5.2 Summarized

DefendDefenders 2021 – 2025 Strategic Budget

Results

1.0 Enhance the availability, accessib

1.1 Enhanced HRD security and con

Sub Total

2.0 Strengthen policy in/f_luence and advocacy engagements at the Global, African, Sub

2.1 Be

2.2 Strengthened strategic impact

2.3 Strengthened strategic impact

Sub Total

3. Improve the capacity of Sub

3.1 Strengthened technical a

3.2 Increased capacity of HRDs to e

Sub Total

4.0 Strengthen DDs institutional capacity to eff ectively deliver on its mandate.

4.1 In

4.2 Improved

4.3 Improved risk management systems and

4.4 Strengthened governance; leadership and organiza

4.5 A mo

4.6 Enhanced fundraising and resources mobiliza

4.7 A Strong M&E system with be

4.8 Strengthened Office Management and Administra
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACHPR</td>
<td>African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBBDDH</td>
<td>Coalition Burundaise des Défenseurs des Droits de l’Homme</td>
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<tr>
<td>COHR</td>
<td>Commission on Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>COI</td>
<td>Commission of Inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNC</td>
<td>Gender Non-Conforming</td>
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<td>HRD</td>
<td>Human Rights Defender</td>
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<td>IE</td>
<td>Independent Expert</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
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<td>OSINT</td>
<td>Open Source Intelligence</td>
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<td>TOT</td>
<td>Training of Trainers</td>
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<td>TRE</td>
<td>Tension Releasing Exercises</td>
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<td>UN HRC</td>
<td>United Nations Human Rights Council</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UPR</td>
<td>Universal Periodic Review</td>
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2020 was overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected our normal way of operating. With offices closed, our technology set up allowed us to rethink and adapt quickly to the restrictive pandemic measures. We also made it clear that while it is legitimate to weigh public health concerns against the protection of fundamental rights, any such restrictions must be temporary, lawful, non-discriminatory, strictly necessary, and proportionate to the threat. It is unfortunate that throughout the continent, we witnessed and documented numerous attacks on the rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and movement in Africa which had a particularly detrimental effect on human rights defenders (HRDs).

COVID-19 also exposed the rampant corruption, discrimination, and inequalities in our society today. In the early days of the pandemic, I led a continental initiative to draw attention to the inhumane treatment of African citizens in China, resulting in an open letter addressed to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, signed by over 400 civil society organisations and 17,000 people from all over the continent.

As Chairperson of AfricanDefenders, I committed my team to the African Union’s (AU) goal of “Silencing the Guns” in 2020. As the year comes to a close, we are still working towards a conflict-free Africa, where genocide is prevented, and peace is a reality for all. We are yet to rid the continent of wars, violent conflicts, human rights violations, and humanitarian disasters. Nonetheless, with doubled efforts and strengthened AU organs, we can silence the guns. On our part, through an outstanding partnership with the African Governance Architecture (African Union Commission), we hope to meaningfully contribute to the African Union Agenda 2063.

I must commend my resilient and resourceful staff not only on swiftly reacting and adapting to the ‘new normal’ in 2020, but also for proactively seeking new possibilities to carry out our work. Despite the pandemic, we continued to support HRDs and reach out to the most at risk and vulnerable, and organised hybrid meetings and webinar series’. To help HRDs protect themselves, we published COVID-19
safe, security, and well-being guidelines in English, Arabic, and French, and dedicated the month of June to well-being, to emphasise the need for rest and respite. We have also released guidelines for HRDs during election periods.

With travel restricted globally since March 2020, DefendDefenders’ Geneva office proved to be an invaluable asset. The permanent presence of our Representative to the UN ensured continuity of our advocacy efforts at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), and allowed for in-person statements, next to the remote participation of HRDs from the sub-region. Voices of HRDs from the ground continued to resonate in Geneva.

Despite the growing challenges, I am proud of how quickly, flexibly, competently, and jovially the DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders teams handled these challenges.

In the 15 years of DefendDefenders’ existence, which we celebrated on 4 November, I believe we have strengthened our operations in supporting the most at-risk human rights defenders in Africa and have made our programmes accessible even at the grassroots level.

I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the national coalitions of HRDs and sub-regional HRD networks for their tireless effort on the ground, and of course our donors and partners, whose support makes our hard work possible.

Yours in solidarity

Hassan Shire
Executive Director, DefendDefenders
Chairperson, AfricanDefenders

“.... we are still working towards a conflict-free Africa, where genocide is prevented, and peace is a reality for all. We are yet to rid the continent of wars, violent conflicts, human rights violations, and humanitarian disasters.”
DefendDefenders was established in 2005 as the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project and registered as a foreign Non-Governmental Organization in Uganda. DefendDefenders exists to strengthen the work of Human Rights Defenders in the region by reducing their vulnerability to the risk of persecution and by enhancing their capacity to effectively defend human rights.

The core mandate of DefendDefenders is to promote the safety, security, and wellbeing of HRDs. To achieve this, DefendDefenders work has to date focused on protection and security management, capacity building, technology development, as well as advocacy, research, and communications. Further, DefendDefenders establishes and supports national coalitions of HRDs in various countries through which HRDs can come together and claim their rights at the national level.

