



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

OVERVIEW OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

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DefendDefenders' Bi-Annual Report to the ACHPR

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Executive summary

DefendDefenders (the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project) welcomes the opportunity offered by the 71st Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights ("the Commission") to highlight the most pressing human rights issues in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region for the period November 2021- April 2022. This submission focuses on issues pertaining to civic space, in particular citizens' enjoyment of their rights to freedoms of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly, and association, specifically the situation of human rights defenders (HRDs).

Over the past six months, there have been increased reports of violations of the rights to freedoms of opinion and expression, association, and peaceful assembly. Somalia's political instability and insecurity threatens the fragile country. Sudan's security and economic situation deteriorated since the military coup on 25 October 2021. The conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia has further destabilised an already fragile Horn of Africa, with gross and systematic violations and abuses reported. Djibouti and Eritrea remain closed and repressive, tolerating little to no dissent. Other countries in the sub-region have witnessed downward trends as well, with reports of harassment of HRDs, including journalists, as well as restrictions on the rights to free expression, association, and peaceful assembly, resulting in curtailing the civic and democratic space. Despite risks and threats, HRDs and journalists continue their work to promote and protect human rights.

Burundi's civic and democratic space remains severely restricted. While President Evariste Ndayishimiye made a few attempts to release pressure over civil society and Burundian citizens in general, including by releasing prisoners in January 2022, some HRDs arrested in the aftermath of the 2015 political crisis remain in jail. The government continues to exert its control and curtail the rights to freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. Reports of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest, torture, and enforced disappearances of opposition members and government persist. Impunity remains widespread, including for violations and abuses related to the 2015 political crisis.

Djibouti and Eritrea remain the most repressive governments in the sub-region. The rights to free expression, association, and peaceful assembly continue to be severely restricted, making it virtually impossible for independent human rights organisations or individual HRDs to operate in the country.

The **Ethiopian** conflict has wreaked havoc on millions of people in Tigray and the neighbouring regions of Afar and Amhara, as well as in Benishangul Gumuz and Oromia, which continue to experience intercommunal conflict and localised violence. Gross and systematic violations and abuses, including attacks against civilians, sexual violence, arbitrary arrests, and ethnic cleansing, continue to occur. Ethiopian citizens' enjoyment of their freedom of expression has further declined during the reporting period. Ethiopian authorities declared a nationwide state of emergency on 4 November 2021, giving the government broad powers that increase the risk of arbitrary arrest and detention of at-

risk communities. Several journalists have been harassed, intimidated, or arrested. The government has made a few positive steps recently, including declaring a ceasefire to allow relief to reach afflicted citizens and releasing several political opposition members from prison. The state of emergency was lifted in early 2022. Recently, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has pointed to talks with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), increasing prospects for peace.

Kenya is set to hold general elections in August 2022. The pre-election period is characterised by grave violations, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and torture often committed by security forces. Gender-based violence, primarily against women and girls, continues, and the Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) community continues to be targeted. To date, Kenyan authorities have used the Covid-19 pandemic as an excuse to restrict freedom of peaceful assembly. In the reporting period, the Magistrate Court in Mombasa found six activists guilty of illegally gathering and failing to maintain physical distances in a public place.

Rwanda continues to stifle its civic space and target those it perceives as critics. Arbitrary arrests, torture, threats, and unfair trials remain commonplace for political opponents, critics, journalists, and bloggers. Several critics continued to be targeted in this reporting period, including Paul Rusesabagina. The civic space environment does not allow for criticism, and as a result, citizens, journalists, media, and civil society self-censor.

Somalia continues to face insecurity, conflict, and recurring drought due to climate change. The presidential election originally scheduled to take place in late 2020 is postponed until an agreement is reached. The lower house elections, initially scheduled for November to December 2021, have been postponed, and the deadline continues to be further extended. The swearing in ceremony for the newly elected lower and upper houses MPs is scheduled for 14 April 2022, however, some MPs from Jubaland and Hirshabelle have not yet been elected. On 31 March 2022, the United Nations (UN) Security Council voted to replace the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which has been in the Horn of Africa nation for 15 years, with the AU Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). The new mission will operate until the end of 2024, after which all responsibilities will be handed to the Somali security forces. During the reporting period, the right to freedom of opinion and expression remained limited, with both state and non-state actors targeting journalists. Several journalists were harassed, abused, and arbitrarily arrested. In **Somaliland**, authorities increased the censorship of journalists and the media.

In **South Sudan**, concerns have been raised over the ongoing conflict and the possibility of resumption of the armed conflict at national level. Gross human rights violations and abuses of international humanitarian law continue including rape, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and increased attacks on humanitarian workers and convoys. An increase in violence in Upper Nile State and other parts of the country threatens the 2018 peace agreement (R-ARCSS). On 22 March 2022, the main opposition force, Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), suspended its participation in the security mechanisms tasked with overseeing the implementation of the R-ARCSS. SPLM/ A-IO claimed the suspension was based on the security

mechanism's ineffectiveness in implementing the peace agreement. On 31 March 2022, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution that extended the mandate of its Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (CHRSS). Civic space is increasingly restricted as the government continues to crack down on journalists and government critics.

Sudan's humanitarian, security, and economic situation has been deteriorating since the coup on 25 October 2021. Security forces continue to violently suppress protests and target protestors. The country has been immersed in a political and social crisis since the beginning of January 2022, following the resignation of Abdallah Hamdok as Prime Minister of the transitional period. The country remains without a functioning government. Several protestors are held without charges and are refused access to their lawyers and families. Moreover, the value of Sudan's currency is depreciating. Consequently, the prices of bread, fuel, electricity, health care and public transport have all skyrocketed. UN Special Representative Volker Perthes warned that while the protests began as an "anti-coup protest," they developed an additional socio-economic character. Additionally, intercommunal violence in Darfur has intensified.

Since the swearing in of President Samia Suluhu Hassan, in March 2021, **Tanzania** has taken some positive measures to improve its civic space. The government issued new publishing licenses to four newspapers banned during the late President John Magufuli's rule. Additionally, it announced its intention to amend the restrictive Media Services Act (2016). President Samia Suluhu met with Tundu Lissu, the exiled opposition figure residing in Belgium, where Lissu raised concern about his fate and that of other political opposition. Authorities also freed opposition leader Freeman Mbowe and his co-accused after the Director of Public Prosecutions submitted a motion to dismiss the terrorist accusations against them. Despite the positive measures taken, the situation remains tense for media freedom. In the first two months of 2022, eight journalists were arrested.

The human rights situation in **Uganda** deteriorated in the reporting period. Restrictions on critics and opposition leaders have increased. Security forces arbitrarily detained, abducted, and tortured critics and political opponents. In December 2021, author Kakwenza Rukirabashaija was kidnapped and tortured whilst held incommunicado. The rights to freedoms of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly, and association are increasingly under pressure. The authorities targeted and arrested several journalists and raided two media houses. The main opposition leader Robert Kyagulanyi, also known as Bobi Wine, was under house arrest ahead of his scheduled campaign for the by-elections in December 2021. To date, close to 30 of the 54 NGOs suspended arbitrarily by the NGO Bureau continue to be under indefinite suspension. Chapter Four Uganda challenged the arbitrary actions of the NGO Bureau; courts are yet to rule on the matter. HRDs and journalists face arrest, harassment, intimidation, and assault in reprisal for their work.

Recommendations

In light of the updates and trends observed, DefendDefenders makes the following recommendations for action by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights:

- Urge all member States to ensure the protection of human rights defenders, notably by observing the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;
- Call on all member States to adopt specific legislative measures to recognise and protect the status of HRDs, and provide a working environment conducive for civil society, as per Res. 376 (LX) 2017 adopted by the Commission during its 60th Ordinary Session Niamey, Niger;
- Urge member States to cease the harassment and arbitrary detention of HRDs, including those working on LGBTQI rights;
- Call on States to abide by the Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly adopted by the Commission during its 60th ordinary session;
- Call on all member States who have not done so to deposit the declaration under article 34 (6) of the protocol of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights to allow individuals and NGOs to directly submit their cases to the Court;
- Call on the Federal Government of Ethiopia through independent and impartial bodies to investigate allegations of human rights violations thoroughly and effectively and to hold those responsible accountable, and urge the government to cooperate with African and international mechanisms, including the African Commission-established Commission of Inquiry on Tigray and the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia established by the UN Human Rights Council;
- Adopt a resolution that strongly condemns the military coup in Sudan and calls for restoration of the civilian-led Transitional Government and urges respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms including the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly; and
- Adopt a resolution urging, among other things, the government of South Sudan to immediately establish and operationalise the Hybrid Court for South Sudan and other transitional justice institutions as per Chapter V of the Revitalised Peace Agreement (R-ARCSS), and to ensure accountability for crimes committed since 2013, and to put an immediate end to harassment, intimidation, and repression, including by the National Security Service, of independent human rights actors and those reporting on human rights in the country.

Burundi

General situation

From 2016-2021, Burundi refused to cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry established by the UN Human Rights Council (Council). Since they were unable to visit the country, its members relied on alternative working methods to document human rights violations and abuses. On 1 April 2022, at the end of its 49th regular session, the Council appointed Fortuné Gaetan Zongo (Burkina Faso) as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi.¹ However, the government announced that it would not cooperate with the expert.

On 29 December 2021, President Ndayishimiye promised to release political prisoners.² Approximately 5,000 prisoners were pardoned in March 2021.³ The announcement would be in line with the presidential practice of granting amnesty to inmates at the end of every year, although political prisoners are rarely included. "I don't want people arrested if they aren't murderers," President Ndayishimiye stated. "Now we are considering giving them a New Year's gift... That is something we will do very soon."⁴

On 11 November 2021, the US lifted sanctions imposed on Burundi in 2015.⁵ President Joe Biden issued an executive order stating that the situation that prompted the declaration of a national emergency, which threatened Burundi's peace, security, and stability, had significantly changed, following the death of President Pierre Nkurunziza last year and the election of President Evariste Ndayishimiye. In response, Armel Niyongere, an exiled Burundian lawyer, urged the international community to make the resumption of cooperation conditional on respect for human rights in Burundi.⁶ Niyongere claims that the human rights situation and impunity in Burundi remain dire.

