seats for the first time.¹⁰³ However, the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) party

⁹⁸ Daily Monitor, “Kenyan officials arrested in '\$90 m' graft scandal,” 28 May 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/World/Kenyan-officials-arrested--90-m-graft-scandal/688340-4583782-109tgbo/index.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

⁹⁹ Daily Nation, “Dozens march in Nairobi to protest Bobi Wine's detention,” 23 August 2018, <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/Bobi-Wine-Dozens-march-in-Nairobi-/1066-4725350-13lu3mhz/index.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹⁰⁰ Amnesty International, “Rwanda: Ensure fair trial for former presidential aspirant,” 22 May 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AFR4784642018ENGLISH.pdf>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹⁰¹ The Economist, “A woman who ran against Rwanda's president is on trial,” 26 May 2018, <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2018/05/26/a-woman-who-ran-against-rwandas-president-is-on-trial>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹⁰² Reuters, “Two opposition lawmakers elected in Rwanda for the first time,” 5 September 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-rwanda-politics/two-opposition-lawmakers-elected-in-rwanda-for-the-first-time-idUSKCN1LL2HI>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹⁰³ Bloomberg, “Four Seats Enough, Rwanda's Opposition Declares Vote Victory,” 6 September 2018,

retains an overwhelming majority, amid accusations that it has for years stifled, harassed, and jailed opposition figures.

On 15 September, 2,140 prisoners were released, including jailed opposition leader Victoire Ingabire of the FDU-Inkingi political party.¹⁰⁴ Ingabire returned from exile in 2010 to run for president, but was arrested within a few months, and accused of undermining the government and denying the genocide. In 2012, she was sentenced to 15 years in prison, in a trial described as politically motivated by international CSOs. After her release, Ingabire called for the release of other political prisoners,¹⁰⁵ while President Paul Kagame responded by warning the newly released prisoners to be "humble" and "careful" or they would return to jail.¹⁰⁶

Freedom of Expression

On 10 August 2018, the *Observatoire des droits de l'homme au Rwanda* reported the disappearance of Jean de Dieu Ndamira, a Rwandan citizen who had been sharing stories of his life on social media and on websites such as the Rwandan Media Network. According to reports, it is believed that he may have been detained by Rwandan authorities because of his writing, which has been considered critical of the Rwandan government.¹⁰⁷

Gospel musician Kizito Mihigo, was also released alongside Ingabire on 15 September. He was arrested in 2014 after he released a song about the 1994 genocide. He later pleaded guilty to conspiring to kill president Kagame, among other crimes, although civil society groups reported that he had been beaten and coerced into making the confessions.¹⁰⁸

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-09-05/four-seats-enough-for-rwanda-opposition-to-declare-vote-victory>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹⁰⁴ Al Jazeera, "Rwandan opposition leader among 2,100 released from prison," 15 September 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/rwandan-opposition-leader-2100-released-prison-180915094047528.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹⁰⁵ DW, "Rwanda: Opposition leader demands release of jailed political opponents," 17 September 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/rwanda-opposition-leader-demands-release-of-jailed-political-opponents/a-45529034>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹⁰⁶ The East African, "Don't be shocked if you go back to jail, Kagame tells Ingabire," 19 September 2018, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Rwanda-Kagame-warns-opposition-leader-Ingabire/4552908-4767706-6p9rqz/index.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹⁰⁷ ODHR, "OBSERVATOIRE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME AU RWANDA (ODHR) : ALERTE ET APPEL URGENT SUR LA DISPARITION DE JEAN DE DIEU NDAMIRA," 10 August 2018, <http://odhr.over-blog.com/2018/08/observatoire-des-droits-de-l-homme-au-rwanda-odhr-alerte-et-appel-urgent-sur-la-disparition-de-jean-de-dieu-ndamira.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹⁰⁸ DW, "Kizito Mihigo, un artiste qui reste engagé," 20 September 2018, <https://www.dw.com/fr/kizito-mihigo-un-artiste-qui-reste-engag%C3%A9/a-45583627>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

On 2 May, 23 Congolese refugees at the Kiziba Camp were arrested after clashes erupted with Rwandan security forces.¹⁰⁹ The violence left one protester dead and at least one other injured. Clashes began when refugees in the camp allegedly pelted visiting government officials with stones, prompting police to respond with tear gas and live ammunition.¹¹⁰ Refugees have reportedly been banned from interacting with the general public since 22 February 2018, when protests over food rations left at least 11 dead. Over 17,000 Congolese refugees live in the camp.

Somalia (with Somaliland)

In a report presented during the 39th session of the UN Human Rights Council in September, the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Bahame Tom Nyanduga, highlighted positive developments in the country, including forward motion on the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission, and ending the practice of public executions in Mogadishu. However, the report also raised significant challenges, including the continued crackdown on free expression and independent media.¹¹¹

In late June, the Human Rights Centre in Somaliland accused the government of disregarding the Paris Principles when selecting members of the National Human Rights Commission, a process the organisation said lacked transparency and disregarded national and international law.¹¹²

In report published on 13 August, the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the UN human rights office (OHCHR) urged Somalia to ensure that future elections are not marred by the human rights violations committed during the 2016-2017 parliamentary and presidential election cycles.¹¹³ The report outlined abuses by state security forces and non-state actors like Al Shabaab in the previous electoral period, including the killing of 44 clan leaders and electoral

¹⁰⁹ Reuters, "Rwanda police arrest 23 Congolese refugees after violence in camp," 2 May 2018, <https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN1I318D-OZATP>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹¹⁰ UNHCR, "Clashes in Rwanda camp lead to tragic refugee death," 4 May 2018, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2018/5/5aec18b84/clashes-rwanda-camp-lead-tragic-refugee-death.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹¹¹ OHCHR, "39th session of the Human Rights Council," September 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session39/Pages/39RegularSession.aspx>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹¹² HRC Somaliland, "Human Rights Centre statement on the composition of the National Human Rights Commission," 14 August 2018, <http://hrcsomaliland.org/human-rights-centre-statement-on-the-composition-of-the-national-human-rights-commission/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹¹³ UN News, "Somalia: UN urges steps to ensure future elections not 'marred' by rights abuses seen in recent polls," 13 August 2018, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/08/1016912>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

delegates, most of which were not properly investigated. It also recommended that future candidates for office be vetted with regard to their human rights records.¹¹⁴

On 13 August, the Somali National Army instructed troops to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law when conducting military operations in the country, emphasising civilians protection during armed conflict.¹¹⁵

Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for a suicide car bombing that targeted a European Union (EU) convoy on 1 October in Mogadishu, killing three and injuring others. The EU is a major source of funding for the African Union-mandated peacekeeping force (AMISOM) which supports the central government against various Islamists organisations across the country.¹¹⁶

Freedom of Association

Somaliland's Vice-Minister for Planning and Development deregistered seven NGOs in mid-July, claiming that they were registered as local organisations, despite also being registered in other countries. The organisations were based in Mogadishu and also have offices in Somaliland.¹¹⁷ Somaliland is a self-declared republic, although it is internationally recognised as an autonomous region of Somalia.