DefendDefenders serves as a Secretariat of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRD-Net) representing thousands of HRDs and their organizations. The network draws its membership from Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia (together with Somaliland), South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The Network also serves as the secretariat for AfricanDefenders (Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network). DefendDefenders further holds a Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as well as observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

**VISION**

*A region in which the human rights of every individual as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are respected and upheld.*

**MISSION**

*To enhance the safety and capacities of HRDs in the region for greater resilience and effective fulfilment of their mandates.*
Throughout 2020, further shrinking of civic space was witnessed across the region, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Human rights defenders (HRDs) were disproportionately affected by increased restrictions on freedom of peaceful assembly, expression, and access to information. While new regulations were enacted to curb the spread of the virus and misinformation, they were also used to silence opposing voices and curtail protest movements, spurred on by increased police violence during COVID-19 lockdowns in countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.

More thorough analyses are available in DefendDefenders’ bi-annual reports to the ACHPR (April 2020 & October 2020), as well as on the website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020</th>
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<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>President Évariste Ndayishimiye elected in May 2020. Four Iwacu journalists were released following a Presidential pardon. Germain Rukiki’s 32-year sentence was quashed by the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal ordered to re-hear it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>In July 2020, demonstrations occurred in support of former Djiboutian Air Force Lieutenant Fouad Youssouf Ali, who was illegally returned from Ethiopia. Several journalists were arrested following the protests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>A resolution to extend the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Eritrea adopted in July 2020. The country remained extremely closed and hostile for journalists. By the end of the year, 16 journalists remained either disappeared or in detention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Armed conflict in Tigray region resulted in the displacement of over 2.2 million people. Intercommunal and ethnic killings were reported in Benishangul-Gumuz region and Tigray. There were mass protests following death of Oromo singer Hachalu Hundessa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>There were increased political tensions in anticipation of 2022 elections. The Cyber Crimes Act remains in place targeting bloggers and social media users. There were several reports of heavy-handedness by authorities in enforcement of covid 19 regulations. The Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU) documented 24 cases of deaths in police custody since January 2020.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Restrictions to the right to freedom of opinion and expression especially for journalists and political opponents remained in place. Paul Rusesabagina, an outspoken critic, was arrested in Europe and forcefully repatriated to Rwanda on terrorism charges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Restrictions were reported ahead of the February 2021 elections. In July 2020 protests against the planned term extension by President Mohamed Abdullahi were violently dispersed. An amendment to the Media Law was signed in August 2020, continuing to criminalise the work of journalists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>There were delays in implementing the transitional security arrangements. Transitional justice mechanisms as per the Revitalized Peace Agreement are yet to be established. Several HRDs fled the hostile political environment, with Peter Biar Ajak fleeing to the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>A State of emergency was declared due to floods and Covid 19. Protests continued against poor living and economic conditions. The Military arm of the Sovereign Council continued to retain significant influence, threatening civic freedoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Elections took place amid massive irregularities and violence, with several political opponents and protestors detained. In August 2020, accounts of Tanzanian Human Rights Defenders Coalition were closed affecting their activities. Electronic and Postal Communications (Online) Content Regulations 2020 continued to be used to silence the media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>The run up to the country’s 2021 general elections was marred with violence against protestors. In November 2020, at least 45 people were killed and over 800 arrested.</td>
</tr>
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PROTECTION AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT

Providing protection and emergency support to HRDs at risk, is the core pillar of our work.

This year, we enhanced access to emergency protection for HRDs under imminent risk of violence. In total **482 grant requests were received**. The breakdown is as follows;

- **283** HRDs received support (**41** females, **9** transgender, **11** organisations, **222** males),
- **134** requests were not supported,
- **11** requests were withdrawn,
- **1191** total beneficiaries;

PREVENTIVE PROTECTION

**Security Management**

The Protection and Security Management department provides both preventive and reactive protection support. Preventive protection is aimed at equipping HRDs with skills to mitigate the risks that they face, increasing the capacities of the HRDs and their families, while reducing the vulnerabilities that they face. Capacity building, risk assessment, trial observation, solidarity visits, and psychosocial support and wellbeing are part and parcel of preventive protection strategies. DefendDefenders offers a robust training in physical security management, monitoring, documenting, reporting, plus stress and organizational management. Mentorship for HRD organisations, coalitions, and sub-regional networks, is also provided by the department.

**Physical security clinic**

Physical security clinics are setup on the side lines of civil society events and meetings. Staff explain the work of DefendDefenders, the different services offered, and showcase publications on security management.

**Resourcing resilience through art**

Psychosocial support and wellbeing have become an integral part of DefendDefenders activities and engagements with HRDs. To reduce the trauma, and mitigate the effects of the threats HRDs face, DefendDefenders organised a therapy camp for HRDs to practise self-care and well-being skills, enabling self-discovery, and psychosocial therapy. Additionally, different forms of artistic expressions, TRE, mindfulness, and talk therapy were used to address the stressful experience of the campers.

