



BI-ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT MAY - OCTOBER 2025



1 BURUNDI

Burundi's 2025 elections occurred amid repression, censorship, and intimidation by the ruling CNDD-FDD. Reports cited coercion, ballot fraud, and violence against opposition members. Civil society recorded disappearances, arrests, and torture. NGOs urged renewing the UN Special Rapporteur's mandate due to ongoing impunity. The Council extended it, condemning abuses and shrinking civic space.

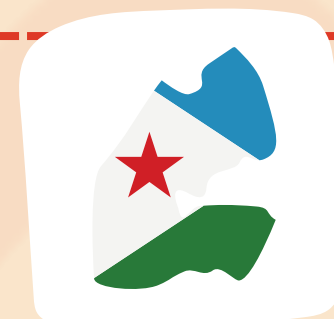


26 CSOs enforced disappearances
60 arbitrary arrests



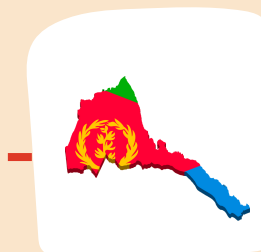
1 Journalist
SENTENCED

2 DJIBOUTI



Djibouti's civic space is severely restricted, and is currently classified as "closed" by the Civicus Monitor. This means there are significant restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of association, and access to information, particularly for CSOs and HRDs.

3 ERITREA



Eritrea continues to face severe human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, indefinite national service, and suppression of freedoms. On 4 July 2025, the UN Human Rights Council renewed the Special Rapporteur's mandate to monitor ongoing abuses and Eritrea's refusal to cooperate with UN mechanisms.

Eritrea lowest **RANKED** in the
Global Press Freedom Index,
highlighting its complete lack of
media freedom.

IN
2025

6 ETHIOPIA

On 14 May 2025, Ethiopia's NEBE revoked the TPLF's legal status, citing unmet obligations, while the TPLF condemned the move as politically motivated and a threat to peace. DefendDefenders raised concerns over ongoing conflicts, shrinking civic space, and human rights abuses, and the TPLF denied government claims of preparing for war, warning of renewed instability in Tigray.

IN JUNE **TAYE arrested**

IN AUGUST **Yared Hailemariam RESIGNED**

IN MAY **Dozens of healthcare workers DETAINED**

1 Journalist **ABDUCTED**
Media house RAIDED

5 KENYA



On 8 May 2025, President William Ruto signed the Persons with Disabilities Act 2025, creating a legal framework to guarantee education, employment, healthcare, political participation, and accessibility for PWDs, reinforcing Kenya's constitutional and international obligations. In a joint press conference with Finland's President, Ruto also addressed recent abductions, claiming all missing persons had been reunited, though details on accountability remain unclear.

1 Journalist **ARRESTED**
7 HRDs **ARRESTED**
1 HRD **DEPORTED**

1 blogger **KILLED**
1 activist **ARRESTED**
3 HRDs **RELEASED**
4 filmmakers **arrested**

nationwide protests
19 **DEATHS**
531 **INJURIES**

4 RWANDA



Rwandan authorities have been linked to serious human rights and international humanitarian law violations beyond their borders through support for the M23 armed group in the Democratic Republic of Congo.[1] Evidence indicates that Rwanda has provided military, logistical, and other forms of assistance to M23, a group responsible for widespread abuses against civilians, including killings, forced displacement, and recruitment of child soldiers.

7 SOUTH SUDAN



On 30 May 2025, the UN extended South Sudan's arms embargo to May 2026 over ongoing violence and stalled peace reforms. Nearly 2,000 civilians have been killed this year amid renewed clashes and rights abuses. Tensions spiked after Vice President Riek Machar was charged with murder and treason, a move critics call politically driven, risking collapse of the 2018 peace deal.

24

headteachers
SUSPENDED

8 SOMALIA / SOMALILAND



In August 2025, a faction of Somalia's opposition, including four former top officials, signed an electoral deal with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud to advance a one-person, one-vote system. Meanwhile, the main opposition bloc allied with Puntland and Jubaland leaders to form the Council for the Future of Somalia, opposing the president's agenda and possible term extension. On 10 September, clashes in Mogadishu between opposition escorts and police left one dead and several injured. In October, parliament ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child with Islamic and constitutional reservations. That same month, the UN Human Rights Council ended the Independent Expert's mandate, transferring Somalia oversight to the OHCHR.

