

Annual Report 2018



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

DefendDefenders
Annual Report 2018

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights
AHRE	Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia
AU	African Union
CoI	Commission of Inquiry
CBDDH	Burundian Coalition of Human Rights Defenders
CSO	Civil society organisation
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRD	Human rights defender
IDP	Internally displaced person
LGBT+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other sexual minorities
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NCHRD-K	National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders - Kenya
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OONI	Open Observatory of Network Interference
OTT	Over the Top (Uganda social media tax)
PEP	Professional Empowerment Program
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
ToT	Training of trainers
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

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FOREWORD

The year 2018 was filled with human rights contrasts in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region, and worldwide, as vastly constructive and destructive human rights actions took place in parallel.

The sub-region witnessed a rising trend of shrinking civic space, affecting the respect for human rights and rule of law. This development entailed the enactment and enforcement of restrictive laws on freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association, deterioration of judicial independence, increased levels of negative human rights discourse and hate speech, and crackdown on demonstrations – fostered by repressive regimes and autocratic state leaders.

For human rights defenders (HRDs), these developments increased the level of threats, harassment, violence, and arbitrary detention, which affects their physical and mental well-being, as well as their ability to carry out human rights work. The vigorous actions are well documented; globally, at least 321 HRDs were killed in 2018.

In 2018, we especially witnessed these damaging trends in Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Sudan. The enactment of restrictive laws in Burundi and Rwanda, the political crisis in Sudan, with severe crackdown on peaceful demonstrations, and Tanzania's continued attack on freedom of expression all illustrates the general shrinking civic space.

Simultaneously, the human resistance that unfolds as a repercussion to the human rights violations illustrates the other side of the coin. Although these trends paint a picture of dark times, we cannot overlook the outstanding human rights work carried out by student activists; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other sexual minorities (LGBT+) HRDs; women HRDs; political activists; indigenous people; and many more.

In 2018, we saw peaceful anti-government activism in Uganda. We witnessed a strong LGBT+ resilience in

Kenya, fighting to repeal colonial-era laws criminalising homosexuality. We watched Ethiopia and Eritrea opening their borders and shaking hands for the first time in 20 years. We saw Ethiopia's Somali region appoint a human rights activist as their president. And not least, we welcomed the first female president in Ethiopia, Sahle-Work Zewde, working in tandem with new Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed, who has already made progressive reforms and sowed seeds of optimism for civil society and HRDs.

Throughout 2018, DefendDefenders did our utmost to support the human rights movement by empowering and protecting human rights activists from the East and Horn of Africa sub-region. After all, in order to surmount the destructive actions, these strong defenders are a key component to ensure an enabling and active civil society, with human rights as its ground pillar.

Yours sincerely,



Hassan Shire,
Executive Director,
DefendDefenders



EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA 2018

In 2018, DefendDefenders and its partners continued to monitor and document human rights violations across the East and Horn of Africa sub-region, with a focus on the contexts affecting the work of HRDs. In general, we witnessed an alarming trend of shrinking space.

The human rights situation in **Burundi** remains critical, with continuous civil society crackdowns, attacks on media, and disruption by the government of any form of peaceful demonstrations. This included killing, rape, kidnapping, beatings, and threats against activists and political opponents – especially prior to and during the constitutional referendum that took place in May, in which potential amendments would allow President Pierre Nkurunziza to remain in power until 2034. The UN Human Rights Council's (HRC or "the Council) Commission of Inquiry (CoI) on Burundi reported that the violations amounted to crimes against humanity.

In 2018, curtailment of civil and political rights in **Djibouti** continued to worsen, while respect for rule of law remained minimal. The situation is amplified by little space for local and national human rights organisations, as well as restricted access for regional and international actors to operate in the country.

A peace deal was signed between the political opposition parties in **Kenya**, in light of political tensions surrounding the 2017 election. However, the threats, attacks, kidnapping, and arbitrary detention of political activists continues, and no significant measures have been taken to ensure investigation and accountability into the police brutality and political killing that took place. The election also highlighted the lack of free expression in the country, as several journalists and bloggers were threatened, harassed, and attacked. The signing of a cybercrime law which criminalises "false or fictitious" news illustrates this shrinking space. Further, the struggles of the Kenyan LGBT+ community reached headlines with the ban on the popular lesbian romance film *Rafiki*, and the fight to repeal an anti-homosexuality legislation from the Penal Code.

Despite the dire human rights situation in **Eritrea**, in addition to their continuous unwillingness to cooperate with UN mechanisms, some proactive steps were taken concerning their relationship with Ethiopia. In 2018, the borders opened for the first time in 20 years, following a peace agreement, and the agreement to implement the 2002 International Boundary Commission decision, aiming to put to

rest the decades-long conflict between the two countries. However, repressive laws restricting freedom of expression, association, and assembly still makes Eritrea one of the most repressive regimes in the sub-region.

