

Amplifying Voices and Protection for Safety and Wellbeing of Human Rights Defenders

"ACCOUNTABLE FOR
HRDs"

"ACCOUNT"

Annual Report 2022



DEFENDDEFENDERS
East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project



AFRICANDEFENDERS
Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network

ACRONYMS

ABA	American Bar Association
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AGM	Annual General Meeting
BGD	Belgium Development Cooperation
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPA	Director Programs and Administration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EHAHRD-Net	East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network
EAWHRDN	Eastern Africa Women Human Rights Defenders Network
FOAA	Freedom of Assembly and Association
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EHRDC	Ethiopia Human Rights Defenders Centre
EU	European Union
EWHRDN	Ethiopia Women Human Rights Defenders Network
FIF	Forum on Internet Freedom
GA	General Assembly
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HRD	Human Rights Defender
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
KAPA	Kampala Plan of Action
MDR	Monitoring reporting and documentation.
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRI	National Human Rights Institutions
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights
RARCSS	Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
UN	United Nations
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ToT	Training of Trainers
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UHC	Ubuntu Hub Cities
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WGAD	Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
WHRD	Women Human Rights Defender



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FOREWORD

2022 was the first full year of resumption of normal operations since the outbreak of Covid-19 three years ago. We were glad to resume full in-person engagements and restore many of our programs disrupted by the pandemic, and we are grateful to the millions of health professionals and volunteers around the world who made this possible. We are also grateful to our partners who stood with us throughout the challenging period.

The return to normalcy was especially welcome for human rights defenders (HRDs) who bore a significant brunt of the downsides of the pandemic, from state reprisals for daring to challenge pandemic rules to isolation-induced anxiety and related mental health challenges.

In 2022, DefendDefenders continued to prioritise the protection and safety of HRDs as well as strengthening their capacity to confront numerous risks and threats around their work. We continued to upscale our protection program, with over 1000 HRDs and their families benefiting from our emergency protection relief, ensuring that they have a social safety net as they navigate the risks associated with their work. At the continental level, we expanded our Ubuntu Hub Cities program to now eight cities on the continent, by launching the Accra and Praia hub cities in Ghana and Cape Verde respectively. This will ensure that HRDs on the continent have more safe spaces, where they can stay safe but not silent.

On the advocacy front, DefendDefenders maintained multi stakeholder engagements at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), participating in the 49th, 50th and 51st sessions of the UNHRC and the 73rd session of the ACHPR, respectively. As a result of our engagements at the UNHRC, the mandate of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan was extended, as was the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Eritrea. The 51st session also renewed the mandates of the Special Rapporteur on [Burundi](#) and the Commission of Experts on [Ethiopia](#). The four countries remain some of the most restrictive in the region, making their sustenance on the international community's agenda vital for ensuring that human rights violations do not go unnoticed or uninvestigated. Many of these gains would not have been possible without the virtual and in person

advocacy of country HRDs, many of whom DefendDefenders facilitated to participate in the sessions as a way of enhancing their advocacy capabilities.

To ensure that more HRDs continue to play a leading role in advocating for better human rights situations in their countries, DefendDefenders sought to further strengthen existing national HRD coalitions and networks and to support the creation of new ones where there are none. In 2022, we convened a consultation session with HRDs from Sudan, which resulted in the formation of a national coalition – Sudan Defenders. DefendDefenders also supported the East African Women Human Rights Defenders Network (EAWHRDN) to convene its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) since its expansion to include Burundi and Somalia, and convened the fourth General Assembly (GA) of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRDN) which elected a new executive and approved a new workplan for up to 2027.

Our work and interventions continue to benefit from deliberate and methodical research, which helps us to design well-informed responses. In 2022, we researched on [African States voting patterns at the UNHRC](#) since its founding in 2006 and published a report, which will continue to inform our advocacy engagements with state representatives and HRDs before, during and after UNHRC sessions. We also investigated the unique place and role of [youth HRDs in the East and Horn of Africa](#), to assess their unique challenges, to be able to design appropriate interventions as the sub-region contends with a bubbling youth bulge.

Overall, 2022, was a mixed bag regarding the situation of human rights in the East and Horn of Africa. While events in Sudan continued to concern us especially the clampdown on freedom of expression and assembly protests, we welcomed the signing of a truce and ceasefire between Ethiopia's federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front in November, which will, hopefully, end the humanitarian crisis in Northern Ethiopia and allow for a full investigation of human rights violations committed during the two-year conflict. We also welcomed the peaceful transition of power in Kenya and Somalia and call upon Somalia's new government to prioritise the safety of journalists to be able to correct the country's present unenviable reputation as one of the worst places to be a journalist on earth.

Yours in Solidarity



Hassan Shire
Executive Director, DefendDefenders
Chairperson, AfricanDefenders

ABOUT DEFENDDEFENDERS

DefendDefenders was established in 2005 as the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project and registered as a foreign non-governmental organisation in Uganda. DefendDefenders exists to strengthen the work of HRDs in the region by reducing their vulnerability to the risk of persecution and enhancing their capacity to effectively defend human rights.

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

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

DefendDefenders also serves as the secretariat for AfricanDefenders (Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network) and internationally holds a consultative status at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as well as observer status at the ACHPR.

VISION

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

MISSION

To enhance the safety and capacities of HRDs in the region for greater resilience and effective fulfilment of their mandates.

CIVIC SPACE AND HRD CONTEXT

There are increased reports of undue restrictions to civic space and human rights violations in the sub-region. Conflict and authoritarianism remain key drivers of shrinking civic space. In Ethiopia, fighting between the Federal Government and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front continued for the most part of the year, exacerbating a humanitarian crisis in the country's Northern region, until a truce was signed in November 2022. Peaceful protests have been met with excessive and, in some cases, lethal force in Sudan, South Sudan, Somaliland, Kenya, and Uganda, while Djibouti and Eritrea remain closed, repressive states. The rights of HRDs working on gender identity and expression have also come under repeated attack in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. In the reporting period, elections were held in Kenya and Somalia, and although we witnessed an increasing trend of disinformation and misinformation in Kenya, with potential to exacerbate existing political and inter-communal tensions in the country, we welcome the peaceful transitions of governments in both countries. In Somalia, however, the objective remains the holding of "one person, one vote" elections in the not-so-distant future.

COUNTRY

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022



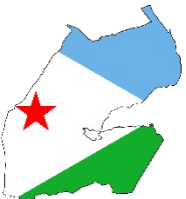
Burundi

The human rights situation remains serious in Burundi. Grave human rights violations continue to be committed by security forces and members of the ruling CNDD-FDD's youth league, the Imbonerakure. CSOs have documented human rights violations, including arbitrary detentions and arrests, torture, enforced disappearances, and killings. Despite President Evariste Ndayishimiye's commitment to addressing impunity and opening the country's civic space, limited structural changes have been recorded.



Eritrea

Eritrea remains closed and among the most repressive states on the continent. In addition to violations committed at home, the country's military continued to commit grave human rights and humanitarian law violations in Ethiopia's northern region of Tigray.



Djibouti

Djibouti remained closed and among the most repressive states on the continent. The rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly, and expression remain severely restricted, with no space for independent media.

Authorities continue to instill a climate of fear by intimidating citizens.



Rwanda

The Rwandan government continues to target, harass, arrest, and intimidate journalists, activists and HRDs. Severe restrictions on the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly, and association remain in place. Political parties, CSOs, and the media are barely able to operate freely. With space for independent human rights work in the country close to non-existent, most HRDs and human rights organisations are forced to operate from outside the country.



South Sudan

Inter-communal tensions and fighting continued in several areas of South Sudan, threatening the peace process. Human rights violations, including abductions, widespread conflict-related sexual violence, gender-based violence, and attacks on civilians, including deliberate starvation, have been documented. The implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (RARCSS, September 2018) has been slow and piecemeal. In August 2022, the unity government announced a two-year extension of the transitional period, which ends in 2023. The new roadmap has been denounced, as the government has failed to make any meaningful progress on the establishment of transitional justice institutions, including a Hybrid Court for South Sudan, as per RARCSS. The authorities responded to calls for peaceful protests over the high cost of living with a wave of repression, arresting protestors and journalists covering them. Authorities continue to use detention to intimidate civil society protests.



Sudan

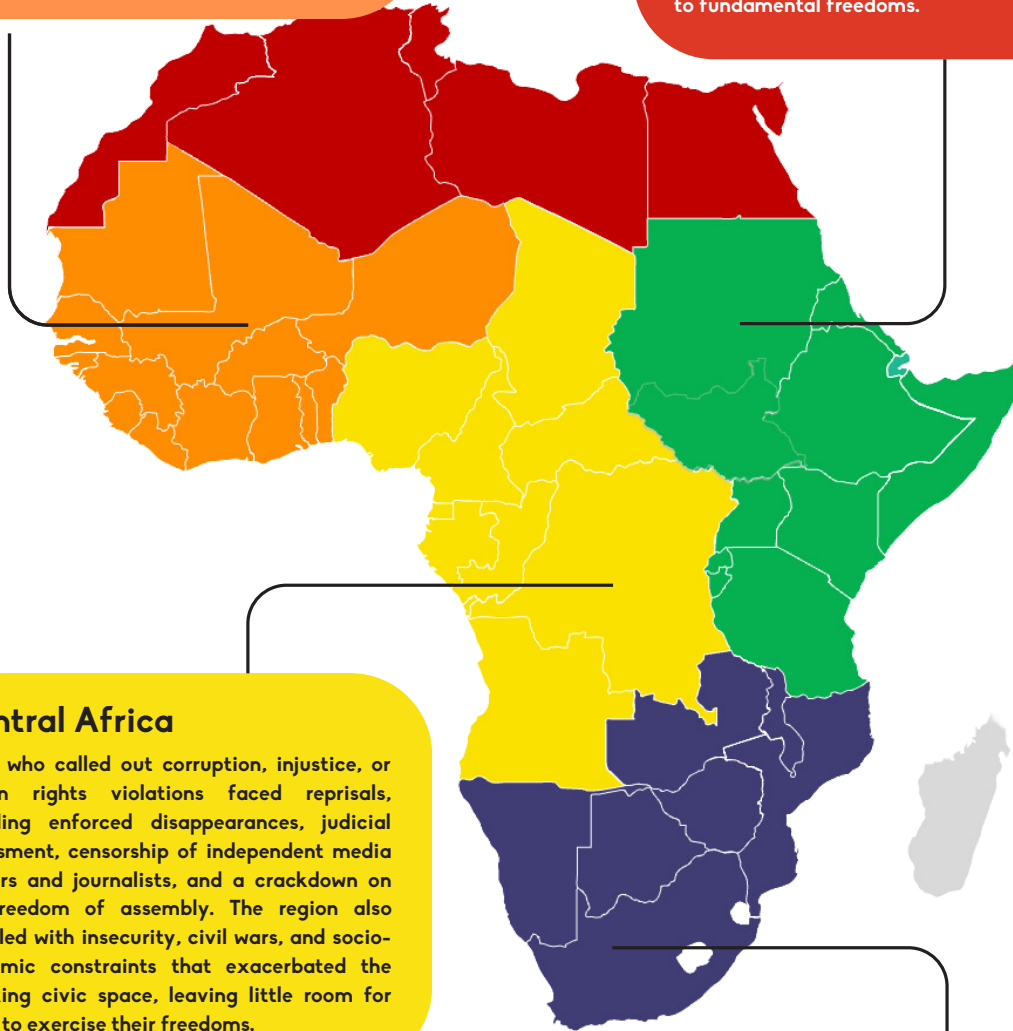
The human rights situation in Sudan continues to deteriorate. Since the military coup of October 25, 2021, numerous human rights violations have been and continue to be documented. According to the Central Committee of Sudan Doctors, at least 116 people have been killed in relation to the anti-coup protests, while an estimated over 6,000 have been wounded. Despite the military lifting the state of emergency, security forces relentlessly used excessive force to disperse protestors with near-total impunity, with thousands unlawfully detained. There are also concerns over the ongoing violence and intercommunal conflicts in Blue Nile, West Kordofan, and Darfur

West Africa

Registered a rise in protests fueled by socio-economic grievances, youth bulge, elections, insecurity, and coups. There was a widespread crackdown on assemblies and expression, characterized by the weaponization of the judiciary, arbitrary arrests, and censorship of independent media.

