

**Human-rights defenders in need of defense:
A field report on the protection and
effectiveness of Human-rights defenders in
West and East Africa and the Horn**

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Synopsis

The project: goals, approach, institutions, and researchers

The African Human Rights Defenders Project is designed to strengthen the work of human-rights defenders in Africa by reducing their vulnerability to the risk of persecution and by enhancing their capacity for effectiveness in defending human rights. It focuses on West Africa, East Africa and the Horn. The current report covers the first, exploratory stage of the project. It identifies the most pressing unmet needs of human-rights defenders there, especially regarding personal security and effectiveness, and addresses the question of the kind of assistance that can be provided from outside Africa, especially from Canada.

This stage of the project was carried out through field trips in March and April 2004 to the two regions. They involved extensive consultations with a wide range of human-rights defenders as well as several public officials.

The project has been conducted by the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University in Canada. It has been funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Amnesty International-Canada, and Inter Pares. The project was designed and is being carried out by two former human-rights defenders, Mr. Hassan Shire, who had been active in Somalia and who is covering East Africa and the Horn for this project, and Mr. James Torh, who had been active in Liberia and who is covering West Africa. Professor Peter Penz, until recently Director of the Centre for Refugee Studies, guided the project and assumed responsibility for the report.

The field report is mostly on a country-by-country basis. Its overall findings are as follows:

- (1) The most important weakness identified is insufficient collaboration among the human-rights organizations, especially among neighbouring countries. As a result, when repressive regimes force advocates to flee their countries, the latter frequently leave their region and go to Europe or the Americas. This means that their institutions lose their most experienced HRDs.
- (2) The effectiveness of human-rights defenders as well as their vulnerability is greatly limited by resource constraints. In particular, they need access to good information, i.e. computers and internet, communication resources, and funds for transportation.
- (3) The specialized expertise required for being a human-rights defender means that there is a great need for knowledge development and skill training, especially on human-rights instruments and mechanisms as well as crisis management, particularly under repressive regimes.
- (4) At times the efforts of local and national human-rights defenders need to be supplemented by those of the wider international community, especially when attacks on

intra-national human-rights defenders are involved. There may be a need for systematic protocols for such support.

Plans for the next stage of this project will be presented in a separate document.

The project: goals, approach, institutions, and researchers

Goals

The African Human Rights Defenders Project is designed to strengthen the work of human-rights defenders in Africa by reducing their vulnerability to the risk of persecution and by enhancing their capacity for effectiveness in defending human rights. It thus also serves to advance the protection of human rights, the rule of law and democratic institutions.

It attempts to find answers to the following three questions:

- (1) Within the human-rights-threatening setting of West Africa, East Africa, and the Horn of Africa, what are the pressing needs of local human-rights defenders not being met by existing programs?
- (2) In particular, how can human-rights defenders be made (a) more secure and (b) more effective in their work?
- (3) How can such support be provided to human-rights defenders in Africa from outside Africa? More specifically, what particular strengths and resources could a Canada-based Initiative bring to addressing these needs?

Approach

These aims have been addressed through field work that was designed by the two project researchers, reviewed by the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University in Canada, and approved by the university's Human Participants Review Sub-Committee. It involved separate field trips to West Africa and to East Africa and the Horn, respectively, in March and April 2004. In each region a wide range of HRDs as well as several public officials were consulted. Electronic and telephonic communications supplemented these face-to-face meetings. (See Appendix A.)

Institutions

The project has been conducted by the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University in Canada. It has been funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Amnesty International-Canada, and Inter Pares and has received in-kind support from the Centre for Refugee Studies. Many organizations were consulted in the process of carrying out the needs assessment. In addition, advice was sought from institutions in Europe about the next stage for the project. Many of these organizations are identified in Appendix B.

The researchers and their work

The project was designed and carried out by two former human-rights defenders, Mr. Hassan Shire, who had been active in Somalia and who has covered East Africa and the Horn for this project, and Mr. James Torh, who had been active in Liberia and who has covered West Africa. Both are affiliated with York University's Centre for Refugee Studies as Research Associates. The substantial work experience in human-rights work and extensive connections in the community of human-rights advocates and institutions of the two researchers was a crucial asset of the project. Professor Peter Penz, who was Director of the Centre for Refugee Studies when the project started and the field work was carried out, guided the project and assumed responsibility for the integrated report. Mr. Sabil Francis pulled together the first draft of the synthesis of the reports from the two researchers.

Background

The cause of HRDs

(HRD will be used to refer to "human-rights defender", with HRDs as the plural.)

HRDs are men and women on the front lines of the struggle to ensure that the principles laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent human-rights conventions are upheld. HRDs are a crucial link in the chain of human-rights protection, from campaigning on behalf of victims of human-rights violations to lobbying at the highest levels for improved mechanisms for human-rights protection. In the process they support the rule of law and the institutions and principles of democracy around the world. By publicizing human-rights instruments and lobbying state authorities and regional bodies, they raise awareness of human-rights entitlements and help to mobilize victims of abuses to fight against them.

They may be members of explicit and exclusive human-rights organizations, but they may also belong to youth groups, churches, or women's or development associations. Some

may act in an individual capacity. They include lawyers, journalists, teachers, social activists or community leaders. Wherever and whenever there is persecution and oppression, minorities and other vulnerable groups are threatened, and human rights are denied or human dignity is threatened, defenders tend to emerge and strive to protect the weak and hold the authorities to account.

The risks of HRDs

More often than not, the courageous work of HRDs puts them in positions of great personal and professional risk. They embarrass and threaten the legitimacy of authorities and other powerful groups that violate human rights in the process of exercising power. They thus attract the attention of power-holders, who then very often turn their patterns of persecution and oppression against HRDs, often in a more violent manner than against those whom the HRDs are trying to protect.

This has been recognized by the United Nations. Following a decade-long campaign by leading human-rights organizations, including Amnesty International, the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (known as the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders— see Appendix C) was adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly on the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 9 December 1998. It recognized the importance of the work of HRDs and calls for the recognition, protection and support of HRDs worldwide. This Declaration broadly recognizes as HRDs those groups and individuals striving for the promotion, protection and realization of social, economic and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. It clearly affirms that states should promote understanding of human rights, create or support independent national human-rights institutions and programs of human-rights education for citizens to know and exercise their rights, and train public officials in human rights. Article 12.2 emphasizes the duty of states to protect human rights defenders: "The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration." (For the full UN Declaration on HRDs see Appendix B.)

In 2000 the UN also established the position of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders to monitor its implementation and recommend better strategies for HRD protection. Ms. Hina Jilani, a prominent human rights defender and lawyer from Pakistan, was appointed and has produced numerous reports on the situation of HRDs.

Furthermore, the European Union (EU) Foreign Ministers, at the meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council held 14-15 June 2004, adopted EU Guidelines on
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Human Rights Defenders as a human-rights priority of the Presidency. Finally, after several years of lobbying by African and international NGOs and support from the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders, the African Commission finally adopted the Resolution on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders at its 35th Ordinary Session held in Gambia 21 May - 4 June 2004. The Commission decided to nominate Commissioner Jainaba Johm as Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa to monitor abuses of the human rights of defenders in Africa, recognizing the important role they play and their specific needs for protection.

Despite such protection ostensibly afforded by these international organizations, governments continue to take repressive action against HRDs in order to counter exposure or criticism of state practices that violate human rights. They harass HRDs, deny them freedom of movement, force them out of employment, imprison them illegally or on the basis of subverted judicial processes, torture them, execute them without fair trial as well as kill them unofficially or “disappear” them. Many HRDs have had to flee their countries to escape such actions.

Naturally, such actions violate the most fundamental human rights of HRDs. These include the right to freedom of expression and opinion; the right to a fair trial; the right to freedom from arbitrary arrest and torture; and the right to life.

Moreover, when an HRD is attacked, the whole community in which he or she lives and works becomes more vulnerable to human-rights abuses. Consequently, defending HRDs not only serves to protect these individuals and their rights, but at the same time strengthens the whole human-rights movement, from the local to the international level.