With the appointment of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed in April 2018, the human rights situation in **Ethiopia** has experienced a progressive turn in a short period of time. The progression entails the call for the return of media stations; the lifting of restrictions on more than 250 websites, and mobile applications; the closure of Makaewi detention center; and not least amendments of repressive laws as the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) proclamation. Additionally, in the tense Somali Regional State, Mustapha Omer, a well-known human rights activist, was appointed as the regional President. However, the high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), ethnic violence and killings, and weak civil society, as well as a lack of cooperation with the HRC, illustrates that severe human rights challenges that lies ahead – especially in light of the scheduled 2020 federal election.

In **Somalia**, attacks on freedom of expression remain alarming, with several arbitrary arrests and detention of journalists and media personnel – amplified by the lack of investigation and accountability from authorities. In Al-Shabaab controlled areas, civilians are often subject to forced recruitment, cruel treatment, and deadly attacks, and the space for human rights activists remains minimal. The grave human rights situation is further exacerbated by humanitarian crises and massive internal displacement. In **Somaliland**, the civil society crackdown also continues, with the arrest of several critical journalists and artists reported in 2018.

In **South Sudan**, there was a shred of optimism with the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan between the warring parties in September. However, peace remains extremely fragile and massive human rights violations, possibly amounting to crimes against humanity and war crimes, remains unaddressed. Over the course of 2018, several incidents of arbitrary arrests and detention of HRDs were reported, often subject to cruel treatment. Exercising the right to freedom of expression remains challenging, including the killings, detention, threats, and harassment of journalists, artists, and, activists, and a lack of independent media.

The human rights situation in **Sudan** is extremely vulnerable. The demonstrations that began in December, as a result of increasing bread prices, led to massive anti-government demonstrations – in which the government responded by cracking down on civil society,

and in December close to 40 protesters was reported killed by security forces, in addition to arresting and detaining hundreds. Media restrictions, which were alarming prior to the tension, was further exacerbated as a part of the crackdown.

With the election of President John Magufuli in 2015, **Tanzania's** civic space and respect for rule of law continues to shrink, illustrated by the enactment and enforcement of restrictive laws on freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. The trend continues to affect the media, among others, through the Communications Regulatory Authority, and restrictions on freedom of expression online. The LGBT+ community has come under attack by the Magufuli's government, especially after Paul Makonda, Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner, announced full crackdown on LGBT+ persons, in addition to the Tanzanian law which punishes consensual adult same-sex conduct.



In **Uganda**, several measures have been taken to restrict freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. The government's introduction of a social media tax (Over The Top (OTT)), requiring Ugandans to pay a daily fee to use social media applications, is a clear sign of curbing free expression and the right to information. Furthermore, several journalists have been arbitrarily detained due to their critical opinions of the government. Free association is also under attack, as several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have had their offices broken into and data systems hacked.

In 2018, several HRDs were killed or went missing. We continue to call on state authorities to ensure investigation and accountability.

We continue to demand justice.

Burundian rights activist Ernest Manirumva was murdered outside his home in 2009, around the same time as he was investigating state corruption. No investigation has been carried out.



OUR VISION:



A region where the human rights of every citizen as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are respected and upheld.



DEFENDDEFENDERS

- 1 Supported 1581 HRDs**
- 2 Raised the capacity of 1189 HRDs**
- 3 Opened an office in Geneva**
- 4 Launched 6 reports**
- 5 Conducted 4 in-country missions**



SNAPSHOT OF 2018

The year **2018** was a **progressive year for DefendDefenders**, punctuated by key success stories from its programmatic interventions and influence at national, regional, and international fora. The organisation was able to improve the quality of its programmes and harnessed opportunities for ensuring access to emergency protection services for HRDs at eminent risk. As we move towards the end of our current Strategic Plan (2016-2020) term, we pledge to continue harnessing opportunities to learn from our work and enhance HRDs' work and access to protection mechanisms.

In 2018, more than 150 human rights activists gathered in Paris, France, for the HRD World Summit, and the adoption of the HRD Plan of Action.

*Last year, we further commemorated the **20th anniversary** of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and the **70th anniversary** of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*



2019 AND BEYOND

Our key focus:

- To increase the protection and support to at-risk HRDs in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region.
- To increase our protection of, and support to, marginalised HRDs, notably women HRDs.
- To enhance our visibility and impact at regional and international platforms, notably the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights and UN Human Rights Council.
- To increase our cooperation with, and support to, national coalitions of HRDs in the East and Horn of Africa.
- To operationalise the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative, and ensure African HRDs' access to protection mechanisms.



PROTECTION AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT

381 HRD requests for protection grants received

176 Protection grants approved and disbursed

77 HRD requests for protection referred to partners

114 Protection requests not supported*

11 HRD requests for protection withdrawn

* Out of the 114 protection requests not supported, some did not meet the criteria.



PROTECTION AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT

We enhanced the access to protection mechanisms and emergency response for HRDs under imminent risk.

In 2018, DefendDefenders provided emergency protection for numerous at-risk HRDs. We received 381 requests, of which 176 requests met the criteria and received support. Although we continue to register a higher number of requests from male HRDs, we are pleased to see that more women HRDs are seeking access to our protection interventions – a development we continue to advocate for. As a result, many of the HRDs have reported improved safety and protection against security threats and risks.

For Burundi alone, 41 HRDs received protection services, in the field of emergency, Professional Empowerment Program (PEP), and equipment and research grants. Throughout the year, our Burundian partners collected 238 testimonies and letters of attorney for accountability mechanisms.