North Africa

Witnessed a surge in the assault on freedom of expression, driven by constitutional coups as seen in Tunisia, escalating insecurity in fragile transitional states such as Libya, and a pervasive crackdown on fundamental freedoms with impunity in Algeria and Egypt. Of particular concern was the weaponization of the judiciary and the targeting of independent judicial actors, which posed a significant threat to fundamental freedoms.



Central Africa

HRDs who called out corruption, injustice, or human rights violations faced reprisals, including enforced disappearances, judicial harassment, censorship of independent media workers and journalists, and a crackdown on the freedom of assembly. The region also grappled with insecurity, civil wars, and socio-economic constraints that exacerbated the shrinking civic space, leaving little room for HRDs to exercise their freedoms.

Southern Africa

There was an increase in the crackdown on the freedom of expression, with civil society actors facing harassment and repressive laws being enacted and enforced with brutality by state security agencies. Additionally, HRDs working in extractive industries faced killings without any accountability or justice.

COUNTING OUR GAINS IN 2022

Protection grants

360

protection grants benefiting

1124 HRDs

HRDs trained

1306

HRDs profiled

12

HRDs profiled

Oral Statements

23

oral statements delivered
at the UNHRC and ACHPR

Cases under Hubcities

46

Capacity Building

86

capacity building
engagements.

HRD Visibility

42

HRDs participated
at ACHPRs and UNHRC

Artistic Therapy

346 HRDs

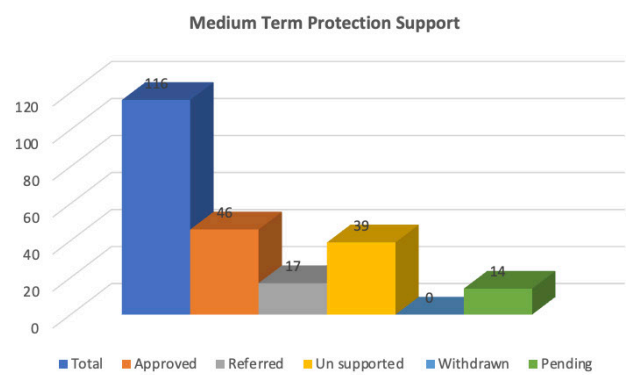
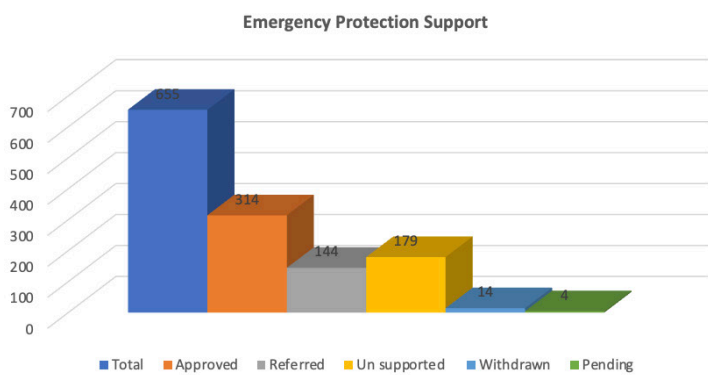
supported through

21 artistic therapy
sessions

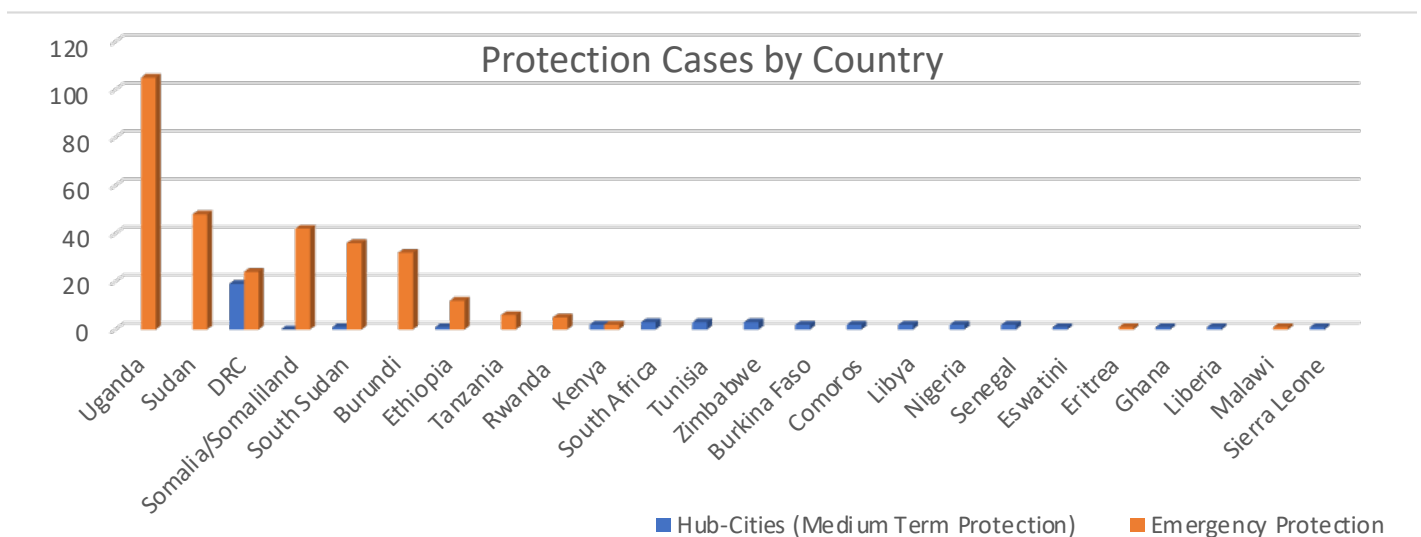
ENHANCED AVAILABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND UTILISATION OF PROTECTION SUPPORT FOR HRDs.

Improved access to protection support for HRDs at risk.

DefendDefenders was able to extend 360 protection grants through its emergency and medium-term protection support, reaching 1124 (w)HRDs (381 males, 371 females, 349 undisclosed and 23 organisations) at risk. In 2022, there was increased demand for protection support with 771 requests for support compared to 663 requests in 2021. A total of 46 grants (32 males, 8 females, 6 organisations) were extended to (w)HRDs through the hub-cities, 314 (188 males, 94 females, 9 (undisclosed), 23 organisations) directly through the emergency protection support while a total of 161 cases were supported through referral. A total of 218 support requests did not qualify for protection support while 18 cases were under review at the end of 2022.



Majority of the cases supported in 2022 were from Uganda followed by Sudan, Somalia/Somaliland, South Sudan, Burundi, and DRC for emergency support, while DRC led on medium term protection through hub-cities.



Enhanced engagements with stakeholders on protection services

As a result of strategic engagements and partnership with Gender Center for Empowering Development (Gen-CED in Ghana), DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders launched 2 new Ubuntu Hub Cities (UHC) in Accra (Ghana) and Praia (Cape Verde) to extend medium term protection and provide a safer space for continued operation of HRDs in the medium term. The hub-cities continued to provide support to HRDs to ensure their physical and mental well-being during their relocation period, while enabling them to continue their work.

DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders organized several stakeholder engagements that contributed to increased knowledge and information about the HRD protection services. For instance, there was continued engagement with several stakeholders to discuss the smooth implementation of the Praia Ubuntu Hub City and identify areas of synergy, following its successful launch in Cabo Verde. Additionally, AfricanDefenders facilitated a training for UHC Coordinators on how to utilize the wellbeing toolkit. 29 participants (20 females, 9 males) benefitted from the initiative.



The launch of Accra as an Ubuntu Hub city on 24 August, 2022

BILATERAL MEETINGS WITH DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS



MINISTER OF JUSTICE

MAYOR OF SANTA CRUZ

EU AMBASSADOR TO CABO VERDE

MAYOR OF SÃO DOMINGOS

“

One of the most responsive programmes I have come across in 20 years is AfricanDefenders' (Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative). It is a unique mechanism on the African continent given that support usually comes from global initiatives.

HRD from Nigeria

#SafeButNotSilent



“

I suffered kidney failure and I needed to go through dialysis. I was also diagnosed with PTSD and up to today, I still experience those psychological wounds. Southern Defenders has been with me since the beginning (from when I was abducted).

I don't think I was going to make it without their support!

HRD from Zimbabwe

#SafeButNotSilent



Annual Ubuntu Hub cities Coordinators Workshop held on 6 - 8 June 2022 at Latitude Hotel, Kampala Uganda

Other key engagements included protection working group meetings that provided DefendDefenders and other protection partners opportunities to advance the protection of HRDs through; learning and shared experiences, strategy development, networking, and partnership building, including facilitating strategic meetings with human rights mechanisms and stakeholders. DefendDefenders maintained its collaboration with numerous HRDs, CSOs and protection partners such as ProtectDefenders.EU, South Sudan HRDs, Free Press Unlimited, Building Responses Together Network, European Union Temporary Relocation Platform, Darfur Network for Monitoring and Documentation, Ford Foundation (Weaving Resilience Initiative), OHCHR, Civil Rights Defenders (CRD), Sudan HRDs, CoC Netherlands, CSOs in Uganda, Bridging Responses Together and the Protection Working group of Kenya.

