



NATIONAL
COALITION OF
HUMAN
RIGHTS
DEFENDERS
UGANDA



“PERSISTENCE IN FRAGILE CIVIC SPACE”

“In increasingly fragile civic space, protection of Human Rights Defenders for us was a priority”

Annual
REPORT 2021



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National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda

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Cover Photo: Ms.Peninnah Zaninka receives the Human Rights Defender of the year 2021 award



"It was my first time to participate in the Universal Periodic Review [UPR] process. I therefore appreciate the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders for providing a platform both physically and importantly virtually for HRDs in the Albertine region working in the Extractives industry to contribute to the UPR process."

Janapher Baitwamasa,
Regional Focal Person NCHRD-U (Albertine)



National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda



Vision.

A society that upholds the dignity and right of every human rights defender.







Mission.

To protect and promote the work of HRDs in safe and secure environment through linkages with national, regional and international like-minded entities.



Objectives.

-  To create an avenue for collective response to threats against HRDs
-  To coordinate other civil society organizations in promoting safety and security of HRDs.
-  To improve protection mechanisms, safety and security of HRDs in Uganda individually and at organizational level.
-  To advocate and raise public awareness and profiles of HRDs in the country.

Acronyms

ACTV	African Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and People's Rights
AGA	Annual General Assembly
CEHURD	Centre for Health Human Rights in Development
CRD	Civil Rights Defenders-Sweden
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSSA	Civil Society Strengthening Activity
DCA	Dan Church Aid
DGF	Democratic Governance Facility
DPI	Defenders Protection Initiative
EU	European Union
EWMI	East West Management Institute
FHRI	Foundation for Human Rights Initiative
GWED-G	Gulu Women Empowerment in Development and Globalisation
HRNJ	Human Rights Network for Journalists
HRAPF	Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRCU	Human Rights Centre Uganda
HURIFO	Human Rights Focus
HRD/s	Human Rights Defenders
ICNL	International Centre for Non-Profit Law
ICTJ	International Centre for Transitional Justice
IMC	Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights
LASPNET	Legal Aid Service Providers Network
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NCHRD-U	National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda

NETPIL	Network of Public Interest Lawyers
NTV	Nation Television
NBS	Nile Broadcasting Services
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OSIEA	Open Society in East Africa
POMA	Public Order Management Act
PLA	Platform for Labour Action
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UDHR	United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders
UN	United Nations
UPDF	Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UOBDU	United Organisation for Batwa in Uganda
UPF	Uganda Police Force
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ULS	Uganda Law Society
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
WHRC	Wakiso Human Rights Committee

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Acknowledgement

Close to a decade now, we've expanded our footprint towards protection of Human Rights Defenders in Uganda. Our very existence relies on the daily struggles of HRDs on the ground. We continuously strived to ensure that HRDs were safe whilst they undertook their work and in cases where their safety wasn't guaranteed, there were measures to mitigate effects of attacks towards them. We are exceedingly grateful for the persistence of HRDs across last year but importantly deeply indebted to HRDs on the ground that made our protection mandate manageable through knowledge exchange, collaboration and resourcefulness.

In a difficult year, we are grateful to our partners in no particular order; American Bar Association, Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), Dan Church AID, USAID CSSA/EWMI, ICNL, Office of

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN-OHCHR), Civil Rights Defenders, Open Society Initiative of East Africa (OSIEA), Civ-source, The Royal Netherlands Embassy, GIZ-Uganda, Irish Embassy, Small Media Foundation UK, Freedom House and Defend Defenders for the consistent and immense financial support.

We importantly acknowledge the continued support, strategic guidance, expertise, and technical support of our Board of Directors NCHRD-U Board, Technical Thematic Working Group (TTWG), focal persons on the ground and key partnerships with stakeholders in the protection of HRDs including Uganda Human Rights Commission, Uganda Law Society, Uganda Police Force, Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), NGO Bureau, Uganda's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other strategic stakeholders.

We would like to extend gratitude to the secretariat staff who remained undeterred by the COVID-19 challenges and ensured we delivered on our mandate remarkably well.



A section of NCHRD-U secretariat staff in a photo with Mr. Hassan Shire, Chairperson African Defenders at the sidelines of the UPR Pre-sessions in November, 2021



Peter Ogik entertains coalition members at the 2021 annual general assembly

Foreword



Partners, Colleagues and Friends,

I extend my greetings warmly on behalf of the NCHRD-U secretariat. As has been our tradition, annually we make available this report as basis for our accountability for the daily work the team at the secretariat undertakes in ensuring that we meet our mandate of protection of Human Rights Defenders. 2021 was an extremely difficult and challenging year for human rights defenders in Uganda.