PROTECTION AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT

We increased the capacity of HRDs to prevent and react to threats.

To enable HRDs to respond to the threats arising from their human rights work, and ensure their well-being, DefendDefenders was able to raise the capacity of HRDs on a broad range of topics, including risk assessment, physical security management, and advocacy strategies. DefendDefenders trained, in total, 481 HRDs in risk assessment and physical security, many being women HRDs, coming from all over the East and Horn of Africa sub-region.

Similarly, to respond to the needs of the exiled Burundian HRDs in Rwanda and Uganda, DefendDefenders increased the capacity of 242 Burundian HRDs through trainings and workshops.



DefendDefenders trained 481 HRDs in risk assessment and physical security.

We also
increased
the capacity
of 242 exiled
Burundian HRDs.

Do you wonder what kind of protection
capacity building sessions we conducted?

Among other trainings, we conducted:

- Security management training
- Risk assessment and digital safety training
- Physical and Digital Security Management training
- Security Management and Advocacy Strategy training
- Regional Risk Assessment and Digital Safety training
- Regional training of trainers (ToT)
- Regional Risk Assessment and Digital Safety training
- Security Management review
- Claiming Spaces: Tactical Tools for HRDs

CAPACITY BUILDING

DefendDefenders' capacity building programme works to build the capacity of HRDs, their organisations, and EHAHRD-Net National Coalitions in the sub-region. The work concentrates on building capacity in:

- HRD protection mechanisms and security management;
- Advocacy tools and strategies for HRDs;
- Coalition building; and
- Networking.



418 HRDs received training in digital safety.

77 HRDs underwent a training of trainers programme.

The training of trainers participants further trained **277 HRDs**.

Focal point meeting, July 2018

In July 2018, DefendDefenders invited focal points from our 11 mandate countries in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region for a two-day meeting to strengthen our cooperation and coordination to ensure enhanced protection of HRDs in the sub-region. The milestone event aimed to:

- Create a platform for country focal point representatives to network and get a better understanding of the situation of HRDs in each country in the sub-region;
- Improve on collaboration between and among focal points and the Secretariat;
- Discuss emerging cross-cutting trends, issues and challenges identified and the way forward in light of the issues raised; and
- Review the Plan of Action that was amended during the General Assembly.

At the focal point meeting, we adopted:

- **A Plan of Action**
- **Resolutions on:**
 - Tanzania
 - Burundi
 - Eritrea



We effectively supported and addressed HRD ICT needs.

In 2018, **DefendDefenders' Technology programme** continued to ensure that HRDs hold the capacity to use technology in a secure and innovative manner, in line with the rapid technological developments of tools and strategies taking place. DefendDefenders built the capacity of HRDs in digital safety, strengthening a total of 418 HRDs from the East and Horn of Africa. The sessions covered, among other topics, digital security and safety, data collection, and digital communication tools, with an enhanced focus on digital security programs for women HRDs.

Among the HRDs that were trained in 2018, 77 underwent ToT programmes, whereas the majority were able to further share their knowledge with, and henceforth raise the capacity of, other frontline HRDs. For example, the second round of the SafeSister programme welcomed women HRDs from Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Sudan, and launched a website for Safe Sister at the RightsCon event, a panel on security tool usability. The programme has proven positive track-records, as previous participants have continued to pass on their new-found digital capacity to others, which, in total, has trickled down to raising the capacity of a total of 277 additional HRDs.

To assess HRDs' progress in securing their environment against digital threats and risks, DefendDefenders conducted nine technical support and/or follow-up visits to 83 HRDs, both individuals and human rights organisations. During the follow-up visits, key efforts were made to further raise the HRDs' capacity to ensure their security, and that their technical devices are protected by conducting trainings in line with their needs.

DefendDefenders conducted three Safetag auditor trainings, a programme utilising the framework for audits and skilled HRD trainers in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania – reaching a total of 34 technologists working in human rights CSOs. Similarly, we implemented the Data4Change project with Small Media Foundation, raising the capacity of five human rights CSOs, with campaigning. In addition to these campaign sites, several smaller project sites were launched and a digital advocacy campaigning guide was produced.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Finally, DefendDefenders' Technology programme promoted HRDs' data security at several regional and international events. This included the the participation to the Ninth Assembly of the World Movement for Democracy event in Dakar, Senegal, and supported 22 African HRDs through a helpdesk operated at the event. Among other events, DefendDefenders attended FIFAfrica, discussing free expression online and flow of information in Africa; and the Citizen Lab Summer Institute, investigating techniques for malware monitoring in civil society.



DefendDefenders continued to implement DOC-IT, a flagship data documentation programme, launched in 2016 to increase the skills of Ugandan human rights organisations on data collection and documentation through data visualisation. In 2018, we raised the capacity of ten organisations.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Claiming Spaces 2018: Tactical Tools for HRDs

Every year, DefendDefenders organises a week-long training event for HRDs from the East and Horn of Africa sub-region, **Claiming Spaces: Tactical Tool for HRDs**.