It is against this background that Amnesty International organized a series of workshops, including the 1998 and 1999 forums in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, and Lagos, Nigeria, respectively, to encourage, promote and pull together the rich network of HRDs in West Africa, to mobilize a collective response to the human rights crises there. In 2001, a regional network of HRDs was launched in Dakar, Senegal. The gathering that brought together over 40 HRDs from across the region was attended and witnessed by representatives of international NGOs, officials of the Senegalese Government and Ms. Hina Jilain, the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders. Based on these consultations, Amnesty International undertook a pilot project of one year, 2001-2002, setting up a regional support office for HRDs in the region. The project, called the West Africa Human Rights Defenders Action (WAHRDA), in which Mr. James Torh, one of the researchers in the present project, the African Human Rights Defenders Project, served as the Project Coordinator, made a significant impact on the coordination of support to HR defenders in the region. Unfortunately, on completion of the one-year pilot phase, the sponsors could not secure the necessary funds for continuing the project.

Findings

Introduction

Military and other forms of dictatorship, state terror and civil wars marked by severe atrocities have plagued both the African regions considered in this report in the past several decades, since independence from colonial rule for most of the countries. Several of them are or have been classic human-rights tragedies. While HRDs are particularly needed in such situations, they are then also exposed to exceptional persecution and consequent risk. They have been killed, “disappeared”, tortured, unlawfully detained, or forced into exile or completely silenced. One of the most famous cases is that of the Nigerian writer, Ken Saro Wiwa, writer and President of the Survival the Ogoni People, who was executed by the Nigerian Government on 10 November 1995, after a blatantly unfair trial for speaking against environmental damage caused by Shell Oil in Niger Delta.

Since the early 1990s, with the wave of democratic reform that has swept Africa, some countries, such as Ghana, are witnessing the gradual emergence of respect for human rights. There HRDs have been generally free to promote and campaign for human rights without such extreme dangers, but some organizations and individual activists have even there at times experienced intimidation or reprisals on account of their human- rights work. For example, in Burkina Faso, Norbert Zongo was killed on 13 December 1998 for pursuing a case of a prisoner who died in custody apparently of torture. He was a newspaper editor and a fierce critic of the government. Notwithstanding the emergence of pockets of democratic and stable regimes, the majority of countries in the two regions still experience massive human-rights abuses and repression of human rights institutions and advocates.

The following review of the situation of HRDs is organized first by region and secondly by country. Since this study is more exploratory than comprehensive, not all the countries in these two regions could be given the same level of scrutiny. In particular, Nigeria could not be included in the field work. Moreover, some countries, such as Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, are given more cursory treatment, since they are cases where HRDs are relatively safe at this time.

For those countries given relatively full treatment, some brief comments are first made about the nature of the country’s society and its government and condition of peace and security and the extent of respect for human rights is indicated as context for the description of the situation of HRDs in that country. The latter is dealt with in terms of the scope of action, security and risks for HRDs. Generalizations are then drawn from the country findings at the end of this section.

East Africa and the Horn

The countries in this region that will be covered are Somalia (together with Somaliland), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, and, more briefly, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. Much of this region has experienced massive human-rights abuses going back many years, in the context of single-party and military dictatorships, struggles for democracy, civil wars and, in the extreme case of Somalia, the collapse of the state.

The eight sub-Saharan States of East/Horn of Africa (Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia/Somaliland, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania) vary enormously in size, population, and *per capita* income, though most are among the least-developed countries of the world. They possess a wide range of political systems from widespread anarchy to multi-party democratic principles but with different degrees of actual political freedom or real respect for human rights. They have been mostly independent from colonial rule since at least the 1960s, with the exception of Ethiopia which has never been colonized, Sudan which became independent from UK in 1956, Djibouti which gained its independence from French colonial rule in 1977, and Eritrea which attained its full independence from Ethiopia 1993 after 30 years of armed struggle. Most embrace a large number of ethnic and racial groups with different culture, religion and languages with the exception of the failed State of Somalia with its nearly homogeneous population.

Somalia (with Somaliland)

The 10 million Cushitic people of Somalia make up one of the culturally, linguistically and religiously most homogeneous countries in the world. However, the society is divided along clan lines. The four principal clans are the Dir, Darod, Hawiye and Rahanweyn (also known as Digil and Mirifle). Beyond the clans, there are Somali minorities, which include Banadiri, Bantus and other caste groups throughout Somalia.

The colonial powers had divided the Somali-inhabited territories in the Horn of Africa between the United Kingdom (British Somaliland in the north-west), France (Djibouti in the northwest), Italy (Italian Somaliland in the south and east) and Ethiopia (the Ogaden in the west). The Somali republic came into existence on 1 July 1960 following the unification of the newly independent British and Italian Protectorates. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was incorporated into Somalia's constitution at independence in 1960 when Somalia joined the United Nations. During the period of parliamentary democracy from 1960 to 1969, the country's human rights record was generally good, even though the political system became increasingly corrupt and autocratic.

This all changed in October 1969 when the military junta took power and suspended the constitution, banned all political parties and independent civic organizations, stifled the free press and detained without trial all members of the overthrown civilian government.

Various repressive laws and national security organs similar to those of the former Soviet Union were introduced, making Somalia one of the most repressive police states in Africa. In January 1991 the Siad Barre military regime was overthrown by the USC forces in Mogadishu and the SNM in the north-west. With the military regime ousted, the repressive structures of government and the military were dismantled. At the same time the Somali state collapsed under factional clan-based fighting, leaving the country awash with weapons and untrained and unrestrained militia forces. While the north-west declared independence from the rest of Somalia in May 1991 as the Republic of Somaliland, it failed to obtain international recognition, but remained a separate entity from the rest of Somalia, which collapsed into civil war towards the end of 1991. The state of Somalia disintegrated as two rival USC factions in Mogadishu and their allies fought each other, neither succeeding in establishing a central government. Mobilised by the “warlords” General Mohamed Farah Aideed, Ali Mahdi Mohamed, Colonel Omar Jess, General Aden Gabiyo, General Mohamed Said Hersi 'Morgan', various militia forces were responsible for civilian massacres, rape, torture, the indiscriminate use of landmines, and the looting and destruction of public and private property. Some 25,000 people were estimated to have been killed in Mogadishu alone between 1991 and 1992, as a result of indiscriminate shelling between the forces of Aideed and Ali Mahdi. So-called “clan cleansing” caused massive population movement as groups sought to gain control of urban and rural assets. Over a million people were forced to flee the country and nearly 2 million people were displaced internally. Asset stripping, forced displacement and the disruption of food supplies led to mass deaths from starvation, disease and war, including up to 50 per cent of all children under the age of five. It is no coincidence that those who died in the greatest numbers in the inter-riverine agro-pastoral regions of southern Somalia were from groups such as the unarmed Rahanweyn, and minorities such as Benadiri, Bantu, Barawanis, Bajunis and the artisan groups who lacked the protection of the Somali pastoralist kinship system and were historically, politically, socially and economically marginalized. Following 14 failed peace conferences for the world’s longest crisis of state collapse, mostly attended by warlords and held outside the country, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) finally organized the Somali Peace Process in Nairobi and after two long years of painstaking negotiations, the process culminated in the selection of 275 members of the Transitional National Federal Parliament (TNFP) and the election of the interim president in October 2004, who appointed a prime minister who in turn is expected to form a transitional cabinet before the end of 2004.

The situation in Somalia has been characterized by a persistent pattern of gross human-rights violations of both international human rights and humanitarian law. Such abuses include the use of excessive force by various armed groups within civilian populated areas, political and clan-based unlawful killing, the widespread rape of girls and women of all ages, and kidnapping for extortion of international aid workers as well as prominent members of minority communities.

In the break-away region of Somaliland, on the other hand, the situation has been quite different. It has a government and is experiencing peace. It is, however, isolated internationally and largely deprived of international aid because of its lack of international

recognition. Moreover, government institutions are not strongly developed and the economic infrastructure is weak. Nevertheless, local NGOs go about their work much as in any other similar country in Africa.

HRDs in Somalia have endured the most difficult circumstances. The dangers they have faced include targeted assassinations that decapitate the top leadership of the organization (with the assailant or the organizer of the assault typically never brought to justice), arbitrary detention without trial by an authority, torture and degrading treatment, banning of an organization, confiscating of defender's work, travel bans, or threats that force the HRD to flee and seek asylum elsewhere.

Two recent assassinations are mentioned here to illustrate these dangers. Istarlin Arush, a long-time HRD colleague of Mr. Shire (who last met her in Tokyo as part of the Somali delegation to the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal in 2001), was murdered in mysterious circumstances in Nairobi in October 2002 as she was about to attend the Somali Peace Conference in Kenya. Annalena Tonelli, a humanitarian worker from Italy who had spent more than 30 years helping Somalis and was also long-time friend of Mr. Shire, was killed outside the hospital she founded to treat tuberculosis patients in Borama town, in the breakaway republic of Somaliland in October 5, 2003.