In a second year running, we awarded HRDs that exhibited a high level of resilience and consistency in standing up for the rights of their communities. We were thrilled to see Ms. Penninah Zaninka Executive Director, United Organisation for Batwa in Uganda receive the overall award for Human Rights Defenders of the year. Penninah has devoted all her life towards ensuring that the

Batwa attain a fair share of public services and importantly recognition by government. It goes a long way to reinforce our commitment to raise the profile of HRDs working with the most structurally marginalized communities.

I was also delighted that as a secretariat, we were able to coordinate activities related to the Universal Periodic Review mechanism [UPR] by convening successfully national and sub-national NGOs to generate consensus on UPR reports at thematic level but importantly in generating a national report. With our stewardship of the CSO National Stakeholders' forum on the UPR, CSOs were able to submit 22 thematic reports and 1 stakeholder shadow report. The NCHRD-U was co-opted onto the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights to bring CSO voices to the state reporting process. We were also able to engage on behalf of the stakeholders' forum with Parliament of Uganda on the need to interest itself in the UPR mechanism and process.

The Universal Periodic Review Mechanism is a very important process for civil society. While it is state driven, CSOs can play a critical role to ensure realization of implementation of recommendations the government of Uganda accepts. NCHRD-U continued to assert its coordination role on the UPR process. Collaboratively with Defend Defenders held 12 refresher trainings with 12 clusters with at most 180 organisations on the UPR reporting process. We held Bi-lateral Meetings with the UN Office, EU Delegation, British High Commission, Netherlands Embassy, Swedish Embassy, Norwegian Embassy and Austrian Cooperation, USAID.

Whilst the biggest half of last year was compounded with COVID-19 effects, we worked with HRDs to defy odds by adapting a virtual working modality and held 18 coordination meetings with close to 422 organisations to generate consensus on their thematic issues. Geographically in adding context to the UPR, we convened five virtual regional consultative meetings with close to 243 organisations

We undertook a robust media campaign in the lead up to the 2021 general elections to emphasise the need for protection of HRDs

during the electoral process and also across the UPR process in the later half of the year. We ensured the talkshows were collaboratively undertaken with various partners inclusive of ISER, FHRI, LASPNET, FIDA, UWONET, ACTV to raise awareness on the recommendations in their reports.

Across the year, we saw gradual erosion of the operating space of NGOs with the suspension of DGF, a core basket fund for both state and non-state actors. To date, the DGF remains indefinitely suspended at the expense of NGOs like ours that depend on the funds it provides to ensure we deliver on our mandate. Civic space challenges were for the first time very glaring for all to see. For example, we saw suspension of close to 54 NGOs by the regulator, the NGO Bureau. In our view, we felt that the matter could have been handled differently in furthering a good working relationship between the NGO Bureau and NGOs. To date most of these NGOs remain under suspension while others have had their suspension lifted.

As we came to the close of the year, we witnessed a sharp attack on HRDs working on Environmental rights particularly the extractives sector. Six [6] AFIEGO staff were arrested under unknown charges and to date remain without charge but have to report to Police for bond. During the year, we extended close to 180 protection grants to HRDs across the country.

We launched the Civic Space Index, a maiden CSO mechanism to track the pattern of Civic space trends and developments. A useful resource for CSO preparedness to respond to emerging civic space challenges.

Just the other day, we were in the Rwenzori sub-region in the remote districts of Ntoroko, Bundibugyo, Kasese and Kabarole in our re-tooling exercise. We had an opportunity to see first hand the challenges of HRDs in the grassroots districts. We were able to handover some equipment to these organisations.

Like I have mentioned before, the NCHRD-U values the important work that these local organisations do. It is at the core of our work—they 'are the backbone of our own work. Supporting these organisations to adapt to the digital age is a very important aspect of our work including development of a vibrant movement of HRDs.

As we come to the end of our strategic period and prepare to begin a new five year strategic period, we pledge to consolidate gains and draw lessons from challenges towards ensuring that protection of HRDs is streamlined. We will also work to ensure that legislation that provides recognition of HRDs is at the core of our work.

I acknowledge the support of all stakeholders both local and international towards sustaining protection for HRDs



Robert. R. Kirenga

Executive Director

Context: Situation of HRDs in 2021

The year 2021 was characterized with a mix of highs and lows in the HRD fraternity. At the on-set, it was marred by heightened electoral violence that contributed to the shrinking civic space. Additionally, the second wave of COVID-19 led to another lockdown characterized with disproportionate restrictions with a sharp effect on civic space. With the looming lockdown, the NCHRD-U strengthened use of virtual engagements and conducted several UPR cluster and regional meetings online as well as pertinent trainings on legal compliance, anti- money laundering and other compliance requirements for NGOs and CBOs.