In October, a defected founder and commander of militant Islamist group Al Shabaab, Mukhtar Robow, was barred from running for public office in Somalia. A day after Robow declared his intention to run, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement that he is unable to put his name forward for the presidency of the country's South-West state, as he still faces sanctions. He is the highest ranking Al Shabaab militant to defect, despite being one of the group's founders.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ OHCHR, "Securing political participation: Human rights in somalia's electoral process," August 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/SO/ReportHRVElectoralProcessAug2018.pdf>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹¹⁵ AMISOM, "Somalia's army asked to comply with International Humanitarian Law during military operations," 13 August 2018, <http://amisom-au.org/2018/08/somalias-army-asked-to-comply-with-international-humanitarian-law-during-military-operations/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹¹⁶ Reuters, "Three die after Somalia car bomb strikes EU convoy: police," 1 October 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-security/car-bomb-hits-eu-convoy-in-somalia-no-casualties-police-idUSKCN1MB258>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹¹⁷ Somaliland Daily, "Somaliland deregisters 7 NGOs," 16 July 2018, <http://somalilanddaily.com/articles/269/Somaliland-deregisters-7-NGOs>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹¹⁸ Voice of America, "Somali Government Blocks Ex-Militant from Seeking Political Office," 5 October 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-government-blocks-ex-militant-seeking-political-office/4601493.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

Freedom of Expression

Somalia remains one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists. On World Press Freedom Day in May 2018, UN Special Representative Michael Keating called for space that would allow journalists to operate without fear.¹¹⁹

On 4 May, authorities in Garowe, in the semi-autonomous Puntland region, arrested journalist Ibrahim Obo Daud (also known as Suldan Godogodo) who runs *Shacabka* Media, a news website that covers Somalia with a focus on Puntland politics. The journalist is a Norwegian citizen and was visiting his family in Puntland at the time of the arrest. It is unclear what triggered the arrest, but he was held at Garowe Prison and allegedly denied medical care. On 20 May, he was released on bail, though no charges had been brought against him. His passport was confiscated and held by the Puntland's Grade 1 Court, and he was allegedly ordered to report to the office of the Puntland Attorney General on a weekly basis.¹²⁰

Somaliland poet Naima Ahmed Ibrahim Qorane was released from prison on 7 May, after receiving a presidential pardon. She was arrested in late January and sentenced to three years in prison for spreading "unpatriotic propaganda" for allegedly promoting the idea of a united Somalia on Facebook.¹²¹

Mohamed Ahmed Jama and Abdirahman Keyse Mohamed, two journalists covering the conflict between Somaliland and Puntland, were arrested in late May 2018. They were arrested in the town of Las Anod in the contested Sool region and detained at a police station until 30 May, before being transferred to the main detention centre. Neither were charged. They were granted bail and released on 31 May.¹²²

On 29 May, Somaliland's Information Ministry banned SBS TV and another privately-owned station SOMNews. The Ministry of Information accused the stations of inaccurate reporting and carrying out a "propaganda war" against Somaliland.¹²³

¹¹⁹ UN News, "'Standing up for our right to truth,' UN celebrates press freedom," 3 May 2018, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/05/1008862>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹²⁰ CPJ, "Puntland authorities detain journalist without charge," 18 May 2018, <https://cpj.org/2018/05/puntland-authorities-detain-journalist-without-cha.php>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹²¹ The East African, "Somali poetess Qorane released from jail," 7 May 2018, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/africa/Somali-poetess-Qorane-released-from-jail/4552902-4549626-eibtsj/index.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹²² HRC Somaliland, "Somaliland: two journalists and protesters arrested in Laasaanood and two TV channels shut down," 14 August 2018, <http://hrcsomaliland.org/somaliland-two-journalists-protestors-arrested-in-laasaanood-and-two-tv-channels-shut-down/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹²³ CPJ, "Somaliland arrests journalists, bans TV stations," 1 July 2018, <https://cpj.org/2018/06/somaliland-arrests-journalists-bans-tv-stations.php>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

On 23 May, a parliamentary committee of the Somaliland National Assembly issued a decision banning unauthorised press conferences and meetings in Sool region. The decision was taken in the wake of escalating conflict between Puntland and Somaliland.¹²⁴

On 19 June, the Attorney General's office in Somaliland sought a court order to have local newspaper *Waaberi* deregistered, accusing it of improper registration. *Waaberi*'s owner, Hassan Omar Hassan, was accused of dual registration and illegal transfer of ownership. No clause under Article 6 of Somaliland's Press Law forbids dual registration or transferring.¹²⁵ On 21 July, an appeals court lifted the ban imposed by a lower court.¹²⁶

In late June 2018, the President of Somaliland pardoned journalist Mohamed Adan Dirir and blogger Mohamed Kayse Mohamoud. Dirir had been sentenced in a one-day trial on 8 October 2017 to 18 months in prison on charges of criminal defamation and publishing false news. Kayse had been sentenced to 18 months in prison for "offending the honour of the President" in a Facebook post. They were released from prison on 18 and 19 June, respectively.¹²⁷

On 20 June, the government of Somaliland released tribal leader King Osman Aw Mahamoud (also known as Burmadow) after serving two months in jail. He had been imprisoned in April on charges of "bringing the State into contempt" after delivering a speech critical of the sovereignty of Somaliland at an elder's inauguration event in the semi-autonomous Puntland earlier in the year.¹²⁸

On 5 July, the European Parliament adopted a resolution recognising the need for urgent action in the face of grave violations of freedom of expression in Somalia, notably the government's longstanding mistreatment of the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ). The resolution notably called for "the institution of independent and credible investigations of crimes committed against Somali journalists, the eradication of corruption, and the building of accountable institutions, especially in the security sector."¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Hiiraan Online, "Go'aamo Amaanka la xiriira oo looga dhawaaqay Laascaanood," 23 May 2018, https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2018/may/wararka_maanta23-155832.htm, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹²⁵ CPJ, "Somaliland bans operations of privately owned newspaper," 21 June 2018, <https://cpj.org/2018/06/somaliland-bans-operations-of-privately-owned-news.php>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹²⁶ Twitter, Human Rights Centre Somaliland @hrcsomaliland, <https://twitter.com/hrcsomaliland/status/1020937564033814529>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹²⁷ HRC Somaliland, "Somaliland: The President pardons jailed traditional leader, journalist and blogger," 14 August 2018, <http://hrcsomaliland.org/somaliland-the-president-pardons-jailed-traditional-leader-journalist-and-blogger/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹²⁸ Garowe Online, "Somaliland releases elder from jail in presidential pardon," 20 June 2018, <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somaliland/somalia-somaliland-releases-prominent-elder-in-presidential-pardon>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹²⁹ NUSOJ, "EU: Historic vote highlights the severity of freedom of expression situation in Somalia," 5 July 2018, <http://www.nusoj.org/eu-historic-vote-highlights-the-severity-of-freedom-of-expression-situation-in-somalia/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

On 8 July, an appeals court in Hargesia overturned a ban on popular newspaper *Haatuf*.¹³⁰ *Haatuf* and its sister publication, Somaliland Times, were suspended in 2014 on allegations of publishing false news. Their editor-in-chief, Ahmed Ali Egeh, and owner, Yusuf Abdi Gabobe, were both given three-year prison terms and hefty fines.¹³¹ They have filed a civil suit against the government at the regional court in Hargesia seeking compensation for the closure.

On 26 July, journalist and cameraman for the privately-owned Somali Broadcasting Services, Abdirisaq Qasim Iman, was shot dead by a soldier at a traffic stop in Mogadishu.¹³² According to witnesses, within moments of arriving at the checkpoint, an argument between the two led the soldier in question to fire two rounds at Abdirisaq's head. The soldier fled the scene after the shooting.¹³³

In a report presented during the 39th session of the UN HRC in September, the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Bahame Tom Nyanduga, highlighted reported cases of alleged arbitrary arrest, detention without trial, harassment, and intimidation of journalists by security agents. The report also raised concerns on a proposed media law which may fall below international standards, as amendments proposed by journalists were not included when it was tabled in parliament.¹³⁴

According to a report released on 6 September 2018 by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) between August 2016 and July 2018, eight journalists and media workers were killed and 32 injured, while 94 journalists and other media workers were arbitrarily arrested and/or subjected to prolonged detention. The report identified non-state actors like Al Shabaab as the main perpetrator of attacks against journalists and other media workers.¹³⁵

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

Police in Somaliland arrested more than 57 protesters on 28 May. Protesters marched through the town of Las Anod, the capital of the disputed region of Sool, in support of rejoining the

¹³⁰ HRC Somaliland, "Human Rights Centre August 2018 Report," August 2018, <http://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/August-2018-HRC-Report.pdf>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹³¹ CPJ, "Somaliland authorities shut down independent papers," 8 April 2014, <https://cpj.org/2014/04/somaliland-authorities-shut-down-independent-paper.php>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹³² CPJ, "Somali cameraperson shot dead in Mogadishu," 31 July 2018, <https://cpj.org/2018/07/somali-cameraperson-shot-dead-in-mogadishu.php>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹³³ NUSOJ, "Journalist murdered in Mogadishu, NUSOJ demands arrest of perpetrator responsible for killing journalist," 27 July 2018, <http://www.nusoj.org/journalist-murdered-in-mogadishu-nusoj-demands-arrest-of-perpetrator-responsible-for-killing-journalist/>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹³⁴ OHCHR, "39th session of the Human Rights Council," September 2018, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session39/Pages/39RegularSession.aspx>,