Despite the latter incident, Somaliland HRDs work in dramatically different political and human-rights contexts. The government has made a "strong commitment" to international human rights standards and has accepted the legitimate role of NGOs and HRDs. Nevertheless, at times Somaliland NGOs and HRDs have faced government reprisals for their work, with some activists (including private-press journalists) being imprisoned for short periods.

Eritrea

Eritrea (population 3.5 million) is a *de facto* one-party state, where the only party permitted is the ruling People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), the re-named former Marxist-Leninist Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which won independence from Ethiopia in 1991 after a 30-year liberation war. Independence was formalized with international recognition in 1993 following a UN-supervised referendum. It was supported by the new Ethiopian government headed by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, a former ally of the EPLF leader and new Eritrean President, Issayas Afewerki. Relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia gradually deteriorated and a bitter two-year border war was fought from 1998 to 2000.

After the war, the President and his supporters in the PFDJ stopped engagement with peaceful local criticism and demands inside Eritrea for democratization were suppressed. Former government ministers and EPLF leaders heading this movement were accused of links with Ethiopia. The chief critics of the President and many of the prisoners of

conscience – self-styled "democratic reformists" – have been branded by him as "traitors, mercenaries and spies". Many are his former comrades as founders and leaders of the EPLF. Starting in 2001, private newspapers which started criticizing the government after the Ethiopian war have been suspended indefinitely. Religious persecution has been increasing since 2003. Travel inside the country by diplomats, international organizations and foreign journalists is restricted.

The government faces opposition from an armed political group, the Eritrean National Alliance (ENA – formerly the Alliance of Eritrean National Forces), with occasional armed activity reported. The ENA originates from fractions of the rival Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) with which the EPLF twice fought in the 1980s and which was offered no reconciliation at independence. It is based in the neighbouring countries of Sudan and Ethiopia, whose own internal armed opposition groups are hosted by Eritrea, in particular the Sudanese National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and, from Ethiopia, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). This pattern of regional/internal conflict threatens to intensify political violence and conflict in the whole Horn of Africa, including in the collapsed state of Somalia.

The large world-wide Eritrean diaspora, possibly as many as a half-million on top of Eritrea's estimated 3.5 million population, consists mainly of refugees from harsh Ethiopian repression of the Eritrean liberation struggle. Many Eritreans abroad are now naturalized citizens of western countries which gave them asylum, while others remain in neighbouring countries without having found a durable solution to their plight, some still in refugee camps and unable to return safely to their former homes. But there is now an increasing flow of new post-independence asylum seekers from Eritrea to various countries in the world. The growing Eritrean diaspora, few of whom are returning home, has been drawn into the current crisis of democracy and human rights. Formerly very supportive of the government and willing to make large financial contributions during the Ethiopian war, many Eritreans abroad now refuse to comply with the government's enforced 2% development tax, which is a condition of access to government and embassy services. Some Eritreans who have become nationals of other countries and have returned on foreign passports have been detained for suspected opposition. Opposition political parties, prohibited within Eritrea, have been formed abroad, relying heavily on internet communications. Former government, PFDJ and EPLF members have formed the Eritrean Democratic Party (EDP) (previously the EPLF-Democratic Party [EPLF-DP]) and other non-violent opposition groups. Human rights groups have also been formed in exile.

Within the country, independent NGOs are not allowed and the legitimate role of HRDs is not recognized. International human-rights NGOs (including Amnesty International) are barred from the country and few foreign journalists are allowed in (with the exception of the British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC]).

The government does not recognize the legitimate role of HRDs as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. It considers any such human-rights activism to

be subversive or treasonable. There are no human-rights organizations in Eritrea monitoring or reporting on human rights in the country. The Regional Centre for Human Rights and Development, an independent NGO formed in 1992 to promote awareness of international human-rights standards, was shut down by the government the following year. Citizens for Peace in Eritrea (CPE) was registered as an NGO during the war with Ethiopia to work on human rights abuses against Eritreans by the Ethiopian government. It gave assistance and support to Eritreans deported from Ethiopia, alongside the official Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. It was unable to extend its work to other human rights issues, although it criticized mistreatment of Ethiopian civilians in Eritrea. Official PFDJ-linked associations of students, youth, women and workers do not promote or defend the human rights described above. There is no Bar Association, and the very few lawyers in private practice are unable to assert the right to provide legal defense counsel for detainees. Eritrean human-rights groups can only operate from outside the country. In September 2001 a number of dissidents were detained and these arbitrary and unlawful detentions served to silence the opposition. Prisoners of conscience in Eritrea include some who acted as HRDs, exposing human-rights violations and campaigning for respect for universal human rights. This includes some journalists. (This project recognizes in particular journalists who persisted, despite the risks, in reporting about human rights as HRDs.)

Ethiopia

Unique among African countries, Ethiopia (population 71 million now) maintained its freedom from colonial rule, one exception being the Italian occupation of 1936-41. In 1974 a military junta, the Derg, deposed Emperor Haile Selassie, who had ruled since 1930, and established a socialist state. Torn by bloody coups, uprisings, wide-scale drought, and massive refugee problems, the regime was finally toppled by a coalition of rebel forces, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), in 1991. A constitution was adopted in 1994 and Ethiopia's first multiparty elections were held in 1995. A two and a half year border war with Eritrea ended with a peace treaty on 12 December 2000. Final demarcation of the boundary, which was on hold, is currently revived as Ethiopia "principally" withdrew its objections to an international commission's finding requiring it to surrender sensitive territory to Eritrea on November 2004.

Human-rights defenders conduct their work in a context of widespread human rights violations. Scores of peaceful government opponents, as well as several thousand suspected supporters of armed opposition groups fighting in different parts of the country, are detained without trial. Torture, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions are continually being reported, particularly in the conflict zones in the Oromo and Somali regions, but also in the capital Addis Ababa. Press freedom was severely restricted by Emperor Haile Selassie's government (1930-1974) and much more so by its successors, the Dergue and Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile-Mariam's Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) government (1974-91). Under the Dergue, which committed massive human-rights violations for which Dergue members are now on trial, publications and press organizations

were tightly controlled. The Dergue violently suppressed any opposition or independent opinion. Newspapers were official propaganda organs and of poor journalistic quality. After the overthrow of the Mengistu government in 1991 by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), Meles Zenawi's government made a commitment to democratic freedoms and a multi-party political system, and pledged to support the rights to freedom of opinion, expression and association. However, today there are no opposition parties in the EPRDF-dominated federal parliament, although it contains representatives of over 60 pro-government ethnic-based parties. Only a few opposition parties have been allowed official registration and even they operate under great difficulties, particularly outside the capital. Pressure has been exerted on trade unions, local NGOs and professional associations (journalists and teachers, in particular) so that they do not oppose the government. Government critics and opponents have at times been accused of supporting or having links with armed opposition organizations, such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and others. In these troubled circumstances, the role of HRDs became even more important in defending the rights of the Ethiopian civil society.

While the Ethiopian government tolerates human-rights organizations with a mandate of human-rights and civic education, it selectively intimidates and represses groups that monitor and report on human-rights abuses. The government continued to harass and intimidate Prof. Mesfin Woldemariam, founder and chair of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council, and Berhanu Nega, Chair of the Ethiopian Economic Association, by falsely accusing them of instigating violence at a demonstration at Addis Ababa University in April 2001. They had been provisionally released on bond, but their court trial has merely (and repeatedly) been adjourned. Other Ethiopian monitoring groups that government harassment has forced underground or into exile are the Ogaden Human Rights Committee, the Solidarity committee for Ethiopian Political Prisoners, and Oromo Ex-Prisoners for Human Rights.

Sudan

Sudan, a Nile country upstream from Egypt, is spatially the largest country of Africa and encompasses a very diverse population. It includes Arab-speaking Muslims in the north and non-Arab-speaking animists and Christians in the south (including the populous Dinka and Nuer), but also non-Arab-speaking Muslims in Darfur in the west. Sudan is often viewed as straddling northern Africa and Black sub-Saharan Africa. These divisions have been the bases of socio-political cleavages and civil wars.

The latter have been very long-lasting in Sudan, the first from 1955 to 72 and the second starting in 1983 and still waiting to be concluded, with a peace process between the Khartoum regime and the southern insurgents stalled as a result of the outbreak of war in Darfur (and armed conflicts on a smaller scale in other parts of the country as well). The Darfur conflict, with its large-scale atrocities, has received global attention. Even before it,

war in Sudan has been responsible for 2 million deaths (mostly from war-induced famine), 4-5 million internally displaced and half a million refugees. Explanations for these wars have been given both in terms of an exploitative development policy and in terms of differing identities and historical grievances. In particular, the Khartoum policy of Arabization and Islamization of the south, together with the introduction of Sharia law, deprivation of regional autonomy and the redrawing of internal boundaries to minimize the oil resources of the south, has led to insurgency. The current regime, which came to power in 1989, is a military dictatorship with a strong Islamist agenda, which has long resisted making the compromises to end the various wars.