In 2018, Claiming Spaces was held in Nairobi, Kenya, organised in cooperation with the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders - Kenya (NCHRD-K). The flagship event welcomed more than 110 Kenyan HRDs, from all the regions in Kenya, to enhance their skills in the following areas:

- Digital Security, Security Management and Risk Assessment
- Realising the right to Privacy for HRDs
- Advocacy Strategies Workshop
- Monitoring Documentation and Reporting of Human Rights Violations



All participants were awarded a certificate on the last day of the training.





Claiming Spaces 2018 welcomed H.E. Anna Jarfelt, Swedish Ambassador to Kenya, Mary Simat, NCHRD-K Chairperson, Hassan Shire, DefendDefenders Executive Director, Dr Joan Nyanyuki, Amnesty Regional Coordinator, and Kamau Ngugi, Executive Director at NCHRD-K.



The trainings were conducted by human rights experts from the sub-region.

“My work starts now; I will go back home and fight even harder for human rights in my village.” - Kenyan HRD



The Kenyan HRD of the Year Award winners 2018: **Anastasia Nambo and Is'haq Abubaka.**



The HRD of the Year Awards are given out by NCHRD-K and EU Human Rights Defenders Working Group in Kenya. The awards are classified in three categories; Upcoming HRD of the Year Award; Human Rights Defender of the Year Award; and Munir Mazrui Lifetime Achievement Award.



We ensured stress management for HRDs through artistic therapy.

Many HRDs face trauma due to their human rights work. In light of this, DefendDefenders introduced artistic therapy, sometimes called creative arts therapy, for HRDs to cope with emotional abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and tension through music, paintings, poetry, drama, and theatre. Key benefits of the artistic therapy process include: self-discovery, personal fulfilment, empowerment, relaxation, and stress relief through venting of emotional stressors like anger, resentment, and others. In 2018, a total of 153 HRDs (78 males, 68 females, 7 transgender persons) took part in creative arts therapy activities. In addition, some of the participants who experienced deep-rooted challenges were able to receive support from comrades, including sessions with a psychotherapist and other protection support where necessary.

153 HRDs

partook in artistic therapy sessions

78

Males

68

Females

7

Transgender

Did you know
that Sudanese women
HRDs were at the forefront
of the anti-government
demonstrations, which started
in Sudan December 2018?





Women human rights defenders

are a particularly vulnerable group of defenders. In 2018, we supported hundreds of female activists from the East and Horn of Africa.

What is their common denominator?

They continue to speak up and fight for human rights.

ADVOCACY, RESEARCH, AND COMMUNICATIONS

DefendDefenders promotes and protects the work and safety of HRDs through advocacy at the regional and international level, enabling HRDs to engage with protection mechanisms, especially HRC and ACHPR. In 2018, we actively participated in the 37th, 38th, and 39th HRC sessions, and the 62nd and 63rd ACHPR sessions. To ensure that HRDs' voices are heard at regional and international platforms, we brought, in total, four HRDs to the HRC, two women and two men, and five HRDs to the ACHPR, two women and three men.

In 2018, DefendDefenders opened a permanent UN office in Geneva, enabling us to more effectively advocate for the protection of HRDs, and improve our engagement with the HRC and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as well as other relevant UN mechanisms and human rights organisations.

DefendDefenders participated in the HRD World Summit 2018, hosted in Paris, France, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the 20th anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. The Summit brought together over 150 HRDs from across the globe to celebrate the achievements of the past 20 years, and to plan for the next decades. The event was a valuable platform to promote the work of HRDs in the East and Horn of Africa, as well as highlight the role of DefendDefenders in HRD protection. DefendDefenders additionally took an active role in the development of the HRD Plan of Action, adopted at the session.



We brought

9

HRDs to the HRC and ACHPR.

We delivered

2

Oral statements at the ACHPR.

We delivered

48

Oral statements, briefing papers, and press releases in relation to the HRC.

We published

79

Updates on our website.





In 2018, we opened an office in Geneva.

The office was officially launched by H.E. **Fatuma Abdullahi Mohamud**, the Somali Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, and **Michel Forst**, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, on 2 March 2018.

“The launch of a Geneva office enables us to engage more effectively with the UN Human Rights Council, its mechanisms, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is another important step towards ensuring that HRDs from the East and Horn of Africa are heard at one of the world's premiere human rights forums.”

- Hassan Shire,
Executive Director, DefendDefenders

We collected broader and deeper data on HRDs and human rights in the East and Horn of Africa.

