



DEFENDDEFENDERS ANNUAL REPORT 2019



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

DefendDefenders Annual Report 2019

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DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

Annual Report 2019



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ACRONYMS

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AGA	African Governance Architecture
AHRE	Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia
AU	African Union
CBDDH	Coalition Burundaise des Défenseurs des Droits de l'Homme
CEHRO	Consortium of Ethiopian Human Rights Organizations
CoHR	Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan
CoI	Commission of Inquiry
CRD	Civil Rights Defenders
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPI	Defenders Protection International
EHAHRD-Net	East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network
EU	European Union
EWLA	Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association
GNC	Gender Non-Conforming
EHRCO	Ethiopia Human Rights Council
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRD	Human Rights Defender
ICORN	International Cities of Refuge Network
IE	Independent Expert
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDR	Monitoring, Documentation and Reporting
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAHRDN	North Africa Human Rights Defenders Network
NCHRD-K	National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders - Kenya
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
OMCT	World Organisation Against Torture
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
REDHAC	Central Africa Human Rights Defenders Network
SAHRDN	South Africa Human Rights Defenders Network
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WAHRDN	West African Human Rights Defenders Network
WHRD	Woman Human Rights Defender



ABOUT DEFENDDEFENDERS

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

DefendDefenders serves as the secretariat of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, which represents thousands of members consisting of individual HRDs, human rights organisations, and national coalitions that envision a sub-region in which the human rights of every citizen as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are respected and upheld.

DefendDefenders also serves as the secretariat of AfricanDefenders (the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network). AfricanDefenders coordinates activities in the areas of protection, capacity building, and advocacy across the African continent, supporting the five sub-regional networks namely: the North Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (hosted by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies in Tunis, Tunisia), the West African Human Rights Defenders Network (Lomé, Togo), the Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (hosted by the International Commission of Jurists in Johannesburg, South Africa), the Central Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (Douala, Cameroon), and the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (hosted by DefendDefenders in Kampala, Uganda).



FOREWORD

2019 was a busy and fruitful year for DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders. The year started with a high-level mission to the African Union (AU). I led a delegation to conduct high-level advocacy with the AU Commission through African Governance Architecture (AGA) to share views on how we would contribute to achieving the goals contained in Agenda 2063. We are finalising an MoU with AGA to consolidate our partnership. I was honoured to spend ten days in Addis Ababa and Jijiga meeting government officials, UN representatives, and CSOs. This was followed by in-depth factfinding missions, which culminated in the publication of [“Turning the Page: Rebuilding Civil Society in Ethiopia.”](#) To cap off a year of exceptional changes in the country, in December, we hosted over 60 Ethiopian HRDs for our flagship event in Addis Ababa, [“Claiming Spaces: Tactical Tools for Human Rights Defenders,”](#) which equipped participants with technical skills to enable them to effectively carry out their work. The highlight of Claiming Spaces was the historic launch of the Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Coalition.

Ten years after the “All African Human Rights Defenders Conference” convened by DefendDefenders in 2009 in Kampala, AfricanDefenders held the Johannesburg +20 (Joburg+20) Convention in Zanzibar, Tanzania, which brought together HRDs from across Africa, Pan-African partner organisations, the highest dignitaries of the African Commission for Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR), the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and representatives of NHRIs. One important outcome of the Convention is the Kampala Plan of Action +10 (KAPA+10). On the side-lines of the Convention, we recognised outstanding African HRDs and presented them with Shield Awards for their excellent contribution and bravery in protecting human rights in Africa.

The landmark opening of an office in Geneva in 2018, the seat of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), bore fruit in 2019. It allowed us to enhance our engagement with the UN human rights system and advance our advocacy efforts on country-specific and thematic issues relevant to HRDs. We continued our engagement with the ACHPR, participating in its 64th and 65th ordinary sessions, in Egypt and the Gambia, respectively. We did so by delivering oral statements, submitting bi-annual reports on human rights violations, hosting side events, welcoming HRDs from the continent, including staff, to attend the sessions and influence ACHPR’s agenda and outcomes.

Sudan also weighed heavily on our minds throughout the year. I led a delegation to the country in October, in order to ascertain the situation and hold meetings with key stakeholders, including government members, HRDs, and diplomats. We look forward to continued engagement in Sudan throughout 2020 and wish to express our gratitude and respect for all those who fought bravely for freedom and human rights in the face of tremendous adversity. To the families who lost their loved ones, we want you to know that their sacrifice will not be in vain.

We continued to support HRDs through reactive protection interventions and capacity building sessions. Developing the capacities of HRDs is key in ensuring they put in place measures to limit the risks that they face. Moreover, we also published our security guide [Stand Up!](#) into four Ugandan local languages for it to be accessible to more HRDs. Our DefendersTech program continues to run innovative programmes in the sub-region which help HRDs and civil society to get the best from, and avoid the worst risks of, digital and internet technologies as the world becomes ever more connected online.



As HRDs are forced into exile, DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders convened the second interactive dialogue between protection service providers and HRDs in exile in Uganda to discuss challenges and discuss how best they can work together to address the challenges and emerging issues. In February 2019, we launched the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative, an African-based relocation mechanism for the holistic protection of African HRDs at risk. By relocating HRDs in a secure environment closer to home, the initiative enables them to remain safe, but not silent. It was sensational to witness the launch of an initiative that now counts six hub cities in Tunisia, Côte d' Ivoire, Uganda, and South Africa.

Throughout 2019, we came up with new and innovative ways of spreading our message and highlighting the amazing work of HRDs from across the continent. For example, DefendDefenders' and AfricanDefenders' [The Three Women](#) campaign, which includes a podcast series, in relation to 16 Days of Activism, articulates the courage demonstrated by women HRDs, and the intersectional challenges they face. To shine light on the outstanding work carried out by HRDs, we continued to, every month, profile a Human Rights Defender of the Month. We plan to continue this trend in 2020; to identify new methods and tools of communication to increase our audience and raise awareness about HRDs.

Every year, we focus on a specific theme to anchor our work and shine light on a specific issue; previous themes included journalists and marginalised HRDs. In 2019, we focused on lawyers who act as first line of defence by ensuring that citizens access justice and remedies. To that effect, in December, we published "[Navigating Justice: Lawyers as Human Rights Defenders in Ethiopia and Somalia/Somaliland](#)," which examines their work to identify their best practices, vulnerabilities, and needs in these rapidly changing environments.

While we celebrate our achievements, we must also be cognisant of the upward battle ahead of us. The fight for respect for human rights has never been easy, but we pledge to continue our efforts to support HRDs by reducing their risks, vulnerabilities, and challenges in the face of this momentous task. In return, we ask for your continued support, and hope for a 2020 filled with achievement and constructive responses to our shared challenges.

I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to national coalitions of HRDs and sub-regional HRD networks for their hard work and dedication – their presence on the ground and extensive networks act as the backbone of so much of our work.

Yours in Solidarity,



Hassan Shire
Executive Director, DefendDefenders
Chairperson, AfricanDefenders



HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

In 2019, we monitored and documented human rights violations across the East and Horn of Africa sub-region. More thorough analyses are available in our bi-annual reports to the ACHPR ([April 2019](#) & [October 2019](#)), as well as on our [website](#).

BURUNDI.

Burundi's civic and democratic space remained closed. HRDs and critics continued to be intimidated, threatened, surveilled, arbitrarily detained, and even killed. International CSOs had to leave¹ and OHCHR closed its Burundi office after 23 years.² The UN Commission of Inquiry (CoI) on Burundi reported increasing repression on opposition to ruling-party CNDD-FDD.³

DJIBOUTI.

Despite a healthy thawing of international relations in the Horn of Africa, Djibouti continued to repress dissent through legal and extra-legal methods, not allowing advocacy for greater democracy or human rights standards.⁴ Djibouti ranked 173rd out of 180 countries in Reporters Without Borders' 2019 World Press Freedom Index.⁵

ERITREA.