¹³⁵ UNSOM, "The precarious enjoyment of freedom of expression in Somalia," September 2018, https://unsom.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/un_report_the_precarious_enjoyment_of_freedom_of_expression_in_somalia.pdf, Accessed 18 October 2018.

federal government based in Mogadishu.¹³⁶ All those arrested have since been released. At least eight protesters were reportedly wounded by security forces, including women and children.¹³⁷

South Sudan

In April, DefendDefenders released a report detailing the situation of HRDs in South Sudan since the July 2016 Juba crisis. The report explored how HRDs face a multitude of challenges, including targeted intimidation and attacks, most notably by the National Security Service (NSS). The report showed that years of civil war have created a divide between urban and rural HRDs, with the latter finding themselves insufficiently supported and lacking access to protection mechanisms. Attacks against activists and CSOs are largely committed with impunity, and a significant number of these incidents go unreported. The report also highlighted the vulnerability and lack of capacity of HRDs and CSOs preserving evidence for a future Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS), which is mandated under Chapter 5 of the 2015 Peace Agreement, but has yet to be established.¹³⁸

On 8 May, the UN Security Council unanimously renewed sanctions on South Sudan for another year, which includes travel bans and asset freezes against individuals responsible for threatening peace and stability in the country.¹³⁹ In that same month, the South Sudan Equatoria Community in Diaspora group began publicly lobbying the International Criminal Court in the Hague to indict President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar for alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.¹⁴⁰

A bill introduced by the government in Parliament in early July 2018 sought to extend the term of President Kiir from 12 August 2018 to 21 August 2021. The bill also proposed term extension

¹³⁶ Reuters, "Somaliland authorities arrest demonstrators, journalists covering protest," 29 May 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-security/somaliland-authorities-arrest-demonstrators-journalists-covering-protest-idUSKCN1IU12M>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹³⁷ Garowe Online, "Somalia: Eight hurt as anti-Somaliland rally in Las Anod turns violent," 28 May 2018, <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/puntland/somalia-eight-hurt-as-anti-somaliland-rally-in-las-anod-turns-violent>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹³⁸ DefendDefenders, "'This is our freedom. These are our rights.' Human rights defenders in South Sudan since July 2016," April 2018, <https://www.defenddefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/This-is-our-freedom.pdf>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹³⁹ Sudan Tribune, "UN Security Council renews sanctions on war-torn S. Sudan," 9 May 2018, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article65367>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

¹⁴⁰ The East African, "Lobby group wants ICC to indict Kiir and Machar," 13 May 2018, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Call-for-ICC-to-indict-Kiir-and-Machar/4552908-4559258-v26t3xz/index.html>, Accessed 18 October 2018.

for the national transitional parliament, the first vice president, and state governors.¹⁴¹ On 12 July, the parliament voted to extend Kiir's term in office.

On 25 July, the South Sudanese Government and the main rebel leader Machar signed a power sharing agreement, which is intended to put an end to a civil war that has devastated and destroyed the country for five years. The power sharing agreement sees Machar return as Vice-President – his sacking from post in 2013 initially ignited the civil war. In early August, President Kiir offered an amnesty to all those involved in the civil war, including Machar, as part of the new peace deal.¹⁴²

It remains to be seen whether this deal, the latest in a long line of ill-fated negotiations and broken ceasefires, will put a permanent end to the civil war that has decimated civil society and forced millions to flee. As the country looks forward to a fresh start following these developments, activists and HRDs still have little to celebrate. Their situation remains grave and precarious.

Intimidation, Harassment, and Attacks Against HRDs

On 30 April, ten aid workers, all South Sudanese citizens, were released after being held for almost a week by SPLA-IO forces. The aid workers went missing in the southwest of the country, close to the town of Yei.¹⁴³

In May, it was reported that four aid workers had been killed, and 10 others abducted in the preceding months, with the UN undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, Mark Lowcock, demanding an end to attacks on aid workers in the country.¹⁴⁴

That same month, the United States asked the United Nations Security Council to place six south Sudanese officials on a blacklist for fuelling the country's war and actively restricting the flow of international aid and staff to beleaguered regions of the country. The list included Cabinet Affairs Minister Martin Elia Lomuro, who is accused of threatening the press, obstructing humanitarian aid and impeding the work of the UN peacekeeping mission in South

¹⁴¹ DW, "South Sudan lawmakers consider keeping President Kiir until 2021," 4 July 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/south-sudan-lawmakers-consider-keeping-president-kiir-until-2021/a-44527826>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁴² Al Jazeera, "South Sudan's Kiir grants rebel leader Machar, others amnesty," 9 August 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/08/south-sudan-kiir-grants-rebel-leader-machar-amnesty-180809062138199.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁴³ News24, "10 aid workers released after abduction in South Sudan," 30 April 2018, <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/10-aid-workers-released-after-abduction-in-south-sudan-20180430>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁴⁴ Voice of America, "UN Demands End to Attacks on Aid Workers in South Sudan," 17 May 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/un-demands-end-to-attacks-on-aid-workers-in-south-sudan-/4397869.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

Sudan, as well as rebel governor Koang Rambang Chol, accused of leading attacks in Northern Bieh State and ordering his forces to impede the work of aid workers.¹⁴⁵

According to a report by the Aid Worker Security Database published in August 2018, South Sudan topped the list for a third year in a row of the most dangerous countries in the world for aid workers. According to the report, a third of the 158 major violent attacks against aid operations in 2017 occurred in South Sudan, with local staff bearing the brunt of these attacks.¹⁴⁶

In late July, several thousand demonstrators attacked a UN compound in Maban, Upper Nile State, alleging discrimination against local people in hiring practices, because many of the staff were allegedly from Equatoria, a southern state with a different ethnic makeup.¹⁴⁷ As protests turned violent, approximately 2,000 youth forced their way into United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) offices and at least ten other compounds, many housing NGOs and relief agencies, resulting in looting, arson, destruction of vehicles, structures, humanitarian assets, and supplies of medicines. Several hundred aid staff were evacuated, and despite the extensive damage, none were fatally injured.¹⁴⁸ *Medecins Sans Frontières* announced that it would suspend activities in the north-east of the country after the attack, leaving up to 88,000 people with limited access to health services.¹⁴⁹

On 6 September, a South Sudanese military court sentenced ten soldiers to prison for the rape and sexual assault of foreign aid workers and the murder of a journalist in a violent attack on a hotel in Juba in 2016.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Daily Monitor, "US asks UN to blacklist six officials in South Sudan," 28 May 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/World/US-asks-UN-blacklist-six-South-Sudan/688340-4583600-10779se/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁴⁶ NRC, "South Sudan declared most violent for aid workers for third straight year," 13 August 2018, <https://www.nrc.no/news/2018/august/south-sudan-declared-most-violent-for-aid-workers-for-third-straight-year/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁴⁷ The East African, "Mob attacks South Sudan UN base," 25 July 2018, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Mob-attacks-South-Sudan-UN-base/4552908-4680668-rtplhy/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁴⁸ Reliefweb, "The South Sudan NGO Forum strongly condemns the violent attacks against humanitarian aid agencies in Maban," 30 July 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-ngo-forum-strongly-condemns-violent-attacks-against-humanitarian-aid>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁴⁹ Reuters, "Medical aid group MSF suspends work in part of South Sudan after office overrun," 24 July 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-unrest/medical-aid-group-msf-suspends-work-in-part-of-south-sudan-after-office-overrun-idUSKBN1KE1YK>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁵⁰ Reuters, "South Sudan soldiers sentenced to jail for murder, rape in 2016 hotel raid," 6 September 2018, <https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKCN1LM11N-OZATP>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

Freedom of Association

Seven aid workers were released on 15 April after being held for nearly three weeks. Rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO) forces accused them of being government spies.¹⁵¹