Human-rights activists dealing with human-rights abuses in Sudan have been persecuted, arrested or forced into exile, which has severely limited their ability to speak out when rights are threatened. Sudan has a record of harassing and arresting HRDs, holding them incommunicado in detention cells without access to private visits from family and legal counsel. The Sudanese government continued to arbitrarily detain two HRDs, apparently for their work in the war-torn region of Darfur. Both are feared to be at risk of inhumane treatment, miscarriage of justice and possible execution.

Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, director of the Sudan Social Development Organization (SUDO), a voluntary organization that provides humanitarian assistance and human rights training, was arrested on 28 December 2003 and has been charged with a variety of capital offenses against the state. He had just returned from a humanitarian mission to Darfur, where he distributed aid to internally displaced persons. He was arrested by security forces in Khartoum and is detained in Kober prison, Khartoum, where he has been allowed to see his wife and lawyer only in the presence of police. Shortly after his arrest, he went on a two-day hunger strike, demanding to be charged or released. On 8 February he was charged with waging war against the state, provoking hatred among religious sects, spying, releasing secret information, revealing military information and establishing a criminal organization. Some of these charges carry the death penalty.

Saleh Mahmud Osman, a human-rights lawyer, has been arrested and held without charge. He works in Nyala, South Darfur, providing free legal assistance to persons accused or convicted of crimes without fair trial, and in many instances without counsel at the summary trial proceedings. He is a member of the lawyers' network of the Sudan Organization Against Torture (SOAT), and many of his clients face severe punishments, such as the death penalty or cross amputation, i.e. amputation of the right foot and the left hand or vice versa. He was arrested by security forces on 1 February 2004 in Wad Medani, Gezira State, in eastern Sudan, and transferred to Khartoum two days later. He is currently being held in Kober prison, but has not been charged with any crime.

Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda

The cases of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda will be dealt with only briefly here, since members of human-rights organizations there have been largely free to defend rights,

including civil and political rights, social economic and cultural rights, without such extreme dangers. However, some defenders have still at times reported intimidation or suffered reprisal on account of their legitimate human-rights work. These three East African countries host among them a variety of international, regional and local organizations working on issues of racial and ethnic oppression, women's rights, children's rights, political imprisonment, torture, the death penalty, refugees and internally displaced persons, religious freedom, slavery, the environment, minority-workers' rights, the right to food, shelter and water, health care concerns (such as HIV/AIDS), media and artistic freedom, indigenous peoples' rights, harmful traditional practices (such as Female Genital Mutilation [FGM]), election observation and other democratic rights, corruption, human-rights accountability, and issues of international aid and debt relief.

West Africa

Senegal

Senegal, with a population of 10 million, is a moderately populous country on the western-most part of the bulge of Africa. It includes desert in the north and a moist, tropical south. Slaves, ivory and gold were exported from the coast during the 17th and 18th centuries. The economy is now mainly based on agriculture. Its main exports are fish, peanuts, petroleum products, phosphates, and cotton. The major language is Wolof, while the official language is French, reflecting its former status as a French colony. Its major religion is Islam.

Since 1982 a low-level separatist war between the government and Movement of Democratic Casamance has been going on in the southern Casamance region, which is separated from the rest of the country by Gambia.

Nevertheless, Senegal has been one of the countries in the region that is largely stable politically and enjoys one of the most unrestricted freedoms of expression in the region. The constitution guarantees free movement and association. The government does not practice censorship, but self-censorship arises from laws which prohibit reports that discredit the state, encourage disorder or disseminate "false information."

Although there are 23 HRD organizations, there are only seven frontline advocates. In terms of legal support, logistical capacity (computers and transportation), financial strength, political contacts (external and internal), ability to host defenders on the run for their lives and networking, the coalition of organizations is weak and fragile. However, Senegal has served as a safe haven for HRDs from other countries in the region.

Gambia

A coastal enclave surrounded by Senegal, with a population of only one and one-half million, Gambia is one of Africa's smallest countries. Various indigenous languages are spoken as well as English. Both Islam and Christianity are represented in the population. The absence of substantial mineral resources has made Gambia heavily dependent on peanut exports and vulnerable to the fluctuations in the world price of the crop.

The President of Gambia, Yahya Jammeh, won 53% votes in a 2001 election. While this election was not truly transparent, it was accepted by foreign observers as free and fair. Jammeh is a repressive ruler who has had students killed for demonstrating in support of better education.

There are 19 HRD institutions, with about 75 frontline advocates. However, legal support, logistical capacity (computers, internet linkage and transportation), funding, and political contacts and networking are weak. The reason is that the government harasses and intimidates journalists and HRDs to instill fear in them. Specific cases of persecution of HRDs include the following: Mohamed Lamin Sillah, the Secretary General of Amnesty International Section in the Gambia, was arrested on 21 October 2001 by the National Intelligence Agency, for an interview with BBC Focus on Africa where he mentioned a violent incident that took place after the result of the 18 October 2001 presidential election was announced. He was later released. Lamin Joof, a student leader who had helped organize a peaceful demonstration on 22 October 2001 that left 14 people dead and a dozen others wounded when security forces used excessive force to break up the demonstration, was hunted and had to flee the country. He now lives in exile. Over the past five years, about 29 HRDs have left the country to escape persecution. Close to 400 persons, including close family, are estimated to be potentially at risk.

Guinea

Like Senegal, Guinea, with a population of 9 million, is a moderately populous country. Its coastline goes from Guinea-Bissau to Sierra Leone and reaches inland behind the latter as well as Liberia. Again like Senegal, it is a former French colony and uses French as its official language, in this case with Soso and a range of African languages spoken among the population. The religions represented are Islam, indigenous beliefs and Christianity. Its main exports are diamonds, gold, timber, bauxite, and fish.

Guinea has suffered from a war that is believed to have been exported from Liberia. The war that destroyed thousands of villages and towns ended in 2003, followed by elections that were allegedly rigged.

Human rights have been abused under President Conte. Security agents and functionaries of the government are intolerant of criticism of his policies and hostile to people in the field of human rights and media, claiming that they are damaging their image abroad, and have put human-rights workers and journalists at risk.

There are 24 HRD organizations, with 65 frontline advocates. They are moderately active. Their legal support, logistical capacity (computers and transportation), financial strength and political contacts are adequate, but improvements are needed in training and networking. They operate in a difficult setting. Ostensible security strategies have been used by the authorities to intimidate HRDs and the political opposition. A specific case of persecution was that of Alcoumba, editor of the weekly *Aurore*. He was arrested on 30 January 2002 for an article that indicated that some Guinea navy ships belonged to the relatives of President Conte. He was later released without charge. It is estimated that close to 400 HRDs and persons connected with them are at potential risk of such persecution and worse.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is a coastal country of 5 million, with Guinea in the north and Liberia in the southeast. Its major languages are English, Krio (a Creole language derived from English) and a range of African languages; its major religions are Islam, indigenous beliefs and Christianity. Its main exports are diamond, rutile (titanium dioxide), cocoa, coffee, and fish.

The West African state of Sierra Leone emerged from a decade of brutal civil war, which was marked by the hacking off of limbs. Life expectancy in the country declined to 33 years for men and 35 years for women. The war ended in 2002. Tens of thousands of militia and rebels were disarmed by United Nations peacekeeping mission to restore peace and democracy.

Human rights have naturally fared very poorly during the years of war. There are currently 33 HRD organizations in the coalition, with about 54 frontline advocates. They are moderately active, but still face a difficult environment. During the civil war HRDs were targeted by all the warring factions. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and his officials are on record for threatening HRDs and journalists. Today, legal support, logistical capacity (computers and transportation), funding, political contacts and networking is in need of improvement. About 21 HRDs have escaped for fear of persecution. Since the end of the war, around 270 persons, HRDs and their immediate family, are estimated to be at potential risk.

Liberia

Liberia is a relatively small country, with a population of 3.3 million occupying the coast and its immediate hinterland between Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast. Twenty-nine different

African languages belonging to the Mende, Kwa or Mel linguistic groups are spoken there as well as English. The religions represented among them are Christianity, Islam and indigenous beliefs. The economy is based on natural resources, especial diamonds, iron ore, rubber, timber, coffee and cocoa, but living standards are very low and life expectancy is no more than 41-42 years.