Freedom of association

The National Congress for Freedom (*Congrès national pour la liberté* CNL), Burundi's main opposition party, accused the government of being responsible for enforced

¹ United Nations Human Rights Office of The High Commissioner, "Human Rights Council concludes forty-ninth regular session after adopting 35 resolutions", 1 April 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/04/human-rights-council-concludes-forty-ninth-regular-session-after-adopting-35>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

² The East African, "Ndayishimiye's New Year gift to political prisoners in Burundi", 4 January 2022, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/ndayishimiye-new-year-gift-to-political-prisoners-burundi-3672008>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

³ The East African, "Burundi's president grants amnesty to 5,000 prisoners", 9 March 2021, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/burundi-president-amnesty-prisoners-3316706>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁴ The East African, "Ndayishimiye's New Year gift to political prisoners in Burundi", 4 January 2022, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/ndayishimiye-new-year-gift-to-political-prisoners-burundi-3672008>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁵ Anadolu Agency, "Burundi welcomes US decision to lift sanctions", 19 November 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/burundi-welcomes-us-decision-to-lift-sanctions/2425269>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁶ Africa News, "US ends sanctions against Burundi as activists slam decision", 19 November 2021, <https://www.africanews.com/2021/11/19/us-ends-sanctions-against-burundi-as-activists-slam-decision/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

disappearances and arbitrary arrests.⁷ According to the Independent National Commission for Human Rights (CNIDH), National Intelligence Service agents tortured Augustin Matata, a CNL cadre in Gihanga commune, Bubanza province, and he died as a result.

Since 7 February 2022, Jean Claude Nzigamye, an activist and member of the CNL, is missing. He was allegedly kidnapped in Ngozi.⁸ According to witnesses, a group of armed men in civilian clothes led by Msafiri Niyonkurum, the head of the Imbonerakure, the ruling party youth league, abducted him.

Freedom of opinion and expression

On 28 January 2022, police officers arrested Venant Niyomwungere, a *Bonesha FM* journalist.⁹ He was arrested while covering a fire at the Bujumbura Municipal police station. Police officers questioned Niyomwungere for three hours because he did not have his press card issued by the National Council of Communication (CNC).

On 14 March 2022, the police prohibited civil society organisations, OLUCOME and PARCEM, from holding a press conference to discuss measures imposed on motorcycles, bicycles and *tuk-tuk*, which limit the space they can use on the roads.¹⁰ The press conference intended to urge the government to temporarily suspend these measures due to their economic consequences. The Ministry of Interior and Public Security of Burundi banned bicycles, motorcycle taxis, and *tuk-tuks* in Bujumbura, which took effect on 21 March 2022.¹¹ The Ministry attributed most fatal incidents in Bujumbura to these modes of transport.

Djibouti

General information

Concluding a mission to Djibouti, on 21 December 2021, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) stated that “Djibouti’s large-scale infrastructure investments have driven strong

⁷ IWACU, “Retro Human Rights / Arrests of CNL activists go crescendo”, 5 January 2022, <https://www.iwacu-burundi.org/retro-droits-de-lhomme-les-arrestations-des-militants-du-cnl-vont-crescendo/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁸ SOS- Torture, “RAPPORT N° 323 DE SOS-TORTURE BURUNDI PUBLIE LE 19 FEVRIER 2022”, 19 February 2022, <https://sostortureburundi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Rapport-hebdomadaire-no-323.pdf>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁹ IWACU, “Burundi/Media: Bonesha FM journalist Venant Niyomwungere released”, 28 January 2022, https://www.iwacu-burundi.org/burundi-medias-le-journaliste-venant-niyomwungere-de-bonesha-fm-libere/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹⁰ Twitter, IWACU Burundi, 14 March 2022, <https://twitter.com/iwacuinfo/status/1503283905608175620>, Accessed 28 March 2022.

¹¹ Africa News, “Motorbike taxis, tuk-tuks and bicycle taxis banned from Bujumbura”, 21 March 2022, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/03/21/motorbike-taxis-tuk-tuks-and-bicycle-taxis-banned-from-bujumbura/>, Accessed 28 March 2022.

economic growth in recent years, but the benefits have not been widely shared.¹² [...] Few domestic jobs and little tax revenues have been generated, and unemployment remains high. As a result, progress on social outcomes has been slow.” The IMF added that “the economic outlook is clouded by the conflict in Ethiopia.”

According to information received from Djiboutian sources, on 22 December 2021, Mr. Farah Loubak, a young Afar inmate at the Gabode Central Prison (Djibouti City), died in detention. The Djiboutian Human Rights League (LDDH) demanded a thorough investigation into his death. In a letter to the Ministry of Justice dated 9 January 2022, the LDDH referred to patterns of deaths occurring in detention.

Freedom of opinion an expression

On 8 November 2021, the Criminal Court of Djibouti sentenced former Djiboutian Air Force Lieutenant Fouad Youssouf Ali to 10 years in prison and additionally fined him 300,000 FD (1,686 USD).¹³ The Court found Fouad guilty on charges of “provocation to arm himself against the authority of the State” “attempted theft of a military aircraft,” and “provocation of the military to disobedience.” Ali was arrested and charged with treason after releasing a video alleging corruption by a high-ranking military official and clan-based discrimination on 12 June 2020.¹⁴

Eritrea

General situation

Eritrea remains one of, if not the, most closed country in the sub-region. There has been little to no improvement or change in the situation for decades. On 9 February 2022, the former head of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, Patriarch Abune Antonios died after 16 years in unlawful detention.¹⁵ Patriarch Abune Antonios was arrested in January 2006 after criticising the Eritrean government for holding people without due process.

On 4 March 2022, Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, presented his update to the Council. He reported that the repression of dissenting voices in Eritrea has persisted.¹⁶ Moreover, the

¹² International Monetary Fund, “IMF Staff Completes 2021 Article IV Mission to Djibouti”, 21 December 2021, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2021/12/21/pr21394-djibouti-imf-staff-completes-2021-article-iv-mission-to-djibouti>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹³ Facebook, “LDDH- Ligue Djiboutienne des Droits Humains, “Communique de presse”, 23 November 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/lddhjdjibouti/photos/pcb.6493297797377853/6493293897378243/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹⁴ CIVICUS Monitor, “Police crackdown on protestors and journalists following rare demonstrations in Djibouti”, 12 October 2020, <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2020/10/12/police-crack-down-protesters-and-journalists-following-rare-demonstrations-djibouti/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹⁵ Amnesty International, “Eritrea must end the systematic use of unlawful detentions and enforced disappearances”, 7 March 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/5282/2022/en/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹⁶ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Human Rights Council holds separate interactive dialogues on the human rights situations in Eritrea and in Sri Lanka”, 4 March 2022,

government continued to restrict freedom of expression, assembly, association, and religion, and civic and democratic spaces remained shut.

Ethiopia

General situation

On 13 November 2021, the African Union (AU) envoy, former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, expressed hope in a statement on the prospect of peace in Ethiopia. He stated that dialogue could end the conflict but needed an immediate ceasefire.¹⁷

On 22 November 2021, DefendDefenders and partners released a letter calling the UN Human Rights Council to hold a special session and to create an investigative mechanism to bring human rights violations to light.¹⁸ As a result, on 17 December 2021, the Council adopted a resolution at the end of a special session, which established a new mechanism responsible for investigating all violations and abuses, establishing facts and circumstances, and identifying individuals responsible in order to support accountability efforts.¹⁹

On 16 December 2021, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reported that Amhara security forces were responsible for mass detentions, deaths, and forced expulsions of ethnic Tigrayans.²⁰ According to the report, Amhara regional police forces and militias, notably Fano militias, rounded up Tigrayans in Adebai, Humera, and Rawyan. Soldiers separated families and arrested men and women civilians above 15. Women and younger children, as well as sick and elderly persons, were forcibly removed from the region. Some of those who were missing have since made their way to central Tigray, while others are still missing.

On 15 February 2022, the Ethiopian Parliament approved to end of a six-month state of emergency.²¹ The Cabinet declared a state of emergency on 2 November 2021.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/human-rights-council-holds-separate-interactive-dialogues-human-rights>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹⁷ Twitter, "African Union", 14 November 2021,

https://twitter.com/AfricanUnion/status/1459821742130663428?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1459821742130663428%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.aljazeera.com%2Fnews%2F2021%2F11%2F14%2Fau-envoy-warns-ethiopia-talks-will-fail-without-ceasefire, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹⁸ DefendDefenders, "Ethiopia: independent international investigation established", 17 December 2021, <https://defenddefenders.org/ethiopia-investigation-established/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹⁹ UN Geneva, "Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Urges All Parties to Pull Back from a Posture of War in Ethiopia", 17 December 2021, <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2021/12/deputy-high-commissioner-human-rights-urges-all-parties-pull>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

²⁰ Human Rights Watch, Ethiopia: New Wave of Atrocities in Western Tigray, 16 December 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/12/16/ethiopia-new-wave-atrocities-western-tigray>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

²¹ Aljazeera, "Ethiopia parliament votes to lift state of emergency early", 15 February 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/15/ethiopia-parliament-votes-to-lift-state-of-emergency>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

On 2 March 2022, the President of the Human Rights Council announced the appointment of Fatou Bensouda, Kaari Betty Murungi, and Steven Ratner to serve as the three members of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia.²²

On 24 March 2022, the Ethiopian government declared a ceasefire, claiming that it was necessary to allow relief to reach afflicted citizens.²³ A few hours later, the Tigrayan authorities stated that they would do everything possible to ensure the humanitarian ceasefire was successful.

Freedom of association

On 9 November 2021, Ethiopian authorities detained 16 UN staff members and their dependents in Addis Ababa.²⁴ The UN Secretary-General's spokesperson, Stephane Dujarric, said that the UN were working on securing the release of those still detained. He claimed that the authorities had not provided a reason for the detention. On 11 November, Ambassador Dina Mufti, the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson, claimed that the staff were arrested due to their infringement of the proclamation of the state of emergency, not their ethnic background or their affiliation with the UN.²⁵ On 18 November 2021, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric reported that six detained staff members were released, and five others and one dependent remained in detention.²⁶ The status of four staff members remain unknown.

On 29 November 2021, the prosecutor filed an appeal in the Federal Supreme Court Cassation Bench against Colonel Gemechu Ayana, a senior leader of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), six months after he and 13 other OLF members were acquitted of terrorism.²⁷ On 19 May 2021, the Federal High Court's third Anti-terrorism and Constitutional Bench acquitted Gemechu and 12 defendants who had been charged with terrorism; however, they remained in custody.²⁸ The hearings scheduled for December 2021 were postponed several times. Gemechu had to attend his first court appearance

²² United Nations Human Rights Office of The High Commissioner, President of Human Rights Council appoints members of investigative body in Ethiopia, 02 March 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/president-human-rights-council-appoints-members-investigative-body-ethiopia>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

²³ UN News, "Ethiopia: Guterres welcomes Tigray humanitarian ceasefire agreement", 25 March 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114742>, Accessed 28 March 2022.