In October 2022, DefendDefenders joined over 250 advocates and activists for democracy at the [11th World Assembly of Democracy](#) (#WM11Assembly) in Taipei, Taiwan. While there, we highlighted the far-reaching impact of Russia's war in Ukraine including on food systems in Africa and pointed out that Russia bears direct responsibility for the hunger and famine crisis currently ravaging many parts of the continent.



Hassan Shire, Chairperson African Defenders and Executive Director DefendDefenders at the 11th Global Assembly of the World Movement for Democracy in Taipei, Taiwan

Improved resilience and well-being.

DefendDefenders improved the wellbeing and resilience for 346 HRDs (150 males, 187 females, 9 undisclosed) across East and Horn of Africa as well as Southern Africa through 21 artistic therapy clinics, wellbeing trainings and mental health workshops. With this, DefendDefenders was able to contribute to HRD resilience, wellbeing, and continued engagement in HRD work



Selfcare demo: ToT Trainee facilitating meditation technique on 21 January, 2022.

HRD testimonials about the wellbeing trainings

“

"If DefendDefenders didn't help us what would have happened to us in this context that we are not familiar with. This kind of support must continue. In case DefendDefenders withdraws and the situation in Burundi remains the same what will happen to Burundian HRDs in exile."

Burundian WHRD

Before the training, I never spoke about mental health. But now I have become more intentional. Since I work with various organisations, I share information about wellbeing. At work, I ensure to provide a space where we talk about our emotions and how things are going. This makes work much easier and creates a happier environment. I work with young people, so when I am planning events, I incorporate a wellbeing session.

WHRD, South Africa

I learnt that communication is important, that being able to say no or to express how I feel to make others understand me is important. I have also become brave in terms of communicating to others.

"The training provided an opportunity for me to engage with HRDs who are in a similar situation. Their experiences made me feel encouraged that I can still do this work even as an exiled HRD - that I can be here, safe, but not silent."

WHRD - South Sudan

I am now able to rest and take breaks when my mind cannot concentrate. Also doing what I love, I have identified some things that I like and now that I am able to balance the responsibilities in my life, its working for me

WHRD

I am now able to communicate with editors about the need to take a break and they don't put me under pressure to submit.

WRHD- Zimbabwe

I am more present and more aware of the work that we do (as human rights defenders). I now have to adequately represent the mental health issues that women face. Before, I wasn't very vocal about my needs, but I have since learnt to take care of my wellbeing.

WHRD

"After the training, I opened a Facebook page where I post about mental health issues for children. I am a cofounder of the Refugee Women's organisation and I use the platform to talk to women about human rights and well-being."

S.S WHRD

"The mental health part impacted my behavior a lot. I started doing a lot of physical exercises regularly which I used not to do. And I also keep recalling the tips on stress management whenever I feel stressed".

Ethiopian HRD

”

ENHANCED AVAILABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND UTILISATION OF PROTECTION SUPPORT FOR HRDS.

Better policy reform and advocacy engagements with international and African human rights systems, sub-regional economic blocks, national institutions, and other relevant stakeholders for HRD safety.

DefendDefenders contributed to advocacy engagements at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) during the 49th, 50th and 51st sessions of the council. At the 49th session, a resolution was adopted on South Sudan renewing the mandate of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan. The resolution on South Sudan was an affirmative response to an initial call by DefendDefenders and 80 other civil society organisations calling for the renewal of the Commission's mandate, as a vital check on South Sudan's political and military actors ahead of the country's 2023 general elections, and as an incentive to adhere to the 2018 Peace Agreement.

Ahead of the [50th session of the UNHRC](#), DefendDefenders coordinated civil society engagement through a joint [letter](#) that urged states to ensure continued attention to Sudan's human rights situation. DefendDefenders submitted [eight \(8\) oral statements](#) and 2 resolutions were adopted i.e., the extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Eritrea and continued public debates ("interactive dialogues," in the Council's terminology) on Sudan in 2023. A [press release](#) was delivered on the need for long-term scrutiny of Sudan.

Prior to [HRC51](#), a virtual meeting was held in August with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Burundi, Mr. Fortuné Gaetan Zongo, and the Assistant to the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Sylvaine Nadine Mballa to secure contributions to the report submitted to the 51st session of the UN Human Rights Council. At the session the mandates of the Special Rapporteur on [Burundi](#) and the Commission of experts on [Ethiopia](#) were renewed to ensure that both countries remain on the Council's agenda for the foreseeable future. The resolutions follow sustained advocacy by DefendDefenders, AfricanDefenders and 53 other NGOs ahead of the session. Read our letters on [Burundi](#) and on [Ethiopia](#).

A total of 12 (W)HRDs were supported by DefendDefenders to engage at the HRC sessions. In particular, Burundian HRDs Chantal Mutamuriza of Light For All and Pierre Claver Mbonimpa of [APRODH](#) were able to have meetings with Burundi state delegations and to participate in a [side event](#).

Similarly, DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders engaged in the 71st and 73rd sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR). At the 71st session, DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders submitted [6 oral statements](#) on a number of thematic issues during the session. A side event was also organized during the session to launch the report, "[Overlooked and Unseen: Human Rights Defenders living with disabilities in conflict areas](#)." Leading up to ACHPR73, AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders provided updates on the situation of civic space and human rights in the East and Horn of Africa region at the NGO Forum in Banjul.

AfricanDefenders also contributed to panel discussions regarding the 10-year anniversary of the Addis Ababa Roadmap, emphasizing the organization's work in relation to the road map, calling for the establishment of a coordinated mechanism among the African Union through ACHPR,

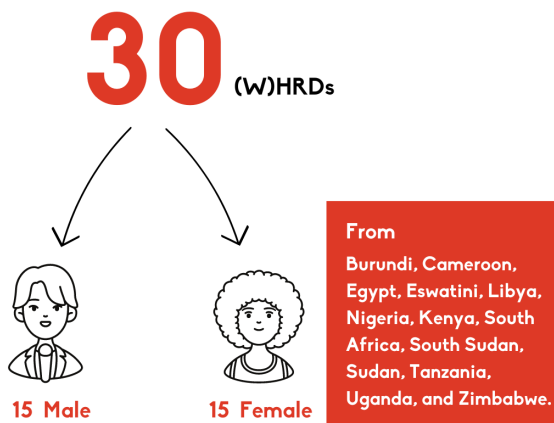
the UN special procedures, NHRIs and civil society representatives, to take stock of the progress made on the implementation of the Addis Ababa roadmap. Additionally, AfricanDefenders [facilitated the launch](#) of a report on the state of civic space and HRDs in Africa by the Réseau des Défenseurs des Droits Humains en Afrique Centrale (REDHAC).

The [73rd ordinary session](#) marked the first physical session since the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. This session coincided with the thirty-five (35) year anniversary of the establishment of the ACHPR. During the session, a [resolution](#) to maintain close scrutiny of South Sudan's human rights situation was adopted. This followed DefendDefenders' [sustained advocacy](#) at both the Commission and at the NGO-forum. Further, AfricanDefenders delivered and submitted 4 statements.

- [Statement 1](#) in response to the Chairperson of the Working Group on Extractive Industries, Environment and Human Rights Violations in Africa,
- [Statement 2](#) on the persistent violence against HRDs,
- [Statement 3](#) in response to violence, including sexual violence against women HRDs
- [Statement 4](#), in response to the Zimbabwe Government's worrying trend targeting HRDs and CSOs.

Additionally, AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders organized [3 side events](#) to facilitate dialogue between the participants and the members of regional and international human rights mechanisms present [including a conversation with South Sudan HRDs and other stakeholders](#).

DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders directly supported participation of



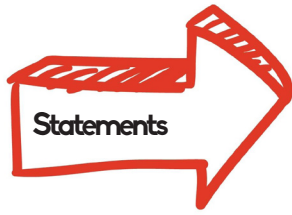
DefendDefenders contributed to better policy environment through participation in an advocacy workshop to push for the passing of a draft law to protect HRDs in the DRC. On 12 December 2022, the law on the protection and responsibilities of HRDs was adopted by the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

DefendDefenders and Partenariat pour la Protection Intégrée (PPI) also participated in the drafting of the proposed law on the protection and responsibilities of human rights defenders during the plenary sessions organised with the national deputy-members of the Human Rights Committee of the National Assembly from November 25 to 27, 2022.



Mission to the democratic Republic of Congo

Other Advocacy Engagements conducted in 2022



The Burundi Coalition of Human Rights Defenders (CBDDH) together with other 17 Burundian CSOs in exile signed a joint statement on the lifting of EU sanctions against Burundi in February 2022.

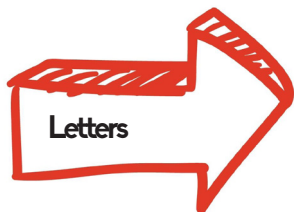
DefendDefenders together with the Cairo Institute of Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) and 19 other CSOs published a [statement](#) calling on the Algerian government to end the systematic criminalisation of peaceful activism and repression of independent civil society.

DefendDefenders joined 5 other CSOs to signing a [petition](#) calling on Nigerian Authorities to protect filmmaker Aminu Nasara. The filmmaker was declared wanted by the Kano State Censorship Board for allegedly promoting immorality with his new drama series "Makaranta", which advocates for girls' rights.

Following the threats received by the Director of the Center for Democracy and Development, Professor Adriano Nuvunga in August 2022, from unknown persons, DefendDefenders together with 31 CSOs and 27 international and regional civil society actors [condemned](#) the cowardly threats issued against the physical integrity of an outstanding Mozambiquean social activist.

Ahead of Sudan's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) initially scheduled for February 2022, DefendDefenders [called upon](#) the UNHRC to refrain from letting Sudan's ruling military council use the UPR process to legitimise itself, but to rather use the process to challenge the military authorities to complete the transition to civilian rule.

DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders and fifty (50) other organisations found that the European Union and its member states' support of human rights defenders is inconsistent, referencing the current unreliable EU visa policies. In a [joint statement](#), the organisations called on the EU to create and implement specially accelerated and user friendly visa processes for HRDs in the region, to ensure that at-risk human rights defenders can access European Union visas with guarantees, security, and predictability.



DefendDefenders, alongside 29 other NGOs [expressed concern in a letter](#) addressed to the UN Secretary General on the HRC's decision to allow Sudan's Military Council appointees to prepare for the country's UPR. Defenddefenders warned against legitimising officials appointed by the de facto military regime as representatives of Sudan, and urged the Human Rights Council (HRC) to suspend Sudan's UPR review. The HRC Bureau suspended the review, although it eventually took place on 7 February 2022.