Liberia is Africa's oldest republic, having being formed in the 19th century to accommodate freed slaves from the United States. Doe's coup marked the end of dominance by the minority Afro-American settlers, but heralded a period of instability. By the late 1980s, arbitrary rule and economic collapse culminated in civil war when Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front overran much of the countryside and executed Doe. Fighting intensified as the rebels splintered and fought each other, the Liberian army and West African peacekeepers. In 1995 a peace agreement was signed, eventually leading to the election of Taylor as president. In 1999 Ghana, Nigeria and others accused Mr. Taylor of supporting rebels in Sierra Leone, while Mr Taylor accused Guinea of supporting Liberian rebels in the north. In the following year government forces battled rebels around the town of Voinjama and engaged in border skirmishes with Guinean forces, resulting in the displacement of thousands of people. The conflict came to a head in 2003 when Charles Taylor, under international pressure to quit and hemmed in by rebels, stepped down and went into exile. A transitional, power-sharing government was sworn in later that year to steer the country towards elections. The long civil war killed over 350,000 people and displaced countless others to refugee and displacement camps.

Naturally, Liberia's human-rights record is poor. At the same time, there is noteworthy human-rights activism. Liberia has 20 human-rights organizations with about 100 frontline advocates that are in a coalition that is moderately active. In terms of training, legal support (legal services and clinics), resources (e.g. computers) and funding (e.g. for transportation), political contacts and coalition networking, the HRD organizations are relatively weak.

HRDs have been subjected to bogus charges, repeated arrest, lengthy imprisonment and torture. The following are specific instances of HRD persecution that have occurred:

Threats: Fourteen student leaders, who had participated in a rally that was organized to call for the release of detained journalists, and 9 journalists, who wrote editorials critical of the government, had to flee the country after the security forces of Liberia threatened them.

Arrest and imprisonment: Thompson Ade Bayor, head of the Liberia Watch for Human Rights, was arrested with his wife and five-year-old daughter on 10 December 2001 by the security forces of government. His home and offices were looted for signing a statement blaming the government for the war in the country. He was later released. Aloysius Toe, head of the Movement for the Defence of Human Rights (MODHAR), was arrested on 4 November 2002 and charged with treason. He spent eight months in prison and later fled to Ghana when rebels entered the capital after intense battles with government forces.

Torture: James Torh, as head of Forerunners of Children's Rights (FOCUS), was arrested and charged with sedition on 15 December 1999 for a statement made during a speech at a secondary school in Monrovia. He was also tortured and later fled into exile for fear for his life, when he was released on bail to seek medical attention. Throble Suah, a journalist working for a local newspaper, was tortured on 14 December 2001 by five armed presidential security officers. Suah lost his sight and was flown to Ghana for medical treatment. Taiwan Gongloe, a human right lawyer, was arrested, charged for making a speech against the government, detained on 24 April 2002 and severely tortured in prison by the security forces, resulting in bruises all over his face, blood in his urine and a range of pains. Hassan Bility, a journalist, was arrested on 24 June 2002 and was severely tortured and at some point electrocuted to extract statements. He stayed in detention without trial for six months and was later released and expelled from the country by the Government of Charles Taylor

Roughly 70 HRDs, have escaped for fear of persecution over the past five years. Including immediate family, about 500 persons are estimated to be at risk of HRD persecution.

Ivory Coast

The next country, moving further east, is the relatively large country of Ivory Coast, with a population of about 17 million. Its population speaks various indigenous languages as well as French, reflecting its colonial history. The religions represented are Islam, Christianity and indigenous beliefs. Its main exports are cocoa, coffee, tropical woods, petroleum, cotton, bananas, pineapples, palm oil, and fish. At 41 years the life expectancy of its population is very low.

Once hailed as a model of stability, Ivory Coast has slipped into the kind of internal strife that has plagued many African countries. In September 2002 a troop mutiny escalated into full-scale rebellion, voicing the ongoing discontent of the northern Muslims. Thousands were killed in the conflict. There is now neither war nor peace and the country remains spilt in two with the rebels controlling the north.

There are 18 HRD organizations and about one hundred frontline advocates. They lack adequate funding, logistical support (computers, internet connectedness and transportation), legal support, training to investigate and report violations, political contacts and the ability to network. They operate in a difficult environment, being targeted and attacked by both rebel groups and the security forces. HRDs and student leaders fear persecution and being killed and many have fled the country, mostly going to Senegal and Mali. About 60 are estimated to have fled in the past three years. Currently 500 persons, HRDs and immediate family members, are estimated to be at potential risk.

Burkina Faso

Formerly Upper Volta, Burkina Faso has spent many of its post-independence years under military rule. After taking power in a 1983 coup, Thomas Sankara adopted a policy of non-alignment, developed relations with Libya and Ghana, and gave the country its present name (which translates as "land of honest men"). In 1987 Mr Sankara was overthrown and then executed in a coup masterminded by Blaise Compaore, who has since instituted a multiparty system.

Burkina Faso has faced domestic and external concern over the state of its economy and human rights, and allegations that rebels in Sierra Leone have involved it in the smuggling of diamonds. A 2002 rebellion in Ivory Coast raised tensions between the two neighbors. Ivory Coast suggested that Burkina Faso had covertly backed the uprising, a claim denied by Burkina Faso's head of state, Ouagadougou.

Ghana

As mentioned earlier, one of the country analyses omitted from this exploratory study is that of Ghana. One reason is that Ghana has, by and large, a reasonable human-rights record now. It is worth noting, however, that its national HRD coalition is not active because of a lack of coordination.

Togo

Between Ghana and Benin is the elongated coastal strip of Togo, whose economy is heavily dependent on cocoa exports. Its population of 5 million speaks various languages, but use French as the official language. Indigenous beliefs, Christianity and Islam are their religions.

Its president, Gnassingbe Eyadema, captured state power in 1967. He is the longest serving president in the region.

Togo has been exposed over the years for its horrible human rights record. Though the constitution of Togo provides for freedom of expression and assembly, the government does not respect such rights in practice.

There are 21 HRD organizations that belong to the coalition in Togo, with 72 frontline advocates. They lack adequate capacity with respect to legal intervention, logistics (computers, internet connectedness and transportation), funding, political contacts, training and networking. They are very concerned about their vulnerability, and several HRDs, journalists and student leaders have found it necessary to flee the country for differing with government policy and raising their voice against the human-rights violations.

Specific instances of persecution are as follows: Nestor Tengue and Francois Gayibor, two leading members of the Togolese Association for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights, and Antoine Koffi Nadjombe, a Togolese Amnesty member, were arrested in May 1999. They were accused of sending false information about human rights in Togo to international organizations like Amnesty International. Koffi fled into exile after they were released the following month. In addition, five student leaders of the University of Benin fled the country after they were charged for illegal assembly. They were tried in their absence and convicted of “disturbing public order, illegal gathering and administering a fatal blow”. They were sentenced to a suspended 18-month prison term. Harrassment of HRDs and journalists, with a perpetual threat of criminal charges, is the regime’s political tool to instil fear in the citizenry. About 40 HRDs have left the country for fear of persecution. About 360 persons are potentially at risk as HRDs or persons associated with them.

Nigeria

Another study omitted from this exploratory survey is that of Nigeria. But it can be mentioned that separatist aspirations among some groups have been growing, prompting reminders of the bitter civil war over the breakaway Biafran republic in the late 1960s. The imposition of Islamic law in several states has intensified divisions, has led to inter-faith violence and has caused thousands of Christians to flee. This process is also fuelled by poverty, unemployment and competition for land. Oil, rather than serving as solvent to social conflict, is heightening it.

Analysis and conclusions

1. Shortcomings in HRD links, networking and collaboration

The most important weakness identified in the consultations is insufficient collaboration among the human-rights organizations, especially among neighbouring countries. There is very little contact and collaboration between HRDs in the region. Very often, HR institutions are not even aware of their counterparts in neighbouring countries and, therefore, are unable to seek support for their staff and personnel in times of repression. This situation is a major weakness in terms of regional solidarity and has negatively affected the development of human rights institutions in the various countries. For example, when repressive regimes force advocates to flee their countries, the latter frequently leave their region and go to Europe or the Americas. This means that their institutions lose their most experienced HRDs.