²⁴ Aljazeera, "UN says 16 local staff detained in Ethiopia's capital", 9 November 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/9/un-staff-detained-in-ethiopias-capital-world-body-says>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

²⁵ Addis Standard, "Ethiopia ready to negotiate 'if preconditions met': argues detained UN staff violated SoE proclamation", 11 November 2021, <https://addisstandard.com/news-ethiopia-ready-to-negotiate-if-preconditions-met-argues-detained-un-staff-violated-soe-proclamation/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

²⁶ Voice of America, "Ethiopia Releases 6 UN Staff Members, Keeps 5 in Detention", 18 November 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/a/ethiopia-releases-6-un-staff-members-keeps-5-in-detention-/6318945.html>, Accessed 11 April 2022.

²⁷ Addis Standard, "Judges no show at Colonel Gemechu Ayana's hearing", 11 January 2022, <https://addisstandard.com/news-judges-no-show-at-colonel-gemechu-ayanass-hearing/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

²⁸ CIVICUS Monitor, "Crackdown on journalists' reporting and delayed elections amid ongoing conflict in Tigray", 28 June 2021, <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2021/05/28/crackdown-journalists-reporting-and-delayed-elections-amid-ongoing-conflict-tigray/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

after his acquittal without his defense team, since they were allegedly not informed of his court appearance. On 11 January 2022, Gemechu was arraigned in court.²⁹

The government also released Jawar Mohammad and several political members of the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) and some Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) leaders.³⁰ The Ministry of Justice stated that the charges were dropped to "ensure inclusiveness and fruitfulness of the upcoming national dialogue." The move coincided with outgoing US envoy Jeffrey Feltman's visit to Addis Ababa.³¹ Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, praised the development. Jawar Mohammed, a member of the OFC and Bekele Gerba, the Deputy Chairman of the party, was arrested on 30 June 2021 when he and others attempted to intercept Hundessa's body, which was being transported to his hometown of Ambo, and return it to Addis Ababa.³²

Freedom of opinion and expression

On 8 December 2021, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) released a report ranking Ethiopia among the worst jailers of journalists in Sub-Saharan Africa, after Eritrea.³³ The report highlighted that several journalists have been arrested since the beginning of the war in northern Ethiopia; nine remain in custody, and one journalist was killed.

According to CPJ, since the declaration of a state emergency on 2 November 2021, Ethiopian authorities have arrested at least 14 journalists.³⁴ On 28 November 2021, the police arrested three journalists, namely Amir Aman Kirayo, a freelance video journalist accredited with the AP, Thomas Engida, a cameraman, and Addisu Muluneh, a reporter with the state-affiliated Fana Broadcasting Corporation. Amir was arrested after returning home from a reporting trip. The police accused him of promoting terrorism

²⁹ Addis Standard, "Judges no show at Colonel Gemechu Ayana's hearing", 11 January 2022, <https://addisstandard.com/news-judges-no-show-at-colonel-gemechu-ayanas-hearing/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

³⁰ Addis Standard, "Jawar Mohammed, Bekele Gerba and others just released", 7 January 2022, <https://addisstandard.com/breaking-jawar-mohammed-bekele-gerba-and-others-just-released/>, 16 March 2022.

³¹ Deutsche Welle, "Ethiopia announces amnesty for jailed opposition politicians", 7 January 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/ethiopia-announces-amnesty-for-jailed-opposition-politicians/a-60362558>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

³² CIVICUS Monitor, "Hundreds dead after protests, fears over covid-19 restrictions' impact on free speech", 20 August 2020, <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2020/08/20/hundreds-dead-after-protests-fears-over-covid-19-restrictions-impact-free-speech/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

³³ Committee to Protect Journalists, "Ethiopia's civil war dashes once-high hopes of press freedom", 8 December 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/12/ethiopia-civil-war-hopes-press-freedom/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

³⁴ Committee to Protect Journalists, "Ethiopia uses emergency law to ramp up arrests of journalists", 15 December 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/12/ethiopia-uses-emergency-law-to-ramp-up-arrests-of-journalists/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

because he interviewed members of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), which Parliament has designated a terrorist group.³⁵

In another incident, police officers arrested and searched the home of Eyasped Tesfaye, co-founder and editor-in-chief of the YouTube channel *Ubuntu TV*, at his home in Addis Ababa,³⁶ as well as his offices. According to Ubuntu TV general manager and co-founder Moonira Abdulemanan, police officers raided the Ubuntu TV office in Addis Ababa, confiscating studio equipment and cameras. Tesfaye's recent broadcast discussed the ongoing war in Ethiopia and politics in Sidama regional state.

Similarly, on 10 December, police arrested *Terara Network's* co-founder, editor, and presenter Temerat Negara, from his home in Addis Ababa. The police officers searched his home and confiscated electronics, including hard drives and audio recorders.³⁷ A few days before his arrest, Negara posted content on YouTube and Facebook, criticising how Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was handling the war. Additionally, he discussed the future of Ethiopia with a cohost on 6 December 2021.

On 14 December 2021, Ethiopia Insight revealed that their employee Ermias Tasfaye had been detained since 3 November 2021 without charges being filed or any allegations against him being disclosed.³⁸ A source familiar with his case claims his arrest is linked to his work as a journalist.

On 7 January 2022, journalist Eskinder Nega and his colleagues were released.³⁹ Eskinder Nega was arrested and detained on charges of inciting violence after the killing of popular singer Hachalu Hundessa, including allegedly paying money to groups of young people to cause unrest in July 2020.⁴⁰ In September 2020, prosecutors also charged them with terrorism.

³⁵ Reuters, "Ethiopia detains three journalists for 'promoting terrorism'", 17 December 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/ethiopia-detains-three-journalists-promoting-terrorism-2021-12-16/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

³⁶ Committee to Protect Journalists, "Ethiopia uses emergency law to ramp up arrests of journalists", 15 December 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/12/ethiopia-uses-emergency-law-to-ramp-up-arrests-of-journalists/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Twitter, Ethiopia Insight, 15 December 2021, <https://twitter.com/EthiopiaInsight/status/1470927844070936576?s=20>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

³⁹ Addis Standard, "Eskinder Nega, colleagues released, senior Justice Ministry officials visit Kality prison", 7 January 2022, <https://addisstandard.com/breaking-eskinder-nega-colleagues-released-senior-justice-ministry-officials-visit-kality-prison/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁴⁰ CIVICUS Monitor, "Hundreds dead after protests, fears over covid-19 restrictions' impact on free speech", 20 August 2020, <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2020/08/20/hundreds-dead-after-protests-fears-over-covid-19-restrictions-impact-free-speech/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

Kenya

General information

Kenya is set to hold its general elections in August 2022. There are a myriad of concerns including pervasive corruption and brutality by security forces. The country is grappling to advance democratisation and encourage citizen participation in governance by electing leaders that advance their aspirations.

The Media Council of Kenya (MCK), an independent national institution responsible for media standards, delivered media training for journalists ahead of the general elections.⁴¹ The training was based on the election coverage manual that was signed by all media houses on 27 September 2021. The manual includes chapters on gender-sensitive reporting, conflict-sensitive reporting, and journalist safety and protection.⁴²

In a memorandum sent to the National Assembly Committee on Communication, Article 19 expressed concerns about sections in the Copyright (Amendment) Bill 2021 that undermine international standards on intermediary liability and free speech.⁴³ According to Article 19, clauses 6 and 7 of the Bill are likely to lead to violations of human rights as they repeal sections 35C and D of the Bill. Article 19 made recommendations for the National Assembly to delete clauses 6 and 7 "as they limit the gains made to safeguard the right to privacy and freedom of expression in the digital environment", and "it eliminates the opportunity for a complainant to seek judicial remedies for copyright infringement."

Freedom of association

On 2 December 2021, the Chief Magistrate Court in Malindi found Joel Ogada, a land activist guilty for "threatening to kill" a security guard of a Salt Mining Company.⁴⁴ Ogada was arrested on 14 March 2016 and charged with Section 233, Subsection 1 of the Penal Code. His lawyer claims that Ogada was persecuted because of his campaign against the forceful encroachment of community land by a salt mining company which had sustained a campaign of criminalisation of activists through the justice system. The judge Sentenced him to six months in jail or requested him to pay a fine of 50,000 Kenyan shillings (\$430).

⁴¹ Kenya News Agency, "MCK Prepares Journalists For The Upcoming General Election", 8 January 2022, <https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/mck-prepares-journalists-for-the-upcoming-general-election/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁴² All Africa, "Kenya: Media Council to Unveil Updated Election Coverage Guidelines on September 27", 23 September 2021, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202109230857.html>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁴³ Article 19, "Kenya: Copyright Bill must respect international standards of free speech", 12 January 2022, <https://www.article19.org/resources/kenya-proposed-copyright-amendment-bill-must-respect-free-speech/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁴⁴ Defenders coalition, "Punitive ruling against Kilifi Land Rights Activist, Joel Ogada", 2 December 2021, <https://defenderscoalition.org/punitive-ruling-against-kilifi-land-rights-activist-joel-ogada/>, Accessed 11 April 2022.

On 8 February 2022, Members of Parliament voted on the Assisted Reproductive Technology Bill (2019) that aims to restrict the rights of the LGBTQ+ community.⁴⁵ The Bill was approved for tabling in November 2021.⁴⁶ It seeks to regulate rights and obligations relating to assisted reproductive technology.⁴⁷ Activists criticised the Bill for using the word "couple", which under the Constitution refers to a man and woman who are legally considered married. According to Clause 23 of the Bill, same-sex couples accessing surrogacy are at risk of jail term and a 5 million Kes fine (\$50,000).⁴⁸ On 24 February 2022, the National Assembly forwarded the Bill for consideration to the Senate for a first reading.⁴⁹ The Senate then declared that it will not proceed with the Bill.