On 27 February 2020, DefendDefenders launched the first artistic therapy studio for HRDs in the East and Horn of Africa. The studio will enable HRDs to practice various well-being activities including, practicing TRE, personal reflection, meditation, playing, learning how to play musical instruments, dance, and body movement, drawing and painting, among others.
Figure 1: US Embassy staff join Defend Defenders Executive Director Hassan Shire to cut ribbons launching the artistic therapy studio at DefendDefenders offices
Figure 1: US Embassy staff join Defend Defenders Executive Director Hassan Shire to cut ribbons launching the artistic therapy studio at Defend Defenders offices

Figure 2: A wellbeing exercise in session

RESOURCE CENTRE FOR HRDS
The Floribert Chebeya Resource Centre is a safe space for HRDs to continue their human rights work while in exile. Located at the office premises of Defend Defenders, the resource centre is stocked with equipment, books, and a stable internet connection. In the first few months of 2020, it was accessed by 22 HRDs (16 males, 5 female & 1 other).

DEFENDDEFENDERS TECH
DefendersTech provides IT security support to organisations in form of organisational security audits and subsequent fixups. In 2020, DefendersTech audited 10 organisations, and followed up to provide fixup support. Due to Covid-19, the team had to adapt the mode of implementation for organisations outside of Uganda, which meant that audits were conducted remotely, using consultants and junior auditors who previously took part in trainings of auditors.
ADVOCACY, RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATIONS

DefendDefenders engages in different fora at national, regional, and international level to influence the global agenda for HRDs, primarily at the HRC and the ACHPR. Through our office in Geneva, our Representative to the UN engages with state delegations, human rights experts, OHCHR officials, the HRC, human rights organisations and other relevant UN bodies. Similarly, HRDs are supported to engage physically and online with the same fora.

In 2020, DefendDefenders engaged in the 43rd, 44th and 45th sessions of the UN HRC and the 66th and 67th sessions of the ACHPR. These sessions were greatly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, with the 66th ACHPR session being postponed and the 67th session being held online. Despite this, DefendDefenders submitted bi-annual reports to the Commission. Throughout the year, DefendDefenders engaged with partners, pushing for the adoption of meaningful resolutions at the ACHPR and HRC.

![Figure 3: AfricanDefenders Coordinator Joseph Bikanda, Human Rights Ambassador for the Kingdom of the Netherlands Bahia Tahzib-Lie and DefendDefenders’ Representative to the UN, Nicholas Agostini at the side lines of HRC43](image)

**HRC 43**
- 5 Advocacy documents and press releases
- 1 Side event - South Sudan
- 1 resolution

**HRC 44**
- 4 Advocacy reports and press releases
- 1 Side event - Sudan
- 4 resolutions

**HRC 45**
- 8 Oral statements
- 7 Advocacy documents and press releases
- 1 Side event - Burundi
- 5 resolutions
ADVOCACY, RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATIONS

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Figure 3: AfricanDefenders Coordinator Joseph Bikanda, Human Rights Ambassador for the Kingdom of the Netherlands Bahia Tahzib-Lie and DefendDefenders' Representative to the UN, Nicholas Agostini at the sidelines of HRC43.

ONLINE EVENT

Sudan at a crossroads: what role for the HRC?

A year after the adoption of the transitional constitutional Declaration, this online event will provide an assessment of the human rights situation in Sudan to the diplomatic community working around the UN Human Rights Council’s Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on Sudan. To go beyond the political challenges of a single agreement between the military, private militia and the representatives of the civilian parties and fighting a range of cases of Covid-19, the event will highlight key issues that need to be tackled by the authorities, among which COVID and third parties’ support is needed, and suggest recommendations to improve the human rights situation in the country.

The event is organised by the African Center for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, CSFR, DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project), Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Justice Centre for Advocacy and Legal Consultancies (JCALC), and ROBRES.

Speakers:
- Fatna Khalaf, activist, Missing Initiative
- Mohamed Abdeelakim, Professor, Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Khartoum
- Musaa Muhamed, activist, Women Peace and Security Initiative (WPSI)
- Mohammed Ahmad Ali, Executive Director, ACPS

Moderator: Shela Mawa, Visiting President, FIDH

DATE: 15 July 2020

14:00 – 15:00 GMT

The platform used will be Zoom, and the discussion will be held in English.