2. Shortcomings in resources for HRD effectiveness

HRDs may have the best of intentions, but if they do not have the funds and resources to pursue their activities, they will both be less effective in defending the human rights of the population as a whole and be more vulnerable. They need access to good information; computers and internet access are very important for this purpose. Networking also requires communication resources, but in addition actual transportation to meetings is essential. Such transportation is also vital to the everyday work of HRDs in monitoring, investigating and publicizing human-rights violations.

3. Shortcomings in HRD skill training

One of the problems for HRDs is that it is an area that requires quite specialized expertise and yet relies to a considerable extent on individuals' concern, dismay and courage to be mobilized or mobilize others to human-rights advocacy, rather than any professional preparation. This means that there is a great need for the development of relevant knowledge and skills, especially on human-rights instruments and mechanisms as well as crisis management, particularly under repressive regimes. With restricted resources, HRD organizations are typically quite limited in their capacity to appropriately equip their advocates. All the consultations, telephone interviews and meetings during the April-May 2004 mission indicated the need for HRDs to increase their skills in responding to the difficult and hostile environment in which they operate.

4. Need for international-community action

While collaborative regional networks can do much to enhance the security and effectiveness of HRDs, there are times when it is crucial that the wider international community exercises the pressure necessary to prevent executions, torture, extended detention or simply on-going harassment through threats, recurrent arrests and unresolved charges. Amnesty International has, of course, a long tradition of taking up such cases, but regular channels to bring such cases to the attention of diplomatic circles would help to enhance the security and effectiveness of HRDs. More generally, the pressure that the international community brings to bear on repressive, human-rights-violating regimes is sporadic and unsystematic. Thought needs to be given to possible protocols for the international community to respond to human-rights violations, especially when they target HRDs.

Plans for the next stage of this project will be presented in a separate document. Professor Pablo Idahosa, Coordinator of the African Studies Programme at York University, will take over from Professor Penz for this part of the project.

Appendices

A. Project methodology

The basic method of Stage 1 of this project has been to consult with human-rights NGOs and, especially, national networks of such NGOs. This involved (1) identifying the relevant organizations and the relevant individuals in them and (2) consulting them, on an individual basis or in the framework of a group meeting, to determine their existing strengths and unmet needs, both with respect to vulnerability and effectiveness, and to collect related information, both anecdotal and generalizing. Some consultations with government officials occurred as well, but these were derivative and secondary to the consultations with NGOs. Of particular concern was the difference in the situations of human-rights defenders working in countries with a reasonable degree of democracy and political stability and those in repressive and politically fragile conditions.

B. Consultations and contacts in West Africa and Europe

The reporting details of the two field reports that served as the basis for this integrated report varied somewhat. One difference was in the listing of consultations and contacts. This had not been required as part of the template agreed upon, but was provided in the case of the report for West Africa. It is provided below. It can be provided for East Africa and the Horn upon request, to the extent that confidentiality agreements with interviewees or other personal-security considerations on their behalf do not bar that.

Senegal

Senegal **Contact person:** Omar Diop

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On 16th of April, 2004, a press briefing was held.

Due to limited resources, our ability to visit all the regional groups was impeded. However, we have maintained contact with the national chairman of the Senegalese Coalition and members of the coalition to keep us abreast of the reality on the ground. During the launching event of the sub-regional network of HRDs in 2001 in Dakar, the Senegalese Coalition made valuable contributions and hosted the launching event. As Coalition Coordinator in 2001-02, Mr. Torh maintained a good working relationship with the Coalition. In Senegal

The members organization in the Senegalese Coalition with which we maintained contact are: RCIDDHUP, RADI, AFDEFA, ONDH, SOS PRISON, Amnesty Senegal, RADDHO,

CAEDHU, AJED, GRARADEP, AFARO, OFADEC, RESEAU, SIGGIL, LADH, GOREE INSTITUTE, HANDICAP FORM EDUCATION, REDHUS, and AGORA .

Gambia

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Guinea

Guinea Contact person: Diallo Abdoul Gadiry

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Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone Contact person: Charles B. P. Lahai

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Liberia

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In Liberia we met with the heads and representatives of eighteen of nineteen HR institutions that made up the National Human Rights Centre of Liberia on the 15th of April, 2004. The following needs were expressed by the group::

To collaborate at the sub-regional level to promote and protect human rights and human rights defenders;

To establish co-operation at the sub-regional level and conduct dialogue with governments and political actors on the promotion and protection of human rights and international instruments for implementation;

To hold regional and national conferences to strengthen the faith and commitment in the struggle for human rights, program strategies and training purposes;

To begin to link with colleagues in sub-regional countries for interaction-- a matter of urgency.

Institutions that attended:

Name	Representative	Focus
Movement for the Defence of HR (MODHAR)	Jakpa Nah	Human Rights Education
Fore-Runners of children's Rights (FOCUS)	Joseph Harris	Children's Rights
Association of Female Lawyers (AFELL)	Lucy Mah	Women's Rights
Civil Rights association of Liberian Lawyers (CALL)	Albert Sims	Law Group
Liberia Democracy Watch(LDW)	Mark Gadeh	Monitoring Democracy
United Methodist Human Rights Monitors (MONITORS)	Sam Kingsley	Monitoring HR
Liberia Civil and HR Alliance (ALLIANCE)	Jeremiah Kwajeneh	Human Rights Advocacy
Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC)	John Sumo	Human Rights and Peace
Center for Law and Human Rights Education (CLHRD)	Boima Bayssay	Legal and Human Rights Education
Rural Human Rights Activists(RHAP)	Henry Sumo	Rural Human Rights Education
Liberia Human Rights Observers (LHRO)	Sam Dahn	Human Rights Monitoring
Committee for Peace and Development Advocacy (COPDA)	Moses Weh	Human Rights and Peace Building
Liberia Prison Watch	No representative	Monitoring prisons
Centre for Sustainable Human Development (RDCHR)	David sah	Human Rights and Development
Liberia watch for Human Rights (LWHR)	The Brooks	Human Rights Monitoring
Human Rights Watch/Women and Children	Barney Tamba	Women and Children's Rights
Center for the Protection of Human Rights (CPHR)	Karnh Ward	Legal and Human rights Monitoring
Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy (FOHRD)	Alysious Toe	Social and Economic Rights
National Human Rights Center	Blamoh Sieh	Human Rights-Umbrella organization

Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast Contact person: Koffi Haglebe

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Ghana

The national coalition in Ghana is not active because of lack of coordination. However, from April 20th-25th separate discussions were held with representatives of selective institutions in seeking and to accelerate ideas and strategies in the ability of building solidarity and promoting cross regional learning exchange since Ghana is positioned to assume a greater role in hosting the office. In summing up the ideas we gathered and discussions from the various meetings are the following:

- That the regional office develops a wide range of coping strategies to respond to emergency situations/cases.
- That there should be linkages with national groups at sub regional level through conferences/workshops that will be the foundation of building solidarity.
- That the regional office support and build the capacity of national coalitions to strengthen weak organizations in the coalition
- That the regional office put into motion plans for training in advocacy, lobby techniques, investigations and reporting writing

Name of Organization	Representative	Focus
Amnesty International Section-Ghana	Juliet Gbassay	Human Rights
Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA)	Taata Ofusu	Small arms campaign and Human Rights
Foundation for Security and Development in Africa	Afi Yabuku	Small arms campaign and Human Rights
Sam Doe	West Africa Peace Building Network	Peace Building in West Africa
Wellington G. Smith	Media Foundation for West Africa	Advocacy for the Rights of Journalists
Togba Quaye	Movement for the Promotion of Gender Equality	Women Rights advocacy Group
National Coalition on Domestic violence Legislation in Ghana	Nana Asantewa Atadzinu	Fighting for violence against women
Exile News	Charles Jackson & colleagues	Liberian Journalist working in Exile

On the 25th of April, a press briefing was held.

Togo

Togo Contact person(s): Clement Voule & Adem Y. Siekro

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We arrived in Togo April 28th, 2004 with some members of the coalition (active). In the increasingly complex political and tense environment for HR defenders, the following is a summary of the suggestions that were advanced:

- That the need for continued assistance and protection to fleeing defenders be given attention;
- That national coalition in neighbouring Ghana be strengthened and be encouraged to be more active in promoting solidarity;
- That support of capacity-building for the national coalition be the priority of the regional office;
- That short-term training– both local and international-- to promote knowledge in the field of human rights should be made a matter of urgency.