On 28 July, HRD and chairman of the South Sudan Young Leaders Forum (SSYLF), Peter Biar Ajak, was arrested by national security forces at Juba airport while en route to attend the Red Army Foundation commemoration day in Aweil.¹⁵²

On 8 August, activist Bashir Mohamed Babiker Ahmed, who works with the Civil Society Human Rights Forum, was taken from his home in the city of Yambio by armed men and disappeared thereafter.¹⁵³ He was allegedly held by the NSS at a detention centre in Yambio – no charges have been brought against him, and he has yet to see a lawyer.¹⁵⁴

On 18 August, the government released 21 political detainees who were held by the national security services. It remains unclear exactly which detainees were released, or what their crimes were.¹⁵⁵

Freedom of Expression

On 19 April, authorities from the South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation (SSBC) shut down the BBC's FM relay stations in the cities of Juba and Wau, alleging that the broadcaster had failed to pay certain bills.¹⁵⁶

A joint report published on 11 August by the Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI) and The Advocates for Human Rights and Democracy (TAHURID) outlined the blocking of media outlets in South Sudan, in addition to other deliberate attempts by the government to censor online content.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Reuters, "South Sudan rebels say they have freed seven aid workers," 15 April 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-aid/south-sudan-rebels-say-they-have-freed-seven-aid-workers-idUSKBN1HM0QV>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁵² Amnesty International, "SOUTH SUDAN: DETAINED ACTIVIST DENIED ACCESS TO A LAWYER: PETER BIAR AJAK," 31 July 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/8853/2018/en/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁵³ Twitter, Karen Jenson @froncalgoshi36, <https://twitter.com/froncalgoshi36/status/1035261611148238848>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁵⁴ Amnesty International, "SOUTH SUDAN: SOUTH SUDANESE ACTIVIST ARBITRARILY DETAINED: BASHIR AHMED MOHAMED BABIKER," 27 August 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/8994/2018/en/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁵⁵ Twitter, Karen Jenson @froncalgoshi36, <https://twitter.com/froncalgoshi36/status/1031559155449057280>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁵⁶ Daily Nation, "South Sudan shuts BBC stations 'over unpaid bill'," 19 April 2018, <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/South-Sudan-shuts-BBC-stations-over-unpaid-bill/1066-4488210-pgepcz/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁵⁷ OONI, "South Sudan: Measuring Internet Censorship in the World's Youngest Nation," 1 August 2018,

Sudan

On 4 September, 31 CSOs issued a letter decrying the state of human rights in Sudan, drawing particular attention to the excessive use of force against protesters and major challenges faced by civil society and HRDs.¹⁵⁸

At the 39th Session of the UN HRC in September, 32 organisations called on the Council to adoption of a monitoring and reporting mandate on Sudan under the agenda item 4, in addition to mandating a Special Rapporteur to monitor, verify and report on ongoing human rights violations in the country.¹⁵⁹

On 9 September, President Omar al-Bashir suddenly dissolved the government and appointed Motazz Moussa as new Prime Minister amid growing unrest in the face of rising food prices, hyperinflation, and mass unemployment, which threaten to exacerbate the country's economic crisis.¹⁶⁰ While the size of the cabinet was slashed from 31 ministers to 21, it remains to be seen whether this new government will relax the authoritarian control over basic freedoms in the country.

Intimidation, Harassment, and Attacks Against HRDs

On 26 July, HRD Wini Omer was produced in court to answer charges of operating a brothel and consuming alcohol, a banned substance in Sudan. Omer was arrested in February and held for five days. At her trial, prosecutors warned that she could face additional charges, such as espionage against the State. She could face a death sentence if convicted.¹⁶¹

In August, the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies released a report outlining the precarious challenges facing WHRDs in Sudan, in addition to detailing the harassment, arrests, and arbitrary detention of 20 WHRDS from June 2016 to February 2018.¹⁶²

<https://ooni.torproject.org/post/south-sudan-censorship/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁵⁸ Alkarama, "ADDRESSING THE SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN SUDAN," 4 September 2018, <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/addressing-serious-human-rights-and-humanitarian-situation-sudan>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁵⁹ ACJPS, "32 organisations call for a strong monitoring and reporting mandate on Sudan, 4 September 2018, <http://www.acjps.org/31-organisations-call-for-a-strong-monitoring-and-reporting-mandate-on-sudan/>, Accessed 23 October 2018.

¹⁶⁰ Reuters, "Sudanese President Bashir dissolves government, appoints new PM," 9 September 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sudan-politics/sudans-president-bashir-dissolves-government-suna-idUSKCN1LPORA>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁶¹ WHRD Mena, "Sudan: Wini Omer may face death sentence," 1 August 2018, <https://whrdmena.org/2018/08/01/sudan-wini-omer-may-face-death-sentence/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁶² ACJPS, "Situation of Female Human Rights Defenders in Sudan: June 2016-February 2018," <http://www.acjps.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Female-HRDs-FINAL.pdf>, Accessed 23 October 2018.

Freedom of Association

In August, two members of the Darfur Bar Association (DBA) were briefly detained after returning to Sudan from receiving an award from the American Bar Association.¹⁶³

Freedom of Expression

National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) agents summoned journalist Ahmed Abakar for questioning on 5 May and again on 7 June. Abakar has been repeatedly harassed, threatened and banned from working, allegedly for writing political commentary on the situation in Sudan. On 14 June, his press card was revoked.¹⁶⁴

On 21 June, the Sudanese Ministers Council passed amendments to existing media legislation, giving the government increased jurisdiction over newspapers, including allowing the Council to approve the licence of online newspapers, increasing the government's control over online content.¹⁶⁵

In August, Sudanese authorities seized print runs of *Al-Jarida*, *Al-Ray Al-Aam*, and *Al-Shaiha* newspapers.¹⁶⁶ NISS regularly confiscate publications to intimidate and financially cripple news outlets, often with complete impunity.¹⁶⁷

On 31 August, NISS banned the *Al-Midan Al-Sharqi* talk show on Omdurman TV unexpectedly. No further explanation was given.¹⁶⁸

On 8 September, NISS summoned Lina Yacoub, editor-in-chief of Baj News and interrogated her for twelve hours before releasing her. The online news source had famously covered corruption

¹⁶³ Human Rights Watch, "Addressing the Serious Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in Sudan," 4 September 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/09/04/addressing-serious-human-rights-and-humanitarian-situation-sudan>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁶⁴ Alkarama, "Harassment, threats and revocation of press licence against journalist Ahmed Abakar," 5 August 2018, http://sudanconsortium.org/member_publications/2018/HarassmentthreatsAhmedAbakar.pdf, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁶⁵ ACJPS, "Sudan Restricts Freedom of Expression : A Report on Violations against Freedom of Expression in Sudan: July-September 2018," 18 October 2018, <http://www.acjps.org/sudan-restricts-freedom-of-expression-a-report-on-freedom-of-expression/>, Accessed 23 October 2018.

¹⁶⁶ Arab Media Network for Crisis, "The Arab Media Network for Crisis condemns the continued confiscation of newspapers and the arrest and summoning of journalists," August 2018, http://sudanconsortium.org/member_publications/2018/ANCConfiscation.pdf, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁶⁷ DefendDefenders, "Don't Shoot the Messenger! Journalists as human rights defenders in the East and Horn of Africa," October 2017, <https://www.defenddefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/DontShootTheMessenger.pdf>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁶⁸ Sudan Tribune, "Sudanese security confiscates 3 newspapers, bans TV show," 1 September 2018, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article66153>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

in Sudan. The following day, NISS also summoned journalist Maha al-Tilib with the *Al-Tayyar* newspaper, and banned columnist Abdel-Bagi al-Zafir from writing in *Al-Saiha* newspaper.¹⁶⁹

In a report published in mid-October, the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies released a report outlining the blocking and confiscation of newspaper print runs on at least 16 different occasions between July and September alone. The report also details additional arrests and detention of journalists and media professionals during this period.¹⁷⁰

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

On 10 October, several students at the University of El Gezira in eastern Sudan were injured and arrested after police used batons and tear gas to disperse demonstrators. The demonstrations were allegedly in connection to clashes the previous evening between student supporters of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and others on campus.¹⁷¹

Tanzania

On 10 May, DefendDefenders and 64 others CSOs penned a joint letter calling on the Tanzanian Government to address the rapidly deteriorating environment for media, HRDs, and opposition party members.¹⁷² Since the election of President John Magufuli in October 2015, Tanzanian civic space has faced a sharp and dramatic decline, with the government increasingly intolerant of civil society, HRDs, and dissent of any kind.

