

BURUNDI

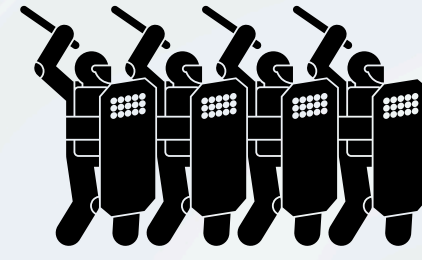
Burundi witnessed persistent human rights violations in the reporting period. Fundamental freedoms, including freedom of opinion and expression, association and peaceful assembly continue to be curtailed. While the government has introduced reforms to abolish prison sentences for journalists facing ethics complaints, concerns persisted regarding the release of incarcerated journalists.



In Numbers

- 1 prison sentence upheld for a journalist.
- 1 activist attacked.
- 6 activists arrested.

Prison sentences abolished.



ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia's human rights situation worsened with escalating violence and conflict in Oromia, Amhara, and Tigray. The International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia (ICHREE) reported widespread atrocities across Tigray, Amhara, and Afar regions, revealing systematic abuses including attacks against civilians, ethnic cleansing, sexual violence, and arbitrary arrests. In February 2024, the Ethiopian government extended the state of emergency in Amhara, giving the government broad powers that increase the risk of arbitrary detention. The Ethiopia Human Rights Center reported that over 48 HRDs were unjustly detained in 2023, and women, especially WHRDs, suffered gender-based violence (GBV), sexism, and discrimination.

In Numbers

- 4 protest coordinators arrested
- 13 media workers arrested



KENYA

Kenya's civic space remains relatively open in the subregion, however, it continues to grapple with corruption, and human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings and torture. Security forces routinely violate the right to freedom of assembly by using excessive force to suppress protests, resulting in numerous deaths and injuries, arbitrary arrests, and detentions. Additionally, freedom of expression continues to be stifled as journalists investigating corruption and governance issues face threats and arbitrary arrests.

In Numbers

- 1 HRD attacked.
- Several protests dispersed.
- Several activists and protestors arrested
- 1 Blogger strangled.
- 6 journalists assaulted.
- 1 verbally insulted.
- 1 arrested



RWANDA

In the past six months, Rwanda witnessed a concerning trend of political repression and human rights violations perpetrated by the ruling Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) and its proxies. As the country approaches its 2024 general elections, the space for political opposition remains tightly closed, both within and outside the ruling party. The government targeted and harassed activists, journalists, and other critics. The RPF government employed various measures, including criticism during public gatherings, to suppress perceived opponents and dissenting voices.

In Numbers

- Opposition party officials detained
- 1 media worker tortured.

SOMALIA/SOMALILAND

Somalia grapples with a humanitarian crisis due to climate change, widespread human rights violations, and ongoing conflicts. Al Shabab continues to control territory and to commit grave human rights abuses with several attacks against civilians in this period. Furthermore, GBV surged, disproportionately impacting displaced women and girls. Civic space remains under intense pressure in Somalia, one of the most dangerous places to be a journalist. Journalists are constantly targeted, harassed, arrested, and attacked by both the state and non-state actors. In October 2023, the United Nations HRC extended the mandate of the Independent Expert on Somalia's human rights situation, emphasizing grave violations and abuses.

In Numbers

- 1 journalist released.
- 1 media worker died in suicide bombing
- 1 media worker summoned.
- 6 media workers detained.
- 2 media workers targeted.
- 1 journalist deported.
- 1 journalist killed.



SOUTH SUDAN

Sudan faces a complex human rights crisis marked by a significant increase in violations across various fronts. The ongoing one year conflict has claimed over 12,190 lives and displaced millions, leaving 25 million reliant on humanitarian aid. Nearly 18 million individuals experience severe food insecurity, worsened by humanitarian workers facing obstacles in reaching those in need. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) continue to block aid deliveries through vital crossing points, impose restrictions on transporting aid supplies, and ban civil society groups, alleging collaboration with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