Join us at:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8360311682
## Country-Specific Advocacy

<table>
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<th>Country</th>
<th>Actions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>At HRC 43, we pursued work on prevention and objective criteria for council action, and called for preventative engagement with Tanzania to avoid further deterioration of the human rights and civic space situation in the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>At HRC 43, we delivered an oral statement urging Eritrea to cooperate with the council and its mechanisms, including the Special Rapporteur on the country's situation, pursuant to its membership obligations. Ahead of HRC 44, we worked on a Letter: “Eritrea – Maintain Human Rights Council scrutiny and engagement,” and Press release: “Eritrea – UN extends scrutiny as no human rights progress can be reported.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>During HRC 43 AND HRC45, we wrote a letter advocating for the extension of the mandate of the CoHR. The mandate of the COHR and international monitoring and reporting on South Sudan was extended.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>During HRC 44, we delivered a statement building on a recent joint letter, encouraging President Evariste Ndayishimiye to commit to a reconciliation agenda and grant pardon to all unjustly detained HRDs. Additionally, we called for a further extension of the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry on the country.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>At HRC 43, we delivered an oral statement welcoming the progress in Sudan, while stressing the need for continued attention, monitoring, and public debates on the country. Ahead of HRC 44, we pursued consultations on the situation in Sudan and actions the Council could take to promote and protect human rights in the country and support a democratic transition. At HRC 44, we co-organised an online event with Sudanese HRDs. We also delivered a comprehensive statement during the session’s “enhanced interactive dialogue” on Sudan. During HRC 45, DefendDefenders and partners emphasised that it was untimely to relax scrutiny of Sudan's situation and stressed key points in a press release and an oral statement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>At HRC 45, we delivered a statement on Item 10: Interactive dialogue with the IE. During HRC 45, in a statement, we highlighted the precarious situation of HRDs and journalists in the country. Read our analysis of the resolution adopted on 6 October 2020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>At HRC 45, our statement on the adoption of the report on the country’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was delivered by the Defenders Coalition via video message.</td>
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RESEARCH
DefendDefenders conducts both country specific and thematic research to inform our advocacy efforts regionally and internationally. In 2020 we published:

- 2 country specific reports
- 2 thematic reports
- 1 policy brief
- 1 podcast

The first report, “Targeted but Not Deterred: Human rights defenders fighting for justice and peace in South Sudan”, analyses the situation of HRDs in South Sudan following the signing of the 2018 Revitalised Peace Agreement and formation of a national unity government in early 2020.

The policy brief; “On the Legal Frontline: Lawyers and Paralegals as Human Rights Defenders in the East and Horn of Africa” synthesises the problems that legal practitioners in the sub-region face, and the strategies they use to promote human rights. It is based upon documentation and action research by human rights lawyers and legal activists from Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The other report; “Making a Difference for Women and Girls? East and Horn of Africa countries and women's and girls' rights at the UN Human Rights Council”, examines how and to what extent, the 11 States of the East and Horn of Africa contribute to the advancement of the rights of women and girls at the United Nations (UN). It aims to raise awareness on how states’ behaviour at the UN HRC contributes to citizen engagement with governments of the sub-region, enhances scrutiny, and furthers efforts towards the realisation of women's and girls’ rights.

COMMUNICATIONS

In 2020, 12 HRDs were profiled as HRDs of the month, to amplify their voices and recognise their work across the sub-region. Additionally, monthly newsletters were circulated to stakeholders, networks, and partners. DefendDefenders maintained its presence online, with continuous engagement on our various social media platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. As a result our social media presence and following continued to grow.

MEET OUR 2020 HRDS OF THE MONTH:

January – Faiza Abdi Mohamed, Somalia
“I’ve lost so many of my friends due to cruelties, so I can’t keep quiet”

February – Aluel Atem, South Sudan
“It’s not only about being a female, but a young female. You get undermined for being a woman in all-man spaces, and for being young in older spaces”

March – Kadar Abdi Ibrahim, Djibouti
“Every day, I witness the injustice and suffering inflicted upon my fellow compatriots. As a human being, I cannot stand idly by”
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Meet our 2020 HRDs of the Month:

**April – Onyang Owor, Uganda**
“The ripple effects of such a case go beyond the court room or the human rights defenders that had been affected by a draconian application of this law”

**May – Edmund Yakano, South Sudan**
“All focus was on dissemination of information around COVID-19, on awareness raising. But for example, immunization of children from other medical sicknesses – it’s not been taken seriously, not been budgeted for.”

**June – Vanessa Tsehaye, Eritrea**
“The Eritrean situation is very unique. In these past 19 years, very few things have changed for the better, if any. Maybe it’s comparable to North Korea, this situation where opposition and civil society are completely banned and unable to operate within the country. Only people on the outside can mobilise and campaign. It’s very tricky, because it’s much easier to mobilise people within a county to organise mass protests.”

**July – Karis Moses Oteba, Uganda**
“Within DefenderDefenders’ protection department, we often encourage outbursts, owing to the desperate situations HRDs face. In the beginning I would argue back and forth with them, but I have learned to stay calm, and appreciate where they are coming from”

**August – Malab Alneel, Sudan**
“I grew up in a house that was very political. All of my sisters are activists, my parents are very involved. Activism has always been there. But for me it started with the revolution. It just felt like a time for change”
September – Onesmo Olengurumwa, Tanzania
“I did not start championing human rights because of employment, I started this at secondary school, and we were not paid. I am extremely passionate about my human rights work, whether they pay me or not. I chose this work, knowing that it’s risky and I’ve faced a lot of difficulties. My house was surveilled and at one point I had to be evacuated internally. Life is not independent and free.”

October – Andrew Gole, Uganda
“If I have a skill that someone else needs to be safe, I am very happy to provide it. Many of the organisations I work with don’t have IT departments, so once I do something for them, I usually become their IT guy. Most of it is easy for me, so if I can help, I usually do it immediately and I can’t charge a consultancy fee for that.”