On 3 January 2022, Elizabeth Ibrahim, an environmental and land rights defender, was killed.⁵⁰ Reports indicate that her neighbour allegedly murdered her over a land dispute. The suspect reportedly stabbed Elizabeth several times at a burial when she was lured aside. The police detained the suspect at Isiolo police station. In a statement, women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and CSO's condemned Elizabeth's death and the escalating attacks on WHRD in Kenya.⁵¹ On 11 January 2022, HRDs held a peaceful protest demanding the end of increased femicide and violence against women.⁵²

Freedom of opinion and expression

On 25 November 2021, unknown assailants attacked a standard group journalist, Samson Wire.⁵³ Wire covered a story about a land ownership dispute in Parklands,

⁴⁵ Gays With Kids, Kenya Bill Would Bar Gays From Surrogacy, 20 January 2022, https://www.gayswithkids.com/the-being-blog/kenya-bill-would-bar-gays-from-surrogacy?utm_content=195112110&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&hss_channel=tw-2369400127, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁴⁶ All Africa, "Kenya: MPs Support Surrogacy Bill, Say It Is Long Overdue Move", 16 May 2021, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202105160106.html>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁴⁷ Parliament of Kenya, "Twelfth Parliament- (Fifth Session)", 11 March 2021, <http://www.parliament.go.ke/sites/default/files/2021-03/The%20Assisted%20Reproductive%20Technology%20Bill%20%20%28National%20Assembly%20Bill%20No.%2034%20OF%202019%29.pdf>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁴⁸ Gays With Kids, Kenya Bill Would Bar Gays From Surrogacy, 20 January 2022, https://www.gayswithkids.com/the-being-blog/kenya-bill-would-bar-gays-from-surrogacy?utm_content=195112110&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&hss_channel=tw-2369400127, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁴⁹ Parliament of Kenya, "TWELFTH PARLIAMENT – (SIXTH SESSION)", 24 February 2022, <http://www.parliament.go.ke/sites/default/files/2022-03/Votes%20and%20Proceedings%20-%20Thursday%2C%2024.02.2022.pdf>, Accessed 11 April 2022.

⁵⁰ Front Line Defenders, "Murder of woman human rights defender Elizabeth Ibrahim Ekaru", 10 January 2022, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/murder-woman-human-rights-defender-elizabeth-ibrahim-ekaru>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁵¹ Defenders Coalition, "Enough is Enough: Stop Killing Women Human Rights Defenders", 5 January 2022, <https://defenderscoalition.org/enough-is-enough-stop-killing-women-human-rights-defenders/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁵² Twitter, FIDA-Kenya, 11 January 2022, <https://twitter.com/fidakenya/status/1480884765880463362>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁵³ Kenyans.co.ke, "Standard Journalist Attacked by Goons, Equipment Destroyed", 25 November 2021, <https://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/70920-standard-journalists-attacked-goons-equipment-destroyed>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

Nairobi. The private developer is allegedly responsible for hiring the unknown assailants. According to bystanders, the assailants who carried machetes destroyed Wire's camera and threatened to harm him more if he did not leave.

On 6 January 2022, a Citizen TV journalist, Martin Kosgey, was threatened via text after airing a story implicating a governor's bodyguard in a murder case.⁵⁴ Additionally, Kosgey claims that he received intelligence that there is a plan to harm him over the story. Martin Kosgey posted the story that revealed that the bodyguard fatally attacked and murdered his kin over a beehive.

Freedom of peaceful assembly

A group of Kenyans held a peaceful protest demanding equal access to education for the LGBTQ+ community.⁵⁵ On 30 December 2021, Education Cabinet Secretary George Magoha declared, "children who are homosexual, and lesbian must go to day schools close to their homes." He added that "headteachers should be responsible for the greater majority and not a few individuals".⁵⁶ The protesters called for Magoha to withdraw his comments and criminalise phobias that put homosexual students' lives at risk. The comments have affected some students; according to a protestor, one student was removed from school.⁵⁷

On 16 January 2022, police officers fired teargas to disperse a rival group that disrupted Deputy President William Ruto's political rally in Nairobi.⁵⁸ Ruto is running for the presidency in the upcoming elections under the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) party against his main rival Raila Odinga. Ruto accused Raila Odinga, the opposition leader, of inciting violence among his supporters in Odinga's perceived stronghold region.⁵⁹

On 4 February 2022, the Magistrate Court in Mombasa found six activists guilty of illegally gathering and failing to maintain physical distances in a public place.⁶⁰ The activists protested the misappropriation of Covid-19 funds and demanded the arrest of those responsible. The protests took place in different counties, including Nakuru,

⁵⁴ Kenyans.co.ke, "Citizen TV Journalist Threatened Over Story Implicating Bodyguard in Murder", 6 January 2022, <https://www.kenyans.co.ke/news/72074-citizen-tv-journalist-threatened-over-story-implicating-bodyguard-murder>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁵⁵ Voice of America, "Kenyan LGBT Students Protest Suggestion They be Banned from Boarding Schools", 13 January 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/kenyan-lgbt-students-protest-suggestion-they-be-banned-from-boarding-schools/6395390.html>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁵⁶ Mamba Online, "Kenya | LGBTQ students protest over boarding school ban", 17 January 2022, <https://www.mambaonline.com/2022/01/17/kenya-lgbtq-students-protest-over-boarding-school-ban/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁵⁷ Voice of America, "Kenyan LGBT Students Protest Suggestion They be Banned from Boarding Schools", 13 January 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/kenyan-lgbt-students-protest-suggestion-they-be-banned-from-boarding-schools/6395390.html>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁵⁸ Capital News, "Teargas As Ruto's Jacaranda Rally Disrupted, Vows He Won't Be Intimidated", 16 January 2022, <https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2022/01/teargas-as-rutos-jacaranda-rally-disrupted-vows-he-wont-be-intimidated/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Article 19, "Kenya: Court judgment threatens free expression of protesters", 18 February 2022, <https://www.article19.org/resources/kenya-court-judgment-threatens-free-protests/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

Kisumu, and Nairobi. Authorities arrested the six activists on 25 August 2020. The activists allegedly violated provisions of the Public Health Rules 2020. Kenyan authorities have been using the Covid-19 pandemic to restrict freedom of peaceful assembly.

In the reporting period, freedom of assembly and expression have been constantly violated by the state. HRDs have been arbitrarily arrested on trumped-up charges as they exercise their right. In some instances, police have used excess force to violently disperse crowds and, in the process, continue to further violate human rights. Cases of HRDs arrested and tortured by police while carrying out peaceful protests have been on the rise. The criminalisation of environmental defenders was noted in this period.

Rwanda

General situation

According to Samantha Power, U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator, Rwanda does not meet the standards for a liberal democracy under President Paul Kagame's leadership.⁶¹ Power stated that she does not think there is an environment on the ground that allows criticism or that there is pluralistic party development or the criteria you would have in any textbook for liberal democracy.

Freedom of association

The prosecutor in Paul Rusesabagina's case appealed against the 25-year sentencing and sought a life sentence.⁶² The court adjourned the case to 18 January 2022 following the absence of Rusesabagina.⁶³ The prosecution argued that he was duly notified, and it was his decision not to attend the hearing. As a result, the case will continue in his absence.

Freedom of opinion and expression

On 12 November 2021, the High Court in Kigali sentenced Dieudonne Niyonsenga, a YouTuber known for criticising the government, to seven years in prison.⁶⁴ He was charged with four counts, including forgery and usurping titles with the intention to mislead the public, impersonation, and "humiliating" state officials. The court additionally charged him with a fine of five million Rwandan francs (\$4,900). Dieudonné Niyonsenga was freed on 13 March 2021 after the Gasabo Intermediate Court acquitted him of all charges.⁶⁵ However, Human Rights Watch reported that Dieudonné Niyonsenga's reporting on alleged military abuses has continued to cause him trouble since his release.

On 27 January 2022, John Williams Ntwali, a Rwandan YouTuber, alleged that a few channels of imprisoned politicians were hacked or deleted. In January alone, *Iris TV*, *Yago TV*, *Primo TV*, and *Shema TV* were either deactivated, hacked, or temporarily

⁶¹ Devex, "Samantha Power says Rwanda lacks environment 'that allows criticism'", 19 November 2021, <https://www.devex.com/news/samantha-power-says-rwanda-lacks-environment-that-allows-criticism-102147>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁶² CIVICUS Monitor, "Authorities target critics with spyware, opposition members arrested", 29 October 2021, <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2021/10/29/authorities-target-critics-spyware-opposition-members-arrested/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁶³ Reuters, "Appeal in 'Hotel Rwanda' hero's case can proceed without him, judge rules", 19 January 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/appeal-hotel-rwanda-heros-case-can-proceed-without-him-judge-rules-2022-01-18/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁶⁴ Al-Jazeera, "Rwandan YouTube star jailed for 'humiliating' state officials", 12 November 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/12/rwandan-youtube-star-jailed-for-humiliating-state-officials>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁶⁵ CIVICUS Monitor, "Ongoing persecution of critics and journalists arrested", 6 July 2021, <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2021/07/06/ongoing-persecution-critics-and-journalists-arrested/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

suspended.⁶⁶ However, the deputy spokesperson for the Rwandan government Alain Mukuralinda, alleges that the Rwandan authorities do not have the "power to influence or force the company YouTube to block or cancel certain broadcasts." He believes that the account owners are fighting over clicks and are responsible for the hacking.

⁶⁶ Deutsche Welle, "Rwanda: youtubers increasingly worried", 27 January 2022, <https://www.dw.com/fr/rwanda-youtube-libert%C3%A9-d'expression-prison/a-60520364>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

Somalia

General context

Somalia's political situation remains fragile in this reporting period. The lower house elections scheduled for November to December 2021 are still ongoing.⁶⁷ However, the Federal Elections Implementation Team (FEIT), a body that oversees the election process, along with the State Electoral implementation Team (SEIT), extended the deadline to 25 February 2022. In February, FEIT verified that all 54 senators were elected, and 153 Members of Parliament (MPs) assumed their seats, leaving 122 seats open.

The deadline was further extended to 15 March 2022, as constituencies such as Garbaharey in Gedo and Jubaland face disputes regarding moving forward with the 16 seats.⁶⁸ One of the critical concerns mentioned is security. A dispute resolution committee has been working to agree on the polling location. After the legislative elections, 329 MPs would vote in presidential elections (275 MPs and 54 Senators). However, the presidential election is yet to be scheduled.⁶⁹

The swearing in ceremony for the newly elected lower and upper houses MPs is scheduled for 14 April 2022.⁷⁰ However, due to differences between the electoral team and a number of states, the swearing in of MPs could be delayed following the rejection of the new timelines by MPs from Southwest and Galmudug region.⁷¹ Additionally, some MPs from Jubaland and Hirshabelle are yet to be elected.

On 31 March 2022, the Security Council adopted a resolution that replaced the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) with the AU Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).⁷² The Council recognised Somalia's capability in responding to security challenges and the significant changes in the security situation since it authorised AMISOM in February 2007. Accordingly, the Council approved AU member nations to deploy up to 19,626 uniformed personnel, including a minimum of 1,040 police, until 31 December 2022.⁷³ It also backed the African Union Peace and Security Council's decision to cut the number of peacekeepers by 2,000 by that date and "zero personnel" by the end of December 2024.