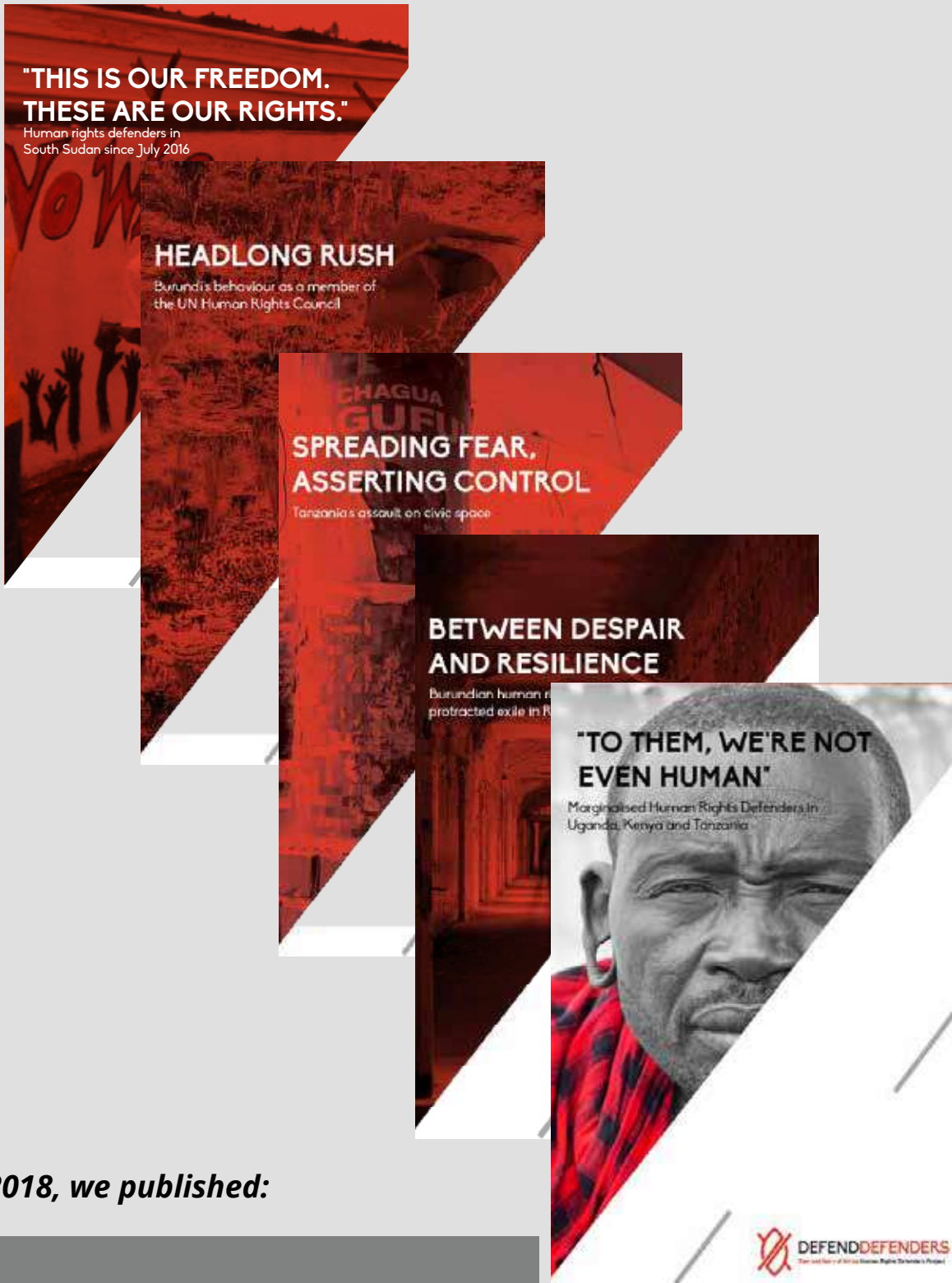
Over the course of 2018, we conducted several research missions in the region, resulting in six thematic and country-specific reports – findings of which were used as a baseline for our advocacy at regional and international level.

In our comprehensive one-year research project on marginalised HRDs in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, we identified the unique challenges and major trends affecting indigenous HRDs, women HRDs, and LGBT+ HRDs. The missions led to the report ***“To Them, We’re Not Even Human”: Marginalised Human Rights Defenders in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania***, which makes concrete recommendations for relevant entities to counter negative developments. The findings of this report acted as the baseline for our advocacy towards the UN resolution on environmental HRDs, adopted at the 40th HRC session.

In light of the newly established social media tax in Uganda, DefendDefenders joined forces with the Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI) to test the taxed social media platforms and to run a series of experiments, as well as testing VPN blocking. The research concluded in the report ***Uganda’s Social Media Tax through the lens of network measurements***.

The grave human rights situation in South Sudan was the basis for a research mission in the country, which identified that South Sudanese HRDs are at crucial junction; facing shrinking civic space, while still operating with a minimum degree of freedom, and the need for civil society to be supported through improved emergency protection mechanisms, strong capacity-building initiatives, and international advocacy. The findings were laid out in the report ***“This is our freedom. These are our rights”: Human rights defenders in South Sudan since July 2016***.





In 2018, we published:

4 *country reports*

2 *thematic reports*





From our report *"To Them, We're Not Even Human": Marginalised Human Rights Defenders in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania*.

"We are losing our heritage and our culture. Forcing us to lose our culture violates our basic human rights. If we are removed from our land, we are limited from accessing our ancestral spiritual areas. **When we come out and speak about this, we become victims.**"

ADVOCACY, RESEARCH, AND COMMUNICATIONS

DefendDefenders conducted a research mission to Tanzania, which led to a publication outlining the deteriorating space for civic engagements; ***Spreading Fear, Asserting Control: Tanzania's assault on civic space***. The publication, being one of the first to raise alarm about the deteriorating human rights situation and the crackdown on civil society in the country, was launched during a side-event at the 38th HRC session.