In June, DefendDefenders published “Spreading Fear, Asserting Control: Tanzania’s Assault on Civic Space,” a report which examines how newly enacted draconian legislation and extra-legal methods are being used to harass HRDs, silence independent journalists, and significantly restrict freedoms of association, expression, and peaceful assembly.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Sudan Tribune, “Sudanese security summons two female journalists, suspends columnist,” 10 September 2018, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article66213>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁷⁰ ACJPS, “Report on: Freedom of Expression July – September 2018,” October 2018, <http://www.acjps.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Freedom-of-Expression-Report-Sept2018-2.pdf>, Accessed 23 October 2018.

¹⁷¹ Radio Dabanga, “Students arrested after clashes in Sudan’s El Gezira,” 11 October 2018, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/students-arrested-after-clashes-in-sudan-s-el-gezira>, Accessed 21 October 2018.

¹⁷² DefendDefenders, “Tanzania: Civil society organisations express concern over rapid decline in human rights,” 10 May 2018, https://www.defenddefenders.org/press_release/tanzania-65-civil-society-organisations-express-deep-concern-over-deteriorating-human-rights-situation/, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁷³ DefendDefenders, “Spreading Fear, Asserting Control Tanzania's assault on civic space,” June 2018, <https://www.defenddefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Spreading-Fear-Asserting-Control-web.pdf>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

Intimidation, Harassment, and Attacks Against HRDs

In a major victory for pastoralists, in late September, the East African Court of Justice ordered the Tanzanian government to halt the eviction of Maasai pastoralists in Ngorongoro district, in the north of the country.¹⁷⁴ The main case, which is ongoing at the regional court, involves the forced eviction of thousands of indigenous Maasai allegedly to clear the area for high-end tourist safaris and big game hunting by wealthy foreign nationals.¹⁷⁵ Pastoralists claim that, since May 2017, HRDs and other Maasai activists have been harassed, beaten, and arbitrarily detained, while hundreds of homes have been burnt in an effort to force people from ancestral lands, which are inextricably tied to their cultural traditions and indigenous livelihood systems.¹⁷⁶

Freedom of Expression

On 4 May, the High Court of Tanzania issued a temporary injunction to suspend implementation of the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations (2018),¹⁷⁷ after a petition by human rights advocates claimed that it violates freedom of expression.¹⁷⁸ Draconian provisions of the law include requiring bloggers and online content producers to pay an annual licensing fee of up to USD \$900, rendering information sharing online prohibitively expensive for citizen journalists.¹⁷⁹ On 29 May, the High Court upheld the law,¹⁸⁰ and on 11 June, the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) ordered all unregistered blogs and online forums to shut down, banning them from publishing new content

¹⁷⁴ The East African, "Leave herders alone, East African court tells Tanzania," 29 September 2018, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Leave-herders-alone-East-African-court-tells-Tanzania/4552908-4783586-1ka6i7z/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁷⁵ The Oakland Institute, "LOSING THE SERENGETI: THE MAASAI LAND THAT WAS TO RUN FOREVER," 9 May 2018, <https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/losing-the-serengeti.pdf>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁷⁶ The Guardian, "Maasai herders driven off land to make way for luxury safaris, report says," 10 May 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/10/maasai-herders-driven-off-land-to-make-way-for-luxury-safaris-report-says>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁷⁷ Government of Tanzania, "THE ELECTRONIC AND POSTAL COMMUNICATIONS (ONLINE CONTENT) REGULATIONS, 2018 ARRANGEMENT OF REGULATIONS," 16 March 2018, https://www.tcra.go.tz/images/documents/regulations/SUPP_GN_NO_133_16_03_2018_EPOCA_ONLINE_CONTENT_REGULATIONS_2018.pdf, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁷⁸ Africa News, "Tanzania bloggers win temporary court order against \$900 licence fees," 5 May 2018, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/05/05/tanzania-bloggers-win-temporary-court-order-against-900-licence-fees/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁷⁹ DefendDefenders, "Spreading Fear, Asserting Control:Tanzania's assault on civic space" June 2018 <http://www.defenddefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Spreading-Fear-Asserting-Control-web.pdf>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁸⁰ Africa News, "Tanzania government wins court case to impose online regulations," 30 May 2018, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/05/30/tanzania-government-wins-court-case-to-impose-online-regulations/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

without licences.¹⁸¹ This effectively forced popular online citizen journalism and whistleblower platform Jamii Forums to shut down temporarily.¹⁸² While the Tanzanian government alleges that these regulations are meant to end the moral decadence caused by social media, civil society activists contend that it is just the latest in the Magufuli government's attempt to stifle independent voices wherever possible.¹⁸³

On 8 August, Silas Mbise, a broadcast journalist with a local radio station, was assaulted by at least four police officers who hit him with wooden clubs and kicked him until he fell down. The incident happened at a stadium in Dar es Salaam, after a football match when police officers tried to stop journalists from entering a post-match press conference, even though they had identity cards. The assault was captured on video and widely circulated on social media.¹⁸⁴

On 2 October, the World Bank issued a statement expressing deep concern over Tanzania's Statistics Act (2015),¹⁸⁵ which harshly penalises individuals or organisations that question official statistics.¹⁸⁶ While the World Bank worries that this legislation may hamper the generation of useful economic data, CSOs argue that it stifles independent research on human rights violations, which may contradict official government lines or use more transparent methodology.¹⁸⁷

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

Ahead of massive demonstrations scheduled for 26 April, Tanzania deployed heavily armed police officers across major towns and cities to block anti-government protests,¹⁸⁸ with police Chief Gilles Muroto warning that demonstrators would be crippled and "beaten like stray

¹⁸¹ Reuters, "Tanzania orders all unregistered bloggers to take down their sites," 11 June 2018, <https://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews/idAFL8N1TD3FW>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁸² The Citizen, "Tanzania shuts down Jamii Forum over tough new rules," 11 June 2018, <http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/Tanzania-shuts-down-Jamii-Forum-over-tough-new-rules/1840340-4606244-g8gffgz/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁸³ iAfrikan, "New social media and blogging regulations in Tanzania," 9 April 2018, <https://www.iafrikan.com/2018/04/09/new-social-media-and-blogging-regulation-in-tanzania/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁸⁴ Twitter, Clouds Media @CloudsMediaLive, https://twitter.com/CloudsMediaLive/status/1027818265102479360?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1027818265102479360&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bbc.com%2Fnews%2Fflive%2Fworld-africa-45081987, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁸⁵ NBS, "The Statistic Act 2015," 30 October 2015, http://www.nbs.go.tz/nbs/takwimu/references/The_Statistics_Act_2015.pdf, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁸⁶ The World Bank, "World Bank Statement on Amendments to Tanzania's 2015 Statistics Act," 2 October 2018, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/statement/2018/10/02/world-bank-statement-on-amendments-to-tanzanias-2015-statistics-act>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁸⁷ Twaweza, "Rapid Analysis and Key Questions on Tanzania's Statistics Act," 15 April 2015, <https://www.twaweza.org/go/stats-act-analysis>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁸⁸ Reuters, "Tanzania police threaten to beat protesters 'like stray dogs' to halt demos," 25 April 2018, <https://af.reuters.com/article/tanzaniaNews/idAFL8N1S262Y>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

dogs.¹⁸⁹ On 24 April, police in Arusha arrested at least seven people accused of mobilising the population for the 26 April protests.¹⁹⁰ On 25 April, authorities also briefly detained opposition member Elizabeth Mambosho for inciting demonstrations on social media.¹⁹¹

Uganda

On the eve on a by-election in Arua in August to fill a parliamentary seat left empty after an MP was slain by unknown assailants in public, violence led to a cascade of government repression of independent media,¹⁹² a brutal crackdown on demonstrators,¹⁹³ and the arrest and alleged torture of several high-profile opposition members. Since April 2018, the overall tightening by the government of freedom of association, expression, and peaceful assembly shows a worrying trend in Uganda felt by individual HRDs and CSOs working in nearly every field.