2021 was an electoral year that presented unique issues for HRDs among which were the heightened arrests, trumped up charges, kidnaps and in some cases forced disappearances. The NCHRD-U aware of the restrictions and civic space concerns set out to monitor anticipated human rights violations and abuses against HRDs during 2021 elections, however the electoral monitors faced a number of challenges. Notable among the challenges experienced was the delay of accreditation and in some cases failure by the Independent Electoral Commission of Uganda. Despite the NCHRD-U having submitted the application in time and provided all details of its electoral observers, the process was very bureaucratic and overly unclear. This made it impossible to pursue the matter with certainty. Ultimately, the NCHRD-U opted to engage in the electoral process as simply HRDs who have the mandate to monitor observance of human rights. This affected the level of vigilance on the part of monitors of the entire electoral process and kept a distance on the tally centres as access to gazetted polling areas was limited to only personnel accredited by the Electoral Commission. Similarly, many other organisations such as the NGO Forum, UWONET and other grassroot organisations such as MIRAC, Twerwaneho Listeners' club were affected.

The NCHRD-U observed the pre-polling period and issued several statements on the campaign process that was marred by arbitrary arrest of candidates, intimidation of voters, limitations in terms of campaign time and venues especially on the side of mainly the opposition candidates, extrajudicial killings, and media censorship. According to the reports shared by HRDs who monitored and observed elections especially in Isingiro, Hoima and Kasese, many faced a lot of intimidation, arrests, detention during the presidential elections and local government elections.

Throughout last year, the NCHRD-U engaged in continuous training of HRDs on monitoring and documentation and this was very helpful to HRDs in the regions. The Coalition through its Referral Network System established a Rapid Response Task Force team to respond to HRD cases during the electoral period. As one of the Rapid Response Strategies the rapid

Legal response mechanism was developed where information of the pool of legal service providers and stand by lawyers were enlisted in the Referral Directory to ensure HRDs at risk in need of legal support were quickly attended to when in contact or in conflict with the law. The NCHRD-U adopted a human rights monitoring tracker that was used to collect and compile all the related human rights issues around the election period and the entire year.

During 2021 the operating space of HRDs continued to narrow. The top three abused rights and freedoms were the freedom of expression, media and digital freedoms; freedom of assembly; and the rule of law. There was a clampdown on expression rights evidenced by the Internet shutdown that affected grossly the work of HRDs thus frustrating communication and information flow. Three cases of brutalization of journalists were recorded in Nebbi, Mityana and Wakiso on election days. The Government and its security apparatus continued to use disproportionate force that resulted into violence, including torture and ill-treatment, forced disappearance and kidnaps targeting opposition leaders and sometimes HRDs during electoral contests. Most of the violations of the civic space rights were associated with the Uganda Police Force, Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF) and the National Bureau for NGOs. Throughout the reporting period, citizen participation and peaceful assemblies were overly politicized which made the civic activities risky and the HRDs could not organize or go to peaceful assemblies because of fear of arbitrary arrest, fear of

teargas and bullets. (Uganda Civic Space Index 2021). In response to some of these violations, the NCHRD-U established a national referral network and a fully-fledged protection mechanism that has supported HRDs at risk.

the NGO legal operating environment was very restrictive. The suspension and halting of operations of 54 NGOs and civil society organizations by the NGO Bureau was a major issue that the NCHRD-U took on to raise awareness to selected organizations on

legal compliance requirements.

Organisations like Chapter Four Uganda have elected to utilise courts of law to challenge actions of the NGO Bureau which in their view deemed unfair and disproportionate.



Journalists targeted by security agents at the UN-OHCHR Offices [Source- Bukedde NewsPaper]



A military police officer chases New Vision journalist Henry Sekanjako who was covering a petition handover at the UN-OHCHR headquarters in Kololo

1. Our 2021 performance

1.0. Capacity building



HRDs from across Uganda reached with capacity building in 2021



62

Organisations equipped with mobile phones and recorders



56

Journalists oriented into a community of practice



82

NGOs and CBOs' capacity built in legal compliance



5

Organisational risk assessments undertaken in Busoga, Sebei, Karamoja, Bakedi and South Buganda reaching 110 NGOs



94

Benefited from a monitoring, documentation and reporting training on elections violations for NCHRD-U staff and HRDs in Busoga, Teso and Bugisu



15

Organisations in Rwenzori sub-region benefit from an equipment retooling exercise



"As the region prepared for the 2021 general elections, we identified the major challenge faced by HRDS in the Karamoja sub-region was how to monitor, document and report human rights violations against HRDS. An orientation meeting organized by the NCHRDU was very instrumental in equipping HRDS especially the youth from the Youth Forum for Social Justice with skills and tools to collect, verify and report information during the elections. Furthermore, the specialized trainings in safety and security, monitoring, documenting and reporting have enabled the organization streamline internal systems especially in terms of individual and organizational risk management."