The establishment of our permanent UN office in Geneva allowed for a stronger engagement with the Council and OHCHR, leading the way for DefendDefenders' report ***Headlong Rush: Burundi's behaviour as a member of the UN Human Rights Council***, which examines Burundi's voting record and offers concrete recommendations on how to prevent unfit states from serving on the Council. In addition, at the 39th HRC session, DefendDefenders and the Burundian Coalition of Human Rights Defenders (CBDDH) launched the report ***Between Despair and Resilience: Burundian human rights defenders in protracted exile in Uganda and Rwanda***, which examines the situation of exiled Burundian HRDs, and highlights their professional, security, and socio-economic challenges.



We strengthened HRDs' influence at the national, regional, and global level.

Burundi

The human rights situation in Burundi remains fragile. At the 38th HRC session, Burundi continued its non-cooperation with UN mechanisms, despite being a member of the HRC, featured prominently on the Council's agenda under Item 4, Item 6, and Item 2. We continued our Burundi advocacy at the 39th HRC session, pushing for renewed mandate of the UN CoI on Burundi, which was adopted at the session. At a side event at the 63rd ACHPR session, we highlighted the ongoing grave human rights situation in Burundi, with a focus on enforced disappearances. We urged the ACHPR to keep Burundi on its agenda, and Burundi's government to respect and protect human rights as enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights – using the findings from our two Burundi reports; *Headlong Rush* (2016-2018) and *Between Despair and Resilience* (2018), as a baseline.

Djibouti

Prior to Djibouti's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), we supported a Djiboutian HRD to participate in the pre-session, raising issues concerning freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. We further advocated for the need for legal amendments, as set out in our joint report ahead of their UPR.

Eritrea

The restrictions on civic space in Eritrea are alarming, and much like Burundi, the country continues to refuse to cooperate with UN mechanisms, namely the HRC and OHCHR. We supported Eritrean HRDs to highlight the critical country situation at the 38th HRC session and 62nd ACHPR session. At the ACHPR, we co-hosted a panel discussion with Amnesty International – raising awareness of Eritrea's human rights violations, and discussing methods to circumvent the country's harsh civic restrictions. This we further emphasised in the UPR report we published ahead of Eritrea's 3rd UPR examination.

Ethiopia

To bolster the progressive developments that have taken place over the past year, we supported Ethiopian HRDs to attend the 37th HRC session. At the HRC, we organised a side-event with the Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia (AHRE), discussing the human rights situation, and avenues to further strengthen Ethiopian HRDs.

Kenya

The country was one of the focus countries in our latest report on marginalised HRDs, focusing on indigenous HRDs, women HRDs, and LGBT+ HRDs. Further, we raised the advocacy capacity of more than 100 Kenyan HRDs at Claiming Spaces in Nairobi – DefendDefenders' annual flagship event for HRDs in the East and Horn of Africa.

Somalia & Somaliland

In the 37th HRC session, the High Commissioner for Human Rights noted positive changes in Somalia – as the only one of our mandate countries. We further engaged with H.E. Fatuma Abdullahi Mohamud, the Somali Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, when opening our Geneva office.

South Sudan

Despite the peace deal signed in 2018, the human rights situation in South Sudan remains extremely fragile. For the 37th HRC session, DefendDefenders supported the participation of South Sudanese HRDs to share their stories. We were pleased to witness the adoption of Resolution 37/L.40 by consensus, extending the mandate of the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan for one year. At the 62nd ACHPR session in Nouakchott, Mauritania, we hosted a side event to highlight civil society's role in the promotion of human rights, and launched our report, *"This is our Freedom. These Are Our Rights" (2018)*. We actively participated in Crisis Actions' meeting in Nairobi, identifying actions to heighten the international community's attention to the national human rights situation in South Sudan.

Sudan

The situation in Sudan, with a vast government crackdown on peaceful demonstrators, largely deteriorated towards the end of 2018. As Sudan was on the agenda for the 39th HRC session, we took the opportunity to ensure structured advocacy, including a letter stressing the grave human rights situation in Sudan, and supporting Sudanese HRDs to share their views at the session. This advocacy was followed up at the 62nd ACHPR session, leading a delegation from Sudan, where the key activities included a panel discussion on enforced disappearances in Sudan – especially within the context of conflict zones such as Darfur and South Kordofan. At the 63rd ACHPR session, in our parallel event, we highlighted the dire human rights situation and identified strategic actions for the Commission to address the grave violations.

Tanzania

Tanzanian authorities have grown increasingly intolerant of critical voices since President Magufuli took office in October 2015. At the 38th HRC session, we raised awareness about the situation in our side-event, which was based on the findings from our report *Spreading Fear, Asserting Control (2018)*, launched at the event. Focusing on the Council's prevention mandate, the participants explored avenues for the HRC to avert entrenchment of the current crisis – which we continued to advocate for at the HRC and ACHPR sessions.

Uganda

Over the course of 2018, several advocacy trainings were conducted in Uganda, as well as ensuring strategic advocacy towards national authorities.