November – Meskerem Geset Techane, Ethiopia
“Any opportunity to discredit me is used. When I assert my leadership and demand excellence, men complain that I’m insulting them. They would never say that to the other men in their ‘boy’s club.’ It’s very subtle, but it’s bullying and intimidation attempting to discredit me. Many women human rights defenders face such experiences.”

December – Foni Joyce, South Sudan
“Numbers are useful to show the intensity and impact of a conflict, but when we talk about 70 million refugees, most people think about 70 million people taking up resources or opportunities. We forget that behind every number is a human being. A mother, a father, a brother or sister, whose voice needs to be heard regardless of their status.”
Throughout the course of the year, together with AfricanDefenders we hosted and participated in several online campaigns such as: International Women’s Day; International Youth Day; International Democracy Day; International Peace Day; Universal Access to Information Day; #Justice4AllWomxn; World Press Freedom Day; The UN International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples; World Mental Health Day; Africa Human Rights Day; 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

SAY NO TO ONLINE GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

#SayNoToOnlineGBV

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.
#FreeHRDsNow

They should have never been detained.

A campaign advocating for the freedom of detained HRDs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY
2020 Annual Report

International Women’s Day

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

“...Young Sudanese leaders were instrumental in the peaceful resistance movement against the dictatorship and continue to mobilise communities.”

“...Every generation has its own ideas of how to fight and what to fight for. The ones leading tomorrow need to fight today to make it different and to make it better.”

“...Young people are the future! We are the majority in most societies around the world, so we should be represented.”

“...Representing youth in human rights will also ease our societal transition from dependence to independence and autonomy.”
Annually, DefendDefenders organises and co-hosts its flagship event, Claiming Spaces: Tactical Tools for HRDs, which constitutes week-long trainings for HRDs in the sub-region. This year, DefendDefenders co-hosted the 9th edition of the Claiming Spaces event together with the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda, in Kampala, from 7 – 11 December 2020. The event was attended by 345 HRDs (143 females, 197 males and 5 other).

JOINT PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL SECURITY TRAININGS
The Protection and Security Management department, and DefendersTech trained 175 HRDs in physical and digital security (59 males, 112 females, and 4 other). Additionally, 42 HRDs (17 females, 23 males, and 2 other) participated in digital and physical security training of trainers (ToTs).

PHYSICAL SECURITY TRAININGS
The Protection and Security Management department were able to capacitate 54 HRDs (26 females, and 28 males). Trainings included MDR, financial and organizational management, stress management, and physical security.

DIGITAL SECURITY TRAININGS
In 2020, DefendersTech took strides to innovatively ensure HRDs are equipped with the skills to safely use technology in the execution of their work. DefendDefenders trained 254 HRDs (208 females, 45 males, and 1 other) in digital security, and safety. DefendDefenders runs a multitude of technology programs including, Safe Sister, and Ttaala, and provides trainings in the areas of digital security, safety, and organisational audits, using the SAFETAG framework.
This year, as part of the **Safe Sister fellowship program**, **26 WHRDs** were trained in conducting digital security assessments using the SAFETAG framework. These WHRDs will become trainers in the SAFETAG community.

Additionally, **34 HRDs (14 females, 19 males, and 1 other)** participated in trainings of auditors using the SAFETAG framework. The content delivered included, introduction to SAFETAG, operational security, context research and OSINT, organisation assessment, device and data assessment, and vulnerability assessment.

In collaboration with our partner OHCHR, the DefendersTech team built the capacity of **150 WHRDs** in digital security and safety. The participants came from Cameroon, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Morocco, Norway, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, United Kingdom and Zambia.

Under the **Ttaala program**, **44 HRDs (18 females, and 26 males)** were trained. The program aims to build the digital capacity of participants in IT security, data collection and documentation, building an online/social media brand, as well as brainstorming on potential projects the organisations could launch with their new skills. Support **follow-up visits** were also conducted to **six organisations** in Uganda.

*Cover of the comic book created in partnership with Advocacy for Child Relief (Ttaala participant)*
DefendDefenders has helped in the establishment of national coalitions of human rights defenders in 7 countries across the East and Horn of Africa sub-region, namely in Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia. As part of the EAHHRD-Network, DefendDefenders provides support to these national coalitions when needed. National coalitions often receive support in the form of trainings or technical assistance.

In 2020, we supported and worked closely with the national coalitions. Some of the collaborations included but were not limited to:

- Hosting the Burundi coalition within DefendDefenders' offices
- Financial and technical support to the secretariats of coalitions
- Joint emergency protection interventions
- Collaborations on research and advocacy initiatives
- Collaborations on capacity development initiatives
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• Joint emergency protection interventions
• Collaborations on research and advocacy initiatives
• Collaborations on capacity development initiatives
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 human rights defenders (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.