A two-day hybrid consultation was organised as part of a series of regional and global consultations by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association (FoAA), Clement Voule . Hassan Shire shared his experiences on raising funds and echoed the need to encourage access to funding for grassroots organisations and to push for the simplification of cumbersome donor requirements. This consultation gathered views, lived experiences, and concrete recommendations on how human rights could be better protected in the context of peaceful protests during different crisis situations. A total of 66 participants attended this meeting – 44 from African civil society who attended physically (20 males and 24 females) and 22 virtually (10 males and 12 females).

Together with the Geneva Academy, the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), DefendDefenders and the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda (NCHRD-UG) organized an informal roundtable consultation between the UN Special Rapporteur on FoAA, Clement Voule, and civil society actors from Uganda in Kampala. The meeting discussed the state of the freedom of peaceful assembly and association in times of crises in Uganda.

African Defenders and DefendDefenders together with the Network of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice hosted a 2-day consultation meeting in Accra, Ghana between representatives of NHRIs and CSOs from across the continent. The consultation identified opportunities for both bodies to collaborate to ensure the advancement of the human rights agenda with specific focus on the protection of HRDs across the continent. To this effect, a Declaration and [Plan of Action](#) was adopted.



AfricanDefenders joined Atrocities Watch Africa and other African civil society organisations in Nairobi to analyse the situation in Ethiopia and understand the existing dynamics of regional and wider international response with a view of setting the scene for discussion of strategy and specific actions. Stakeholders in the meeting developed strategies for action at the United Nations and African Union, and a plan on engaging women, youth, and other Ethiopians in response to the crisis.



Consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Association and Peaceful Assembly, Clement Voule, on peaceful protests in crisis situations, May 2022.



Burundian HRDs Chantal Mutamuriza and Pierre Claver Mbonimpa of APRODH take part in a panel discussion on Burundi's human rights situation on the side lines of HRC51, on 20 September 2022



A photo-collage of DefendDefenders staff, HRDs and National Coalition leaders making advocacy statements at the 50th session of the Un Human Rights Council

SIDE EVENTS AT ACHPR 73

Freedom of Assembly in Africa:

The panel at this side event consisted of 6 HRDs highlighting the fact that FoAA has been severely restricted across the continent consequently affecting the fundamental prerequisite to the sustenance of good governance and democracy. The examples discussed were, the violent use of excessive force in response to the #ENDSARS campaign by the Nigerian government, the judicial killings of the Abahlali people in South Africa, in addition to examples from Cameroon, DRC, the Gambia, Kenya, and Sudan. Participants and mandate holders appreciated receiving the perspective of youth activists representing minority and vulnerable groups in the dialogue. The side event called on the duty bearers present to work alongside the UN Special Rapporteur to develop tools for law enforcement that prioritize peaceful de-escalation and negotiations rather than use of force. Additionally, the deliberations urged the ACHPR to reassess and strengthen their monitoring mechanisms on peaceful protests across Africa.



Panelists at the state of Freedom of Assembly in Africa side event pose for a picture with the ACHPR'S chairperson H.E. Remy Ngoy Lumbu and UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association, Clement Voule, at the end of the session.



Sharon Chideu (Zimbabwe), Zainab Zainab Isameldin Abuelgasim Mohamed Elhassan (Sudan) at the state of Artistic Freedom in Africa side event.

The State of Artistic Freedom in Africa:

The first ever of its kind for DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders at the ACHPR, this side event sought to draw focus on the work of artistic HRDs who are often left out of such platforms and discourse, to create a space for them to discuss the challenges they face and develop strategies and tools to ensure that they are adequately supported. The prevailing challenge noted at the side event is the non-existence of protection mechanisms and if any, the limited access to them, gender-bias, negative narratives, and failure of recognition by CSOs. The side event called for more inclusiveness with regard to artistic HRDs in CSO activities to bolster collaboration between the two, capacity building initiatives for artistic HRDs to enhance their work, and mostly importantly, create awareness of the importance of Artistic HRDs in our societies.



Sarah Sakouti (Egypt) , Ahmed Mefreh (Egypt), Walda Shaka and Naji Moulay Lahsen at the Egypt and the Rocky Road to COP 27 side event.

Egypt and the Rocky Road to COP 27:

The discussion noted the non-existence of civic space in Egypt, characterized by rampant violation of human rights, with no intervention from regional and international human rights mechanisms. The side event observed that the state legalizes violations committed by state actors against citizens and further weaponizes existing and new laws against HRDs. As a result of lack of intervention on the part of the human rights mechanisms, Egyptian HRDs and CSOs are hesitant to engage with these mechanisms, particularly the African Commission. This side event noted the shared concerns of the HRDs regarding their ability to participate in the upcoming COP 27, citing a fear of being surveilled and restricted from attending the event by state authorities. The participants called on the ACHPR to recommit to its obligations to the people of Egypt. The panelists further recommended the following: the formulation of HRD coalitions, , ACHPR to use other tools other than diplomatic communication to hold the state accountable, among others.



The UN special rapporteur on FOAA Clement Voule, chairperson of ACHPR, Remy Ngoy Lumbu and other dignitaries.



The Commissioners at the 73rd Ordinary session of the African Commission on the Human and People's Rights.



Hassan Shire, Chairperson AfricanDefenders and Executive Director DefendDefenders, Gilbert Sebihogo Executive Director of the Network of the National Human Rights Institutes (NANHRI), Esther Tawiah Executive Director Gender Center for Empowering Development (GenCed) representatives of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) the organisers and Representatives of NHRIs and Civil Society Actors photographed in Accra Ghana at the NHRI-CSO Consultation.



AfricanDefenders Coordinator Joseph Bikanda contributing to the deliberation at the 2022 Southern African Human Rights Defenders Summit from 28 November, 2022.



DefendDefenders' Advocacy, Research and Communications Manager, Estella Kabachwezi moderates a conversation on South Sudan's human rights situation on the sidelines of the 73rd ordinary session of the ACHPR, in Banjul, The Gambia



Members of the EAWHRDN at the 2022 Annual General Meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya on 2 November, 2022.

HRD work, visibility and protection amplified.

DefendDefenders recognized and profiled 12 human rights defenders as HRDs of the month, amplifying and drawing more attention to their outstanding work in Africa. Read their profiles [here](#).

In addition, DefendDefenders amplified voices and visibility for 42 HRDs through their engagement in different forums at the UNHRC and ACHPR. These were able to highlight the HRDs' situation and advocate for intervention of different mechanisms for the protection of human rights.

Meet the brave HRDS of the Month profiled in 2022



JANUARY

Mugisha Jelousy



FEBRUARY

Fadia Khalaf



MARCH

Abacha Ahmed Ibrahim



APRIL

Alex Njenga John



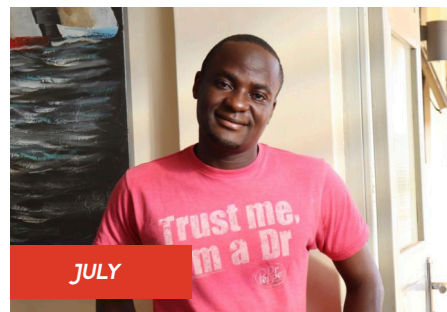
MAY

Esther Tawia



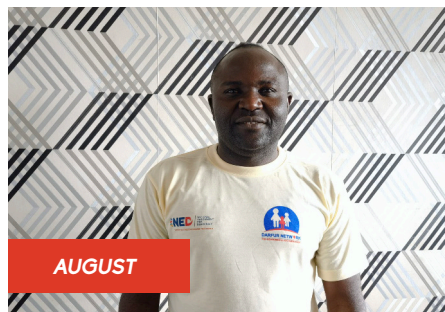
JUNE

Agather Atuhaire



JULY

Issah Musundi



AUGUST

Mohammed Adam Hassan



SEPTEMBER

Margaret Muna Nigba



OCTOBER

Kamau Ngugi



NOVEMBER

Pierre Claver Mbonimpa



DECEMBER

Kasale Maleton Mwaana

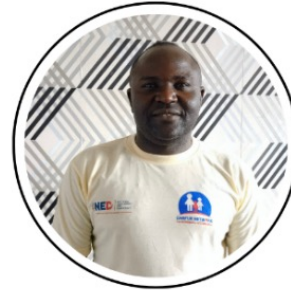
Some of the recognized HRDs have benefited from their profiling as highlighted through the testimonies below.



HRD OF THE MONTH JULY

“Thanks to the HRD of the Month Profile by DefendDefenders, I was recognized as my Organisation’s Employee of the Month, and one of the best paralegals in our annual paralegals forum

ISSAH OTOME MUSUNDI



HRD OF THE MONTH AUGUST

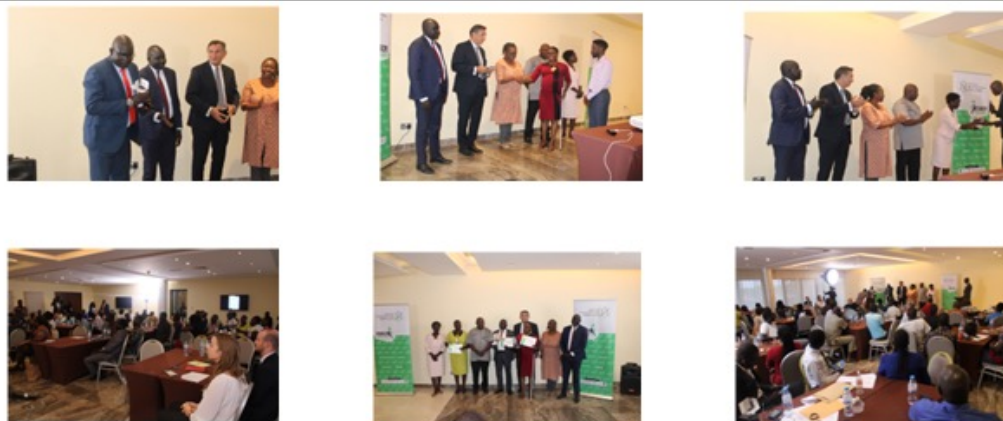
“ After the (HRD of the Month) Profile, I travelled to Sudan for my routine human rights work. During my stay, I met EU diplomats who had read the profile by DefendDefenders. They were very impressed by my work and my story and they encouraged me to carry on, and to not hesitate to reach out to them incase I need any support. This was very motivating.

MOHAMMED ADAM HASSAN

To further enhance HRD profiling and visibility, South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network (SSHRDN) recognized human rights defenders that stood out in the year 2022 across South Sudan in its flagship awarding event. The awarding committee recognized recipients in six awards categories namely,

1. Outstanding HRD of the year: Advocate Godfrey Victor Bulla;
2. Woman HRD of the year; Jackline Nasiwa; and
3. HRD of the year for Persons with Disabilities' Rights; Zekia Musa Ahmed.