Eritrea's human rights situation has not improved, even though a peace deal with Ethiopia was signed.⁶ Cooperation with the HRC and its mechanisms remained impossible, despite Eritrea's election to the Council.⁷ In July, the HRC extended the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the country for one more year.⁸

ETHIOPIA.

Ethiopia's human rights record improved with its new political leadership – for his conflict resolution with Eritrea, Ahmed was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.⁹ Several repressive laws were modified or removed and previous restrictions on CSOs were lifted,¹⁰ but internal displacement, arrests of journalists,¹¹ and escalating ethnic violence¹² remain concerns.

KENYA.

Abuse by Kenyan security forces continued in 2019, exacerbated by counter terrorism efforts.¹³ Lack of investigation into disappearances and extrajudicial killings, is particularly concerning for HRDs. Criminalisation of same-sex intercourse was upheld in court after a three-year legal battle.¹⁴

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RWANDA.

Rwanda curtailed rights to free expression, association and peaceful assembly. Opposition leaders were stifled and intimidated.¹⁵ Rwandan President and East Africa Community (EAC) Chair, Paul Kagame, cancelled the EAC Heads of States Summit slated for end of November 2019.¹⁶

SOMALIA AND SOMALILAND.

While Somalia made strides in establishing a more cohesive central government, repression of journalists remains a serious cause for concern.¹⁷ Somalia renewed commitments to halt child soldiers,¹⁸ but security forces fighting Al-Shabaab militants had to be reminded to protect children.

SOUTH SUDAN.

Despite a peace deal, fighting in South Sudan continued and the formation of a unity government was postponed to 2020.¹⁹ South Sudan's justice system and impunity for crimes against humanity raised concern.²⁰

SUDAN.

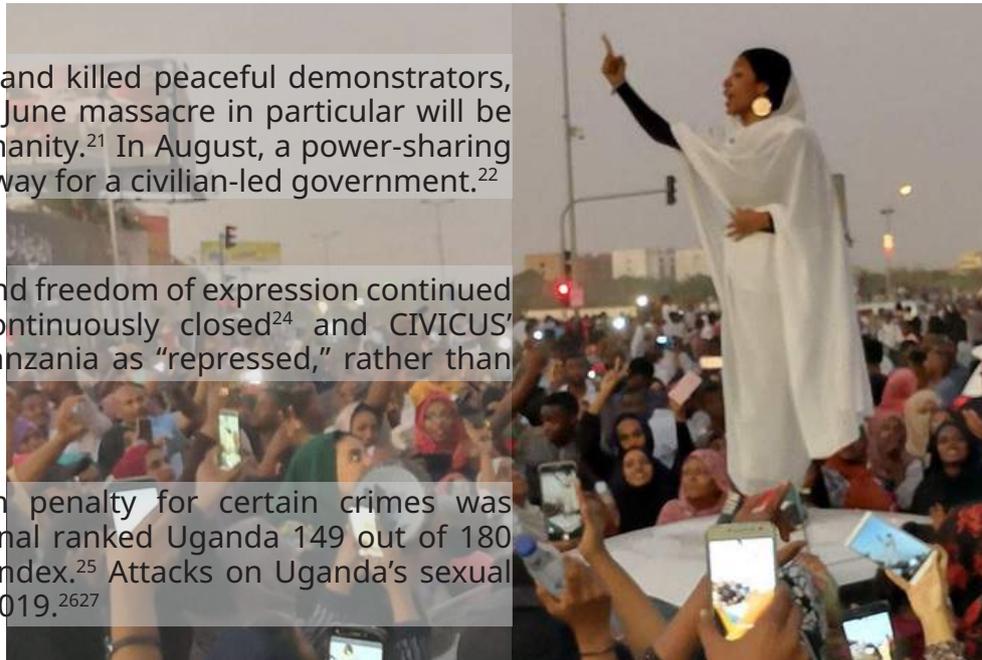
Security forces attacked, detained, and killed peaceful demonstrators, who ousted Omar Al-Bashir. The 3 June massacre in particular will be investigated for crimes against humanity.²¹ In August, a power-sharing agreement was signed, paving the way for a civilian-led government.²²

TANZANIA.

The crack down on press freedom and freedom of expression continued in Tanzania.²³ Civic space was continuously closed²⁴ and CIVICUS' Civic Space Monitor re-classified Tanzania as "repressed," rather than "obstructed" in November 2019.

UGANDA.

In August 2019 mandatory death penalty for certain crimes was abolished. Transparency International ranked Uganda 149 out of 180 in its 2018 Corruption Perception Index.²⁵ Attacks on Uganda's sexual minority community intensified in 2019.^{26,27}



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OUR 2019 PERFORMANCE



- **144 grants** approved benefitting **331 persons**
- Built capacity of **879 HRDs**
- Launched Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Network
- Launched **3 reports**
- Conducted **3 in-country missions**



PROTECTION AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT.

We support at-risk HRDs through short and long-term protection interventions and security trainings.



DEFENDERSTECH.

We help HRDs with digital security and IT support.



ADVOCACY, RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATIONS.

We protect and promote HRDs through strategic advocacy, through raising awareness online and offline, and through in-depth research and analysis.



CAPACITY BUILDING.

We organise trainings, conferences, workshops, action-based learning, and mentoring to build capacity amongst individual HRDs, EHAHRD-Net members, and national HRD coalitions.

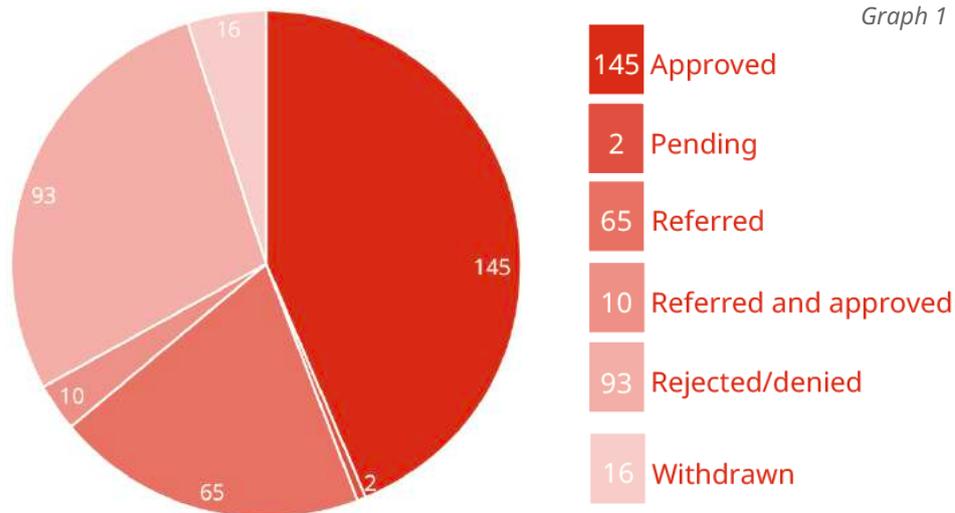


ACCELERATING HRD PROTECTION & SECURITY MANAGEMENT

EMERGENCY PROTECTION SUPPORT

We enhanced access to emergency response for HRDs at imminent risk

Graph 1 shows the outcomes of our **331 emergency protection requests** in 2019:



We continued to operate our 24/7 emergency phone line and provided safe spaces for HRDs. Additionally, to our emergency support, in 2019 we also supported **50 HRDs** with immigration queries, legal support, travel accompaniment, counselling services, and other technical support.