**Ogira Charles Donaldson –Coordinator Youth
Forum
for Social Justice, Abim District**

Under the capacity building department, the consistent focus is to enhance the capacity of HRDs to improve their safety and working environment as specified under NCHRD-U's strategic objective 2. The coalition strived to strengthen the protection, safety and security of HRDs in Uganda at an individual and organisational level. As a result of the various initiatives, the Coalition was able to extend capacity building initiatives to 357 HRDs drawn from across Uganda throughout 2021. Key capacity building initiatives implemented are highlighted below;

1.1. Orientation Workshop for Community of Practice for journalists

Across the 2021 general elections, the NCHRD-U observed increasing attacks towards Journalists. In a strategic move, the NCHRD-U oriented and trained 56 journalists (24 Female, 32 Male) on safe and secure practices they could adopt whilst they undertake their work. In this workshop, journalists had an opportunity to learn further the concept of Human Rights Defending (HRD) ,

review and shared experiences. As a result of the engagement, a Community of Practice (CoP) for journalists was formed: The community will have the ability to speak for itself and members will be able to share experiences and build relationships to learn from and with each other. The COP will be a strategic intervention through which the secretariat will work with key partners such as the Innovation Hub, Human Rights Network for Journalists, Freedom of Expression Hub and CIPESA to continue extending protection support to Journalists.

1.2. Train, Engage and Equip HRDs (Monitoring, Documentation and Reporting during elections (Busoga, Teso, Bugisu))

Ahead of the 2021 general elections, the secretariat utilizing its findings "Democracy on Trial" tailored specialized trainings with selected HRDs in monitoring, documentation and reporting of electoral related human rights violations and abuses. In January, NCHRD-U held trainings in Busoga, Teso and Bugisu sub-regions aimed at equipping HRDs with skills in monitoring,

documenting, reporting and investigating of human rights violations and abuses against HRDs during and after the electoral cycle. It also reflected the need for safety and security management for HRDs within the sub-regions. It also provided guidelines on how cases of abuse/violation were tracked through the human rights violation tracker that was used to gather information during and after elections. The trainings were an opportunity to popularize and equip the national rapid response taskforce with strategic tools to respond to HRD issues during and after elections. Following the prior engagement, the Coalition procured and equipped the project beneficiaries with phones and recorders. The equipment was to be used for data collection and reporting of HRD issues and indeed, the HRDs used the gadgets to document, and report on human rights violations during elections and after.

1.3. Referral network Strengthening Workshops in Teso & Bukedi sub-regions

The capacity building team continued to work collaboratively with the protection team to strengthen the Referral network regional nodes. 2 trainings were undertaken in Teso and Bukedi on the concept of referral networks and as a result regional referral committees were established. The purpose of the Referral committees is to coordinate response, have a rural based support system for HRDs when faced with threats and targeted attacks and bring services closer to the HRDs at the grass root level. The meetings are platforms for the grass root HRDs to network, share experiences, progress and updates of the network system, popularize the HRD concept in their communities, discuss contextual issues, draw strategies of resilience and capacity gaps. The meetings also foster accountability especially when handling cases of HRDs at risk and collaboration of the grass root HRDs.

1.4. Staff Workshop on Monitoring, Documentation and Reporting

NCHRD-U deployed close to 150 human rights monitors country wide and each team was supervised by a staff from the secretariat. As such it was critical to build capacities of 11 staff secretariat staff in strengthening their skills in monitoring, documentation and reporting of human rights violations and abuses as part of the National HRD Emergence response mechanism. This enabled them to monitor and offer support to HRDs who were required to monitor elections across the country. The Workshop was a refresher for some staff but introductory to the rest of the staff interacting with the process for the first time.