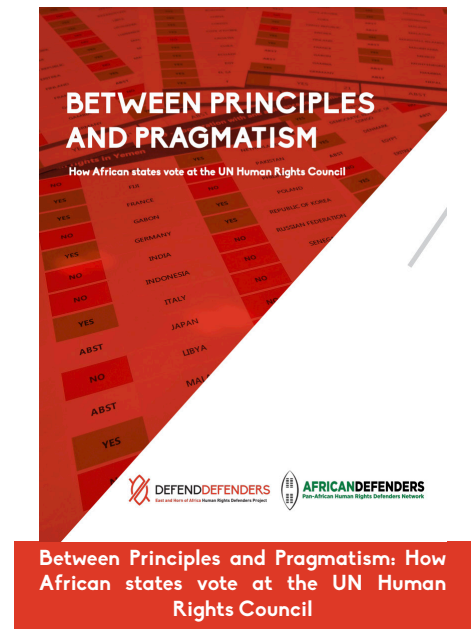
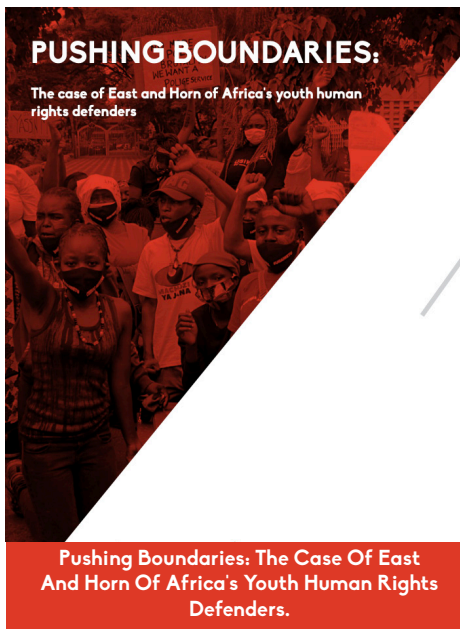
SSHRDN also awarded HRDs of the year from each of the three greater regions of South Sudan - Mayuol Diing Mayuol from Greater Bhar El Ghazal, Aweil and Bol Deng Bol from Greater Equatoria and Hawa Adams from Greater Upper Nile. In attendance were over 70 people including CSO partners, the network members, representatives from the national human rights commission, ministry of the presidency and other government officials. From the international and diplomatic community, the Dutch, the EU, the French, the German, and the Swedish Embassy representatives were also in attendance.



SSHRDN HRD Awards

As part of generating evidence on human rights and state of HRDs, DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders continued to undertake research and Publish findings in 2022. This year, we launched a report, ["Between Principles and Pragmatism: How African states vote at the UN Human Rights Council,"](#) which comprehensively analyses the voting patterns of African states at the UNHRC since its creation, in 2006. Additionally, two research reports on the situation of human rights defenders were launched, namely the [White Paper on the impact of Covid-19 on Human Rights Defenders](#) and [Pushing Boundaries: The Case Of East And Horn Of Africa's Youth Human Rights Defenders.](#)

Further advocacy and collaboration with civil society contributed to the production and submission of two joint stakeholder reports to the 4th cycle of the UPR for Burundi 2023. A joint report on HRDs' rights in Burundi was also produced and an extra report was produced and submitted on socio-economic rights.

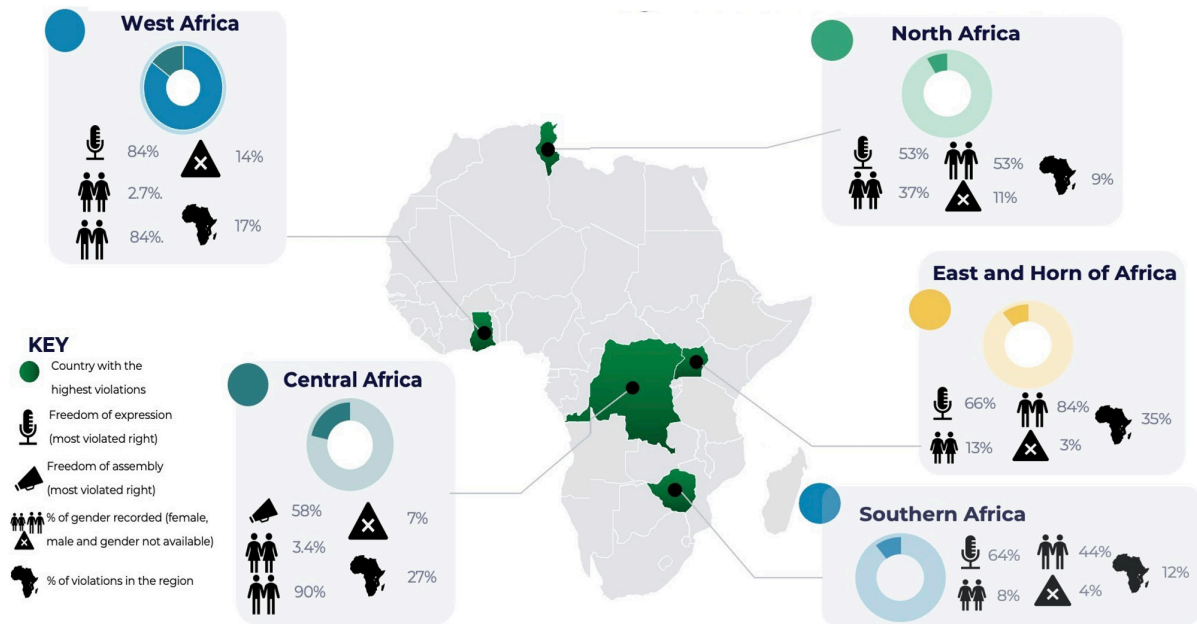


Monitoring, Documentation and Reporting of human rights violations.

Through its Greatlakes project, DefendDefenders continued to document and report on the human rights violations against Burundian HRDs and monitor their human rights situation. In 2022, a total of 211 periodic reports, including articles, newsletters, justice bulletins, declarations, joint statements, and letters were produced and used to conduct advocacy. The Burundian coalition also participated in radio and television broadcasts, wrote newspaper commentaries, and undertook other media engagements to enhance their advocacy.

AfricanDefenders recorded 216 instances of human rights violations across the continent which informed advocacy initiatives. The most violated human right was the right to freedom of expression followed by the right to freedom of assembly as shown in the graphics below.

Violations against HRDs, journalists and artists



Strengthened strategic impact litigation to achieve effective reforms, formulation, and implementation of international standards.

Defenders continued to strengthen strategic impact litigation and support human rights lawyers. In 2022, 16 cases were submitted for litigation, with three cases to the UN and AU mechanisms for the protection of human rights. (Two files submitted to the ACHPR and, one file submitted to the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD). An additional 5 files were processed for submission to WGAD. Other eight files and four communications with additional information to the Desk Officer of the ICC. One Burundian organisation engaged in the collection of testimonies and depositions and referral of cases to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Migration on behalf of 18 Burundian refugees in Tanzania. Similarly, a Burundian CSO conducted a victim awareness training for 15 victims and further supported 14 of them in their interaction with the ICC-Office of the Prosecutor by guiding them in completing the "ICC Victims' Participation Form".

IMPROVED CAPACITY OF SUB-REGIONAL NETWORKS AND NATIONAL COALITIONS.

Strengthened technical and organizational capacity of the sub-regional networks and national coalitions.

In 2022, DefendDefenders supported 11 national coalitions and three sub-regional networks to strengthen their capacity to be, capacity to do and capacity to relate including: La Directrice du Réseau Des Défenseurs des Droits Humains en Afrique Centrale (REDHAC), National Coalition for Human Rights Defenders Uganda (NCHRD-U), Burundi Coalition of Human Rights Defenders (CBBDH), Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders Center (EHRDC), Sudan Defenders, South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network (SSHARDN), Defenders Coalition Kenya, Mali (COMADDH), Coalition Burkinabè des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CBDDH), Réseau Nigérien des Défenseurs des droits Humains (RNDDH), Niger, West Africa HRDs Network (ROADDH/WAHRDN), SouthernDefenders and the East Africa Women Human Rights Defenders Network (EAWHRDN). The coalitions and networks were supported with, technical and institutional support, coalition building, and initiatives in wellbeing, international advocacy, security management, HRD protection case assessment, gender, Accountability towards the affected population (AAP), Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Harassment (PSEAH) and anti-corruption. Below are some of the key highlights.



DefendDefenders coordinated the establishment of Sudan Human Rights Defenders Coalition (Sudan Defenders) through a three-day coalition building consultation meeting for Sudanese HRDs which convened 28 HRDs (15 female and 13 male) in Kampala. A Kampala Declaration was signed establishing the Coalition and an interim committee to finalize the coalition's structure was assigned.



AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders in collaboration with the OHCHR organized and hosted the 2022 EAWHRDN Annual General Meeting. This meeting marked the first of its kind since the expansion of the network's members to include Somalia, Somaliland, and Burundi. The meeting recognized the network's achievements of the year, elected a new steering committee and developed strategies for future work. The meeting also conducted capacity building on the protection for 21 WHRDs focusing on legal frameworks, resource mobilization, mental and emotional welfare.



Civicus, AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders together with Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement (RFLD) conducted an advocacy training from 18th to 20th October 2022 on how to work with the ACHPR and its special mechanisms. The training equipped 25 (11 male, 14 female) civil society actors and HRDs across the continent with knowledge on how to effectively engage with regional mechanisms to advance the protection of human rights at national level and conduct meaningful advocacy campaigns within the African human rights system.



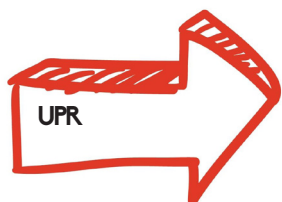
The 5-day training sought to enhance the capacities of Strengthening Civil Courage (SCC) alliance country teams and their partners in the M&E methodology of identifying, describing and analysing change brought about by the programme. Two staff from national coalitions of EHRDC and SSHARDN benefitted from the training.



From 7th to 10th December 2022, DefendDefenders together with the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), co-hosted the annual Claiming Spaces: Tactical tools for Human Rights Defenders in commemoration of the Human Rights Defenders Day and Human Rights Day. The focus of this years' session was to equip Tanzanian HRDs with new tools to claim their space to work and provide a platform to build their capacity to effectively carry out their work.



DefendDefenders built capacity for 20 HRDs from the Malian HRDs Coalition (COMADDH), Burkinabe HRDs Coalition (CBDDH), Niger HRDs Network (RNDDH) and West Africa HRDs Network (ROADDH/WAHRDN) in physical and digital security.



Together with 17 Burundian CSOs and the CBBDH - Burundi, DefendDefenders supported the production of a report around the Burundi 2023 UPR.