We increased our visibility through enhanced presence on media platforms

In 2018, we launched our HRD of the Month profile, which highlights outstanding human rights work and human rights issues at the local level in the East and Horn of Africa. In 2018, we profiled eight HRDs. In addition, we share monthly newsletter with our networks and partners, and continuously share tweets, posts, photos, and videos on social media about human rights in the sub-region. To enhance our social media presence, we made an Instagram account in December 2018.



1241

new **Twitter** followers



857

new **Facebook** followers



97

new **Instagram** followers

We ensure that the voices of activists from the East and Horn of Africa are heard.



In June 2018, we launched the initiative 'HRD of the Month' to highlight the human rights work and challenges of HRDs from the East and Horn of Africa.

Meet our 2018 HRDs of the Month:

December: Anastsia Nambo and Is'haq Abubakar, Kenyan HRDs

"I faced verbal attacks and anonymous threats, in addition to people attempting to break into my home." - Nambo
"We need to increase our protection of rights of indigenous peoples." - Abubakar



November: William Leslie Amanzuru, Ugandan HRD

"Illegal logging does not only threaten the environment. It also threatens the livelihoods of local communities. So local communities become poorer and poorer, and illegal traders become richer and richer."



October: Eulalie Nibizi, Exiled Burundian HRD

"Human rights violations in Burundi are like a wild animal that is attacking the whole country, entering one house at a time."



September: James Rukampena, Ugandan HRD

"Activists who are in a similar situation as myself should persist and continue to fight for the rights of others, because, even when they will be gone, their children will enjoy the fruits they have left behind."



August : Mohamed Farah, Somali HRD

"Persons with disabilities in Somalia face numerous challenges that result in their exclusion from mainstream society, making it difficult for them to access their fundamental social, political, and economic rights."



July : Vicky Ntetema, Tanzanian HRD

"Tanzania is not peaceful anymore. Where is our independence? Where is our space?"



June: Dinah Nakuwa, Kenyan HRD

"Culture is really an imbalance to women participation. A woman is not supposed to participate in public when men are there."



AFRICANDEFENDERS AT A GLANCE

AfricanDefenders (Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network) is a network

AfricanDefenders represents the following networks:

- Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
- Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network
- Réseau des Défenseurs des Droits Humains en Afrique Centrale
- Réseau Ouest Africain des Défenseurs des Droits Humains
- DefendDefenders



"To the frontline human rights defenders of the continent, who raise an active voice for those who cannot speak up – wherever you are, you are part of a global movement."

- Hassan Shire, Chairperson
AfricanDefenders



#WeDefend #OurRights

In 2018, we partook in the #WeDefend #OurRights campaign.



Promoted the protection of African HRDs at the regional and international level.

of five African sub-regional organisations, dedicated to the promotion and protection of HRDs across the continent.

As an African network, regional and international advocacy is an essential part of AfricanDefenders' work, especially towards the HRC, ACHPR, and African Union (AU). At the 63rd ACHPR session, AfricanDefenders actively advocated for the rights of African HRDs. In addition, they participated in the NGO Forum, in Banjul, The Gambia, signing a joint call to safeguard the independence of the Commission together with like-minded CSOs. On the 20th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, AfricanDefenders, in collaboration with the Special Rapporteur on HRDs in Africa, organised a panel to analyse the implementation of the Declaration as well as identify steps forward, while facilitating the participation of eight HRDs from different African sub-regions, for them to raise key human rights issues, and to strengthen collaboration among member networks.



AfricanDefenders participated in the 37th, 38th, and 39th HRC sessions, and 62nd and 63rd ACHPR sessions, alongside DefendDefenders.

Enhanced the protection of African HRDs through the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative.

What is Ubuntu Hub Cities?

- AfricanDefenders' Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative **relocates HRDs at risk to safe locations on the African continent**, while offering support, guidance, and tools to enhance their well-being and human rights work while in exile.

Which African cities are Ubuntu Hub Cities?

- Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)
- Cape Town (South Africa)
- Kampala (Uganda)
- Johannesburg (South Africa)
- Pretoria (South Africa)
- Tunis (Tunisia)



In 2018, AfricanDefenders conducted **three in-country missions**: Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa, and Tunisia.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We strengthened our impact and outcomes through detailed monitoring and evaluation of all our programs.

In 2018, DefendDefenders' monitoring and evaluation (M&E) function was greatly enhanced to enable the organisation to plan, implement and report based on key result areas. The M&E function was able to deliver a comprehensive M&E framework that summarises the key results of the strategic plan, and integrates the performance indicators to measure change. DefendDefenders has been able to clearly articulate its intended outcomes and performance of key projects through internal and external evaluations. In 2018, DefendDefenders organised its first M&E training for staff to raise their capacity and awareness of M&E, and how to track the progress made when implementing our objectives.

With the advent of M&E training and numerous engagements with HRDs, DefendDefenders was able to conduct follow up missions to understand the impact accruing from our activities, and further tailor our support. In 2018, we were able to conduct four follow up missions reaching 45 HRDs in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, South Sudan, and Ethiopia.

Our human resources continued to grow, in number and capacity.