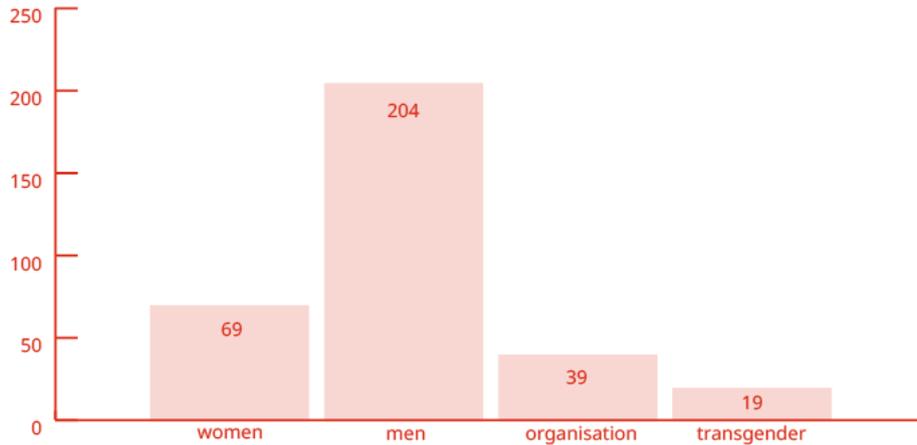
"If it wasn't for the support provided by DefendDefenders, I would have died a long time ago. I am alive because of DefendDefenders. Thank you DefendDefenders for the protection."

I thank DefendDefenders for the support I received that covered medical treatment at Buhinga hospital. I also received money for upkeep that I used to pay school fees for my children when I wasn't able to work."

"If it wasn't for DefendDefenders' support, we would have closed offices and not been able to engage different stakeholders. The support was very important, it gave a life and hope to our organisations to operate normally in exile."

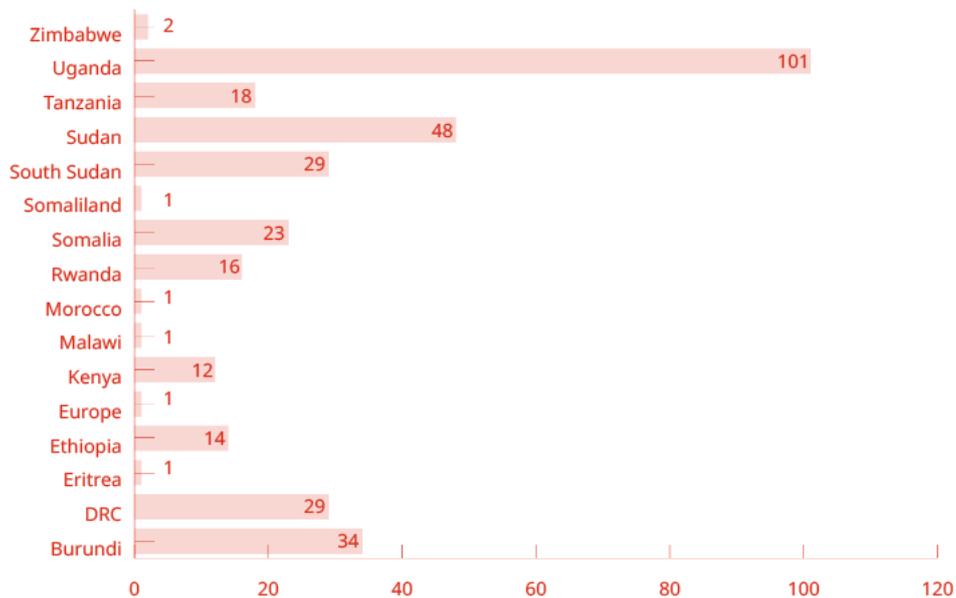
Source: Mid-term internal Strategy evaluation 2019

Graph 2



Graph 2 shows the **gender segregation** of the applicants of protection grants. Men request the majority of protection grants. Societal structures make it easier for men to take risks, often allowing men to work on more hazardous issues. DefendDefenders developed a gender strategy to ensure deliberate efforts are put in place to reach out to more women.

Graph 3



Graph 3 shows the separation of protection grants **per country**. The majority of protection grant requests were made in Uganda, Sudan, Burundi, DRC, and South Sudan, as a result of these countries' socio-political, economic, and cultural realities.



Protection collaboration

DefendDefenders participates in a web of institutions with diverse experience and expertise in HRD protection at a regional and global level. We have set up a two-way referral mechanism with Human Rights Defenders Coalitions / Networks and are in partnerships with various NGOs, INGOs, diplomatic missions, and intergovernmental institutions at the UN and AU.

Hosting the secretariat of [AfricanDefenders](#) has given DefendDefenders access to a continent-wide systematic referral platform, through engagements with [REDHAC](#), EAHRD-Net, NAHRDN, [SAHRDN](#) and [WAHRDN](#). We refer HRD protection requests to and receive referrals from other international protection providers like the Journalists in Distress working group, [Frontline Defenders](#), CRD, [OMCT](#), [ICORN](#), [Freedom House](#) and the [ProtectDefenders.eu](#) mechanism among others.

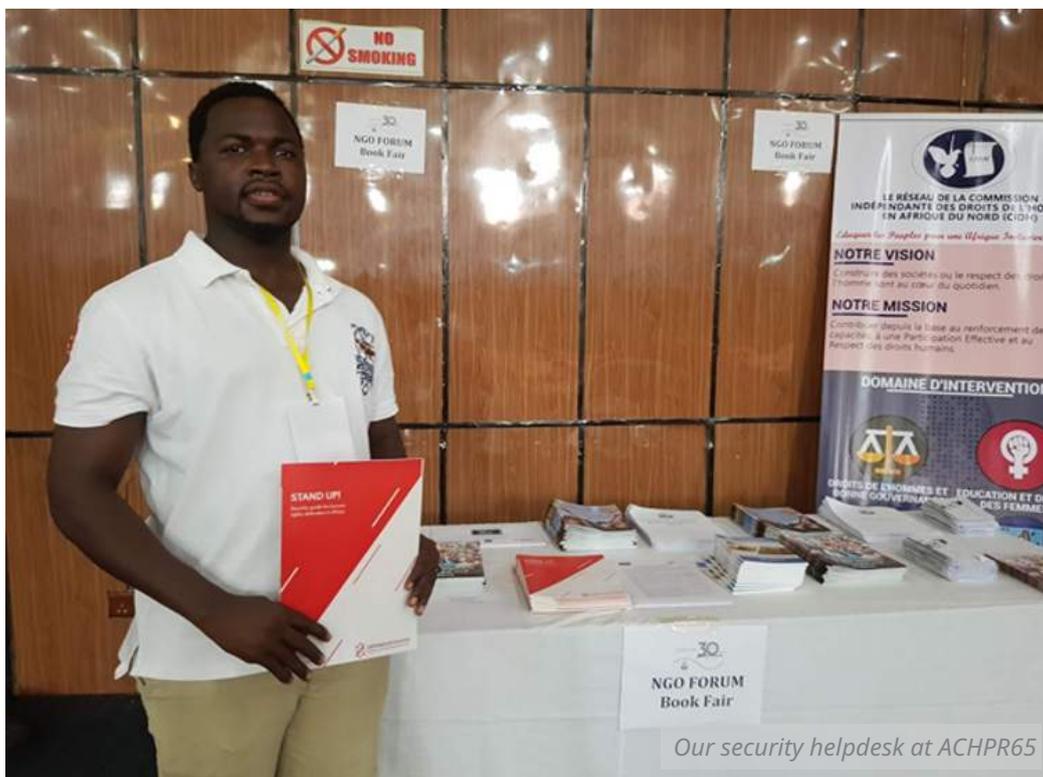
PREVENTIVE PROTECTION

Security management

We have designed preventive protection strategies that will help HRDs pre-empt potential risks as well as reduce the impact of risks on HRDs' well-being, work, and social environment. This includes capacity building, risk assessment and management tools, wellbeing interventions, and comprehensive trainings (e.g. security and safety management; monitoring, documenting, and reporting; stress management; organisational management).

Security Desks at ACHPR

During the sessions at the ACHPR, DefendDefenders conducts security management helpdesks, to support HRDs who have questions about the importance of security, and challenges of their human rights work. The clinic includes various activities, such as face to face engagements, organisational security policy assistance, and workshops et cetera.