LES ONG MEMBRES DE LA COALITION

Les ONG	CONTACTS	Personne Contact
Amnesty International Togo(AI TOGO)	BP 20013 Lome, Togo. Tel:(228)2225820	M. Clement N. VOULE
La Ligue Togolaise des droits de l'Homme	BP : 2302 Lome, Togo .Tel : 222 98 00	Me DEVOTSOU Kofimessa
Association togolaise pour la Defense et la Promotion des Droits humains	BPÂ : 13284 Lome,Togo Tel: 221 78 52/222 30 61	M. GAYIBOR Francois
Droits de l'Homme pour Tous au Togo	BP: 7192 Lome,Togo Lome-Togo Tel: 225 50 99	M. Dominique FONZAN
Espace Juridique pour le Bien-Etre Social(EJUBES)	BPÂ : 8815 Lome, Togo Tel: 225 60 25 Fax : 905 26 23	M. Martin Hotowossi

Organization pour une Culture Democratique (OCD)	B.P 80208 Lome, Togo Tel /fax : 2228766	M. Sylvestre ZOUNOU
Centre Afrique Obota Togo (CAO-TOGO)	(228)948 10 64	M.COLOMBO
WAO –Afrique	BP: 80242 Tel: 225 89 90/225 22 49	M. Ciphaz MALY
Global march	BP : 3058 Lome, Togo Tel 2250414/9486077	M. Kuma AFETO
Groupement de Femmes Democratie et Development(GF2D/CRIFF)	BP 14455 Lome, Togo Tel :2224925	Madame AKOUEGNON Estelle
Action des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture(ACAT Togo)		M.AFOUDJI

- Amnesty International Togo
- ACAT Togo
- La Ligue Togolaise des Droits de L'Homme
- ATDPDH

The program of action that has been planned is as follows:

PLAN D'ACTION DE LA COALITION TOGOLAISE DES DEFENSEURS DES DROITS HUMAINS

Année 2004

ACTIVITES	PERIODE	RESPONSABLE	RESSOURCES	OBJECTIFS	RESULTATS ATTENDUS
Reunion	1fois /mois	President/ SG	ONG membres	Planification et evaluation des activites	Les activites sont bien planifés et bien suivies
Renforcement des capacites	Octobre	La Coordination nationale	Elaboration et soumission	Former et informer les ONG sur les	Les DDH connaissent les mecanismes et

des DDH			d'un projet pour financement	instruments et mecanismes de protection des droits de humains en general et des droits des DDH en particulier	instruments de protection des DH et des droits des DDH et en font usage
Mise en place des antennes locales de la CTDDH	Courant de l'annee	La coordination nationale	Contribution des ONG membres	-Assurer la presence de la Coalition l'interieur du pays -Mieux protager les DDH a l'interieur du pays	La CTDDH est implante sur tout le territoire
Suivi des proc's des DDH	Courant de l'annee	La coordination nationale	Projet soumettre pour financement	Assister juridiquement et si possible materiellement les DDH en situation	Les DDH en situation ont un soutien local
Participation aux actions visant les DDH au plan international	Courant de l'annee	Coordination et ONG membres	Contribution des ONG membres	Marquer la Solidarite de la CTDDH avec les DDH en situation dans le monde	La CTDDH participe la lutte mondiale pour le respect des droits des DDH
Celebration de la journee internationale des droits de l'homme(10	Mois de decembre	Coordination et ONG membres	Contribution des ONG membres	Faire connatre la situation des DDH au Togo et	La situation des DDH est connue par Plus de solidaritse

decembre)				dans le monde	manifeste en faveur du respect des droits des DDH
Lobbying pour l'assouplissement des conditions d'obtention du detention	Avril-Mai	Coordination et membre ONG	Contribution ONG membres	Amener le gouvernement a delivrer plus de aux ONG	Beaucoup d'ONG dispose d'un ©

Europe

The Africa field trip, which took place April-May 2004, was preceded by consultations with identified partners in Europe. The discussions with European partners were very encouraging. These partners, many of whom have a history of support for human rights institutions and advocates in Africa, expressed various levels of commitments to assist the aims of the proposed project. The European leg of the trip involved consultations with the following institutions:

Amnesty International (Dutch Section)
 Novib (Holland)
 ICCO (Holland)
 Amnesty (Spain)
 Confederation of Spanish Trade Unions

Individuals and organizations consulted

- (1) Dr. Martin Hill, Horn of Africa Researcher, Amnesty International-International Secretariat, London, UK
- (2) Frank Smith and Liz Hodgegin, Sudan Team, Amnesty International-International Secretariat, London, UK
- (3) Elisabeth Cyrum, Eritrean Committee for Human Rights, London, UK
- (4) Prof. John Markakis, Professor of African Studies, University of Greece.
- (5) Dorothe Appels, Horn of Africa Desk, The Netherlan organization for International development Cooperations(NOVIB), The Hague, Netherlands
- (6) Dave Peterson, Senior Program Officer for Africa, The National Endowment for Democracy, Washington DC, USA
- (7) Dr. Ismail Jumale Human Rights Centre, Mogadishu, Somalia
- (8) Horn of Africa Watch, Hargaisa, Somaliland
- (9) Peace and Human Rights Network (PHRN), Mogadishu, Somalia.
- (10) Kifle Mulat, Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association, Addis Ababa-Ethiopia.
- (11) Ethiopia Human Rights Council (EHRC) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- (12) Refugee law Project, Faculty of Law, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda.

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- (13) Musa Gassame, Human Rights Defenders, Amnesty International-Africa Regional Office, Kampala, Uganda.
 - (14) Rose Nakayi, Human Rights and Peace Centre (HURIPPEC), Faculty of law, Makerere University, Kampala-Uganda.
 - (15) Livingstone Sewanyana, Executive Director, Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) Kampala, Uganda
 - (16) Cynthia Burns, Resident Representative, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Kampala-Uganda
 - (17) Uwe Bergmeier, Programme Officer-Governance and Civil Society, Delegation of European Commission, Kampala-Uganda
 - (18) Ali Salih, Tanzania Human Rights Defenders, Zanzibar-Tanzania
 - (19) Ibrahim Farah, Somalia and Sudan Desk, US Embassy, Nairobi-Kenya
 - (20) Maina Kiai, Kenya National Human Rights Commission, Nairobi-Kenya
 - (21) Sheila Keethar, East Africa Researcher, Amnesty International- Africa Regional Office, Kampala-Uganda

C. Declarations regarding human-rights defenders

Declaration of the All-Africa Human Rights Defenders Conference, Johannesburg, South Africa, November 1998

We,

Human rights defenders, that is, women and men on the front line of the struggle to protect and promote human rights and who include, lawyers, journalists, NGO workers, trade unionists, members of rural organizations, health workers, religious workers, development workers, students and relatives of victims, etc

Gathered at the All-Africa Human Rights Defenders Conference, Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2 to 4 November 1998

Recalling the regional and international standards already in existence for the protection and promotion of human rights in particular the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which on 10 December 1998 celebrates its 50th anniversary, and the draft Declaration for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders that guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms.

Observing the failure of most states and governments in Africa either to live up to the domestic and international obligations to which they have committed themselves in the protection and promotion of human rights, or to ratify and accede to relevant international human rights standards, and the failure of governments and armed groups involved in conflicts in Africa to adhere to international humanitarian law;

Acknowledging that Human Rights Defenders have as a result assumed a central role in the promotion and protection of each and every one of the human rights;

Observing moreover the particular risks run by human rights defenders in the context of armed conflict;

Deeply concerned that the increasing number and influence of human rights defenders has been accompanied by their own rights being violated;

Denouncing in particular the violations of human rights they face, including: extrajudicial execution, torture, rape and sexual assault, arbitrary arrest and detention, and unfair trials;

Denouncing moreover the extent of measures used by many states to silence human rights defenders, including censorship and seizure of publications, constant surveillance and intimidation, economic and professional harassment, bureaucratic obstacles to legalization of their activities, denial of freedom of assembly and social ostracisation

Affirm the right to continue such work in accordance with the international human rights standards

Considering all threats on human rights defenders as an attack on the work of human rights NGOs everywhere, decide to organize themselves into networks to respond immediately, with all means at their disposition, to these fundamental violations of human rights

Undertake to train Africans, in particularly human rights defenders, to make best use of national, international and regional mechanisms established for the protection of human rights

Call upon all States to respect and ensure the respect of the right to freedom of action for human rights defenders

Urge all States to bring national legislation into accordance with international human rights standards and to ensure the independence of the judiciary and other mechanisms for the defense of human rights

Urge all States to adopt special measures to ensure the protection of women human rights defenders including the implementation of the Beijing Plan of Action

And call upon all States to facilitate the granting of asylum to human rights defenders at imminent risk of human rights violations

Moreover call upon the intergovernmental, international and regional organizations to intervene on behalf of human rights defenders and campaign to guarantee their safety

Urge that the United Nations and all its agencies give priority to consultations with human rights defenders in their work

Urge the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to establish the post of Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders and to ensure that the work of human rights defenders is included in the mandate of all United Nations mechanisms

Demand moreover that all bi-lateral and multi-lateral organs and authorities of economic cooperation ensure in their program the protection of human rights defenders

Demand finally that multinational companies ensure that their strategies and projects are not harmful to the freedom of action of human rights defenders

Call upon international public opinion, in particular the media, to join in the protection of human rights defenders and promoting their activities in defense of human rights for all.