⁶⁷ The Standard, "Somalia polls have been marred by graft and outright thuggery", 23 February 2022, <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/opinion/article/2001438404/somalia-polls-have-been-marred-by-graft-and-outright-thuggery>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁶⁸ The East African, "Somalia polls drag on as March 15 deadline looms", 13 March 2022, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/somalia-polls-drag-on-as-deadline-looms-3746084>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁶⁹ The Standard, "Somalia polls have been marred by graft and outright thuggery", 23 February 2022, <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/opinion/article/2001438404/somalia-polls-have-been-marred-by-graft-and-outright-thuggery>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁷⁰ Garowe Online, "Somalia: Cracks emerge over the swearing in of the MPs", 16 March 2022, <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-cracks-emerge-over-the-swearing-in-of-the-mps>, Accessed 13 April 2022.

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Al Jazeera, "UN authorises new AU mission in Somalia to dislodge armed groups", 1 April 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/1/un-authorises-new-au-mission-in-somalia-to-dislodge-armed-groups>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

⁷³ Ibid

President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed also known as (Farmaajo), and Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble are at odds again. On 7 April 2022 Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble, ordered the expulsion of an African Union envoy, Ambassador Francisco Madeira, who was heard criticising the head of government on a leaked audio file.⁷⁴ President Farmaajo denounced Roble's order as illegitimate and hasty.

Freedom of opinion and expression

On 20 November 2021, a suicide bomber assassinated Abdiaziz Mohamud Guled, the director of the government-owned *Radio Mogadishu*, as he was leaving a restaurant.⁷⁵ According to several media sources, Sharmarke, a government-owned *Somali National* TV director, and their driver, Abdukadir Abdullahi Nur, were hurt in the incident. Al-Shabaab, a Somali militant group, claimed responsibility for the attack, saying they had been "hunting" Abdiaziz for a long time.

Somali Journalist Syndicate's released a report on the state of press freedom in 2021 on 10 January 2022.⁷⁶ The report indicated two journalists were killed in the country, while three others were seriously injured, two of whom were shot.⁷⁷ In addition, seven media houses were raided, and 65 journalists were arbitrarily imprisoned. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the murders of two journalists in Galkayo and Mogadishu, while government security forces shot and injured two on-duty journalists. According to the report, attacks on free press increased in Somaliland; 12 Journalists were arbitrarily arrested in 2021.

On 21 January 2022, Hirshabelle police in Beledweyne raided a local independent radio station *Hiiraan Weyn* and arrested seven journalists.⁷⁸ The arrest took place after the radio broadcast interviews with local armed resistance that opposed the Hirshabelle authorities. The journalists claimed that the officers threatened them with "harsh consequences" if they revealed any information detrimental to Hirshabelle authorities. The journalists were allegedly transferred to a private residence during the detention where Yusuf Ahmed Hagar (Dabageed), Hirshabelle police chief Colonel Hassan Dhi'isow, and Somali National Army commander Colonel Mohamud Hassan Ibrahim were living. The authorities held the journalists until midnight and set them free without charges. The radio station resumed the following day.

⁷⁴ Voice of America, "Somali Prime Minister, President at Odds Over Expulsion of AU Envoy", 7 April 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/somali-prime-minister-president-at-odds-over-expulsion-of-au-envoy/6519396.html>, Accessed 11 April 2022.

⁷⁵ Somali Journalists Syndicate, "State media director killed, others injured by a suicide bomber in Mogadishu", 21 November 2021, <https://sjsyndicate.org/2021/11/21/state-media-director-killed-others-injured-by-a-suicide-bomber-in-mogadishu/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁷⁶ Somali Journalists Syndicate, "State of Press Freedom in Somalia 2021: Silencing Journalists through Targeted Attacks, Restrictions and Censorship Amid Precarious Working Conditions", 10 January 2022, <https://sjsyndicate.org/2022/01/10/state-of-press-freedom-in-somalia-2021/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Somali Journalists Syndicate, "Hirshabelle police attack and close independent radio station, detain seven journalists in Beledweyne over critical interviews", 22 January 2022, <https://sjsyndicate.org/2022/01/22/hirshabelle-police-attack-and-close-independent-radio-station-detain-seven-journalists-in-beledweyne-over-critical-interviews/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

According to a Facebook statement posted by the privately-owned station, police officers in Beledweyne harassed and assaulted *Radio Hiiraan Weyn* reporter Abdullahi Ali Abukar on 24 January 2022.⁷⁹ The officers accused him of leaking footage of the 21 January police raid on the station. Abukar was among the seven journalists arrested during the raid. He claims that the officer beat him with the butts of their guns and forced him to carry the heavy stones left by protestors for about 35 minutes.

In a separate incident, police officers in the town of Abudwak, in the Galmudug regional state, raided the privately owned *Sooyal TV* and *Radio* offices on 30 January 2022. The police beat and arrested Mahad Bashiir Xilif, the station director.⁸⁰ Mahad was subsequently driven to the outskirts of Abudwak town, where he was kept for several hours, blindfolded behind a tree. The police later took him to the station. Mahad claims that the officers damaged a desktop and chairs inside the studio, and they confiscated external hard drives and memory cards. The raid, attacks, and arrest followed a broadcast interview with a group of police officers who went on strike because their salaries had not been paid. Mahad was released without charges the following day.

On 15 February 2022, Puntland's Military Court found four men guilty of murdering the freelance journalist Jamal Farah Adan.⁸¹ The court sentenced Adde Abdullahi Mohammed Hassan and Abdiqani Saleban Jama, to death. Additionally, the court found two other men guilty of playing a role in the murder and sentenced them a jail term of 25 years and 15 years. Jamal Farah Adan was killed by unidentified gunmen outside his shop in Galkayo, in the central Somalia region of Mudug, on 01 March 2021.⁸²

On 16 February 2022, Haramcad police officers attacked a group of journalists reporting a car bombing and gunfire attacks that took place the previous night. Four TV journalists, Somali Cable TV's Ismail Mohamed Muse and Mohamed Hassan Yusuf, and Five Somali TV's Aweys Mohamud Jila'ow and Mohamud Bari, were apprehended by Haramcad officers and assaulted with gun barrels and wooden sticks laced with nails.⁸³ Two journalists sustained injuries. The Haramcad officers confiscated the journalists' phones and cameras and blindfolded them as they were escorted to a police van. After a short

⁷⁹ Facebook, "Hiiraanweyn Media, 25 January 2022, https://web.facebook.com/Hiiraanweynmedia/posts/129012706283538?_cft_%5b0%5d=AZV6gd2N22oySm-zhCy6Dy1QdenZjtXU7gm152A9cHkwQT_8h0RvrtK5kx5DclYMJSUytZft8nFBjUAHpeBwvfdqRkMKWUZqZaG1vzlezCSzPHN7uxWBOGazqXrnyX8X8l7oyiYYIjv-Aa2qP1eqwO&_tn_=%2C0%2CP-R, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁸⁰ Somali Journalists Syndicate, Galmudug's Darwish forces raid independent local media station, beat and detain journalist in Abudwak, 2 February 2022, <https://sjsyndicate.org/2022/02/02/galmudugs-darwish-forces-raid-independent-local-media-station-beat-and-detain-journalist-in-abudwak/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁸¹ The East African, "The sentenced to death for Somali journalist's murder", 15 February 2022, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/two-sentenced-to-death-for-somali-journalist-murder-3717068>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁸² CIVICUS Monitor, "Two year presidential term extension threatens to further destabilise the country", 16 April 2021, <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2021/04/16/two-year-presidential-term-extension-threatens-further-destabilise-country/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁸³ Somali Journalists Syndicate, "Haramcad police brutally attack journalists covering al-Shabaab attack in Mogadishu", 17 February 2022, <https://sjsyndicate.org/2022/02/17/haramcad-police-brutally-attack-journalists-covering-al-shabaab-attack-in-mogadishu/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

drive, they were taken to another location and told to lie on the ground in the open sun with their hands and legs tied. The officers released the journalists on the same day without charges.

Somaliland

Somaliland authorities in Las Anod, the capital of the Sool region, arrested three journalists.⁸⁴ On 26 December 2021, police officers detained *Holhol Media* reporter Abdifatah Mohamed Abdi. In addition, the police officers arrested two other journalists, namely Hamse Abdi Ahmed, a freelancer, and Abdikhadar Farah Abshir, a reporter with the privately owned Universal TV, on 30 December 2021. According to Sakaria, a Las Anod-based journalist, the arrests are linked to the journalists' conducting interviews of members of the public criticising the track record of Sool governor Abdikarin Adan Haji Diriye.

⁸⁴ Committee to Protect Journalists, "Somaliland authorities arrest three journalists for critical reporting", 31 December 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/12/somaliland-authorities-arrest-three-journalists-for-critical-reporting/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

South Sudan

General situation

On 10 February 2022, DefendDefenders and 80 other NGOs released a letter ahead of the UN Human Rights Council's 49th session, urging states to extend the mandate of the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (CHRSS).⁸⁵ The CHRSS is the only mechanism responsible for collecting and preserving evidence of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in South Sudan. Its work is critical as the country prepares for elections in 2023, conflict persists, and repression of South Sudanese civil society intensifies. On 31 March 2022, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution that extends the mandate of the CHRSS for one year.⁸⁶

Freedom of association

On 22 December 2021, the Department of Immigration, Passport and Nationality arrested youth activist Animu Athiei for "illegally obtaining diplomatic credentials" Athiei claimed that her passport was ordinary.⁸⁷ The authorities handed her over to the Ugandan authorities in Nimule city, a border town. However, the Ugandan authorities denied her entry "because they couldn't find her name in their system."⁸⁸ Athiei and her family sought refuge in Uganda during South Sudanese the civil war, and she claims that she is often harassed by immigration when travelling because she is not deemed to be a "true South Sudanese citizen."

Athiei sued the government in a Juba court and regional and continental tribunals in Arusha over the confiscation of her passport. Athiei believes that her situation is linked to her political ambitions, tribalism, and misogyny.⁸⁹ Animu was appointed to Parliament in May 2021; however, President Salva Kiir revoked her appointment for unknown reasons. On 21 February 2022, the court released Athiei on a \$2500 bail.