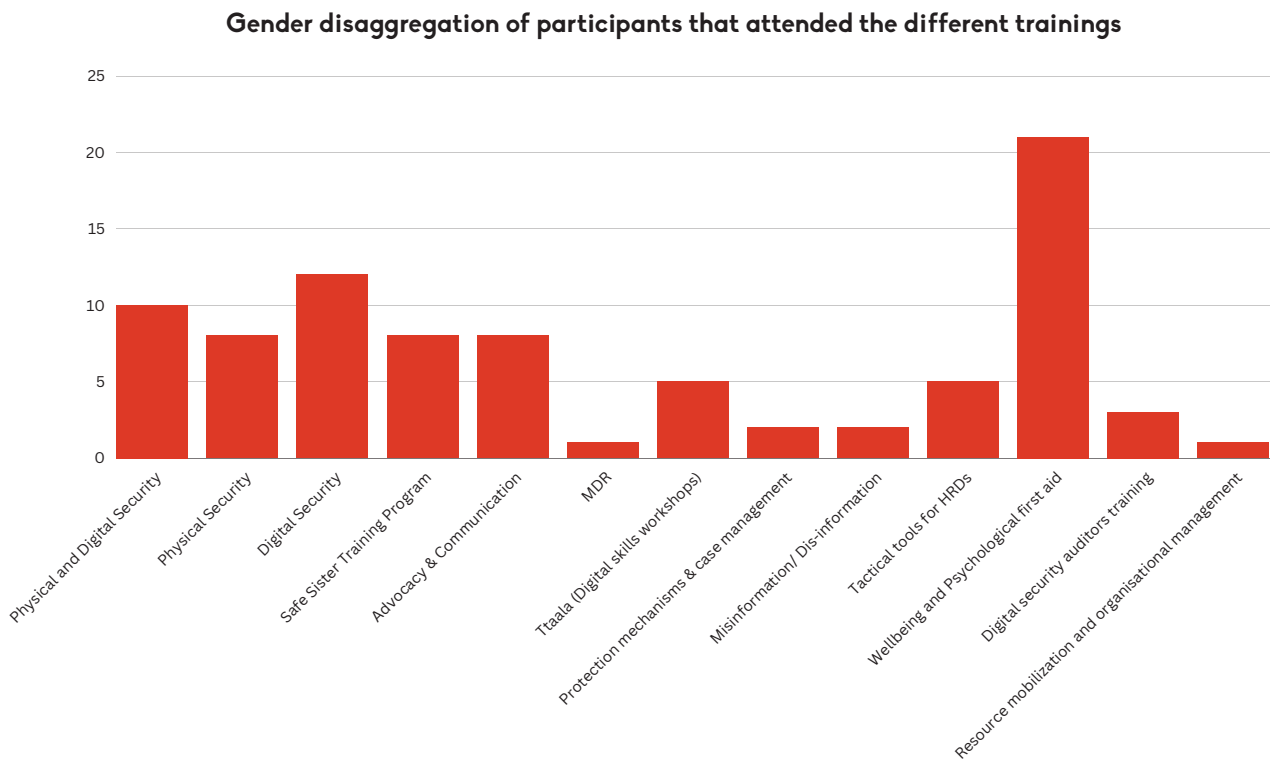
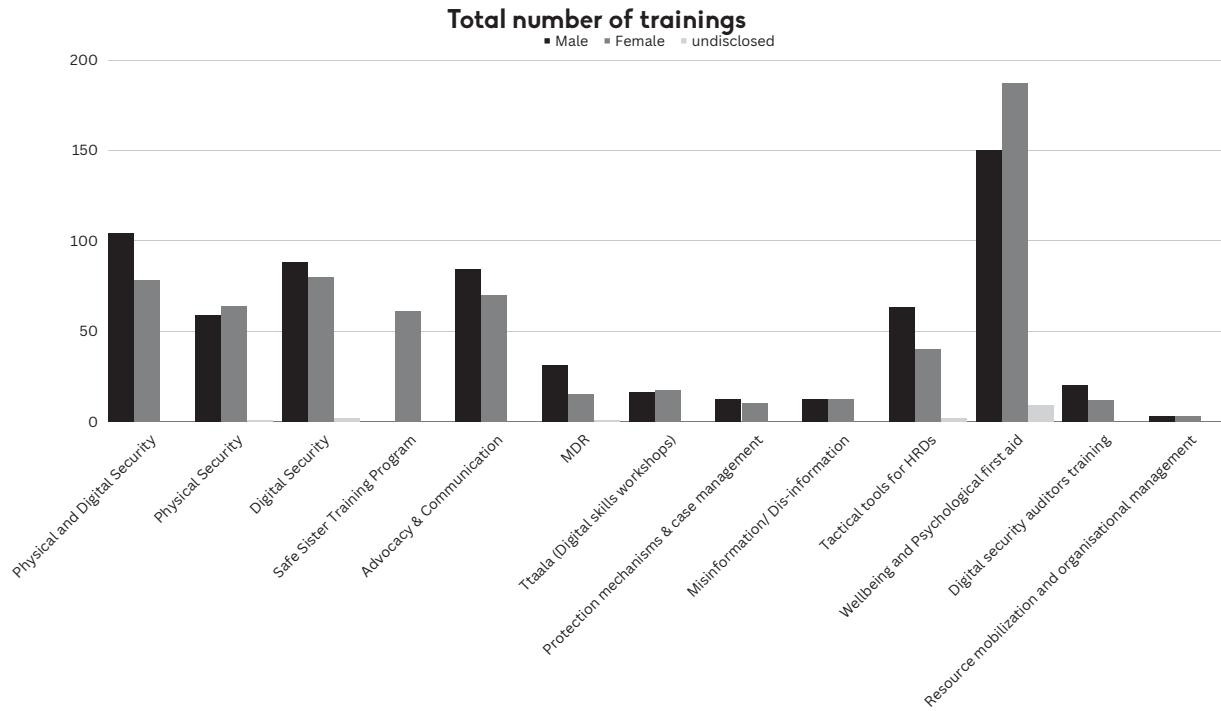
Increased capacity of HRDs and their organisations to effectively respond and mitigate imminent risks.

In 2022, DefendDefenders strengthened the capacities of 1306 HRDs (649 females, 642 males, 15 undisclosed) through 86 capacity building events/trainings. Out of these, 99 HRDs were trained as master trainers in physical and digital security; monitoring, documentation, and reporting (MDR); KoBo Toolbox and Tella App; resource mobilization and organisational management and wellbeing to enable them to continue rolling out similar trainings to other individual HRDs. Below is the summary of the capacity building engagements.

Enhanced Capacity for HRDs

Type of Training	Total trainings conducted	Gender Disaggregation			Total participants
		Male	Female	undisclosed	
Physical and Digital Security	10	104	78	0	182
Physical Security	8	59	64	1	124
Digital Security	12	88	80	2	170
Safe Sister Training Program	8	0	61	0	61
Advocacy & Communication	8	84	70	0	154
MDR	1	31	15	1	47
Ttaala (Digital skills workshops)	5	16	17	0	33
Protection mechanisms & case management	2	12	10	0	22
Misinformation/ Dis-information	2	12	12	0	24
Tactical tools for HRDs	5	63	40	2	105

Wellbeing and Psychological first aid	21	150	187	9	346
Digital security auditors training	3	20	12	0	32
Resource mobilization and organisational management	1	3	3	0	6
Total	86	642	649	15	1306



Accelerated IT Technical support to HRDs and HRD organisations

DefendersDefenders extended technical IT support to a total of 191 individuals and organisations through various spaces as detailed below.

Technical Support to Individuals and Organizations in 2022		
Type of Support	No. Supported	Spaces through which support is provided
Digital security	58	FIFAfrica2022 (Forum on Internet Freedom in Africa) Digital Security Clinic
Fixup Support	3	Audit FixUp Supports
Website design, Domain Renewal, Hosting	5	Capacity building & technical support
Online campaigns and Graphic Design	3	Capacity building & technical support
Antivirus and Software Support	23	Capacity building & technical support
Antivirus, Software provision, IT Support	88	Helpdesk
Helpdesk platform	5	GIF Technical support visits
Rapid Response Helpdesk system	6	CDR Technical support visits
Digital Security Audits	7 organisations	Uganda (4), South Sudan (2) and Rwanda (1)



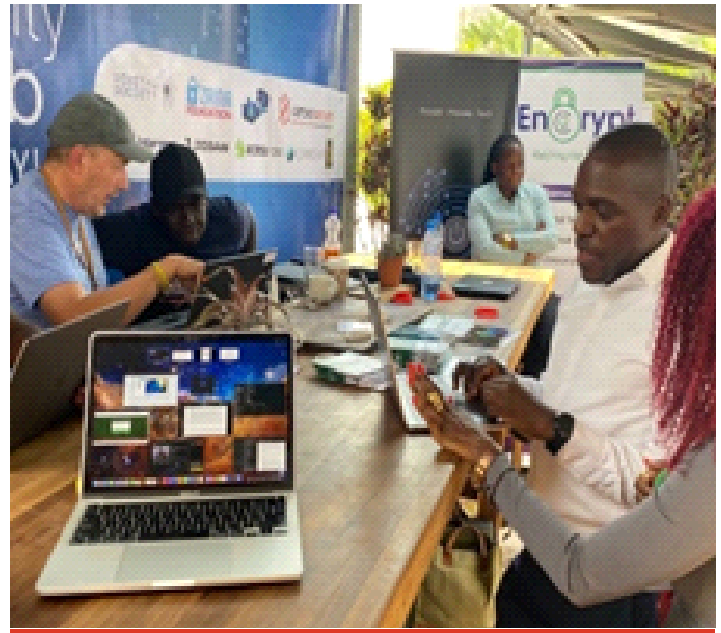
Defenders' follow-up team in a discussion with grassroots HRDs during Paten-BIRUDO follow-up, September 2022



Participants at the plenary session on the Training for HRDs in Karamoja held on 25 April 2022.



Training of Trainers in Physical and security management to improve their skills, October 2022.



Our IT Manager, Mark Kiggundu provides support to a participant at the digital security clinic on the side lines of FIFAfrica2022 in Lusaka, Zambia 28 September 2022



DefendersTech trainers delivering the Digital Security Awareness training to HRAPF staff in Kampala.

Capacity assessments and assessment missions

As part of ensuring program effectiveness, DefendDefenders conducted 2 needs assessments- one in Uganda (Karamoja, Pakwach and Buliisa) for grassroot HRDs and the other done across the region for artist- HRDs to identify the key gaps in their capacity, protection, and advocacy, and other related risks.