DefendDefenders has continued to grow its human resource base both in number and capacity, to match the increased demand for protection services for HRDs. In 2018, the organisation successfully recruited nine new staff that reported promptly for duty following the departure of five staff from the organisation on a voluntary basis. As the numbers grew, the organisation continued to raise staff capacity through various trainings, including M&E, media, and digital security. Throughout the year, we provided ten traineeship and five fellowships opportunities, to enhance the skills and competences of young professionals in the area of HRDs.



We enhanced our engagement with other organisations, partners, and donors.

It is essential for the success of DefendDefenders to ensure strategic and progressive partnerships, which enables us to enhance our respond to the needs of HRDs in the sub-region. In 2018, we were able to maintain our funding relations with development partners whose support is significant in ensuring the safety and protection of HRDs. DefendDefenders is grateful for the support and collaboration.

DefendDefenders also celebrates the partnership it has had with national coalitions, regional networks, and CSOs, which led us to ensure increased and tailored support to protect HRDs. In 2019, we will focus on strengthening all our partnerships and collaborations, to further meet the needs of HRDs in

A special thanks to the following partners:

- Austria Development Agency
- Brot für die Welt (BfdW)
- The Kingdom of Netherlands in Uganda
- European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy (supporting various projects)
- Internews
- Irish embassy in Uganda
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Netherlands
- National Endowment for Democracy
- Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- Tides for Hub Afrique

DefendDefenders organised its first **Development Partners meeting** in Kampala, Uganda, bringing together our partners and donors to examine and evaluate DefendDefenders work, and set out plans for the coming year. The aim of the meeting was;

- To provide current donors and partners of DefendDefenders with an update on the organisation's progress on its implementation of the strategic plan and budget.
- To present donors and partners with the strategic direction for the next two years.
- To determine through dialogue the mechanisms to support better coordination of DefendDefenders' activities with donors and partners.



FINANCIAL STATEMENT



OUR BOARD

DR LIVINGSTONE SSEWANYANA - CHAIRPERSON

Dr. Ssewanyana is a Ugandan National living in Uganda and is the Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), a Ugandan NGO, which is also a member of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network. He is one of the founding members of DefendDefenders. Further, he is the UN Independent Expert on the promotion of democratic and equitable international order, and an Advocate of the High Court of Uganda.

SOPHIE KYAGULANYI - TREASURER

Sophie Kyagulanyi is a Ugandan national, and is currently working with Oxfam. She one of the founding members of DefendDefenders, and an active HRD. Previously, she was a Governance Research and Policy Analyst at Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE).

DAVID KAGGWA - SECRETARY

David Kaggwa is an Advocate of the High Court of Uganda, and a Partner at Kaggwa and Associates. Kaggwa brings legal skills including advising the Board on legal matters on registration and tax returns, volunteering his skills to defenders in exile and helping them obtain refugee status under the Ugandan legal system amongst others. David Kaggwa resides in Uganda, Kampala.

FAIZA JAMAL MOHAMED - MEMBER

Mohamed is a Djibouti national, and the Executive Director of the Pan African organization Equality Now. Since 2001, she has overseen the Fund for Grassroots Activism to End Female Genital Mutilation, among other matters, she has channeled over 1.8 Million US Dollars to 30 organisation in Africa. Mohamed has extensive work experience from the East and Horn of Africa sub-region, and has previously worked with the UN Population Fund and Oxfam NOVIB, amongst others, as well as being a member of the AU Women's Committee. Mohamed resides in Nairobi, Kenya.

DOROTHE APPELS - MEMBER

Dorothe Appels is a Dutch national with over twenty years of human rights experience in the East and Horn of Africa. Dorothe Appels is the Director of the Centre for International Development (COS) in the Netherlands. Previously, she has worked in Pakistan, Bolivia, and Ethiopia, and has developed country-level grant programmes in countries in the Horn of Africa, and West Africa. She has previously managed Oxfam Novib's Gender Based Violence programme, and started the project 'Bonded Labour in the Netherlands' (BlinN) in collaboration with Humanitas. Dorothe Appels resides in the Netherlands.

HASSAN SHIRE - EX OFFICIO AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DEFENDEFENDERS

Hassan Shire is the Executive Director of DefendDefenders. He is a HRD from Somalia, with over 15 years of experience from the sub-region. Further, Hassan Shire is the Chair of AfricanDefenders, and the Coordinator of African Human Rights Defenders Project at York University, Centre for Refugee Studies. He holds a MA in Economics, and has authored and published numerous human rights reports. In 1996, he founded and co-directed the Somali human rights organisation, the Dr. Ismail Jumale Human Rights Centre in Mogadishu, which continues to play a vital role in the country.



OUR STAFF

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Memory Bandera

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Stewart Picken

A heartfelt thanks to fellows, interns, and volunteers who supported us in 2018: Mastulah Sendagire, Yusra Abdullahi, Samira Mohamed, Grace Vimbai Zeigler Mano, Kristna Kumar, Faidrex Leon Zahiti, Shirin Choudhary, Mohammed Chennoufi, Patricia Katushabe, Felin Fabrice Kanjoli, Nephtaly Abassa Byenda, and Madeleine Gosselin.



DefendDefenders will
continue to protect human
rights defenders in the
East and Horn of Africa.