Freedom of opinion and expression

On 22 February 2022, the National Security Service (NSS) arrested eight journalists in the national Parliament's premises while they were covering a press conference that included members of opposition parties. The NSS stopped the event, claiming that the press conference was illegal, and confiscated the journalists' recording devices. The NSS released the journalists without charges.

⁸⁵ DefendDefenders, "Extend the mandate of the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan", 10 February 2022, <https://defenddefenders.org/extend-the-mandate-of-the-un-commission-on-human-rights-in-south-sudan/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁸⁶ DefendDefenders, "South Sudan: as concerns multiply, the UN keeps a focus on human rights", 31 March 2022, <https://defenddefenders.org/south-sudan-concerns-multiply-un-keeps-focus/>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

⁸⁷ Eye Radio, "Activist Animu released on bail", 21 February 2022, <https://eyeradio.org/activist-animu-released-on-bail/>, 16 March 2022.

⁸⁸ Al Jazeera, "'Stateless': The politician disowned by South Sudan and Uganda", 4 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/3/4/stateless-the-politician-rejected-by-south-sudan-and-uganda>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁸⁹ Ibid

On 1 March 2022, Human Rights Watch called on the government to release Abraham Chol Maketh and Kuel Aguer Kuel, two government critics, and cease arbitrary arrests and detentions.⁹⁰ Both their lawyers filed court applications in February 2022, claiming that they had been held for months without being brought before a judge, as required by law. Maketh was arrested in July after inferring the overthrow of the South Sudanese government that month. While Kuel was detained for allegedly co-founding an “anti-government campaign.” Neither of the men appeared in court to be formally charged.

On 2 March 2022, four unknown assailants abducted an editor and news anchor with the independent broadcaster Eye Radio, Woja Emmanuel, near the outlet’s office in Juba.⁹¹ The assailants blindfolded him and held him captive the entire day. The kidnappers accused Woja of supporting the National Salvation Front, an armed group fighting the South Sudanese government in the Equatoria region, as well as the Peoples’ Coalition for Civil Action (PCCA), a group of activists calling on President Salva Kiir and other leaders to step down. The assailants also accused him of issuing anti-government opinions on social media. Woja fled on foot after gunfire broke out between his captors and unidentified attackers. Woja believed the kidnappers were going to execute him.

Freedom of peaceful assembly

On 9 February 2022, civil servants organised a protest over salaries in Bor, Jonglei State.⁹² The protest began after the Jonglei government planned to reduce a number of civil servants’ salaries to fund mounting security expenditures. Security officers violently dispersed the protestors and injured approximately 17 people. Following the protest, the state government of Jonglei state overturned a decision to decrease allowances for public employees.⁹³

⁹⁰ Human Rights Watch, “South Sudan: Government Critics Held on Dubious Charges”, 1 March 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/01/south-sudan-government-critics-held-dubious-charges>, 16 March 2022.

⁹¹ Committee to Protect Journalists, “South Sudanese journalist Woja Emmanuel abducted by unidentified men”, 11 March 2022, <https://cpj.org/2022/03/south-sudanese-journalist-emmanuel-woja-abducted-by-unidentified-men/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁹² The Paradise, “South Sudan lawmaker hopes Jonglei protests ‘not tribally motivated’”, 9 February 2022, https://theparadise.ng/south-sudan-lawmaker-hopes-jonglei-protests-not-tribally-motivated/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter, Accessed 16 March 2022.

⁹³ Sudan Post, “Government reverses pay cuts against Jonglei state employees”, 22 February 2022, <https://www.sudanpost.com/government-reverses-pay-cuts-against-jonglei-state-employees/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

Sudan

General information

On 6 December 2021, DefendDefenders published a report about women human rights defenders in Sudan.⁹⁴ The report explored the experience and effects of the revolution on frontline workers. It illustrated the challenges they continue to face as diverse groups.

On 2 January 2022, Prime Minister Abdullah Hamdok resigned from his position through a televised speech addressed to the Sudanese people.⁹⁵ The prime minister also warned that the current political impasse might devolve into a full-fledged crisis, causing havoc on the country's already fragile economy. He stated that a roundtable discussion is necessary to agree on a new national charter and to draw a road map to complete Sudan's transition to democracy.

The President of the Transitional Sovereignty Council, Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, assigned the undersecretaries the functions of a specific ministry to create a path towards the holding of elections.⁹⁶ In a joint meeting, the Councils of Sovereignty and the Ministers approved the budget for the year 2022.⁹⁷ The Minister of Finance revealed that the budget witnessed an estimated increase in state workers' wages. However, he did not disclose any figures within the new budget.

Freedom of association

On 9 February 2022, security forces arrested two prominent political figures who held top positions in the civilian administration before a military takeover.⁹⁸ Youssef and Saleh were detained one day after joining a Forces and Freedom of Change (FFC) group for

⁹⁴ DefendDefenders, "An unfinished revolution: The situation of women human rights defenders", 6 December 2021, <https://defenddefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Sudan-Report.pdf>, Accessed 03 April 2022.

⁹⁵ Al Jazeera, "Sudan's Hamdok resigns as prime minister amid political deadlock", 2 January 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/2/sudan-pm-abdalla-hamdok-resigns-after-deadly-protest>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

⁹⁶ Anadolu Agency, "Sudan. The Sovereignty Council and the Ministers approve the 2022 budget", 20 January 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/ar/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%A9-2022/2481069>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Al Jazeera, "Two prominent Sudanese leaders critical of military detained", 9 February 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/9/two-prominent-sudanese-critics-of-military-detained>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

negotiations with UN Special Representative Volker Perthes as part of efforts to address the escalating crisis.

Similarly, on 14 February 2022, Sudanese authorities arrested Mohamed Al-Faki Suleiman, a member of the Unionist Alliance party, while he was driving home.⁹⁹ Faki has now been arrested for the second time since the military takeover. After the October coup, he was removed from his position and held in custody. Khalid Omer Yousif, Wagdi Salih, and Mohamed al-Faki Suleiman were involved in a task force that seized property and fired bureaucrats linked to Al-Bashir's regime.¹⁰⁰

On 1 April 2022, Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, Sudan's de facto leader, threatened to expel the UN special representative Volker Perthes for interference in the country's affairs.¹⁰¹ The threat followed Perthes' address to the UN Security Council. Burhan cautioned Perthes "to stop overstepping the mandate of the UN mission and blatant interference in Sudanese affairs, as that would lead to his expulsion from the country."

Freedom of opinion and expression

The rights to freedom of expression has been under extreme pressure since the anti-coup protest in October 2021. Sudanese army and police continue to target, attack, arbitrarily arrest and detain journalists. Several journalists are subjected to surveillance, harassment, and abuse.

On 13 January 2022, Sudanese security forces attacked three journalists while covering a protest.¹⁰² According to the Sudanese Journalists Network, the security forces attempted to run over journalist Shamael Al-Nour, while journalists Bakri Khalifa and Othman Fadlallah escaped death. On the same day, security forces raided the offices of *Al-Araby* channel in Khartoum and detained TV correspondents Islam Saleh, Wael Muhammad Al-Hassan, and cameraman Mazen Onur. The three journalists are in an unknown location.

On 27 February 2022, Al-Hadi Muhammad Al-Amin, journalist and specialist in the affairs of extremist groups, received a message from an unarmed party requesting him to stop writing about terrorism and religious extremism.¹⁰³ Al-Amin announced that the request

⁹⁹ Al Jazeera, "Sudan arrests former ruling council member again", 14 February 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/14/sudan-arrests-former-ruling-council-member>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Arab News, "Sudan's Burhan threatens to expel UN mission head", 1 April 2022, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2055256/middle-east>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

¹⁰² Altaghyeer, "Renewed targeting of the media in Sudan and the Journalists' Network condemns", 13 January 2022, <https://www.altaghyeer.info/ar/2022/01/13/%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%B4%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%A7/>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

¹⁰³ Sudan Civic Space Monitor, "JOURNALIST SUSPENDED FROM WRITING ABOUT RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM", 27 February 2022, <https://sudan.civicmonitor.org/journalist-suspended-writing-about-religious-extremism-and-terrorism/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

was obligatory, and he would stop his journalistic work on a Facebook post. He claims to have received previous threats of execution by extremist groups.

On 30 March 2022, security forces arrested Mab Mirghani, a female journalist working for *Al-Jarida* newspaper, while covering the protest events at Khartoum's open-air market (Souq al-Arabi).¹⁰⁴ According to a statement made by the Sudanese Journalists Network, "authorities detained Mirghani for more than eight hours to obtain a confession about her affiliation with a political party." As a result, the authorities charged Mirghani under Article 77 of the public disturbance Act.

Freedom of peaceful assembly

Approximately 93 people died, and several people have been arrested since the crackdown against protesters began in October 2021.¹⁰⁵ In addition, on 20 January 2022, the Central Committee of Sudan Doctors (CCSD) issued a report revealing that 616 protestors have sustained injuries between 30 October 2021 and 17 January 2022.¹⁰⁶

On 13 November 2021, security forces arrested 64 activists while demonstrating in the city of Nabala. Police officers fired teargas and used batons to beat up protestors.¹⁰⁷ Separately, on 4 January 2022, the CCSD reported that 70 people were injured during the anti-coup protest in Khartoum and Port Sudan. Security authorities used tear gas, rubber bullets, and sound bombs to disperse protestors.¹⁰⁸

On 17 February 2022, security officers arrested activist Mohamad Ali after raiding his house. Mohamad was held in Khartoum's Soba prison without charges or access to visitors. The authorities denied knowing about his arrest. Reportedly, since the military coup started in October 2021, approximately 105 protestors have been detained in Soba without due process.

On 30 March 2022, Sudanese authorities killed a protestor. According to the CCSD, Assem al-Rasoul, was shot in the chest by a "live bullet" during an anti-coup

¹⁰⁴ Radio Dababanga, "Sudanese journalist arrested for protest coverage", 31 March 2022, <https://www.dabangasudan.org/en/all-news/article/sudanese-journalist-arrested-for-protest-coverage>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

¹⁰⁵ Central Committee of Sudan Doctors, "Sudan Central Doctor Committee", 20 January 2022, <https://www.theccsd.org/post/654>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

¹⁰⁶ Al Jazeera, "Protester killed as Sudanese rally against coup, economic crisis", 31 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/31/protester-killed-as-sudanese-rally-against-coup-economic-crisis>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

¹⁰⁷ Darfur 24, "About 64 protesters arrested in Darfur", 13 November 2021, <https://www.darfur24.com/2021/11/13/%d8%a7%d8%b9%d8%aa%d9%82%d8%a7%d9%84-%d9%86%d8%ad%d9%88-64-%d9%85%d8%aa%d8%b8%d8%a7%d9%87%d8%b1%d8%a7%d9%8b-%d9%81%d9%8a-%d8%af%d8%a7%d8%b1%d9%81%d9%88%d8%b1/>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

¹⁰⁸ Altaghyeer, "The violence of the Sudanese authorities leaves 70 injuries in the January 4 procession", 5 January 2022, <https://www.altaghyeer.info/ar/2022/01/05/%d8%b9%d9%86%d9%81-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b3%d9%84%d8%b7%d8%a7%d8%aa-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b3%d9%88%d8%af%d8%a7%d9%86%d9%8a%d8%a9-%d9%8a%d8%ae%d9%84%d9%81-70-%d8%a5%d8%b5%d8%a7%d8%a8%d8%a9-%d9%81%d9%8a/>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

demonstration in Khartoum.¹⁰⁹ So far, this brings the Committee's death toll to 93 people since 25 October 2021.