Our security helpdesk at ACHPR65

Resourcing resilience through art

Artistic therapy helps HRDs cope with stress and trauma they encounter in their work through music, art, drama, poetry, conversation, or body movements. Benefits are: self-discovery, personal fulfilment, empowerment, relaxation, and stress relief. All DefendDefenders protection staff are able to facilitate artistic therapy sessions. For deeper and more complex challenges, we provide sessions with psychotherapists.

62 HRDs (22 male, 21 female, 5 transgender & 1 GNC) participated in artistic therapy sessions in 2019.



HRD Mental Wellbeing and Temporary International Relocation Retreat in Barcelona, Spain – June 2019.

Resource Centre for HRDs

HRDs ICT needs effectively supported and addressed

DefendDefenders runs the **Floribert Chebeya Resource Centre**, where exiled HRDs can continue their human rights work. We provide computers, internet, reading materials, and a safe space for interacting with other HRDs. DefendersTech also organises clinics, organisational audits, and fixups. In 2019, **18 organisational audits and risk assessments** took place.

A total of **201 HRDs** (183 male and 19 female) visited the resource centre in 2019. The glaring difference in gender, corresponds with the fact that significantly less women than men go into exile, as African societies often do not approve of women living alone. Women also often take on more family responsibilities than men, leaving less time for such resources.

ADVOCACY, RESEARCH, AND COMMUNICATIONS

PARTICIPATION AT REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS

Strengthened advocacy and HRDs influence at national, regional, and global level.

DefendDefenders promotes and protects the work and safety of HRDs through advocacy at the regional and international levels, especially at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). In 2018 we established an office in Geneva for our UN Representative, enabling us to engage with a multitude of UN bodies and mechanisms and other key players throughout the year.

In 2019, DefendDefenders actively participated in the 40th, 41st, and 42nd regular sessions of the HRC, and in the 64th and 65th ACHPR sessions. We also submitted a [report](#) on Kenya to the 35th session of the UPR working group, in collaboration with NCHRD-K. To ensure that HRDs' voices are heard at regional and international forums, we sponsored a total of **10 HRDs** (6 women, 4 men) to attend HRC and ACHPR sessions, as well as a UPR pre-session. We also logistically supported five more HRDs.

DefendDefenders collaborates with advocacy partners to push for meaningful resolutions at the ACHPR and HRC. In 2019 we advocated for:

HRC 40

- A/HRC/40/19 – Human rights situation in South Sudan
- A/HRC/40/11 – Contribution of environmental HRDs to the enjoyment of human rights, environmental protection, and sustainable development

HRC 41

- A/HRC/41/01 – Human rights situation in Eritrea
- A/HRC/41/18 – Mandate of the Independent Expert (IE) on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

HRC 42

- A/HRC/42/26 – Human rights situation in Burundi and mandate of the Commission of Inquiry (CoI) on Burundi
- A/HRC/42/35 – Technical assistance and capacity-building to further improve human rights in Sudan and mandate of the IE on Sudan
- A/HRC/42/33 – Assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights and mandate of the IE on Somalia

HRC40

- 5 HRDs (2 women, 3 men)
- 4 staff members
- 2 side events
- 9 oral statements
- 4 advocacy papers

HRC41

- 1 male HRD
- 2 staff members
- 1 side event
- 9 oral statements
- 5 advocacy papers

HRC42

- 5 HRDs (1 woman, 4 men)
- 2 staff members
- 3 side events
- 8 oral statement
- 4 advocacy documents

ACHPR 64

- [ACHPR/Res. 413](#) - Human rights situation in Sudan

ACHPR 64

- 2 Sudanese HRDs (1 male, 1 female)
- 2 staff members
- Panel discussion on situation of HRDs in exile

ACHPR 65

- 3 HRDs (1 male, Uganda, 2 female, Kenya and Tanzania)
- 1 staff members
- 1 side event
- 3 oral statements

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ADVOCACY

Burundi

- Focus of advocacy efforts at HRC 42: highlighted importance of “risk factor” approach and CoI’s preventative work ahead of 2020 elections.
- HRC 42: organised side event, ‘Burundi: Elections and risk factors of human rights violations’, convening Burundian HRDs and HRC advocates on human rights situation, based on latest CoI report, which highlights the grave and systematic human rights violations, in light of the 2020 elections.

Somalia

- Issued open letter (November) to Government of Somalia raising concern over voting patterns at HRC.

South Sudan

- HRC40 side event: DefendDefenders and its partners highlighted the main issues affecting South Sudan, including implementation of the ceasefire agreement and various chapters of the R-ARCSS.
- Resolution 40/19: mandate renewal of Commission on Human Rights (CoHR) in South Sudan and clear message that lasting peace cannot be achieved without justice, including accountability for grave crimes and sexual violence.

Sudan

- ACHPR 65: organised side-event on the situation of HRDs in Sudan.
- HRC 41: organised side-event on Sudan with Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), ‘Responding to Atrocities in Sudan: Role of the Human Rights Council’ featuring HRDs, lawyers and doctors as panellists.
- Press release (October) calling on Government of Sudan to ensure human rights-based approach in its activities, and to ensure investigation and accountability of human rights abuses in 2019.

Tanzania

- Part of advocacy efforts at HRC 41: published joint letter prior, calling on states to engage Tanzanian government on rights situation.

Burundi : élections et facteurs de risques des violations des droits humains

Événement parallèle à la 42^{ème} session du Conseil des droits de l'homme de l'ONU

Date et heure :
16:30 à 17:30,
17 septembre 2019

Lieu :
Salle XXI, Palais des Nations

Panélistes :
M. Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, APRODH
M. Armel Niyongere, Avocat défenseur des droits humains
Mme Pamela Capizzi, TRIAL International

Modération :
M. Nicolas Agostini, DefendDefenders

Langue :
Français

Pour plus d'information veuillez contacter geneva@defenddefenders.org

Alors que la prochaine élection présidentielle burundaise se tiendra le 20 mai 2020, le contexte pré-électoral est susceptible de mener à une escalade des tensions politiques et à une nouvelle augmentation des violations des droits humains. Les ONG burundaises et internationales continuent de documenter des violations graves et systématiques. Le dernier rapport de la Commission d'enquête (CoI) confirme que des violations graves des droits de l'homme continuent à être commises dans un climat général d'impunité, et que ces violations ont une dimension « essentiellement politique ».

La CoI demeure le seul mécanisme à surveiller et à rendre des rapports publics sur la situation au Burundi. Le renouvellement de son mandat est nécessaire pour s'assurer que la situation est suivie de manière continue, alors que l'espace civique et démocratique restreint et l'intimidation exercée par les forces gouvernementales, le parti au pouvoir et les membres des Imbonerakure limitent les perspectives d'élections libres et équitables. Lors de cet événement parallèle, les panélistes discuteront de la situation et de ce que le Conseil devrait faire pour poursuivre efficacement son attention à la crise – y compris via une extension du mandat de la CoI.

Sudan: ensuring a credible HRC response

Side event at the 42nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Date **Time**
12 September 2019 12:30 - 13:30

Location
Room XVI, Palais des Nations

Panellists
Ms. Azar Shami, WHRD and independent consultant
Mr. Mohamed Ali Mossaad, African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS)
Ms. Jehanne Henry, Human Rights Watch (HRW)

Moderator
Ms. Estella Kabachwezi, DefendDefenders

For more information, please contact geneva@defenddefenders.org

This side event will bring together Sudanese human rights defenders (HRDs) and experts and HRC advocates to discuss what the Council should do to ensure: (1) a credible response to human rights violations and abuses, including those committed in response to peaceful mass protests; (2) monitoring and public reporting; and (3) support for systemic human rights reforms in the country.