Freedom of Association

On 8 June, MP with the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM), Ibrahim Abiriga, and his bodyguard were shot dead by unknown assailants riding a motorcycle. It is still unclear what prompted the murder, and no suspects have been identified.¹⁹⁴

On 15 August, voters headed to the polls in Arua despite a heavy police presence in the city following mass unrest, eventually electing independent candidate Kasiano Wadri to Parliament.¹⁹⁵ However, on 16 August, three lawmakers, including Wadri, and more than 30

¹⁸⁹ The East African, "Tanzania police to 'cripple' anti-Magufuli protesters," 21 March 2018, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Tanzania-police-cripple-anti-Magufuli-protesters/2558-4351898-xvkrg/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁹⁰ The Citizen, "Seven arrested over Union Day protests," 24 April 2018, <http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/Seven-arrested-over-Union-Day-protests-/1840340-4520414-15t1d47z/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁹¹ The Citizen, "Opposition stalwart detained for 'inciting protests' on social media," 26 April 2018, <http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/News/Opposition-stalwart-detained-for--inciting-protests-/1840340-4524202-1vx5jdz/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁹² IPS News, "The Shrinking Space for Media Freedom in Uganda," 27 September 2018, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2018/09/shrinking-space-media-freedom-uganda/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁹³ Daily Monitor, "State violence against civilians must stop," 23 September 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/OpEd/Editorial/State-violence-civilians-NRM-police-uniforms-Kasangati/689360-4772996-gjy8qv/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁹⁴ New vision, "MP Abiriga shot dead," 8 June 2018, https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1479386/abiriga-shot-dead, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁹⁵ Daily Monitor, "Government puts Arua Town under blanket security," 15 August 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Government-Arua-Town-EC-security-Abiriga/688334-4712974-ifxra1/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

government critics were charged with treason for their role in an alleged attack on the presidential convoy.¹⁹⁶

Opposition MPs Kyagulanyi and Francis Zaake were also charged with unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition at a military court in Gulu.¹⁹⁷ Kyagulanyi appeared in court handcuffed and badly bruised, allegedly unable to speak or walk due to injuries sustained while in custody.¹⁹⁸ He was allegedly initially denied access to a lawyer, but was eventually charged in the presence of a counsel. On 17 August, he spoke to a representative of the Ugandan Human Rights Commission, who reported that he had a “swollen face, was in pain and required support to walk. It was also observed that he had difficulty sitting and breathing.”¹⁹⁹ Photos also emerged of a severely beaten Zaake recovering in a hospital bed.²⁰⁰ President Museveni denied the reports of torture as “fake news.”²⁰¹

On 9 July 2018, Uganda’s Electoral Commission suspended accreditation for the Citizens’ Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU) to observe local council elections, in what critics decried as a means to obfuscate the electoral process. In a letter addressed to CCEDU, the commission expressed alleged concerns that the organisation was conducting itself in a partisan manner and was in breach of guidelines for voter education and other electoral activities.²⁰²

In mid-July, 200 people from the northern village of Apaa traveled to the town of Gulu seeking

¹⁹⁶ Reuters, “Ugandan lawmakers, others charged with treason over stoning of Museveni convoy,” 16 August 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-uganda-politics/ugandan-lawmakers-others-charged-with-treason-over-stoning-of-museveni-convoy-idUSKBN1L11IZ>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁹⁷ Amnesty International, “Uganda: Opposition MPs must not be tried in military court,” 16 August 2018, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/08/uganda-opposition-mps-must-not-be-tried-in-military-court/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=article&utm_term&utm_campaign=social, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁹⁸ Daily Monitor, “Bobi Wine’s lawyers speak out on his deteriorating health, Barbie breaks down,” 17 August 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Bobi-Wine-lawyers-deteriorating-health-Barbie-breaks-down/688334-4716056-551hne/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

¹⁹⁹ UHRC, “Statement on findings from the visit to the detained Members of Parliament by UHRC Team,” 17 August 2018, <http://www.uhrc.org/statement-findings-visit-detained-members-parliament-uhrc-team>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁰⁰ Twitter, Kifefe Kizza-Besigye @kizzabesigye1, https://twitter.com/kizzabesigye1/status/1030885398287974400/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1030885398287974400&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fmonitor.civicus.org%2Fnewsfeed%2F2018%2F08%2F22%2Fopposition-mps-detained-and-tortured-while-conditions-journalists-sharply-deteriorate%2F, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁰¹ New vision, “Museveni hits out at ‘fake news’ over Bobi Wine’s health,” 19 August 2018, https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1483925/museveni-hits-fake-news-bobi-wines-health, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁰² Daily Monitor, “EC suspends CCEDU from observing LC elections,” 19 June 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/EC-suspends-CCEDU-observing-LC-elections/688334-4654548-1476pyk/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

safety, and camped at the offices of the UNHCR.²⁰³ They accused Ugandan soldiers of killing three residents of Apaa, beating others, and burning over 800 homes since 2017, in an effort to designate the area as a wildlife reserve.²⁰⁴

On 6 August 2018, unidentified burglars broke into the offices of ISIS-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) in Kampala and stole computer processors, internal and external hard drives, and cash.²⁰⁵ Similarly, on 12 September, the Twerwaneho Listener's Club (TLC), an NGO operating in the crater lakes region of Western Uganda, was burgled for the third time in less than a month.²⁰⁶ These were only the latest in a long series of CSO office break ins. Since 2013, more than 30 CSOs in Uganda have had their offices broken into, yet investigations remain inconclusive despite available evidence such as CCTV footage.²⁰⁷

On 20 September, MP Kyagulanyi returned to Uganda²⁰⁸ after receiving medical treatment in the United States following his alleged torture at the hands of state security forces.²⁰⁹ Upon arrival in Uganda, he was separated from other passengers, and escorted by police to his home, which he described as against his wishes.²¹⁰ Eddie Yawe, Kyagulanyi's brother, was arrested at the airport.²¹¹

After his return, Kyagulanyi was charged with treason alongside 34 other politicians following the campaign violence in Arua.²¹² The case was adjourned to 3 December after the government

²⁰³ Human Rights Watch, "Forced Evictees in Northern Uganda Entitled to a Remedy," 23 July 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/23/forced-etictees-northern-uganda-entitled-remedy>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁰⁴ Apaa Monitor, "Text of the Apaa Community's Letter to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights," 11 July 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/notes/apaa-monitor-northern-uganda/text-of-the-apaa-communitys-letter-to-the-un-high-commissioner-for-human-rights/229602427650420/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁰⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Uganda: String of Burglaries of Rights Groups," 7 August 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/08/07/uganda-string-burglaries-rights-groups>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁰⁶ DefendDefenders, "Uganda: DefendDefenders condemns latest office break-in at Twerwaneho Listener's Club," 12 September 2018, https://www.defenddefenders.org/press_release/uganda-defenddefenders-condemns-latest-office-break-in-at-twerwaneho-listeners-club/, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁰⁷ DefendDefenders, "Uganda: Government should immediately take steps to end pattern of office break-ins," 23 May 2018, https://www.defenddefenders.org/press_release/uganda-government-immediately-take-steps-end-pattern-office-break-ins/, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁰⁸ BBC, "Uganda's Bobi Wine: 'Tortured' pop star MP returns home," 20 September 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45587144>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁰⁹ YouTube, Bobi Wine and Robert Amsterdam Washington DC Press Conference, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1poJdSDIm4>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²¹⁰ The East African, "Uganda police escort Bobi Wine home," 20 September 2018, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Uganda-police-escort-Bobi-Wine-home/4552908-4769394-985qikz/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²¹¹ The East African, "Bobi Wine's brother arrested at the airport," 20 September 2018, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Bobi-Wine-brother-arrested-at-the-airport-/4552908-4769034-haeq02/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²¹² Daily Monitor, "Arua violence: Counting the human cost," 8 September 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/SpecialReports/Arua-violence-human-cost-Kassiano-Wadri-NRM-Bobi-Wine/688342-4749276-n82ghf/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

told a Magistrate's Court in Gulu that it needed more time to conclude its investigations before the trial can begin.²¹³ Kyagulanyi returned to Parliament on 2 October.²¹⁴