1.5. Legal Compliance and Awareness Knowledge Exchange Workshop

In September, the capacity building team organized and held an online legal compliance session which attracted 42 NGO and 40 representatives of CBOs. Members present discussed legal compliance



Human Rights Defenders from the Bugisu sub-region with their mobile phones and recorders ready to proceed to monitor elections

and specifically NGO registration, filling of returns, and NGO/CBO incorporation among others. The workshop was facilitated by a representative from Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA) who took participants through all issues related to FIA and anti-money laundering crimes with emphasis on what NGOs should do in compliance

1.6. Organizational Risk Assessment

We carried out 5 risk assessment exercises in the different sub-regions inclusive of Busoga, Sebei, Karamoja, Bukedi and southern Buganda. The assessments were geared towards assessing; the existing safety and security measures and protocols in place for HRDs, the existing risks, vulnerabilities and capacities for HRDs, the existing response mechanisms available for HRDs at risk, protection needs of HRDs in these sub-regions. This informed specific interventions towards enhancement of safety and security for HRDs. In total, 110 HRD organisations benefited from the assessment exercise.

1.7. Retooling of 15 HRD organizations

The Coalition provided security gadgets including security cameras, monitors, information management gadgets including laptops, flash desks, external hard drives, laptop desk locks, anti-virus software and digital security tips to 15 HRD organizations in Rwenzori sub-region. In the face of the pandemic, a consignment of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) inclusive of face masks and sanitizers were distributed to all organisations visited in districts of Kabarole, Kasese, Bundibugyo and Ntoroko.



Secretariat staff in a mock-up exercise during a training on MDR.



UPR Africa's Gilbert Onyango facilitates a session on engaging the United Nations Human Rights Council at the CSO UPR pre-sessions [November,2021]



The NCHRD-U conducted a risk assessment exercise at Karamoja Anti-Corruption Coalition in Karamoja sub-region

"In increasingly fragile civic space, protection of Human Rights Defenders for us was a priority"



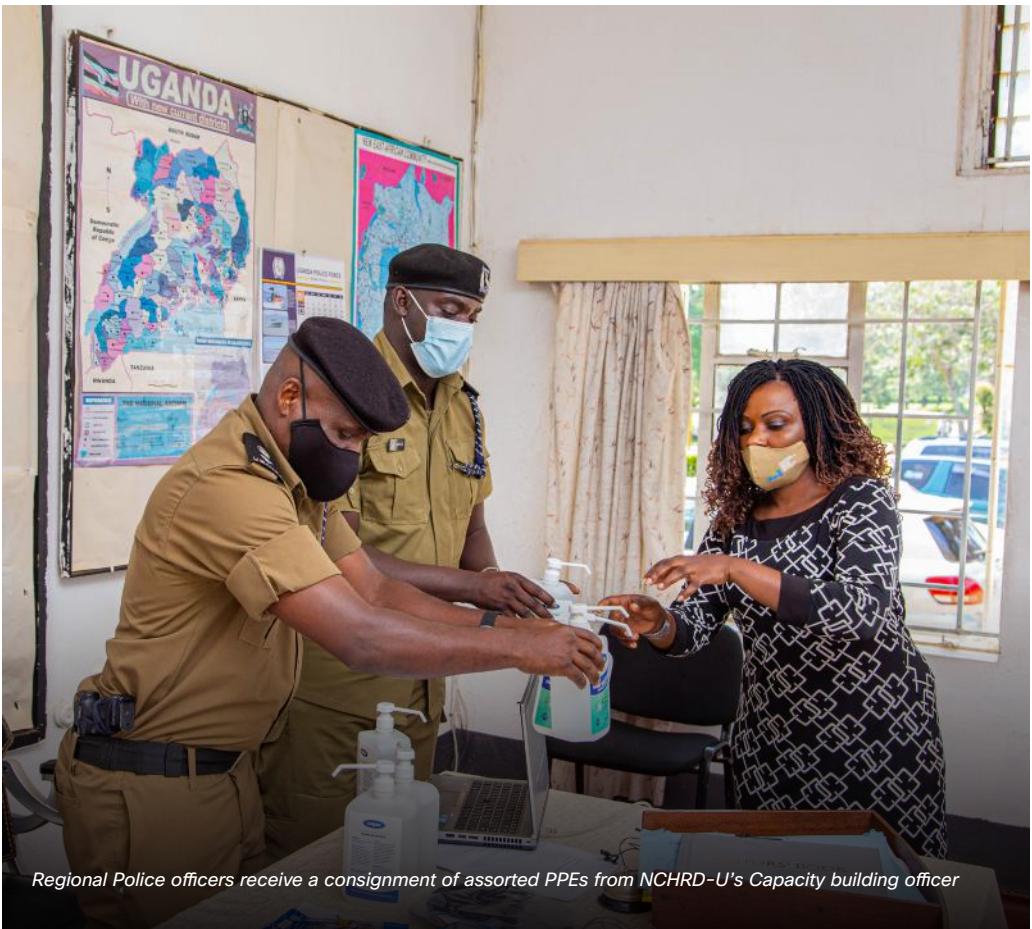
Security gadgets to enhance the security of the Alliance for development offices being handed over to the Executive Director Charles Masumbuko with an assortment of PPEs.