In a joint letter published ahead of HRC42, Sudanese, regional and international civil society organisations outlined a path the HRC should take to address violations and abuses, ensure accountability, follow-up and support to regional processes, and meaningfully contribute to human rights reforms.

The Council still has the opportunity to make a difference, provided it sets the bar high and approaches the country's human rights challenges from a holistic perspective. HRC42 takes places as OHCHR is discussing the opening of a fully-mandated country office (with monitoring, reporting, and technical assistance and capacity-building functions) with the Government of Sudan.





- 1 country specific report
- 2 thematic reports
- 1 policy brief
- Podcast

RESEARCH

In 2019, we conducted several research missions in the region, resulting in three reports. The findings informed our strategic advocacy. DefendDefenders published three reports, one policy brief, and a podcast.

Given the increasing reforms in Ethiopia and the opening up of civic space in the country, we took the opportunity to conduct two research missions to assess the human rights situation in the country.

Turning the Page: Rebuilding Civil Society in Ethiopia identifies the situation, challenges, and needs of Ethiopian HRDs, and presents concrete recommendations to the Ethiopian government, civil society, and other relevant human rights actors.

Navigating Justice: Lawyers as Human Rights Defenders in Ethiopia and Somalia/Somaliland examines the work of lawyers to identify best practices, vulnerabilities, and needs in a rapidly changing environment. It also outlines how state authorities, donors, and non-governmental organisations can effectively promote the work of lawyers. The research was conducted in collaboration with Goldsmith University (UK) and also resulted in a policy brief and podcast.



Police see lawyers as a threat. They believe that a lawyer is interfering in their cases. They must understand the rights of lawyers and people they are accusing."

"No Advice Without Knowledge: Scrutiny elements in the UN Human Rights Council's item 10 resolutions," analyses the content and evolution of resolutions adopted by the UN HRC in the framework of its agenda item 10, which is dedicated to technical assistance and capacity-building. The report has been used at the HRC, in particular in relation to countering China's efforts to deprive the HRC of its scrutiny role.



- Website: 66 posts
- Twitter: 1569 new followers
- Facebook: 130 new followers
- Instagram: 140 new followers
- YouTube: 11 videos

COMMUNICATIONS

In 2019, we continued to share our monthly newsletters and increased our online presence.

We nominated 11 “HRDs of the month” – a monthly series to recognize HRDs from the sub-region and highlight their work.

Meet our HRDs of the month!



January: Yared Hailemariam, Ethiopia

“This is a huge chance for civil society. Because of bad laws and the previous government, our work was totally crippled and paralysed, but there are many good signs that our presence is welcome like it wasn’t before. It’s a bright future for civil society as a result of these changes.”



February: Mildred Apenyo, Uganda

“What inspires me is the vision, the idea, of a world where no one’s dignity has to be fought for. It’s such a terrible waste of time that so many wonderful, powerful women are spending all of their lives fighting things that are obviously unfair, and fighting what obviously should not exist.”



March: Kamal Ramadan, Kodi Marshall, and Ganja Ali, Sudan

“We wish to be the voice of the voiceless. We have grown up in a war zone. We have seen people dying, we’ve seen bombs, we’ve seen a lot of things – this is why we sing songs about freedom.”



April: Gabriel Mugaruka, DRC

“Let us break the silence, let us go ahead and fight for our rights.”



May: Abdul Aziz Muhamat, Sudan

“I have seen friends die before my eyes, due to the treatment given at Manus Island, and I could not sit around and watch as the Australian government destroyed the hope and life of these good men.”





June: Beatrice Githinji, Kenya

"After independence, the government promised to give back the land that was taken away from people before, however that did not happen."



July: Gladys Mmari, Tanzania

"We need to stop romanticising the idea of women empowerment, and co-empower one another to achieve the goals of an equal world."



August: Alaa Satir, Sudan

"The challenges that we, women, have faced in Sudanese society have been enormous – we have been the main casualties of Omar al-Bashir's regime."



September: Moses Kabaseke, DRC

"It's difficult for people that have not experienced atrocities to understand how that feels like. With my music, I try to capture the trauma and injustices experienced by so many."



October: Gladness Hemedi Munuo, Tanzania

"Shrinking space and crackdown on media causes huge problems in Tanzania – to me it's a thing that needs serious and immediate action."



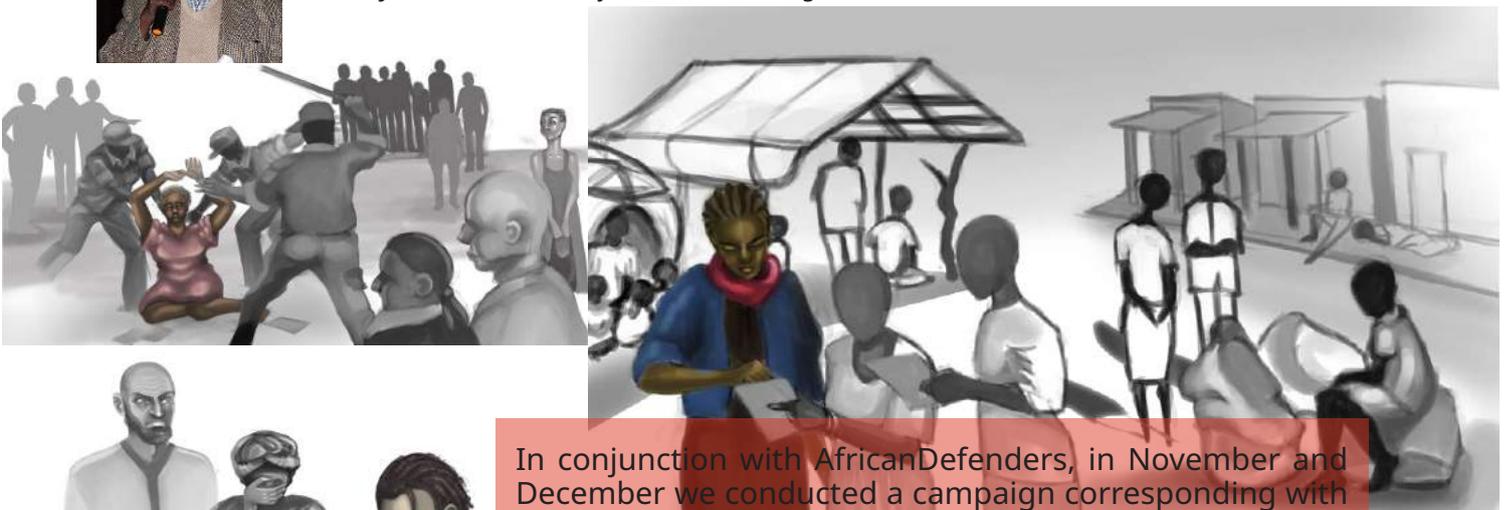
November: Brenda Kugonza, Uganda

"As a defender, you lose friends and family members – they don't want to be associated with someone who brings them shame. We are viewed as women with bad manners and I struggle daily with discrimination."



December: Omot Agwa Okwoy, Ethiopia

"If you commit yourself to good things, you will make it. But if you don't want to do it, that's fine too, you should not be forced. Human rights work starts as an internal motivation."



In conjunction with AfricanDefenders, in November and December we conducted a campaign corresponding with International Women Human Rights Defenders Day, 16 Days of Activism, and Human Rights Day, **Three women stories**. The campaign included, a podcast, illustrations and short stories, portraying the reality of WHRDs and their courage.



CAPACITY BUILDING FOR HRDS

DefendDefenders' capacity building programme works to build the capacity of HRDs, their organisations, and EHAHRD-Net National Coalitions in the sub-region. We focus on protection, advocacy, MDR, wellbeing, and networking.