**Adopted by acclamation
Johannesburg, 4 November 1998**

UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

UN General Assembly resolution 53/144, 9 December 1998

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the importance of the observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations for the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons in all countries of the world,

Reaffirming also the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights as basic elements of international efforts to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the importance of other human rights instruments adopted within the United Nations system, as well as those at the regional level,

Stressing that all members of the international community shall fulfil, jointly and separately, their solemn obligation to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of any kind, including distinctions based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, and reaffirming the particular importance of achieving international cooperation to fulfil this obligation according to the Charter,

Acknowledging the important role of international cooperation for, and the valuable work of individuals, groups and associations in contributing to, the effective elimination of all violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of peoples and individuals, including in relation to mass, flagrant or systematic violations such as those resulting from apartheid, all forms of racial discrimination, colonialism, foreign domination or occupation, aggression or threats to national sovereignty, national unity or territorial integrity and from the refusal to recognize the right of peoples to self-determination and the right of every people to exercise full sovereignty over its wealth and natural resources,

Recognizing the relationship between international peace and security and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and mindful that the absence of international peace and security does not excuse non-compliance,

Reiterating that all human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and should be promoted and implemented in a fair and equitable manner, without prejudice to the implementation of each of those rights and freedoms,

Stressing that the prime responsibility and duty to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms lie with the State,

Recognizing the right and the responsibility of individuals, groups and associations to promote respect for and foster knowledge of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels,

Declares:

Article 1

Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels.

Article 2

1. Each State has a prime responsibility and duty to protect, promote and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms, *inter alia*, by adopting such steps as may be necessary to create all conditions necessary in the social, economic, political and other fields, as well as the legal guarantees required to ensure that all persons under its jurisdiction, individually and in association with others, are able to enjoy all those rights and freedoms in practice.

2. Each State shall adopt such legislative, administrative and other steps as may be necessary to ensure that the rights and freedoms referred to in the present Declaration are effectively guaranteed.

Article 3

Domestic law consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and other international obligations of the State in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms is the juridical framework within which human rights and fundamental freedoms should be implemented and enjoyed and within which all activities referred to in the present Declaration for the promotion, protection and effective realization of those rights and freedoms should be conducted.

Article 4

Nothing in the present Declaration shall be construed as impairing or contradicting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations or as restricting or derogating from the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and other international instruments and commitments applicable in this field.

Article 5

For the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, at the national and international levels:

- (a) To meet or assemble peacefully;
- (b) To form, join and participate in non-governmental organizations, associations or groups;
- (c) To communicate with non-governmental or intergovernmental organizations.

Article 6

Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others:

- (a) To know, seek, obtain, receive and hold information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including having access to information as to how those rights and freedoms are given effect in domestic legislative, judicial or administrative systems;

(b) As provided for in human rights and other applicable international instruments, freely to publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(c) To study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, through these and other appropriate means, to draw public attention to those matters.

Article 7

Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to develop and discuss new human rights ideas and principles and to advocate their acceptance.

Article 8

1. Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to have effective access, on a non-discriminatory basis, to participation in the government of his or her country and in the conduct of public affairs.

2. This includes, *inter alia*, the right, individually and in association with others, to submit to governmental bodies and agencies and organizations concerned with public affairs criticism and proposals for improving their functioning and to draw attention to any aspect of their work that may hinder or impede the promotion, protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Article 9

1. In the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the promotion and protection of human rights as referred to in the present Declaration, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to benefit from an effective remedy and to be protected in the event of the violation of those rights.

2. To this end, everyone whose rights or freedoms are allegedly violated has the right, either in person or through legally authorized representation, to complain to and have that complaint promptly reviewed in a public hearing before an independent, impartial and competent judicial or other authority established by law and to obtain from such an authority a decision, in accordance with law, providing redress, including any compensation due, where there has been a violation of that person's rights or freedoms, as well as enforcement of the eventual decision and award, all without undue delay.

3. To the same end, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, *inter alia*:

(a) To complain about the policies and actions of individual officials and governmental bodies with regard to violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, by petition or other appropriate means, to competent domestic judicial, administrative or legislative authorities or any other competent authority provided for by the legal system of the State, which should render their decision on the complaint without undue delay;

(b) To attend public hearings, proceedings and trials so as to form an opinion on their compliance with national law and applicable international obligations and commitments;

(c) To offer and provide professionally qualified legal assistance or other relevant advice and assistance in defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.

4. To the same end, and in accordance with applicable international instruments and procedures, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to unhindered access to and communication with international bodies with general or special competence to receive and consider communications on matters of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

5. The State shall conduct a prompt and impartial investigation or ensure that an inquiry takes place whenever there is reasonable ground to believe that a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms has occurred in any territory under its jurisdiction.

Article 10

No one shall participate, by act or by failure to act where required, in violating human rights and fundamental freedoms and no one shall be subjected to punishment or adverse action of any kind for refusing to do so.

Article 11

Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to the lawful exercise of his or her occupation or profession. Everyone who, as a result of his or her profession, can affect the human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of others should respect those rights and freedoms and comply with relevant national and international standards of occupational and professional conduct or ethics.

Article 12

1. Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to participate in peaceful activities against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2. The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, *de facto* or *de jure* adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration.

3. In this connection, everyone is entitled, individually and in association with others, to be protected effectively under national law in reacting against or opposing, through peaceful means, activities and acts, including those by omission, attributable to States that result in violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as acts of violence perpetrated by groups or individuals that affect the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Article 13

Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to solicit, receive and utilize resources for the express purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms through peaceful means, in accordance with article 3 of the present Declaration.

Article 14

1. The State has the responsibility to take legislative, judicial, administrative or other appropriate measures to promote the understanding by all persons under its jurisdiction of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

2. Such measures shall include, *inter alia*:

(a) The publication and widespread availability of national laws and regulations and of applicable basic international human rights instruments;

(b) Full and equal access to international documents in the field of human rights, including the periodic reports by the State to the bodies established by the international human rights treaties to which it is a party, as well as the summary records of discussions and the official reports of these bodies.

3. The State shall ensure and support, where appropriate, the creation and development of further independent national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all territory under its jurisdiction, whether they be ombudsmen, human rights commissions or any other form of national institution.

Article 15

The State has the responsibility to promote and facilitate the teaching of human rights and fundamental freedoms at all levels of education and to ensure that all those responsible for training lawyers, law enforcement officers, the personnel of the armed forces and public officials include appropriate elements of human rights teaching in their training programme.

Article 16

Individuals, non-governmental organizations and relevant institutions have an important role to play in contributing to making the public more aware of questions relating to all human rights and fundamental freedoms through activities such as education, training and research in these areas to strengthen further, *inter alia*, understanding, tolerance, peace and friendly relations among nations and among all racial and religious groups, bearing in mind the various backgrounds of the societies and communities in which they carry out their activities.

Article 17

In the exercise of the rights and freedoms referred to in the present Declaration, everyone, acting individually and in association with others, shall be subject only to such limitations as are in accordance with applicable international obligations and are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

Article 18

1. Everyone has duties towards and within the community, in which alone the free and full development of his or her personality is possible.

2. Individuals, groups, institutions and non-governmental organizations have an important role to play and a responsibility in safeguarding democracy, promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and contributing to the promotion and advancement of democratic societies, institutions and processes.

3. Individuals, groups, institutions and non-governmental organizations also have an important role and a responsibility in contributing, as appropriate, to the promotion of the right of everyone to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments can be fully realized.

Article 19

Nothing in the present Declaration shall be interpreted as implying for any individual, group or organ of society or any State the right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of the rights and freedoms referred to in the present Declaration.

Article 20

Nothing in the present Declaration shall be interpreted as permitting States to support and promote activities of individuals, groups of individuals, institutions or non-governmental organizations contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.