¹⁰⁹ Al Jazeera, "Protester killed as Sudanese rally against coup, economic crisis", 31 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/31/protester-killed-as-sudanese-rally-against-coup-economic-crisis>, Accessed 3 April 2022.

Tanzania

General information

On 16 February 2022, President Samia Suluhu met with Tundu Lissu, the exiled opposition leader living in Belgium.¹¹⁰ Lissu expressed his desire to return home but requested Hassan's safety assurance. Additionally, he expressed concern over other opposition politicians who fled Tanzania to seek asylum overseas after their lives were threatened during former President John Magufuli's rule. Furthermore, Lissu appealed to the President to release Freeman Mbowe, the Chadema Party's national chairperson, and three other party members facing terrorist and economic sabotage charges.

On 28 February 2022, Maasai residents protested the Tanzanian government's intentions to evict 167,000 Maasai from Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) and Loliondo to make way for trophy hunting and elite tourists.¹¹¹ The residents blocked the entrance to the NCA, a well-known UNESCO World Heritage Site in northern Tanzania, as part of their protest.

In the March 2022 Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Tanzania committed to conduct investigations of all threats and attacks against and killings of journalists, civil society actors and human rights defenders and holding those responsible to account.¹¹²

Freedom of association

During the trial against Freeman Mbowe, the country's main opposition party chairman, Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Swahili for Party of Democracy and Progress), popularly known as Chadema, the 13th prosecution witness in the case claimed to be ill while being cross-examined by defense counsel. As a result, the High Court judge adjourned the case to 14 February 2022.¹¹³ The judge instructed the lawyer to ensure Mr Swila attended the proceedings on the 14th or bring in other witnesses. On separate

¹¹⁰ Voice of America, "Applause in Tanzania After President Meets Exiled Opposition Leader in Belgium", 17 February 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/applause-in-tanzania-after-president-meets-exiled-opposition-leader-in-belgium/6446281.html>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹¹¹ Africa Sustainable conversation news, "Tanzania – Maasai blockade Ngorongoro in protest over expulsions from NCA and Loliondo", 28 February 2022, <https://africasustainableconservation.com/2022/02/28/tanzania-maasai-blockade-ngorongoro-in-protest-over-expulsions-from-nca-and-loliondo/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹¹² Civicus, "Adoption of Tanzania's Universal Periodic Review", 23 March 2022, Adoption of Tanzania's Universal Periodic Review, <https://civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/news/united-nations/geneva/5699-adoption-of-tanzania-s-universal-periodic-review>, Accessed 11 April 2022.

¹¹³ The East African, "Case against Tanzania's Freeman Mbowe stalls again as witness 'taken ill'", 11 February 2022, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/case-against-chadema-chairman-mbowe-3713008>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

occasions, two other witnesses fell ill during cross-examination on. Mbowe was charged with terrorism-related and economic crimes.¹¹⁴

On 18 February 2022, the High Court ruled that the case against Freeman Mbowe would proceed.¹¹⁵ Judge Joachim Tiganga stated that "without going into details," the court believed the prosecution's evidence was sufficient to require the defendants to respond to five of the six allegations against them. The verdict came after the state prosecutor unexpectedly finished filing evidence against the main opposition Chadema party leader on 15 February 2022.

On 4 March 2022, the Director of Public Prosecutions submitted a motion to dismiss the terrorist accusations against Freeman Mbowe and his three co-accused in the High Court Division of Corruption and Economic Sabotage Offenses. Mbowe and the three other opposition members were freed.¹¹⁶ According to his lawyer, the release was unexpected; "we did not know it would happen; we had spent the whole day in prison yesterday preparing Mr Mbowe and his co-accused for defense."¹¹⁷

Freedom of opinion and expression

In an effort to protect journalists and the media industry, the government plans to amend the Media Services Act (2016).¹¹⁸ The Minister for information, communication and information technology, Nape Nnauye stated that President Samia Suluhu Hassan approved the amendment of the Act, and the ministry was ready to "act accordingly". The Media Services Act has been criticised for giving the government arbitrary powers that limit independent media and effectively censor them. The Act creates strict rules for journalist accreditation and gives broad oversight powers to government agencies to ban, suspend, and fine newspapers.

In other developments, the government issued new publishing licenses to four newspapers namely, *Mwanahalisi*, *Mawio*, *Mseto*, and *Tanzania Daima*.¹¹⁹ These newspapers were banned during late President John Magufuli's rule. According to Nape Nnauye, Hassan ordered the reinstatement of the papers' licenses as part of her vow to protect press freedom.

¹¹⁴ CIVICUS Monitor, Attacks, pressure on dissent and opposition unrelenting, 20 September 2021, <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2021/09/20/attacks-pressure-dissent-and-opposition-unrelenting/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹¹⁵ The East African, "Tanzania court rules Chadema leader Freeman Mbowe to stand trial for terrorism", 18 February 2022, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/tanzania-opposition-leader-freeman-mbowe-stand-trial-terrorism-3721698>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹¹⁶ The East African, "Tanzania opposition leader Mbowe freed after DPP drops terror charge", 4 March 2022, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/tanzania-opposition-leader-freeman-mbowe-freed-3736890>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹¹⁷ The Washington Post, "Tanzania drops terrorism charges against opposition leader, releases him", 4 March 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/03/04/tanzania-freeman-mbowe-released/>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹¹⁸ Daily News, "Media services act due for review", 13 January 2022, <https://dailynews.co.tz/news/2022-01-1361dfce437cdcb.aspx>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹¹⁹ Voice of America, "Media in Tanzania Relieved as Government Lifts Ban on Four Newspapers", 11 February 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/media-in-tanzania-relieved-as-government-lifts-ban-on-four-newspapers-/6437601.html>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

Eight journalists were arrested in the first two months of 2022. On 4 February 2021, the Ngorongoro police officers arrested six journalists covering a public meeting organised by the residents to discuss threats of forced eviction (see above).¹²⁰ The residents invited journalists to amplify their message on media platforms. However, the authorities held and harassed the six journalists after the meeting and released them later. The Tanzanian Human Rights Defenders Coalition believe that this incident resulted in self-censorship, as the information gathered in the meeting was not publicly shared "the six journalists feared to disclose any condition given to them in relation to information gathered from the community meeting".

On 24 February 2022, police officers in Arusha unlawfully arrested and held Global Tv journalist Kolumba Victor and *Kusaga Online TV* journalist Alphonse Kusaga.¹²¹ The arrest followed the journalists' interviewing citizens who reported an incident of local security guards allegedly looting their money.

In March 2022, HRDs were prohibited from conducting a fact-finding mission in Ngorongoro following the existing land conflict.¹²² The aim of the mission was to prepare a report with recommendations on how to resolve the land conflict in Ngorongoro. Moreover, three HRDs were persecuted and threatened because of defending rights of indigenous people in Loliondo. Two of them were summoned at Arusha Central police station and interrogated on publication of false or misleading information about the land disputes in Ngorongoro.¹²³

¹²⁰ Twitter, THRCOALITION, 4 February 2022, <https://twitter.com/THRDCOALITION/status/1489680453623857152>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹²¹ Twitter, THRCOALITION, 24 February 2022, <https://twitter.com/THRDCOALITION/status/1496872402428612608>, Accessed 16 March 2022.

¹²² Tanzania human rights defenders coalition

¹²³ Ibid

Uganda

General situation

Within this period, there have been ongoing rights violations in Uganda. Security forces restricted the rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly, and expression. Security forces arbitrarily arrested, beat, and tortured critics, journalists, and opposition members. Additionally, environmental HRDs continue to face threats, arrests, and detention, and torture.¹²⁴ Additionally, environmental NGOs continue to be targeted. For instance, Africa Institute for Energy Governance (AFIEGO) staff still report to police in respect to a bond issued as far back as last year on unknown charges.

HRDs in Uganda continue to face serious challenges in accessing resources with the suspension of Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), a leading core funder for most NGOs in Uganda.¹²⁵ This has significantly impacted the legitimate work of NGOs including women's rights organisations working to abolish gender-based violence, and other cultural practices.

Freedom of association

Ahead of his scheduled campaign for his party candidate in the Kayunga district chairperson by-election, the military deployed around Robert Kyagulanyi, also known as Bobi Wine's home.¹²⁶ According to Bobi Wine, no one was allowed to leave or enter his house. Additionally, the security officers violently arrested Bobi Wine's security guard and gardener and confiscated their phones. President Museveni was also expected to campaign for the National Resistance Movement (NRM) party candidate.

On 27 February 2022, unknown assailants broke into the offices of Community Transformation Foundation Network-COTFONE, a non-governmental organisation striving to guarantee that those affected by the East African Crude Oil Pipeline-EACOP project in greater Masaka receive compensation.¹²⁷

Freedom of opinion and expression

On 17 December 2021, security forces arrested three journalists while covering the district LCV chairperson by-elections in Kayunga.¹²⁸ The police violently arrested them and

¹²⁴ National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda, "UGANDA: A call to end the continuous unabated assault on fundamental human rights and freedoms of human rights defenders", 18 March 2022, <https://hrdcoalition.ug/uganda-a-call-to-end-the-continuous-unabated-assault-on-fundamental-human-rights-and-freedoms-of-human-rights-defenders/#more-3031>, Accessed 11 April 2022.

¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ Aljazeera, "Ugandan opposition leader Bobi Wine 'under house arrest'", 14 December 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/14/uganda-opposition-leader-bobi-wine-under-house-arrest>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ Human Rights Network for Journalists- Uganda, "Three journalists arrested and detained in Kayunga due to appear in court this afternoon", 17 December 2021, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=9352>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

confiscated their equipment, according to the journalists. Micheal Kakumirizi, Joy Lule, and David Byansi were detained Naggalama police station for a night and produced in court the next day. According to Human Rights Network for Journalists (HRNJ- Uganda), many journalists covering the by-elections were assaulted and teargassed by security forces. HRNJU reported 17 cases of abuse and violations against journalists covering the Kayunga district by-elections.

On 17 December 2021, the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) withdrew charges against two online journalists Pidson Kareire and Magara Darius of the Drone Media and East African Watch.¹²⁹ The state representative Peter Mugisha informed the court that "the DPP has instructed me to inform the court that she is no longer interested in the case and has decided to withdraw charges against all the accused persons." The two journalists were charged with criminal libel under section 179 of the Penal Code. They were accused of publishing defamatory claims about a Ugandan infrastructure company, Dott Services Limited on 27 May 2021.¹³⁰ Separately, another case involving Pidson Kareire and Mugalula Moses of the Drone Media and *Bilal FM* was adjourned to 18 January 2022.¹³¹ The two journalists were accused of publishing a story claiming that Hon. Deputy Speaker of Parliament Anita Among is involved in corruption tendencies.

On 28 December 2021, Kakwenza Rukirabashaija, an author and government critic, was arrested by armed men claiming to be police officers in his home for allegedly posting on Twitter about Museveni and his son, Muhoozi Kainerugaba.¹³² He described Museveni's son as "obese" and a "curmudgeon" on Twitter. On 12 January 2022, the state Magistrate Court charged Rukirabashaija two counts of offensive communication under section 25 of the computer misuse act 2011.¹³³ The prosecutor accused him of "willfully and repeatedly using his Twitter handle to disturb the peace of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda, Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni with no purpose of legitimate communication". Rukirabashaija remains in remand until 21 January 2022.

On 9 February 2022, Ugandan author and government critic Kakwenza Rukirabashaija fled the country through Rwanda and is now in Germany seeking medical treatment.¹³⁴ On 25 January 2022, The Magistrate

¹²⁹ Human Rights Network for Journalists- Uganda, "Director of Public Prosecutions withdraws charges against two online journalists", 17 December 2021, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=9356>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹³⁰ CIVICUS Monitor, "Attack on freedom of expression and 44 people arrested for attending lgbtqi engagement", 22 July 2021, <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2021/07/22/attack-freedom-expression-and-44-people-arrested-attending-lgbtqi-engagement/>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹³¹ Human Rights Network for Journalists- Uganda, "Director of Public Prosecutions withdraws charges against two online journalists", 17 December 2021, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=9356>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹³² The East Africa, "Ugandan novelist and government critic arrested: lawyer", 29 December 2021, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/ugandan-novelist-government-critic-arrested-lawyer-3666586>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹³³ Nile Post, "Kakwenza finally charged in court, remanded", 12 January 2022, <http://nilepost.co.ug/2022/01/11/kakwenza-finally-charged-in-court-remanded/>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹³⁴ France 24, "Ugandan writer arrives in Germany after fleeing 'torture' in custody", 23 February 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220223-ugandan-writer-arrives-in-germany-after-fleeing-torture-in-custody>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

Courts released Rukirabashaija on a cash bail of Ush500,000 (\$142) and Ush10 million (\$2,839) for his sureties.¹³⁵ The courts granted bail on medical grounds as Rukirabashaija was tortured during his detention. The court denied his request for his passport to be returned.¹³⁶

On 1 February 2022, police officers assaulted two NBS journalists, Eddie Kisseka and Samalie Kisakye, while covering a story on police officers receiving bribes from *boda bodas* (motorbike riders) operating during curfew hours.¹³⁷ The journalists claim that once the policemen realised that they were recording, they "grabbed the camera and assaulted them. On 31 December 2021, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni opened all sectors of the economy except for the *boda* industry.

On 7 March 2022, freelance Ugandan based Spanish journalist Sadurni Carrasco Sumaya, and her driver died in a car accident in Kiryandongo District.¹³⁸ Faridah Nampiiga, the Public Relations Officer in the Police Traffic and Road Safety Department, reported that the duo died instantly in a head-on collision involving their car and a Fuso truck; and the truck driver escaped. Nampiima stated that police in Kiryadongo were looking for the driver. Opposition Members of Parliament demanded an investigation into the journalist's reportedly "mysterious" death.¹³⁹ According to Joyce Bagala, the Shadow Information Minister, the Spanish journalist covered Uganda's general elections in 2021 despite alleged intimidation, and her death in this manner raises questions.

On 10 March 2022, the Uganda Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) raided the *Alternative Digitalk TV*, an online television platform and confiscated equipment, including cameras, computers and the station's mobile van.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, the UPDF arrested nine staff members, namely Tumuhimbise Norman, Mukose Arnold, Faridah Bikobere, Jeremiah Mukiibi, Tumusiime Kato, Tulyahabwe Roger, Nabukeera Teddy Teangle, Lillian Luwedde and Wabyona Jeje Jacob.¹⁴¹ The reason for the arrest is not yet known. However,

¹³⁵ The East African, "Ugandan novelist Kakwenza granted bail on medical grounds", 25 January 2022, <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/ugandan-novelist-kakwenza-released-on-bail-3693348>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹³⁶ France 24, "Ugandan writer arrives in Germany after fleeing 'torture' in custody", 23 February 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220223-ugandan-writer-arrives-in-germany-after-fleeing-torture-in-custody>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹³⁷ Human Rights Network for Journalists- Uganda, "Police assault NBS journalist while covering an operation", 2 February 2022, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=9361>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹³⁸ Chimp reports, "Spanish journalist Sadurni Carrasco Sumaya dies in Uganda Road Accident", 8 March 2022, <https://chimpreports.com/spanish-journalist-sadurni-carrasco-sumaya-dies-in-uganda-road-accident/>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹³⁹ Nile Post, "Opposition wants death of Spanish journalist who covered NUP campaigns investigated", 10 March 2022, <http://nilepost.co.ug/2022/03/10/opposition-wants-death-of-spanish-journalist-who-covered-nup-campaigns-investigated/>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹⁴⁰ Human Rights Network for Journalists- Uganda, "Two media houses raided, as army men arrest online DIGITALK TV staff in Uganda", 11 March 2022, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=9381>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹⁴¹ Ibid

Tumuhimbise was due to launch a book critical of President Yoweri Museveni on 30 March.¹⁴²

On 14 March 2022, the group's lawyers, led by Eron Kiiza, filed a plea in Kampala's High Court civil division, seeking orders for the group's mandatory and unconditional release after they had been detained for longer than the required 48 hours.¹⁴³ The lawyer claims the nine journalists have been denied access to see their lawyers and family members since the arrest.

Separately, on 10 March 2022, 12 plain-clothed officers raided Vision Group offices.¹⁴⁴ The security officers allegedly intended to detain Lawrence Kitatta,¹⁴⁵ a Vision Group journalist who covered a demonstration on 21 February 2022 against Deputy Speaker Among's alleged mockery of MP Francis Zaake. While covering the protest, Kitatta was assaulted by a security officer attached to the presidential protection guard who was guarding the Deputy Speaker.¹⁴⁶ Kitatta claims he fears for his life and has received threats from unknown people since the coverage of the protest.¹⁴⁷

Freedom of peaceful assembly

On 8 November 2021, Fred Enanga, Ugandan police spokesman, stated that the security officers are ready to counter the illegal protests planned by the National Unity Party (NUP) and other "violent" political groups.¹⁴⁸ Police officers arrested four members of NUP, namely Bwambaale Geoffrey, Mumbere Isaac, Basisa Brian and Isande Adonozio, on conspiracy to commit a felony of treason charges.¹⁴⁹ The four were accused of mobilising people from Ntoroko, Fort Portal Bundibogyo and Hoima to hold massive violent protests'. Additionally, authorities are investigating political opposition Kiiza Besigye, and Municipality MP Francis Zaake for "inciting the public to rise against the

¹⁴² Voice of America, "Rights Activists Call for Release of Detained Ugandan Journalists", 15 March 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/rights-activists-call-for-release-of-detained-ugandan-journalists/6486399.html>, 20 March 2022.

¹⁴³ Nile Post, "Gov't dragged to court over arrest of Digitalk TV journalists", 14 March 2022, <http://nilepost.co.ug/2022/03/14/govt-dragged-to-court-over-arrest-of-digitalk-tv-journalists/>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹⁴⁴ Human Rights Network for Journalists- Uganda, "Two media houses raided, as army men arrest online DIGITALK TV staff in Uganda", 11 March 2022, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=9381>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

¹⁴⁶ Pulse live, "Ugandans angered by officer who beat up a journalist [Video]", 24 February 2022, <https://www.pulselive.co.ke/news/lawrence-kitatta-a-ugandan-journalist-with-vision-group-beaten-by-security-guards/k5y8911>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹⁴⁷ Human Rights Network for Journalists- Uganda, "Two media houses raided, as army men arrest online DIGITALK TV staff in Uganda", 11 March 2022, <https://hrnjuganda.org/?p=9381>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹⁴⁸ NBS, "We Are Ready For NUP Protests – Fred Enanga", 8 November 2021, <https://nbs.ug/2021/11/we-are-ready-for-nup-protests-fred-enanga/>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹⁴⁹ Galaxy FM, "NUP disowns reports it plans to hold illegal protests", 8 November 2021, <https://www.galaxyfm.co.ug/2021/11/08/nup-disowns-reports-it-plans-to-hold-illegal-protests/>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

government”.¹⁵⁰ According to Enanga, the political Crimes Department opened a case against the two. The NUP spokesman, Joel Ssenyonyi, refuted the claims and accused the police of “concocting intelligence for their selfish gains”.¹⁵¹

On 16 December 2021, police officers arrested 33 doctors and interns while attempting to petition the parliament speaker.¹⁵² The petition demanded the ministry of health to ensure all hospitals have personal protective equipment, pay interns at least 2.5 million Ugandan shillings, and improve the general working conditions.

¹⁵⁰ Chimp Reports, “Police Probes Besigye, MP Zaake over inciting violence”, 9 November 2021, <https://chimpreports.com/police-probes-besigye-mp-zaake-over-inciting-violence/>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹⁵¹ New Vision, “NUP dismisses protest talk”, 8 November 2021, <https://www.newvision.co.ug/articledetails/119319>, Accessed 20 March 2022.

¹⁵² YouTube, “YY Media”, 15 December 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6d5squ2byme>, Accessed 20 March 2022.