OUR MEMBERS

North African Human Rights Defenders Network (co-hosted by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights and the Tunisian League of Human Rights)

The West African Human Rights Defenders Network

The Central African Human Rights Defenders Network

The East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (hosted by DefendDefenders)

The Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network
**THE UBUNTU HUB CITIES INITIATIVE**

**What is 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, while also continuing to do their work by growing their network and expanding their skills and knowledge.

**6 CITIES**

- Tunis
- Abidjan
- Kampala
- Pretoria
- Johannesburg
- Cape Town

**2020 IN NUMBERS**

Human rights defenders (HRDs) applied for support

- 39 Accepted
- 6 Referred
- 4 On hold
- 4 Withdrawn
- 5 Unable to support
- 2 Under review
ADOPTION OF HUB CITIES DOCUMENTS
We translated the action plan, reviewed application forms and internal guidelines for assessment cases that were a result of the Ubuntu Hub Cities coordinators workshop, held in November 2019, into French. The documents have been validated at the Secretariat level and shared with hub cities coordinators and are currently being successfully used by hub cities coordinators and Secretariat staff as guiding documents in the assessment and handling of each application received under the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative.

IN NUMBERS SINCE 2019

IN NUMBERS
Since January 2019

132
Requests for support

- 75 Supported
- 4 accepted (but on hold due to COVID-19)
- 26 Referred to partners
- 18 Unable to support
- 2 Under review
- 7 Withdrawn

3 oral submissions delivered
17 statements published
24 webinars and meetings attended
18 HRDs profiled
10 online campaigns
In 2020, our consistent coordination of advocacy efforts resulted in the publication of more than 30 joint statements, calls to action, open letters, and campaigns relevant to HRDs issues on the continent. We also continued to strengthen our advocacy efforts with international human rights mechanisms for HRDs to strengthen HRDs influence at national, regional, and global level.

**ADVOCACY AT THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES’ RIGHTS (ACHPR)**

During ACHPR 66, which was held online for the first time because of the global pandemic we made oral submissions on the following:

- **Human Rights Situation in Africa** - highlighted the violations of fundamental human rights in the context of COVID-19 and elections on the continent. This submission contributed to the commission adopting a resolution (ACHPR/Res.449 (LXVI) 2020), which calls on member states to employ a human rights-based response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Statement on the report of the Special Rapporteur on women** - called attention to the impact of COVID-19 on WHRDs. It further mentioned the increase of gender-based violence since lockdown measures were put in place in different states across the continent.

- **Statement on the report of the special rapporteur on human rights defenders in Africa** - underscored the alarming increase of attacks against HRDs, journalists and artists across the continent with 80 cases documented within the period of January to June 2020.
In 2020, we virtually hosted both forums. At the NGO forum preceding the ACHPR66, Hassan Shire, delivered an opening statement calling on member states of the African Union to build a Union that is people-centred and based on genuine commitment and political goodwill to achieve a peaceful continent and an equal and just society in Africa. He illustrated the huge gap between adopted standards versus the state of implementation of such standards in Africa, which he attributed to a lack of commitment by African States to domesticate and implement many progressive protocols and instruments they have voluntarily developed and adopted.

Some of the participants of the side event

**ADVOCATING FOR HRDS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

In April 2020, AfricanDefenders in collaboration with the International Service for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch, engaged the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), specifically the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa, H.E. Remy Ngoy Lumbu in several meetings. The main aim of the engagement was to coordinate on effective working methods that will allow continued engagements between the Commission and HRDs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussion was followed by a press release by the Special Rapporteur on the protection of Human Rights Defenders during the COVID-19 pandemic.
AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders hosted three webinars to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on HRDs. We explored challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic specific to the protection of human rights, freedom of expression, access to information, lawyers and the justice system, human rights defenders in situation of conflict, and women human rights defenders, as well as coping mechanisms.

THEMATIC ADVOCACY
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

In 2020, we conducted several virtual engagements with the Kuhluka movement, an organisation founded by Josina Machel to address gender-based violence against women in Africa. The founder suffered serious physical and psychological attacks from her ex-fiancé leaving her blind in the right eye and has not obtained justice. AfricanDefenders provided her team with legal advice during the appeal process and highlighted her case at the 66th session of the ACHPR. In addition to this, we also provided the organisation with technical support in fundraising and establishment of strategic partnerships.
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**Gender-Based Violence**

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In addition to this, we also provided the organisation with technical support in fundraising and establishment of strategic partnerships.

**Artistic Freedom**

We formed a coalition on artistic freedom with Artists at Risk Connection, America Bar Association, and Committee for Relevant Art, Nigeria to address violations of artistic freedom in West Africa. The first case we worked on as a coalition was of a Nigerian musician who was arrested following a song he released addressing corruption in Kano state. We spearheaded the interventions on this case by coordinating the submission of a call for urgent action to the ACHPR which resulted into his release. We went ahead to support the artist’s living costs upon his release under the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative.

**STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN AFRICA**
and HRDs to explore opportunities for collaboration and exchange best practices. Relevant academic institutions, activists, and CSOs shared ideas for increased and impactful university-CSO collaborations to strengthen the position of HRDs and CSOs facing restrictions in their work. The webinar resulted in a policy brief. We published policy briefs on:
• Strengthening collaboration between universities and civil society
• Strengthening collaboration between national human rights institutions and civil society

STRENGTHENING THE RIGHT TO PROTEST AND FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY IN AFRICA
In line with our ongoing work to engage with the African Union and East African Community institutions and mechanisms on issues of freedom of assembly and association, AfricanDefenders together with global partners launched a project aimed at strengthening the right to protest and freedom of assembly in Africa in the face of increased related violations and dissent online and offline.

DOCUMENTING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST HRDS, ARTISTS AND JOURNALISTS
AfricanDefenders documented human rights violations against HRDs, artists and journalists in Africa. We recorded 142 cases of violations with most violations against the right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Some members of the Malawi Human Rights Defenders Coalition

We conducted virtual needs assessments for the Malawi Human Rights Defenders Coalition, Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Coalition and Burkina Faso coalition which resulted in providing diverse support to them including enhancement of their communication mechanisms to ensure they are secure and adhere to the necessary security protocols.

OPERATIONALISING THE EAST AFRICA WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In October 2020, we virtually hosted the network’s annual meeting in collaboration with the East Africa Regional Office of The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, where we facilitated the network to establish its first steering committee. We also launched and currently manage the network’s social media accounts.
AfricanDefenders launched its podcast series entitled “Exile Shall Not Silence Us.” The podcast series highlights the professional, security, socio-economic, and psychosocial challenges of HRDs in exile in Africa, but most of all their achievements and resilience strategies. The episodes explore the state of HRDs in Zimbabwe, The Gambia, Cameroon, and Egypt. All episodes of the podcast series have been published and have been listened to over 100 times so far.
INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

STAFF DEVELOPMENT
Staff are encouraged and supported to pursue opportunities that further enhance their capacity to adapt to context, changing career requirements and technology. In 2020, DefendDefenders staff attended trainings internally on Office 365, Jira project management tool, physical security, CiviCRM database and financial management. Continued staff development improves the quality of services provided and delivery of programs. Internal trainings are also conducted for all staff.

DD WAY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
In October 2019, DefendDefenders and Civil Rights Defenders embarked on a partnership to learn from each other and improve the way we work. One of the initiatives of this partnership was to develop a management system for DefendDefenders. The management system called DD Way describes who we are and our current way of working. It consolidates and makes transparent all the knowledge about DefendDefenders and highlights key aspects about the work we do. This is our one stop shop to finding strategic, helpful, and reporting documents. This system provides clarity, transparency, and increased efficiency for the entire organization.

GENDER STRATEGY
Under the same joint initiative with Civil Rights Defenders, DefendDefenders embarked on an assessment process to evaluate our interventions from a gender perspective. One of the recommendations from this process was the development of a gender strategy. A consultant was engaged to develop the strategy. The gender strategy was finalised and circulated to all staff, with an awareness session held during the annual staff retreat.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025
DefendDefenders launched its new strategy for the period 2021-2025 “Enhancing the safety and capacity of HRDs in the region for greater resilience and effective fulfilment of their mandates”. The strategy builds on the previous work done by DefendDefenders to deepen and consolidate its mandate in supporting HRDs at risk, by reducing their vulnerability to persecution and enhancing their capacity to effectively protect human rights.
PARTNERS AND DONORS

Our partners and donors are an essential element in allowing us to conduct our work. Over the years we have increased the number of donors and partners we have. In 2020, we received support from the following partners:

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

Figure 4: Official launch of the organisation's strategic plan for 2021-2025.
## Financial Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ugx</th>
<th>Percentage Expenditure to Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income 2020</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,532,129,828</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>1,944,918,664</td>
<td>10.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection and Digital Security Management</td>
<td>3,301,488,926</td>
<td>17.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy and Research</td>
<td>550,579,360</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT (Technology and Human Rights Program)</td>
<td>438,805,528</td>
<td>2.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan Africa</td>
<td>1,737,199,383</td>
<td>9.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation Dev’p/Admin Costs</td>
<td>5,394,462,831</td>
<td>29.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Program Great Lakes</td>
<td>2,536,317,928</td>
<td>13.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus for the Year</td>
<td>2,628,357,216</td>
<td>14.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In October 2020, we held our annual development partners meeting, which brings together our donors and members of the board to present our work and financial standing in relation to our strategic budget. This was a hybrid meeting given the Covid-19 travel restrictions.

## Focal Points Meeting

On 22nd October 2020, DefendDefenders hosted the 6th Biennial focal points hybrid meeting at Mestil Hotel and Residences. The meeting brought together focal points of the East and Horn of African Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRD-Net) both in person and virtually to discuss emerging cross-cutting trends, issues, challenges, and the way forward. It also sought to improve collaboration between and among focal points and the Secretariat, and to create a platform for the focal points to network and get insights on the current situation of HRDs in each country in the sub-region. The hybrid meeting was attended by 53 people including DefendDefenders staff and board members.
BOARD MEMBERS MEETING
During our annual board meeting, on 20th October 2020, the Board examined the activities and financial standing of the organisation, progress of the current strategy and the new incoming strategy. This year’s board meeting was a hybrid given the travel restrictions and the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, founding board member Dorothé Appels stepped down.