On 3 October, police raided the home of Edith Byanyima, sister-in-law of prominent opposition politician Kizza Besigye, searching for illegal material. Police then confiscated 24 red napkins, which are not illegal but symbolically linked to Besigye's Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) party.²¹⁵

The ACHPR is investigating accusations that the Ugandan government committed mass violations of human rights against the indigenous Banyoro people of Western Uganda. The petitioners allege that the native Banyoro have been marginalised and deprived of their ancestral land and other entitlements, a claim government dismisses.²¹⁶

Freedom of Expression

On 19 April, Ugandan journalists were denied access to a police court that was expected to hand down a ruling on charges against former slain Buyende District Police Commander Muhammad Kirumira.²¹⁷ In February, police also blocked journalists covering the same case, and a reporter with Bukedde newspaper was allegedly assaulted.²¹⁸ In response to these incidents, a group of Ugandan journalists proposed boycotting coverage of court proceedings if security forces were present, as a form of protest.²¹⁹

Four reporters were interrogated by police on 22 May after being summoned to the Criminal Investigations Directorate Headquarters in Kibuli, Kampala, in relation to online articles regarding leaked bank transactions of a high-ranking Bank of Uganda official. Andrew Irumba

²¹³ Daily Monitor, "Roads blocked as Bobi Wine, 34 others appear in Gulu Magistrates Court," 1st October 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Bobi-Wine-34-others-Gulu-Magistrate-Court-today/688334-4785412-ys1lulu/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²¹⁴ Facebook, @Bobi Wine, 2 October 2018
<https://www.facebook.com/www.bobiwine.ug/posts/10157816296833012>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²¹⁵ Daily Monitor, "Police raid Edith Byanyima's home, confiscate red napkins," 3 October 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Police-raid-Edith-Byanyima-home-confiscate-red-napkins/688334-4789762-r9yr6h/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²¹⁶ Daily Monitor, "AU probes Uganda over rights abuses in Bunyoro," 5 October 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/AU-Uganda-rights-abuses-Bunyoro--Batwale-Rwandans/688334-4792020-fi4b4gz/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²¹⁷ Daily Monitor, "Kirumira case: Journalists barred from police court," 19 April 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Kirumira-case-Journalists-barred-police-court-Okoth-Ochola/688334-4488506-8wntfoz/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²¹⁸ HRNJ Uganda, "Journalists blocked from covering trial of Senior Police Officer, Bukedde TV Reporter assaulted," 22 February 2018, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=4205>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²¹⁹ HRNJ Uganda, "MEDIA TO BOYCOTT POLICE EVENTS," 20 April 2018, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=4342>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

(Spy Uganda), Bob Atwine (Spy Reports), Taddeo Ssenyonyi (Business Focus), and John Njoroge (CEO Magazine) were later released without charge.²²⁰

In a major blow to both Internet freedom and freedom of expression online, on 30 May Parliament passed the Excise Duty (Amendment) Bill (2018), which places a mandatory daily tax of 200 Ugandan Shillings (USD \$0.05) on popular social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.²²¹ While President Museveni claims that social media encourages gossip, the levy makes regular social media use prohibitively expensive for people living in poorer regions of the country, in addition to throttling potential sources of information and discussion on matters of public interest.²²²

In early June, security officials banned radio stations from broadcasting ‘*Mac Onywalo Buru*’ (Fire Makes Ash), a song by popular Northern Ugandan musician Lucky Otim (also known as Bosmic Otim,) describing it as “misleading.”²²³ The song is allegedly critical of prominent politicians and MPs.²²⁴

As chaos erupted in Arua on the evening of 13 August, NTV journalist Herbert Zziwa’s live broadcast amid the demonstrations abruptly cut off. He was reported missing until it was revealed that he and his cameraman, Ronald Muwanga, were detained at Arua Central Police Station.²²⁵ The two were released on bond on 14 August and charged with incitement to violence and malicious damage.²²⁶ They claimed they were tortured while in police custody.²²⁷

On 27 June, politician Keihwa Patrick Besigye allegedly assaulted Voice of Kigezi radio journalist Aritwe Emmanuel at the station’s offices in Kabale. Angered over an embezzlement story the

²²⁰ HRNJ Uganda, “Police interrogates journalists at CIID Headquarters,” 24 May 2018, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=4411>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²²¹ Par-liament Watch, “THE EXCISE DUTY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2018 MEMORANDUM,” 29 March 2018, <http://parliamentwatch.ug/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/L-03-04-18-The-Excise-Duty-Amendment-Bill-2018.pdf>, Accessed 19 October 2018,

²²² BBC, “Uganda imposes WhatsApp and Facebook tax 'to stop gossip',” 31 May 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44315675>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²²³ Daily Monitor, “Song critical of government big shots banned,” 5 June 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Song-critical-government-big-shots-banned/688334-4596014-qk4025/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²²⁴ YouTube, mac onywalo buru--lucky bosmick otim, 29 May 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y83SiV3zCks>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²²⁵ Daily Monitor, “Video: How NTV journalists were detained amidst Arua gun fire,” 14 August 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Video-How-NTV-journalists-were-detained-amidst-Arua-gun-fire/688334-4711422-ias4wg/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²²⁶ Daily Monitor, “Kirumira case: Journalists barred from police court,” 19 April 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/NTV-journalists-released-on-bond/688334-4711966-c76aex/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²²⁷ Twitter, NTV UGANDA @ntvuganda, https://twitter.com/ntvuganda/status/1029371175514906625/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Eetfw%7Ctwcamp%5Eetwe%5Eembed%7Ctwterm%5E1029371175514906625&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bbc.com%2Fnews%2Ffive%2Fworld-africa-45167980, Accessed 19 October 2018.

journalist had published, Besigye allegedly stormed into the studio, verbally abusing and repeatedly slapping Emmanuel, threatening to have him fired over the story.²²⁸

On 13 July, police in Katakwi, eastern Uganda, arrested Kenneth Odere of NTV, Eddy Enuru of NBS TV, and Simon Emwamu of the Daily Monitor, while they were covering a demonstration by local mobile money operators against the newly introduced tax on their services. The journalists were asked to share their recorded material and reveal the organisers of the protest, which they declined. The police proceeded to arrest them for allegedly covering an illegal assembly.²²⁹

On 17 July, Vision Group journalist Ronald Kasasa was assaulted by a police officer while covering a demonstration in a Kampala suburb, sustaining injuries around the neck. Kasasa was later summoned to the police station on allegations of criminal defamation for a broadcast on Bukedde Television, in which he accused the District Police Commander of Jinja Road Police Station of instructing officers to assault him. He lodged a formal complaint against the officer on 20 July.²³⁰

On 27 July, Vision Group journalist Damba Wiziri was assaulted while covering the local elections, allegedly by sub-county chief of Rugarama in Sheema district, Amanyanda Jordan.²³¹ On 30 July, Damba was again beaten by three attackers while covering a demonstration by opposition supporters and told to delete the footage from his video camera. He sustained injuries around the neck, chest, and hands, and his professional equipment was stolen. Damba lodged a formal complaint at Sheema Police Station on 1 August.²³²

On 10 August, the Attorney General of Uganda withdrew an appeal filed at the East African Court of Justice challenging the court's decision to allow the Media Legal Defence Initiative and 19 other organisations to be joined as *amici curiae* (friends of Court).²³³ The broader case involves the late radio journalist Ronald Ssemuusi, who in 2014 began challenging Uganda's use of criminal defamation under section 179-180 of the Penal Code, after he was sentenced to one year in prison for defamation.²³⁴

²²⁸ HRNJ Uganda, "Kabale District Chairman assaults journalist over an embezzlement story," 27 June 2018, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=4498>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²²⁹ HRNJ Uganda, "Three journalists arrested as they cover mobile money tax protest," 13 July 2018, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=4539>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²³⁰ HRNJ Uganda, "Journalist files assault case against police officer," 20 July 2018, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=4563>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²³¹ CPJ, "Ugandan journalist attacked twice while covering parliamentary elections," 8 August 2018, <https://cpj.org/2018/08/ugandan-journalist-attacked-twice-while-covering-p.php>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²³² HRNJ Uganda, "Vision Group Journalist files complaint at Sheema Police Station," 2 August 2018, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=4597>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²³³ HRNJ Uganda, "Ugandan government withdraws appeal in a defamation case in the East African Court of Justice, Arusha," 10 August 2018, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=4620>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²³⁴ HRNJ Uganda, "Regional court grants permission to 20 organizations to join criminal defamation case," 1 July 2016, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=2898>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