- HRD protection mechanisms and security management
- Advocacy and communication tools/strategies for HRD
- Monitor, document, and report human rights violations
- Resourcing resilience and wellbeing of HRDs
- Coalition building and networking

CLAIMING SPACES 2019: TACTICAL TOOLS FOR HRDS

Every year, DefendDefenders organises a week-long training event for HRDs in a different country in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region – Claiming Spaces: Tactical Tool for HRDs. In 2019, Claiming Spaces was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, together with HRCO and AHRE. The flagship event welcomed more than **44 Ethiopian HRDs** (15 women, 29 men), from all regions in Ethiopia, to enhance their skills. Overall, we trained a total of **136 HRDs** (41 women, 95 men) in:

- Physical security and risk assessment
- Strategic advocacy and communications
- Monitoring, documentation and reporting
- Resource mobilisation
- Sustaining activism through self-care
- Digital security management

We welcomed **67 Ethiopian HRDs** (19 female, 48 male) to the opening session, where we hosted a panel moderated by our Director of Programmes and Administration, Memory Bandera:

- Biniam Abate, Executive Director (HRCO)
- Hassan Shire, Executive Director (DefendDefenders)
- Annika Nordin Jayawardena, Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Development Cooperation (Embassy of Sweden in Ethiopia)
- Thijs Woudstra, Deputy Head (Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ethiopia)
- Daniel Bekele, Commissioner (Ethiopia Human Rights Commission)
- A representative from Ethiopia's Office of the Prime Minister

Lastly, together with AHRE, CERO, and HRCO, DefendDefenders launched the **Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Network**, which was fully integrated into the EHAHRD-Net.

JOINT PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL SECURITY TRAININGS

Our protection team, and DefendersTech often work hand in hand to train HRDs. This interdepartmental cooperation has raised the capacity of **247 HRDs** (140 women, 77 men, 30 organisations) in physical and digital security management in 2019.

Physical security trainings

Our protection team trained **130 HRDs** (28 women, 53 men, 6 transgender) in monitoring, documenting, and reporting, as well as physical security.

Digital security trainings

DefendersTech strengthened **146 HRDs'** (75 women, 36 men, 10 sexual minorities, 25 undisclosed) digital safety. **24 HRDs** (14 women, 10 men) were visited in three follow ups, to assess the operationalisation of knowledge and ensure device and organisational security.

Safe Sister programme

38 HRDs (all women) participated in our Safe Sister programme, which was launched at FIFAfrica. Participants subsequently train others in digital security, making the programme particularly wide-reaching.

SAFETAG auditor training

13 technologists (5 women, 8 men) from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania participated in our SAFETAG auditor training.

Doc-IT became Ttaala

Towards the end of 2019, we evaluated our Doc-IT programme and rebranded it to Ttaala, meaning 'light' in Luganda. Ttaala is a comprehensive skills-building project, illuminating the world of digital tools and strategies to HRDs. We conducted three sessions in Uganda with a total of **36 HRDs** (18 women, 18 men).

DefendDefenders attended FIFAfrica, where we operated a digital security clinic, in collaboration with AccessNow, DPI, and Greenhost. In addition, we conducted two trainings, raising the capacity of **35 HRDs** (25 undisclosed, 10 sexual minorities).

Advocacy and public interest litigation

"Through our participation in this programme, Human Rights Centre Uganda (HRC-U) is piloting their research utilising ELMO, an open source elections monitoring platform developed by The Carter Centre, which was found to be flexible enough to suit most documentation projects."

Doc-IT/Ttaala programme participant.





In 2019, we conducted one training on strategic advocacy and communication, particularly targeting diplomatic missions, for 20 HRDs (9 women, 11 men) in South Sudan. Representatives from the Dutch, European Union, German and French missions joined the first day of the workshop.

NATIONAL COALITIONS OF HRDS

DefendDefenders helps in the establishment of national coalitions of human rights defenders across the East and Horn of Africa sub-region and supports members of the EHAHRD-Net with trainings or technical assistance. These are some of our achievements in 2019:

Burundi.

- Hosted the coalition within DefendDefenders' offices
- Financial and technical support to the secretariat of the coalition
- Joint emergency protection interventions
- Joint support to Burundian human rights organisations.
- Mentorship on developing a protection response mechanism
- Joint mentorship on risk prevention strategies
- Joint emergency protection interventions
- Interventions on resourcing resilience

Ethiopia.

- Research and advocacy initiatives
- Trainings on security management
- Emergency protection interventions
- Launched new coalition
- Joint emergency protection interventions
- Financial and technical support to the secretariat of the coalition

Kenya.

- Joint emergency protection interventions
- Quarterly meetings on coordination of response interventions

South Sudan.

In the countries without established national coalitions, DefendDefenders works with focal points organisations. E.g. in Sudan we work with the African Centre for Peace and Justice Studies. On 11-16 October 2019, DefendDefenders conducted a [high-level mission to Khartoum](#).

Somalia.

- Joint emergency protection interventions
- Financial and technical support to the secretariat of the coalition

Tanzania.

- Joint emergency protection interventions
- Joint advocacy interventions

Uganda.

- Joint emergency protection interventions
- Continued support to the team



AFRICANDEFENDERS

ABOUT AFRICANDEFENDERS

AfricanDefenders (Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network) is an umbrella organisation of five African sub-regional networks, dedicated to the promotion and protection of HRDs across the African continent. AfricanDefenders is hosted by DefendDefenders and aims to share best practices, cross-pollinate protection expertise, establish rigorous reporting, track continental trends, and deal with transregional protection issues, emergency relocations, and resource shortfalls. AfricanDefenders coordinates activities in the areas of protection, strengthening capacities of sub-regional networks and HRDs, and advocacy at continental and international level.

AfricanDefenders 2019 highlights:

- Ubuntu Hub Cities Initiative operational in **6 African cities**
- **36 HRDs** relocated
- **All African Defenders Convention**
- Kampala Plan of Action **follow up**
- Co-signed **15 statements**
- Sponsored **12 HRDs** to ACHPR and HRC sessions
- Built capacity of **29 HRDs** and **9 organisations**
- Presented **Shield Awards**
- Adopted **communication strategy**



Members:

- North African Human Rights Defenders Network (co-hosted by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights and the Tunisian League of Human Rights)
- The Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network (hosted by the International Commission of Jurists Africa Regional Programme, ICJ)
- The Central African Human Rights Defenders Network
- The West African Human Rights Defenders Network
- The East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (hosted by DefendDefenders)



THE UBUNTU HUB CITIES INITIATIVE

What is the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative?

The Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative is an Africa-based relocation mechanism for HRDs at risk across Africa. We temporarily relocate HRDs who have been subject to threats, violence and extreme pressure as a consequence of their human rights work. This ensures their safety and allows for a break from their highly stressful and dangerous environment, whilst they can continue their work by growing their network and expanding their skills and knowledge.

"In designing the concept of Ubuntu Hub Cities, we wanted to challenge the notion that African HRDs cannot be protected within their own continent."

Hassan Shire, Chairperson of AfricanDefenders

Operationalising the Ubuntu Hub City Initiatives

In line with the organisation's goal to protect HRDs, AfricanDefenders officially launched the [Ubuntu Hub Cities Initiative](#) in [Tunisia](#), [Côte D' Ivoire](#), and [South Africa](#), reaching a total of six Ubuntu Hub Cities on the continent in February 2019.

Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Capetown, South Africa.

To mark the South Africa launch of the Ubuntu Hub Cities Initiative, AfricanDefenders and the Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network (SAHRDN) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU). Human rights experts and CSO and academic representatives attended. We introduced the initiative to human rights experts, CSO representatives, academic institutions, and stakeholders, and initiated cooperation with the South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

Abidjan, Cote D'ivoire.

The launch gathered about 50 representatives from the Ivorian civil society, government officials, regional and international organisations, national media and diplomatic missions. Hon. Aimee Zebeyoux, State Secretary in charge of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire, opened the session with extensive [media coverage](#). An MoU was signed between AfricanDefenders and the Ivorian Coalition for Human Rights Defenders.