District Union of Disabled persons in Kasese receives a laptop and assorted PPEs to further facilitate the organisation's shift to digital adaptation.



Matongo lost land recovery organisation in Bundibugyo receives a laptop and assorted PPEs



Regional Police officers receive a consignment of assorted PPEs from NCHRD-U's Capacity building officer

"In increasingly fragile civic space, protection of Human Rights Defenders for us was a priority"





Robert R Kirenga makes a presentation at the French -Africa pre-summit CSO engagement hosted by the French Embassy in Uganda



A section of NCHRDU secretariat staff with the newly elected speaker of the National Youth Parliament Hon.Ezra Ambansiize [September,2021]

2. Protection and emergency response



Under the protection and emergency response program, NCHRD-U undertook several strategic protection interventions to include: disbursement of the Urgent Protection Fund to support HRDs at immediate risk through the protection desk, conducted solidarity visits to several HRDs at risk, held referral network meetings with the case handlers of the member organizations, Protection Committee meetings, attended security working group meeting for the Sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) HRDs.

2.0. Disbursement of the protection and emergency fund.

According to the reports shared by HRDs who monitored and observed elections especially in Isingiro, Hoima, Kasese. They faced a lot of intimidation, arrests, detention during the 2021 presidential and local government elections. 30 HRDs reported cases of intimidation, 9 reported arrests, and 15 reported cases of assault. Through the emergency fund,

the Coalition provided legal support, medical and psychosocial support, welfare refreshments and toiletries to 27 HRDs.

The Coalition through its Referral Network System established a Rapid Response Task Force team to respond to HRD cases during the Election period. As one of the Rapid Response Strategy the rapid Legal response mechanism was developed where information of the pool of legal service providers and stand by lawyers were enlisted in the Referral Directory to ensure HRDs at risk in need of legal support were quickly attended to when in contact or in conflict with the law.



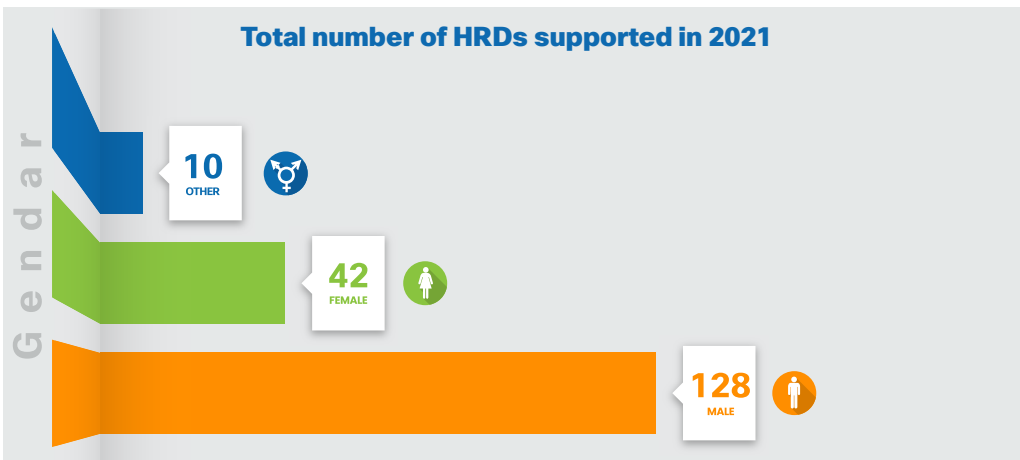
"We were arrested on election day during the presidential elections. The arrest had a huge impact on our mental health. We as an organization could not have sailed through without the support from the NCHRDU. The Coalition organized a group psycho-social session and we've since walked the journey of mental recovery together."

**Isabella Akiteng -
Femme Forte**



"The team that supported us during elections especially in Mbarara, Isingiro and Ntungamo districts enabled us reach out to several HRDs who had been arrested and beaten during election monitoring. We were able to extend support on time majorly medical support. The team provided us with tips on how best to monitor, document and report human rights violations. This is a skill we generally need in our daily work."

**Komugisha Joviah Matsiko
- Focal Person Western Sub-region**



The graph provides a summary of the number of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) that received emergency protection support from the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders-Uganda in the year 2021 which totals 180 HRDs (128 Male, 42 Female, 10 Key populations community). Support extended included psycho-social, relocation, medical support and legal support.