On 20 August, Reuters photojournalists James Akena was beaten and detained without charge while covering protests in downtown Kampala.²³⁵ Footage of Akena being beaten by police with wooden sticks, while on his knees and unarmed, was widely circulated on social media.²³⁶ Police said on Twitter that they would order an investigation.²³⁷

On 20 August, security forces beat and detained at least four journalists covering protests in Kampala, and confiscated or damaged their equipment. These include Alfred Ochwo, a photojournalist with The Observer, and NTV journalists Ronald Galiwango, and Juma Kirya.²³⁸ While covering a protest in Kampala, Joshua Mujunga, a photojournalist with NBS TV, was also severely beaten by police who proceeded to forcibly delete footage from his camera.²³⁹

At least eight other journalists were arrested attempting to cover Kyagulanyi's return from treatment in the US on 20 September, with six being arrested and detained for four hours at Entebbe International Airport.²⁴⁰ BBC Nairobi correspondent Ferdinand Omondi was also detained for five hours following an interview with Kyagulanyi on 20 September.²⁴¹

The Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda also reported that several journalists had received threatening messages and phone calls after their contact information was leaked to a series of viral social media messages, identifying them as agents of the political opposition.²⁴²

In a press statement issued on 12 September, the Foreign Correspondents' Association of Uganda highlighted that at least 10 foreign reporters were denied government accreditation since August 2018, despite fulfilling all of the requirements and following the correct procedure. They linked this to the recent unrest in the country and ongoing harassment of local journalists covering these developments.

²³⁵ Twitter, FCAU @fcauganda, <https://twitter.com/fcauganda/status/1031480644692529152>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²³⁶ Twitter, NTV UGANDA Verified account @ntvuganda, <https://twitter.com/ntvuganda/status/1031856545640927239?lang=en>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²³⁷ Twitter, Uganda Police Force Verified account @PoliceUg, <https://twitter.com/PoliceUg/status/1043165687072649216>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²³⁸ CPJ, "Ugandan security forces attack and detain journalists covering protests," 23 August 2018, <https://cpj.org/2018/08/ugandan-security-forces-attack-and-detain-journali.php>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²³⁹ HRNJ Uganda, "Army on the spot again over beating a journalist covering protests resulting from arrest of MPs," 31 August 2018, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=4678>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁴⁰ CPJ, "Ugandan police arrest at least 8 journalists covering opposition MP Bobi Wine," <https://cpj.org/2018/09/ugandan-police-arrest-at-least-8-journalists-cover.php>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁴¹ Twitter, FERDINAND OMONDI @FerdyOmondi, <https://twitter.com/FerdyOmondi/status/1042809232150724615>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁴² HRNJ Uganda, "Threatening calls, Blackmail of journalists and Progress of the Army towards apprehending the soldiers who "molested" journalists," 29 August 2018, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=4673>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

Two LGBT+ focused events were cancelled in May 2018. The First Annual Conference on Key and Priority Populations scheduled for May 2018 was cancelled after Minister of State for Ethics and Integrity, Simon Lokodo, accused the conference of aiming to “promote homosexuality and other dirty things.”²⁴³ On 17 May 2018, an International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) event organised by Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) was also shut down by Minister Lokodo, with the organisers accused of “promoting homosexuality.”²⁴⁴

On 4 June, two men were arrested in Kampala after carrying a coffin to the Ugandan Parliament, protesting the lack of police investigation into a string of kidnapped and murdered women.²⁴⁵ On 5 June, several women’s organisations and women human rights defenders (WHRDs) marched to the Ugandan police headquarters, accusing authorities of an inadequate and slow response to these murders.²⁴⁶

On 13 August, police used live ammunition to disperse crowds in Arua, who had gathered to support candidates at campaign rallies ahead of a by-election for a municipal parliamentary seat left vacant after the assassination of Abiriga in June. It is unclear what instigated this reaction from security forces, but demonstrators responded by throwing stones, further escalating violence.²⁴⁷ At least five people were injured in the chaos, while Yasin Kawuma, the driver of MP Kyagulanyi was shot dead.²⁴⁸

On 16 August, crowd gathered to protest the continued detention of Kyagulanyi in his Kampala stronghold of Kamwokya, but anti-riot police used tear gas and live ammunition to disperse the demonstrators.²⁴⁹

²⁴³ Daily Monitor, “Minister Lokodo blocks HIV/AIDS conference,” 2 May 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Minister-Lokodo-blocks-HIV-Aids-conference/688334-4541356-ojhe6jz/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁴⁴ Kuchu Times, “MINISTER LOKODO HALTS UGANDA’S 2018 IDAHOBIT EVENT,” 17 May 2018, <https://www.kuchutimes.com/2018/05/minister-lokodo-halts-ugandas-2018-idahobit-event/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁴⁵ Nile Post, “Two Arrested for Carrying Coffin to Parliament Over Women Kidnaps,” 4 June 2018, <http://nilepost.co.ug/2018/06/04/two-arrested-for-carrying-coffin-to-parliament-over-women-kidnaps/>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁴⁶ Al Jazeera, “Uganda’s women say enough is enough,” 5 June 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/ugandas-women-180605184835600.html>, Accessed 19 October 2108.

²⁴⁷ Daily Monitor, “MPs detained over Arua poll chaos were armed, say police,” 15 August 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/MPs-Arua-poll-chaos-armed-police--Bobi-Wine-Wadri/688334-4712808-87jkw5z/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2108.

²⁴⁸ Reuters, “Ugandan government critic alleges police shot dead his driver,” 13 August 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-uganda-violence/ugandan-government-critic-alleges-police-shot-dead-his-driver-idUSKBN1KY247>, Accessed 19 October 2108.

²⁴⁹ NTV, “Police battle Bobi Wine supporters in Kamwokya,” 16 August 2018, <http://www.ntv.co.ug/news/national/Police-battle-Bobi-Wine-supporters-in-Kamwokya/4522324-4715966-v4t3ia/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

Protests continued on 19 August in Mityana, MP Zaake's constituency, where police reportedly killed one demonstrator and injured five others. In Kampala, new protests broke out on 20 August, which were met with a heavy-handed response from the army and police.²⁵⁰

Protests erupted again in Kampala on 31 August after Kyagulanyi was initially barred from leaving the country to seek medical treatment, and security forces were heavily deployed to his stronghold in Kamwokya.²⁵¹

On 11 September, police and security broke up a preparation meeting for Kyagulanyi's return, arresting one of the assembly organisers.²⁵²

On 19 September, ahead of Kyagulanyi's return, the government banned all rallies or demonstrations associated to his homecoming.²⁵³ Security forces enforced this ban on 20 September by beating unarmed protesters with wooden sticks and firing tear gas.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ Daily Monitor, "Teargas, live bullets rock Kampala streets," 20 August 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Teargas-live-bullets-rock-Kampala-streets/688334-4720706-frgent/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁵¹ The Guardian, "Protests in Kampala as pop star politician blocked from leaving Uganda," 31 August 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/31/protests-kampala-pop-star-politician-bobi-wine-blocked-leaving-uganda>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁵² Daily Monitor, "Army disperse Bobi Wine return preparation meeting," 11 September 2018, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Army-disperse-Bobi-Wine-return-meeting-Kamwokya-US/688334-4754588-9w2g1n/index.html>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁵³ Reuters, "Uganda bans rallies by supporters of pop star ahead of his return from U.S.," 19 September 2018, <https://af.reuters.com/article/africaTech/idAFKCN1LZ1PB-OZATP>, Accessed 19 October 2018.

²⁵⁴ Twitter, Chapter Four Uganda @chapter4uganda, <https://twitter.com/chapter4uganda/status/1043047732183740417>, Accessed 19 October 2018.