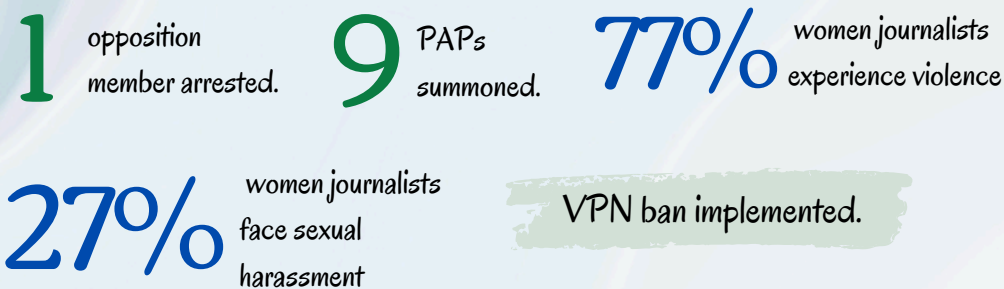
In Numbers

- 7 activists detained
- 2 HRD disappeared

TANZANIA

During the reporting period, the Tanzanian government suppressed dissenting voices. Authorities restricted access to information by imposing bans on VPN without permits to regulate access to content deemed "illicit". Journalists, notably women journalists, endured targeted abuse and harassment, fostering a climate of fear and self-censorship. Additionally, unknown gunmen attempted to assassinate Tanzanian politician Christopher Ole Sendeka, a Member of Parliament for Simanjiro, by shooting at his car with bullets. Despite vocal opposition and widespread protests, the government neglected to address the relentless forced relocation of the Maasai communities. Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) faced repression, particularly concerning their opposition to the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project. Further more, reprisals against HRDs persisted, particularly on journalists, lawyers, and civil society organizations (CSOs).

In Numbers



SUDAN

Sudan faces a complex human rights crisis marked by a significant increase in violations across various fronts. The ongoing one year conflict has claimed over 12,170 lives and displaced millions, leaving 25 million reliant on humanitarian aid. Nearly 18 million individuals experience severe food insecurity, worsened by humanitarian workers facing obstacles in reaching those in need. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) continue to block aid deliveries through vital crossing points, impose restrictions on transporting aid supplies, and ban civil society groups, alleging collaboration with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Tragically, paramilitary groups, such as the RSF, have weaponised sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) as a war tactic, targeting women and girls. Children are subjected to arbitrary arrests and recruitment into armed conflict. Journalists and media workers are increasingly subjected to attacks, forced closure of newspapers and radio stations, thus stifling freedom of expression. Peaceful civic activities have been banned in several States, including the Blue Nile and Red Sea regions. Additionally, Sudan experienced internet shutdowns and curfew enforcement, obstructing efforts to address the root causes of unrest. Notably, hate speech has escalated, particularly targeting advocates. Resistance Committees, pro-peace activists, community leaders, humanitarian workers, medical personnel, journalists, and political party members all faced direct threats during the reporting period.

UGANDA

Uganda grappled with significant human rights challenges. HRDs, civil society actors, and media personnel suffered assaults, violence, and intimidation. Critics covering sensitive topics, opposition figures, and protesters faced government intimidation tactics, including surveillance, harassment, and threats aimed at silencing dissenting voices and discouraging public demonstrations. Minority groups and HRDs addressing these issues persistently faced unjust and arbitrary limitations. Furthermore, the government continued to crackdown on anti-fossil fuel activists and environmental defenders. Authorities detained journalists and curtailed freedom of expression.

In Numbers



DJIBOUTI AND ERITREA

Djibouti and Eritrea remain the most closed states in the sub-region, both ranking amongst the world's worst violators of press freedom. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) continues to rank Eritrea as one of the worst jailers of journalists globally. The rights to free expression, association and peaceful assembly continue to be severely restricted, making it virtually impossible for independent human rights organisations or individual HRDs to operate in the country.

In Numbers Eritrea



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Urge all member States to ensure the protection of HRDs, notably by observing the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the provisions and spirit of the United Nations Declaration on HRDs.
- Strengthen monitoring and accountability mechanisms across all countries to address human rights violations, ensuring a culture of respect for human rights where perpetrators are held accountable for their actions.
- Call for open civic space in all countries, opposing censorship, violence against journalists and activists, and any restrictions on civil society participation.
- Call for unrestricted access to independent media, regional, and international human rights organizations across all countries for effective monitoring and documentation of human rights abuses.
- Call for an end to harassment and violence against journalists, dissenting voices, and activists across all countries, ensuring respect for freedom of expression and assembly.
- Engage the Djiboutian government in dialogue to encourage legislative reforms aligning with international human rights standards, emphasizing the importance of fostering an enabling environment for civil society and safeguarding fundamental freedoms for all citizens.
- Call for the renewal of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burundi to ensure continued oversight and reporting.
- Urge concerted pressure on the Governments of Burundi and Tanzania to end initiatives towards forced repatriation of refugees and instead promote a policy of free and voluntary repatriation.
- Call on Rwanda to establish an independent electoral monitoring mechanism to guarantee free, fair, and inclusive elections.
- Call on Sudanese authorities to facilitate the entry of humanitarian aid organizations and agencies, ensuring unhindered access to conflict-affected areas and populations in need.
- Call on the Ethiopian government to immediately end communications blackouts in affected zones, uphold freedom of expression, and ensure transparency in accordance with international human rights standards.
- Urge the Tanzanian government to cease the arrest and harassment of journalists and lift bans on Virtual Private Networks in order to uphold freedom of expression and media freedom.
- Urge the Kenyan government to enact or strengthen legal and institutional reforms, including appropriate legislative and administrative measures, to tackle discrimination against women, as well as discrimination and violence targeting minority groups and women.
- Urge states to review and amend any unconstitutional clauses in regulations concerning the freedom of assembly and police use of force, ensuring that force is restricted to being a last resort and is only employed in fully justified circumstances.