SOMALIA

18 Journalists **ARRESTED**

60 cases of media repression **DOCUMENTED**

3 Journalists **INTERROGATED**

SOMALILAND

24

journalist **ARRESTED**

2

media outlet **BANNED**

10

reporters **DETAINED**

9

SUDAN



Sudan's war between the SAF and RSF has created the world's largest displacement crisis, with 11+ million uprooted (8.6M internally, 3M+ refugees). The UN reports rising civilian killings, ethnic violence, starvation tactics, and sexual violence, with aid access blocked. The UN Human Rights Council adopted Resolution A/HRC/60/L.18, extending the Fact-Finding Mission for 1 year, condemning abuses, urging a ceasefire, aid access, and a civilian-led transition.

4

Soldiers **KILLED**

5

Soldiers **DETAINED**

10

TANZANIA



At the 59th Human Rights Council, DefendDefenders condemned Tanzania's abuse and deportation of Agather Atuhaire and Boniface Mwangi. The government denied wrongdoing. The Electoral Commission barred and reinstated opposition candidate Luhaga Mpina, then reversed again. A 29 Sept 2025 HRW report cited 100 abductions (2015–2025), 10 activist attacks, voter suppression, and rising repression before the 29 Oct elections.

3

HRDs/journalists **DEPORTED**

2

Journalist **ARRESTED**

1

activist **TORTURED**

6

Party members **ARRESTED**X (Twitter) **RESTRICTED**

11

UGANDA



Museveni signed the UPDF (Amendment) Bill 2025, letting military courts try civilians, sparking opposition and rights concerns. On 15 Sept, a Paris court ordered Total Uganda to release key documents in a human rights case, with a €1,000/day fine for noncompliance.

10

NUP members **ARRESTED**

2

Kenyan activists **ABDUCTED in UGANDA**

1

Opposition leader **ABDUCTED**

11

environmental activists **ARRESTED**

1

cyber activist **ARRESTED**

3

Journalists **ARRESTED/ ABDUCTED**Dr. Kizza Besigye **DENIED BAIL**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Urge all states parties to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to protect HRDs, by strictly adhering to the provisions of the Charter and other international and regional instruments to which they are parties, as well as the United Nations Declaration on HRDs.
- Call on governments to end the excessive use of force, including tear gas, bullets, and arrests, during peaceful protests and ensure law enforcement officers adhere to international standards on the use of force and firearms, to ensure the safety and rights of demonstrators.
- Urge all countries to strengthen monitoring and accountability mechanisms to address human rights violations, foster a culture where perpetrators are held accountable for their actions especially in election processes.
- Urge all governments to cease the intimidation and harassment of opposition figures, allow them to freely express their views and participate in political processes without fear of reprisal.
- Call on the governments of Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda to immediately end the use of abductions, torture, and extrajudicial killings by security and intelligence agencies, and to ensure independent investigations, prosecution of perpetrators, and access to justice and reparations for victims and their families.
- Call on the Ethiopian government to end all restrictions on civil society organisations, including surveillance, harassment and to ensure these organisations can operate freely.
- Urge all countries to protect freedom of expression, end the arrests and intimidation of journalists and HRDs, enact laws that guarantee their rights to report and advocate freely to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Call on the government of Somalia to uphold press freedom by allowing journalists to report freely and safely on issues of insecurity, conflict, and governance, and to end the harassment, arbitrary arrests, and censorship of media professionals in line with regional and international human rights standards.
- Call on the Government of Tanzania to fully implement the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in the United Republic of Tanzania (ACHPR/Res.640 (LXXXIV) 2025), including by addressing the Commission's concerns on civic space, media freedom, and the protection of HRDs, and by taking concrete steps to ensure accountability and alignment with regional human rights standards.
- Call on all parties to the conflict in Sudan to grant immediate and unhindered access to humanitarian aid across the country, especially in conflict-affected areas, to address the urgent needs of millions facing hunger and impending famine.
- Call on the Joint Fact-Finding Mission into the human rights situation in Sudan established as per ACHPR Resolution 590 to ensure the complementarity of its efforts with those of other actors, in particular the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Fact-Finding Mission established by the UN Human Rights Council, and other appropriate regional and international entities.
- Call on the Joint Fact-Finding Mission into the human rights situation in Sudan, to promptly release its findings and reports since its establishment.
- Call on the government of Eritrea and Djibouti to provide a safe and enabling environment for civil society to flourish and protect the rights of all individuals to freely express their opinions.
- Call on the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea to exercise restraint, prioritize dialogue, and resolve disputes through peaceful and diplomatic means, in order to prevent the escalation of tensions into armed conflict and to safeguard regional peace, security, and the rights of affected populations.
- Call on the government of Rwanda to engage in constructive dialogue with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and regional actors to find a peaceful resolution to ongoing conflict.