In addition, a mapping exercise was undertaken in Cape Verde to capture accurate and reliable baselines and determine the country's appropriateness and suitability to host a Hub Cities initiative. In 2022, two additional mapping exercises were conducted - one in DRC to identify potential partners and capacity

needs, and the other around the region to determine the number of HRDs living/working in exile in the refugee settlements in Tanzania (Mtendeli and Nduta); DRC (Mulongwe and Lusenda); Rwanda (Mahama, Huye district and Kigali city); and Uganda (Kampala city, Kyaka, and Nakivale).

Finally, DefendDefenders assessed and documented the HRD needs and capacity gaps to inform the extension of protection support to HRDs at risk in Liberia. A capacity assessment mission was conducted in Liberia to assess HRDs and their organizations' preparedness for protection when risks materialize. The mission established that the national coalition was too weak to respond to the protection requests. It recommended for capacitating the Women's network and the Human Rights Platform, to offer protection support in the short run and to strengthen the national coalition for HRDs in a long run to offer suitable protection support.

STRENGTHEN DEFENDDEFENDERS INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO EFFECTIVELY DELIVER ON ITS MANDATE.

Increased compliance, efficiency and effectiveness resulting from consistent application, consolidation of systems and processes.

To foster improvement in complying with DefendDefenders' procurement policy, an all-staff procurement training was conducted to enhance the knowledge and skills of staff in the procurement processes. Relatedly, an employee experience survey 2022 was conducted by People Brand House to ascertain employee satisfaction and motivation. The results from the survey will be used to better understand the needs of the employees and feedback into actionable insights to enhance the improvement of the different organisational processes in 2023. Further, the organisation's monitoring and evaluation policy/manual was finalized pending review and approval by the Board.

Improved financial management systems and practices, better financial stewardship, and operational efficiency.

To build the capacity of staff in compliance and inherent risks in financial management, six (6) finance staff, and the Senior protection and security management manager attended a seminar on taxation organized by KPMG. Two (2) staff also attended the EU consortium finance meeting to review and plan for the 2022-2024 grant. DefendDefenders also renewed its license and updated its accounting software – QuickBooks, to aid efficient and timely financial management.

Improved risk management systems, and timely risk detection and mitigation.

DefendDefenders continued to rollout quarterly internal audits as a risk management strategy. Additionally, seven external project audits were conducted, and a full institutional audit done. DefendDefenders continued to monitor both institutional and program related risks. Incidences were documented and action taken accordingly. The Board continued to provide oversight on risk management, reviewing and signing on audit reports and advising management during visits, quarterly board flash reports and meetings.

Strengthened governance, leadership, and organizational oversight.

As part of the governing structure, a General Assembly for the EHAHRD-Net was held between October 6-7, 2022, in Kampala, Uganda and was attended by 75 development partners, representatives from national coalitions of human rights defenders (HRDs), country focal points and HRDs from Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Somalia (including Somaliland), Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. The General Assembly reviewed and updated its Plan of Action, and elected new leadership with Mr. Ngugi Kamau from Kenya

elected as chairperson of the EHAHRD-Net for 2022 to 2027.

Members of the Steering Committee for AfricanDefenders (The Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network) reviewed the achievements and strategies of the network and ensured alignment to the KAPA +10.

The Committee discussed emerging trends in the protection of HRDs in Africa and developed strategies to strengthen the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative. Furthermore, the Committee assessed the capacities of sub-regional networks on their response to the current situation of HRDs in their respective regions.

The 5th annual Development Partners meeting was held to increase the level and frequency of communication, engagement, and promotion of transparency between development partners and DefendDefenders. In addition to building trust and stronger relationships, the platform provided an opportunity to connect, share, collaborate, celebrate the gains and successes of DefendDefenders, and foster learning.

The annual Board meeting was convened on October 4, 2022, to discuss the years' successes, challenges, and emerging issues as well as the current situation of human rights defenders in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region. DefendDefenders was also able to submit 4 quarterly Board Flash reports to the Board in 2022.

A motivated, engaged and performance-driven workforce.

DefendDefenders remained committed to maintaining a highly motivated and well-trained team of staff. New staff were trained in basic security management protocols to help them prevent and manage security incidents, while the mid-year staff retreat, and staff appraisals were conducted to take stock of performance progress and to plan for the next periods at organizational and individual level respectively. All program implementing staff were retooled on the basics of quality reporting, training, and data analysis. In terms of recruitment, 2 staff members, 3 fellows and 3 interns were brought on board.

Name	Position
Gloria Apoo	Intern, AfricanDefenders
Simlindzile Masinga	Fellow, AfricanDefenders
Joana Kagoya	Intern, AfricanDefenders
Christabell Nephertiti	Fellow, AfricanDefenders
Denis Enapu	Driver
Samuel Sempala	Protection Marshal/Driver
Nancy Njenge	Fellow, AfricanDefenders
Grace Batamuriza	Intern, Advocacy and Research
Rebecca Kabagimu	Fellow, AfricanDefenders
Sharon Nabisawa	Fellow, AfricanDefenders
Aramanzan Babyesiza	Intern, DefendersTech

Throughout the year, different teams within DefendDefenders conducted team building sessions outside of the office to encourage collaboration amongst team members. A management retreat was also conducted to reenergize and refocus the leadership team. Finally, the annual staff retreat was held from November 16 – 19, 2022, with 6 staff recognized for achieving outstanding performance in 2022.



DefendDefenders' staff attending the Annual Staff Retreat, November 2022. Awareness training to HRAPF staff in Kampala.



Susan Ibale, Majid Maali, Jeremie Nkurizimana, Bernard Arinaitwe and Janvier Hakizimana receive awards for outstanding performance and long service to DD from Hassan Shire, Executive Director and Memory Bandera, DPA.

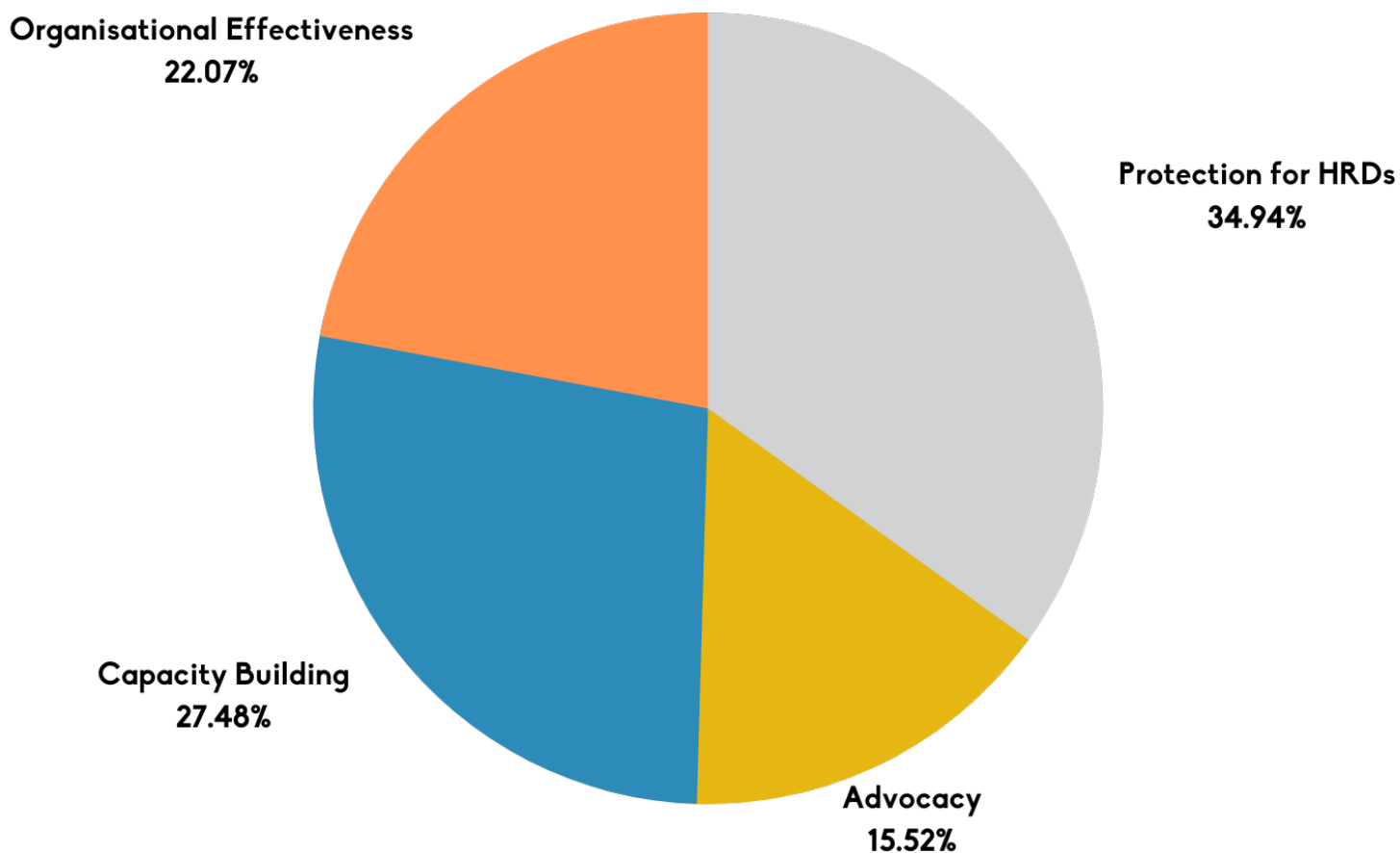
A diversified and sustainable resource envelop.

DefendDefenders maintained a candid relationship with key funding partners and donors and garnered new support from several partners and donors to advance the protection agenda for HRDs. In 2022, DefendDefenders had a funding relationship with the following funding partners:

1. American Bar Association
2. Belgium Development Cooperation-BGD, Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation
3. Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World)
4. Center for Digital Resilience
5. European Commission through Protectdefenders.eu mechanism
6. European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy
7. Ford Foundation
8. Internews
9. Ireland Embassy in Uganda
10. Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in South Sudan
11. Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Sudan
12. Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Uganda
13. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands through SCC Alliance
14. National Endowment for Democracy
15. Open Society Foundations
16. Royal Norwegian Embassy in Uganda
17. Save the Children International
18. Swedish Arts Council
19. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Africa regional project led by CIVICUS)
20. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (core funding for DefendDefenders)
21. United Nations Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund

Financial Summary

	Institutional Priority Area	UGX	Percentage Expenditure to Income
1	Protection for HRDs	9,587,266,463.54	34.94%
2	Advocacy	4,257,782,921.27	15.52%
3	Capacity Building	7,539,399,243.80	27.48%
4	Organisational Effectiveness	6,056,484,272.39	22.07%
	Total	27,440,932,901.00	100%



A strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system with better program quality, efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, learning and innovation.