"Whether you are a journalist, an environmental activist, a whistleblower, a trade unionist, a lawyer, a member of a charitable association, or an occasional activist, you can be protected in Côte d'Ivoire."

Hon. Ai mee Zebeyoux, State Secretary in charge of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire

Tunis, Tunisia.

AfricanDefenders signed an MoU with the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH), its main implementing partner in Tunisia. The launch was followed by a visit to the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR) to explore further collaboration.



Strengthening the local implementation of the initiative

AfricanDefenders organised a [workshop](#) with local implementing partners and hub cities coordinators to develop a holistic and individualised programme to support HRDs, with an emphasis on their wellbeing during and after relocation. One of the results was a psychosocial programme.

- **16 participants** (7 women, 9 men) from the different Ubuntu Hub Cities
- Shared best practices, lessons learnt, and HRD experiences before and after relocation
- **5 psychosocial care experts** provided guidance



Protection under Ubuntu Hub Cities

Out of **73 support requests** in 2019:

- **36** protection/relocation requests granted
- **20** requests referred
- **13** not qualified
- **3** withdrawn
- **1** remained under review

What do HRDs say about Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative?

"With the right support, risk can be an opportunity in disguise."

Nigerian HRD relocated to West Africa

"I was safely relocated, and able to continue my normal life. I am very thankful to AfricanDefenders for their endless support and giving me hope. They regularly checked on my wellbeing and safety, a precious thing for someone in my situation."

Tanzanian activist relocated to South Africa

"AfricanDefenders gave me what I desperately needed: assurance that I am not alone. I hope this does not end here, and that we can continue our strong working relationship."

Zimbabwean HRD relocated to South Africa

"I had to ask myself: am I prepared to go to prison? I did not want to stop my activism, so having access to a relocation mechanism allowed me to be safe, while continuing my activism."

HRD relocated under the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative

ALL AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS CONVENTION

In June 2019, AfricanDefenders held a three-day convention in Zanzibar, Tanzania, the [Johannesburg +20 \(Joburg+20\) Convention](#) bringing together HRDs representatives of the African human rights system to take stock on the achievements made in the past ten years, since developing the Kampala Plan of Action (KAPA). New strategies were developed, resulting in an updated plan of action for AfricanDefenders, the [Kampala Plan of Action +10](#).

Guests of honour:

- Hon. Comm. Soyata Maiga, Chairperson ACHPR
- Hon. Justice Sylvain Ore President, African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Hon. Prof. Prof. Remy Ngoy Lumbu, Special Rapporteur on HRDs and Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa
- George Morara, Vice-Chairman and Commissioner Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
- Margaret Sekaggya, Former UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs



Convention Report
Zanzibar, Tanzania
12-14 June 2019

ADVOCACY & STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Advocacy at ACHPR & UN HRC

AfricanDefenders strengthened its engagement with the ACHPR and UN HRC. Recognising the importance of providing HRDs with a platform to voice their concerns, we facilitated **12 HRDs** (8 women, 4 men) to attend the respective sessions.

Panels and Side Events

- NGO forum preceding 64th Ordinary Session of the African Commission: panel on situation of HRDs working on people on the move and exiled HRDs, organised by AfricanDefenders and International Service for Human rights (ISHR)
- Chaired panel on presentation and adoption of resolutions and recommendations submitted to the African Commission

New African Union partnership

AfricanDefenders initiated an MoU with AGA to provide HRDs with a platform in core decision-making. We conducted a follow up mission to Ethiopia in December 2019.

Engaging Ethiopia

Following the appointment of Abiy Ahmed as prime minister, AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders met with key stakeholders in Ethiopia in January 2019. We shared analyses on the human rights situation and discussed future cooperation. In December, the Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders coalition was [launched](#).

Solidarity with Sudan

Sudan saw historic changes in 2019. In October, AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders [visited](#) Sudan to express solidarity with civil society, engage relevant institutions, and lay foundations for further engagement and advocacy. We highlighted the importance of inclusion of civic space and human rights issues, as well as women's representation in the transition period.



Advocating for Cameroon

AfricanDefenders closely monitored Cameroon's ongoing crisis. At ACHPR65, we sponsored Cameroonian HRDs' participation, conducted bilateral meetings and strategic advocacy, and urged the ACHPR to address the serious and systematic human rights violations in an [open letter](#). We addressed a [letter of protest](#) to Cameroon's president to end attacks and reprisals against international and regional human rights organisations. Furthermore, we organised a side event regarding Cameroon, featuring Un Monde Avenir and Cameroon Women's Peace Movement (CAWOPEM), moderated by Hon. Comm. Remy Ngoy, Country Special Rapporteur on Cameroon. Particularly the Anglophone crisis and ways to support local HRDs were discussed.

Consultations with the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders

Together with DefendDefenders, AfricanDefenders facilitated consultations between the UN Special Rapporteur on the situations of HRDs, Michel Forst, and HRDs from East and West Africa. The aim of the consultations was to discuss the issue of impunity for violations, threats, and reprisals against HRDs as a consequence of their work.

AfricanDefenders supports a project initiated by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs to translate a summary of the **UN Declaration** into more than **50 languages**, including many African languages.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

In 2019, AfricanDefenders equipped HRDs with strategic tools and tactics:

- Trained **14 Cameroonian HRDs** (7 women, 7 men) as digital security trainers;
- Audited **8 Cameroonian human rights organisations'** digital security management; and
- Trained **20 HRDs** (11 women, 9 men) from North Africa in advocacy and strategic litigation, of which **2 HRDs** (both women) attended ACHPR.



Official opening of the AfricanDefenders office in Kampala



Steering Committee Members of AfricanDefenders

HONOURING ACHIEVEMENTS FOR OUTSTANDING PERSONALITIES

To bring visibility to the tireless work and courage of African HRDs, the third edition of the **Shield Awards** highlighted the work of outstanding HRDs in each sub-region:

Sudan Women Protest: consortium of Sudanese women activists bringing women's voices to forefront of revolution. Received **Africa Shield Award** and **North Africa Shield Award**.

Donald Deya: International human rights lawyer representing victims of violations before ACHPR, African Court on Human and People's Rights, and East African Court of Justice. Received **Shield Award for the East and Horn of Africa**.

Felix Agbor Anyior Nkongho: Cameroonian lawyer documenting and reporting systematic human rights violations in Cameroon's Anglophone region. Received **Central African Shield Award**.

Fatoue Jane Senghor: Executive Director of Article 19 West Africa. Ensures accountability, builds civil society capacity, and strengthens reforms in The Gambia. Presented with **Shield Award for West Africa**.

Beatrice Mtetwa: Zimbabwean human rights lawyer representing HRDs and journalists pro-bono. Presented with **Southern Africa Shield Award**.

Hon. Commissioner Maiga Soyata: protects the rights of Africans, notably women, through Maputo Protocol. Presented with the **Shield of Africa Award** for valuable dignitaries.

Maximillienne Ngo Mbe: Leads Central Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (REDHAC) and Steering Committee member of AfricanDefenders. Received **Resilience Award**.

CAMPAIGNS IN 2019



“For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others”

Nelson Mandela International Day

Nelson Mandela International Day (18 July): AfricanDefenders wrote a letter giving tribute to Nelson Mandela’s great work and how his vision has shaped the work of AfricanDefenders.



Women Human Rights Defenders day (29 November): AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders launched a campaign against Sexual Gender-Based Violence and how it impacts WHRDs in Africa.

For each disappeared, more activists stand up to demand #JusticeForActivists

30 August
International Day for the Victims of Enforced Disappearances

International Day of the Disappeared (30 August): AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders carried out the #JusticeForActivists campaign to raise awareness about the use of enforced disappearances against HRDs in Africa.



INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND DOCUMENTATION

In 2019, our internal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was geared towards an effective, integrated, and coherent programme framework, to deepen the impact of our work. We conducted two internal monitoring exercises, trained **33 staff members** in M&E, and evaluated our strategic plan. By mid-2019, we had reached an average of **80% performance** and the evaluation guided the development of DefendDefenders' 2021-2025 Strategy. All new programmes now have M&E frameworks. To increase the effectiveness of our programmes, we also undertook follow-up and documentation processes. Additionally, we followed up with HRDs and HRD organisations all over Uganda that took part in our trainings and initiatives. We evaluated how they benefitted and what still needs to be improved. The conclusions were integrated into our planning and trainings.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

To improve staff performance, we regularly organised internal staff trainings, e.g. on our digital security curriculum and various IT programmes we use. Our staff also has ample external study opportunities, especially DefendersTech participated in a variety of courses and certificates (Udemy, Microsoft Azure Solutions, Agile Practitioner Certificate, CompTIA CySA+ and Comptia A+ certifications, CISSP certification, and more).

ORGANISATIONAL UPDATES

In September 2019, DefendDefenders migrated from G-Suite to Office 365 to consolidate fragmented services, integrate user directories between on-premise and cloud directories, and improve manageability, recoverability, security, and stability.

PARTNERSHIPS

In October 2019, we held our annual developmental partners meeting, where we brought together donors and members of the board to present our work and financial standing for the year. We also embarked on a partnership with Civil Rights Defenders in October to learn from each other. This resulted in developing a management system, a gender strategy, various workshops and learning visits.

BOARD MEMBERS MEETING

During our annual board members meeting in October 2019, the chairmanship was handed over to Ms. Sophie Kyagulanyi from Dr. Livingstone. Additionally, Mr. Vital Nshimirimana and Dr. Zahara Nampewo were introduced as new board members. The board examined the activities of the organisation, progress of the current strategy, and the financial standing of the organisation.



Dr. Livingstone handing over the chairmanship to Ms. Sophie Kyagulanyi

FINANCE

2019 FINANCIAL STATUS

Table 1

	UGX	PERCENTAGE EXPENDITURE TO INCOME
Capacity Building	2,022,572,540	15.11%
Protection and Digital Security Management	3,382,495,949	25.28%
Advocacy and Research	1,278,856,765	9.56%
ICT (Technology and Human Rights Program)	682,211,686	5.10%
AfricanDefenders (Pan African HRD Network)	2,958,875,137	22.11%
Organisation Development/Admin Costs	3,336,603,156	24.93%
Deficit for the Year	(280,074,283)	-2.09%
Total Income 2019	13,381,325,609	100.00%

For detailed accounts, please refer to the 2019 financial audited report.

DONORS

In 2019, we received support from the following partners:

1. Austria Development Agency
2. Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World)
3. Kingdom of Netherlands Embassy in Uganda
4. Kingdom of Netherlands Embassy in South Sudan
5. European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy (supporting various projects in East and Horn of Africa sub-region)
6. Internews
7. Irish Embassy in Uganda
8. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland
9. National Endowment for Democracy
10. Open Society Initiatives for Eastern Africa
11. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (core funding for East and Horn of Africa)
12. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Africa regional project led by CIVICUS)
13. Tides for Hub Afrique
14. United States Embassy in Uganda
15. Civil Rights Defenders
16. Goldsmith University for Research



BOARD MEMBERS

SOPHIE KYAGULANYI - CHAIRPERSON

Sophie Kyagulanyi is a Ugandan National living in Uganda and is currently working with Oxfam. She was previously a Governance Research and Policy Analyst at Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE). She has been an active human rights defender in Uganda, is one of the founding members of DefendDefenders and became our new chairperson to the board of directors in 2019.

ZAHARA NAMPEWO - TREASURER

Zahara Nampewo is a legal and human rights practitioner and academician with 20 years' experience in the private, public, and non-profit sector. She is a lecturer and director of the Human Rights and Peace Centre (HURIPEC) at the Makerere University School of Law. She has work experience in Uganda, Liberia, and the United Kingdom with brief working missions in South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, and Malawi. Zahara Nampewo has published professional papers on a range of subjects including sexuality, decentralisation, and access to justice. She is not only treasurer of DefendDefenders' board, but also a board chairperson of the Uganda Lawyers for Human Rights (ULHR), a young NGO advocating for human rights of marginalized groups. She is also a board member for the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME) and an incisive member of the Association of Uganda Women Lawyers (FIDA-U).

DAVID KAGGWA - SECRETARY TO THE BOARD

David Kaggwa is an advocate of the High Court of Uganda and a Partner at Kaggwa and Associates. As secretary to the board, he advises DefendDefenders' board on legal matters, registration, and tax returns. David Kaggwa volunteers his skills to defenders in exile and helps them obtain refugee status under the Ugandan legal system amongst others.

FAIZA JAMAL MOHAMED - MEMBER

Faiza Jamal Mohamed is a Djibouti national residing in Kenya and is the Executive Director of the Pan African organisation Equality Now, where she is responsible for the implementation of Equality Now's work and representation of the organisation in Africa. Since 2001 she has overseen the Fund for Grassroots Activism to End Female Genital Mutilation channelling over 1.8 Million US Dollars to 30 organisations on the continent. Faiza Jamal Mohamed has extensive work experience in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region, previously working with the United National Population Fund-(UNFPA) and Oxfam NOVIB, amongst others. She is a member of the African Union Women's Committee (AUWC).

DOROTHE APPELS - MEMBER

Dorothe Appels, a Dutch National residing in the Netherlands, has over twenty years' experience in human rights work in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region and is currently the director of the Centre for International Development (COS) in the Netherlands. 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 that focused on domestic violence, war related violence, and trafficking, and started the project 'Bonded Labour in the Netherlands' (BlinN) in collaboration with Humanitas, addressing forced prostitution as an effect of economic inequalities between countries.



VITAL NSHIMIRIMANA – MEMBER

Vital Nshimirimana is a Burundian human rights lawyer. He joined the judiciary in 2004 and became an active member of the Union of Magistrates, going on to chair it in 2009. With his fellow magistrates, he focused on exposing the lack of judicial independence and the wide-ranging consequences this can have. He registered with the Burundi Bar association in June 2013. During his time as a lawyer he prosecuted high profile cases, including two cases at the East African Court of Justice. In 2017, Vital was elected as the chairperson of the EHAHRD-Net, a position that he will hold until 2022.

HASSAN SHIRE – EX OFFICIO AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DEFENDDEFENDERS

Hassan Shire is the Executive Director of DefendDefenders and has steered the organisation through its growth over the years. He is also the Chairperson of AfricanDefenders (Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network). Hassan Shire is an HRD from Somalia, with over 20 years' experience working in the region. While in Canada, he worked with the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University and Amnesty International Canada to create the African Human Rights Defenders Project. In 2005, he returned to Africa and founded DefendDefenders in Uganda. Shire has been instrumental in building coalitions for the protection of human rights defenders in the East and Horn of Africa, namely in Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, and Somalia/Somaliland.

Hassan Shire regularly engages with African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, United Nations Human Rights Council, the Community of Democracies, government authorities, and African and foreign diplomatic missions for the advancement of human rights in Africa. He is currently Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of the Centre for Civil and Political Rights (Geneva, Switzerland), board member of the Institute of Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (Banjul, The Gambia), and Board Chair of the African Center for Justice and Peace Studies (Kampala, Uganda).

Shire has received numerous awards from the international community including the U.S. State Department's 2011 Human Rights Defender Award, the Leadership Awards of the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network in 2015, and the Richard C. Holbrooke Leadership Award by Refugees International in 2017.



OUR TEAM

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Director of Programmes and Administration

Memory Bandera

PAHRD-Net Coordinator

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Estella Kabachwezi

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Thanks to our fellows, interns, and volunteers:

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

DefendDefenders serves as the secretariat of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, which represents thousands of members consisting of individual HRDs, human rights organisations, and national coalitions that envision a sub-region in which the human rights of every citizen as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are respected and upheld.

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