With the heightened shrinking civic space, most HRDs supported were working with the thematic areas continuously under attack such as; journalists, women, land and environmental rights defenders, civil and political rights, pro-democracy activists, key population community and youth rights.

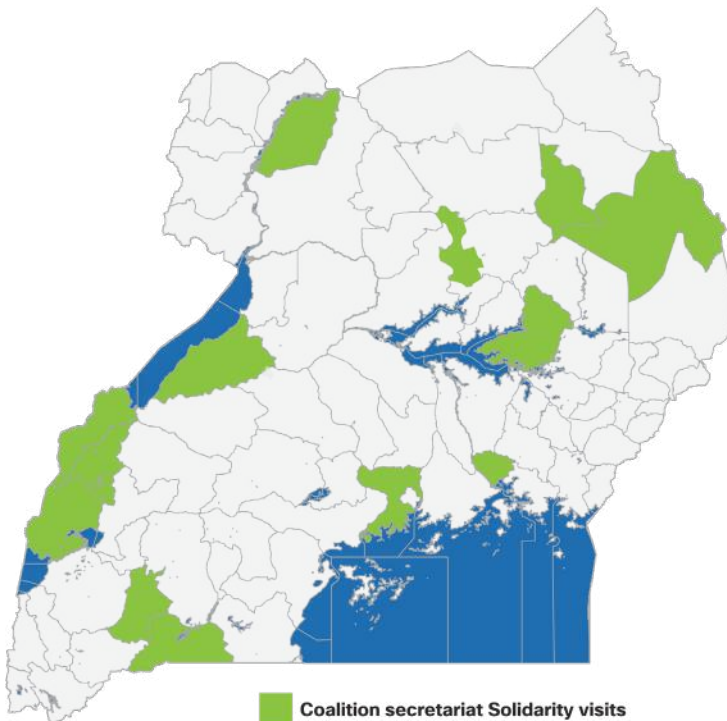
2.1. Establishment of Regional Referral Network Committees

In an effort to improve effectiveness and efficiency in the provision of emergency support and case management especially at the grass root level, the NCHRD-U established 2 Regional Referral Networks with 2 Regional Committees in; Teso and Bukedi subregions. The purpose of the committee is to coordinate response, have a rural based support system when faced with attacks and bring services closer to the HRDs at the grass root level. The meetings are platforms for the grass root HRDs to network, share experiences, progress and updates of the network system, popularize the HRD concept in their communities, discuss contextual issues, draw strategies of resilience and capacity gaps. The meetings also foster accountability especially when handling cases of HRDs at risk and collaboration of the grass root HRDs.

2.2. Solidarity Visits

Solidarity visits are strategic protection initiatives where the Coalition responds to the issues affecting HRDs. It is also a response and an advocacy tool used to verify information to ensure accurate reporting on the situation of HRDs in a given place and situation. It gives an opportunity to engage other stakeholders to ensure protection of HRDs when in need.

Fifty-Nine (59) solidarity visits were conducted in the regions of Kampala (10), Wakiso (1), Lira (1), Kalaki (1), Hoima (8), Soroti (7), Kasese (6), Mbarara (5), Adjumani (1), Isingiro (3), Mbarara (3) Jinja (7), Bundibugyo (1) Napak (3), Moroto (2), Abim (1), Fortportal (1) districts.



2.3. Assessment of the protection needs and existing mechanisms for SOGI HRDs in Uganda

The Coalition in fostering one of its major objectives to improve protection mechanisms, safety and security of HRDs in Uganda individually and at organizational level, conducted an assessment of the protection needs and existing response mechanisms for key population Human Rights Defenders

in Uganda. The research findings will be used to support and help streamline protection support to key population HRDs and improve response towards this specific thematic cluster. The major aim is to provide a robust, structured and inclusive complimentary emergency support to key population HRDs in dire need, to assist them to effectively continue their work.



Notably, the support from Coalition during the presidential elections was impactful for us as HRDS in Gulu especially women. For instance, we managed to immediately reach out to women that had been arrested. The roving team quickly stepped to reach out to the team and secured their release.