DefendDefenders continued to roll out its monitoring and evaluation system to facilitate program quality and learning. In 2022, an end of strategic plan evaluation was finalized for the 2016–2020 Strategic Plan with key lessons and recommendations that have been integrated into the current programs. The external evaluation report was presented at the development partners meeting. One end of project evaluation was conducted for the Irish Embassy in Uganda funded project, to establish the impact of the project and document lessons for quality improvement and future project planning and sustainability.

As part of program quality, accountability, and learning, DefendDefenders conducted monitoring missions to central, western and West Nile regions of Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe to assess the impact accruing from the implementation of our work in 2022 and to generate HRD testimonies. A total of 76 (w)HRDs (45 female, 31 male) were reached, and several testimonies documented on the impact of DefendDefenders work and its contribution to their wellbeing, capacity, and resilience to continue doing their HR work.

To foster improvement in project/program quality and reporting, capacity enhancement for DefendDefenders staff and (w)HRDs was done through capacity building in M&E and reporting. Additionally, in preparation for the SCC programme annual reporting and Mid-Term Review (MTR) for all SCC country alliances scheduled for 2023, a 5-day online training was conducted to enhance the capacity of all PMEL WG members on Outcome Harvesting. 2 M&E staff and 2 program staff in DD supporting the programme benefitted from the training.

Improved profiling, visibility as a major player in the HRD sphere, innovative communication, and collaboration with stakeholders.

DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders engaged at the local, regional, and international level with different HRD bodies to amplify the voices of HRDs. These engagements provided the organisation with a platform to highlight the successful implementation of its protection mechanisms, build capacity of HRDs, broker new partnerships and strengthen existing ones. These engagements included, the Journalists in distress meeting in Amsterdam, a workshop with Ligue Tunisienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (LTDH), a wellbeing summit in Spain, quarterly meeting with ALLIED, the Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Summit Biannual General Assembly, SCC programme reflection meetings, Save the Children partner meetings and Talk to your regulator, an event organised by Defenders Protection Initiative.



Claiming spaces 2022, Dar es salaam, Tanzania

DefendDefenders' [newsletter](#) was published every month, highlighting its key work and profiling HRDs in that month. As part of profiling and visibility, DefendDefenders maintained an online presence across various social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. As a result, our social media presence and following continued to grow with new followers summarized below.

Social media platforms	DefendDefenders	AfricanDefenders	Total new followers	Total
Twitter	3920	644	4564	21525
Instagram	155		155	1366
Facebook	248	546	794	10639
LinkedIn	196	106		618
Total	4519	502	5513	34148

Throughout the course of the year, DefendDefenders together with African Defenders, hosted and participated in several online campaigns such as: #SheDefends; International Women's Day; #NotACrime; Mental Health awareness; International Youth Day; #ArtistsAsHRDs and 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.



The advocacy team in collaboration with the protection and security management department ran a month-long [SheDefends campaign](#) ahead of the International Women's Day to highlight the challenges faced by women and women environmental rights defenders as a result of environmental abuse, and their contributions towards combating climate change.



AfricanDefenders joined CIHRS and other international and Algerian civil society organisations to launch the [#NotACrime campaign](#) which drew attention to the ways in which the Algerian authorities have increasingly attempted to stifle dissenting voices and independent civil society. The campaign called on the Algerian authorities to end their repression on human rights and unconditionally release those detained solely for peacefully exercising their human rights.



AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders joined the rest of the world to commemorate the Mental Health Awareness Month, May, under the Theme: "Mental Health in Equal Role" with a focus on the wellbeing of HRDs living with disabilities. Hassan Shire highlighted the challenges that HRDs living with disabilities face stemming from institutional and environmental [challenges](#) which grossly impact their mental wellbeing.



In celebration of this year's International Youth Day, AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders created awareness on the existing intergenerational gap between HRDs and how this gap can be bridged. For this year, the theme of the campaign was "Intergenerational solidarity. Creating a world for all ages. A generation gap in Activism"

Watch the promo video here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SWdAwXo4I8>



The #ArtistsAsHRDs campaign was launched to create awareness on the vital role artist-HRDs play towards the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa. The campaign also explored the challenges faced by this class of HRDs and their coping mechanisms against the challenges they face in their work. The campaign featured artist- HRDs from South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

The campaign was successfully concluded in September 2022.

WHAT IS FEMICIDE?

Femicide is the killing of women and girls because of their gender, which can take the form of:

- the murder of women as a result of intimate partner violence;
- the torture and misogynist slaying of women;
- killing of women and girls in the name of "honour";
- targeted killing of women and girls in the context of armed conflict;
- dowry-related killings of women;
- killing of women and girls because of their sexual orientation and gender identity;
- the killing of aboriginal and indigenous women and girls because of their gender;
- genital mutilation related deaths;
- other femicides connected with gangs, organized crime, drug dealers, human trafficking and the proliferation of small arms.

Photos by: registered on Unsplash

In commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders ran a campaign to raise awareness of GBV women human rights defenders face because of their legitimate human rights work. The global theme for this year was "UNITE! Activism to end violence against women and girls". To this DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders wanted to further create awareness around the risk WHRDs face because of their gender and take stock of the achievements.

Here are the links to the campaign videos:

Hassan Shire: https://youtu.be/hDSl_ro7sxo

Memory Bandera: https://youtu.be/4TH4jIw9g_0

Nelly William: <https://youtu.be/GdICqHzftBA>

PROGRESS ON MAINSTREAMING THEMES

Gender and Women Human Rights Defenders

In 2022, DefendDefenders continued to support implementation of its gender policy. Support for the creation and strengthening of women's networks was enhanced with establishment of the Sudan Women Human Rights Defenders Network, engagements with the EAHRDN and deliberate targeting for WHRDs. Additionally in the reporting period, routine gender equality monitoring was conducted using the social relations framework to assess progress on gender integration and social inclusion. Further, two (2) gender integration trainings were conducted for WHRDs under the SafeSister cohort, and HRD coalition staff members from the Sahel. Jointly working with ABAAD, we hosted a workshop in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) with the goal of comprehensively engaging local CSOs and their partners in incorporating and consolidating their capacities/knowledge in gender and ending GBV.

Regarding the consideration of resolution [1325](#) of the UN Security Council in project activities implementation, Movement Inamahoro held an online conference/debate on September 27, 2022 on the theme: "Burundian women's contribution to the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325". The main objective of this conference was to sensitize the members of the movement on their role in the implementation of Resolution 1325, which was inspired, among other things, by the fight led by Burundian women during the peace process in Arusha between 1998 and 2000. Gender campaigns were organized and rolled out during women's day & 16 days of activism. Finally, there is a deliberate data disaggregated based on gender across DefendDefenders' work.

Environment and climate change

DefendDefenders supported HRDs working on environment and climate change especially in the extractives industry in DRC and Uganda. This was largely done through tailored capacity building engagements focusing on protection and risk management, wellbeing, and advocacy at different fora at national, regional, and international level.

Disability rights defenders

DefendDefenders launched a research report on disability rights in April titled "**Overlooked and Unseen: Human rights defenders living with disabilities in conflict countries in Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan.**" The report has been published with formats including braille accessible to persons with disability and has been distributed to national coalitions for engagement with HRDs working on disability issues and their organisations. The report was popularized at the ACHPR with a call for support and protection of rights for persons with disabilities. There were also deliberate efforts towards inclusion of HRDs with disability in trainings and other events, including a disability rights campaign conducted by DefendDefenders in May 2022.

HRDs working on minority groups/issues.

DefendDefenders continued to engage with HRDs working on minority issues including ethnic minority/indigenous groups especially through targeted capacity building, mental health and wellbeing, emergency protection interventions and advocacy for their protection, resilience, and continued engagement in human rights work.

MEET OUR TEAM IN 2022

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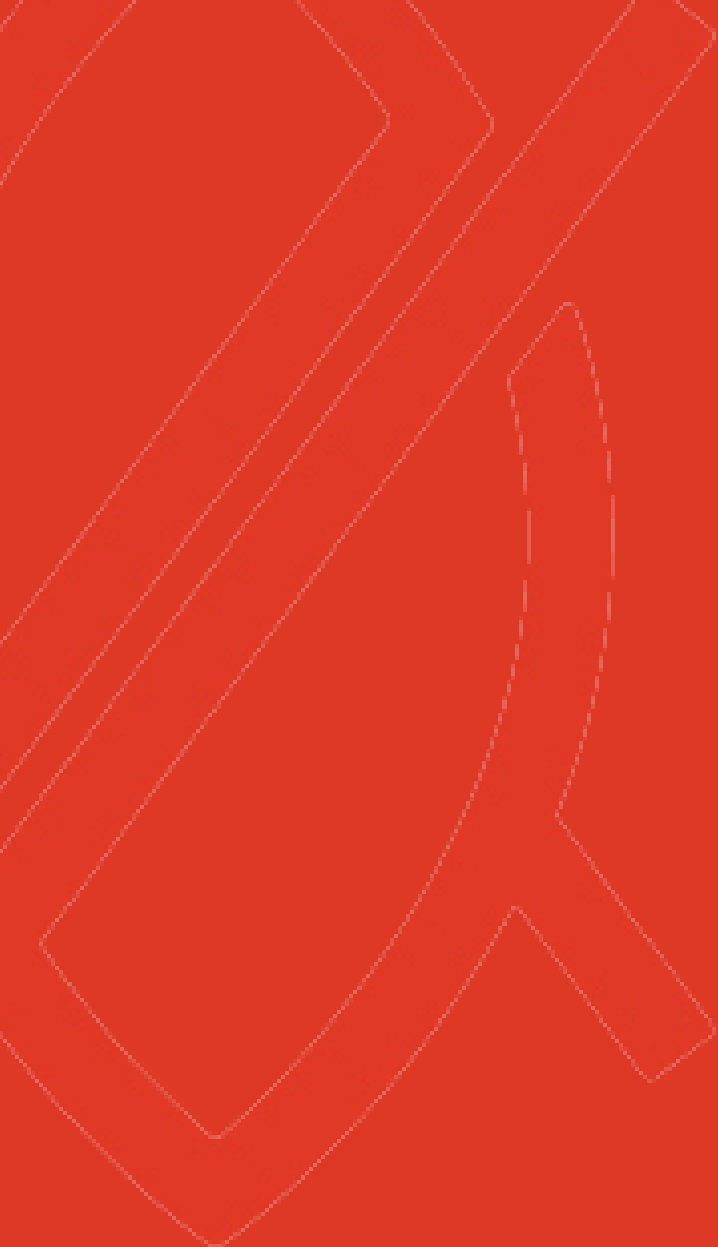
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Thanks to the fellows, interns, and volunteers who supported us in 2022:

Rebecca Kabagimu, Sharon Nabisawa, Aramanzan Babyesiza, Grace Batamuriza, Gloria Apoo, Simlindzile Masinga, Joana Kagoya, Christabell Nephertiti and Nancy Njenge.



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