BOARD MEMBERS

Ms Sophie Kyagulanyi – Chairperson
Ms 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, and is the new Chairperson of the Board of Directors and one of the founding members of DefendDefenders.

Dr. Zahara Nampewo -Treasurer
Dr. Zahara Nampewo is a legal and human rights practitioner and academician with 20 years’ experience in the private, public and non-profit sectors. Dr. Nampewo 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. She has published professional papers on a range of subjects including sexuality, decentralisation and access to justice. She is 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).

Mr David Kaggwa - Secretary To The Board
Mr. David Kaggwa is an Advocate of the High Court of Uganda and is the Secretary to the Board and a Partner at Kaggwa and Associates. Mr. Kaggwa brings legal skills including advising the Board on legal matters on registration and tax returns, volunteering his skills to HRDs in exile and helping them obtain refugee status under the Ugandan legal system, among others. Mr. David Kaggwa resides in Uganda, Kampala.
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Ms Faiza Jamal Mohamed - Member
Ms Mohamed is a Djibouti national and the Executive Director of the Pan African organization - Equality Now, where she is responsible for the implementation of Equality Now’s work and representation of the organization in Africa. Since 2001 she has overseen the Fund for Grassroots Activism to end Female Genital Mutilation, channeling over 1.8 Million US Dollars to 30 organization in Africa. Ms Mohamed has extensive experience in working the East and Horn of Africa region, and has previously worked with the United National Population Fund-(UNFPA), Oxfam NOVIB, amongst others. She is a member of the African Union Women’s Committee (AUWC). Ms. Faiza resides in Nairobi, Kenya.

Mr 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.

Mr Hassan Shire – Ex Officio and Executive Director Of DefendDefenders
Mr. Hassan Shire is the Executive Director of DefendDefenders, a position he has held since 2005, steering the organisation through its growth over the years. He is a human rights defender from Somalia, with over 15 years of experience working in the region. He is also currently the Coordinator of African Human Rights Defenders Project at York University, Centre for Refugee Studies since 2003. He holds an MA in Economics and has authored and published numerous human rights reports. In 1996 he was the founder and co-director of the internationally recognized Somali human rights organization - the Dr. Ismail Jumale Human Rights Centre in Mogadishu, Somalia which to date continues to play a vital role in reporting about human rights violations and campaigning for an end to the lawlessness in the country.

AFRICANDEFENDERS AND DEFENDDEFENDERS TEAM

Figure 6: DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders staff members at the 2020 staff retreat.
Executive Director  
Hassan Shire

Director of Programs and Administration  
Memory Bandera

PAHRD-Net Coordinator  
Joseph Bikanda

Technology Program Manager  
Neil Blazevic

Advocacy, Research and Communications Manager  
Estella Kabachwezi

Great Lakes Project Coordinator  
Ludivine Lecat

Finance Manager  
Alex Lukoye

Protection and Security Management Manager  
Tabitha Netuwa

Monitoring and Evaluation Expert  
Stanley Wobusobozi

Executive Assistant  
Susan Ibale

Representative to the United Nations  
Nicolas Agostini

Logistics Officer  
Bernard Arinaitwe

System Administrator  
Daniel Byekwaso

Communications Officer  
Siri Berge Engerud

Senior Protection Associate  
Janvier Hakizimana

Driver  
Kakuru Julius  
Ambrose Katwesigye

Finance Officer  
Rebecca Kisaakye

Capacity Building Officer  
Majid Maali

Research Officer  
David Meffe

Protection Officer  
Stella Murungi

ICT Assistant  
Immaculate Nabwire

Welfare Assistant  
Shamim Nakato

Project Officer  
Jeremie Nkunzimana

Administrative Assistant  
Zainab Nakato

Protection Associated  
Mariam Nakibuuka

Capacity Building Assistant  
Anne Nakiyingi

Programs Associate  
Melissa Kagimu-Mukasa

Finance Officer  
Jane Ngabirano

ICT Assistant  
Donatien Niyongendako
Protection Officer
Leon Kokolulema-Nsika

Office Messenger
Raphael Kateu Okudo
Hub Cities Development Associate
Cristina Orsini

Finance Officer
Nyamutono Proscovia Ititu

Protection Officer
Karis Moses Oteba

Chief Information Security Officer
Stewart Picken

Technology Fellow
Angela Lucia

Communications Fellow – AfricanDefenders
Gentrix Barasa

Programs Officer
Dee Werter

Finance Officer
Claire Mugabe

Programs Officer – AfricanDefenders
Flora Stevens

Programs Officer
Rosabella Ntanzi

Programs Officer – AfricanDefenders
Walda Keza Shaka

Communications Officer
Francesca Grandolfo

IT Incident Lead
Samuel Eibu

Technology Program Associate
Joshua Ssengozi

Thanks to the fellows, interns, and volunteers who supported us in 2020: Denise Kwizera, Abdikhani Hassan, Ayub Elmi