Pamela Angwech
- Gulu Women Economic Development and Globalization

A CCTV camera being installed for one of our partners in Kasese as one way of improving the organisation's physical security. [October,2021]



Awardees



"I'm the Coordinator for United Organization for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU). An NGO that was started by the Batwa themselves and based in Kisoro DistriVct- South west Uganda, operating so far in 8 districts where the Batwa live. I have been coordinating UOBDU for the last 21 years to- date, helping them to address their land problems and to have sustainable alternative livelihoods. My work is characterized with patience and tolerance. Through my advocacy work I have managed to bring the Batwa voice at all levels including international level"

States Ms. Zaninka Penninah

2021 Human Rights Defender of the Year: Ms. Zaninka Penninah



Annually, we recognize Human Rights Defenders that exhibit tenacity, consistency and resilience whilst they undertake their legitimate human rights work. The awards were conceived jointly with our partners Defend Defenders at the onset of COVID-19 as one way to summon resilience and persistence within the HRD fraternity. The awards come with a recognition plaque and a small stipend to winners in the different categories. In 2021, Zaninka Penninah emerged the most outstanding Human Rights Defender in Uganda. She also doubled as the overall HRD in Southern Uganda.

Incredible Human Rights Defenders were equally awarded for their outstanding work;

Overall Winners

Central -Robert Mugisa



Robert has creatively used the art of music to advocate for human rights across the Human Rights landscape. He discusses topical issues through dialogues, radio and TV talkshows and offers legal assistance to HRDs and general citizenry. As a personal initiative, Robert writes, composes and has music produced to advocate for human rights promotion and protection in Uganda.

Northern-Pamela Angwech



Pamela Judith Angwech is the Executive Director at Gulu Women's Economics Development and Globalization. She is a human rights activists and founder of Women's Right organization who has defended the Rights of many victims of LRA war and vulnerable women in Northern Uganda.

Eastern-Akiiso Joseph



Joseph Akiiso works with media for Transformative Advocacy. He has trained human rights community monitors, has been a trainer for the security officers and the media in good practices for human rights promotion and protection. Joseph has created has created a community of practice for journalists who discuss human rights issues.



Western -Kakonge Apollo Lee

Lee is an outspoken HRD and anti-corruption activist in western Uganda. He is the Executive Director of Western Ankole Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) a citizen's organisation operating in Bushenyi.



Post Humous Award-late Hon. John Mark Lomeri

"Over the years, John Mark Lomeri has been at the forefront of fighting for the rights of the I.K people. He was born in April, 1959. He went the extra mile to take a course in I.K language

ophography. His leadership kept issues of the local communities at National level with more inclusive programming from local government and central government increasingly being extended to the I.K. We remember and celebrate his contribution to the Human Rights Defenders Agenda for the little time we engaged with John Mark. May his legacy continue."



Hassan Shire handovers the Outstanding Human Rights Defender-Western Uganda Award to Apollo Lee Kakonge

3. Advocacy and networking



Towards the achievement of strategic objective 3 enhancing advocacy, research and visibility of issues regarding the safety and working environment for HRDs, the Advocacy and Networking programme focused on strengthening coordination, networking and collaboration within NCHRD-U members and among other stakeholders for concerted response toward the safety and secure working environment for HRDs in Uganda. Across 2021, the programme continued to consolidate successes in advancing policy advocacy, credible thematic research building grassroots ties, networking platforms and media campaigns for the protection of

HRDs. NCHRD-U worked to enhance advocacy and public engagements to secure recognition of HRDs in a safe and conducive working environment through several initiatives as outlined below.

3.1. National advocacy

Convening the CSO National Stakeholders' Forum on the UPR

In February 2021, held CSO National Stakeholders' Forum. This was to strengthen the Coalition, ratify the decisions of the cluster



Uganda People's Defence Forces Political Commissar Major General Henry Masiko joins Ministry of Foreign Affairs Daphine Nyanduri and NCHRDU's Robert R Kirenga at the launch of the CSO UPR 3rd Cyle roadmap [February, Silver Springs Bugolobi]



With the leadership of Defenders protection initiative, we participated in a consultative meeting with the Human Rights committee of parliament to present the Civil Society position on the need for the human rights defenders bill to be immediately passed into law



Lyandro Komakech presents the final consultative report on the Human Rights Defenders bill to the human rights committee of Parliament.

heads in the creation of new and merger of existing clusters; review and adoption of the UPR 3 CSO roadmap and any other matters arising. The meeting attracted close to 160 NGOs drawn from across Uganda. Representatives from Uganda's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Uganda Human Rights Commission, Uganda Police Force, Uganda People's Defence Forces participated in the meeting sharing with HRDs their specific role in the UPR. MOFA pledged to collaborate with the NCHRD-U to ensure strengthened CSO-Government collaboration on the forthcoming 3rd cycle UPR process. The meeting successfully received, adopted the operationalization of the CSO UPR Roadmap.

Universal Periodic Review- 3rd Cycle



Robert R Kirenga addresses representatives from the diplomatic community and the UPR CSO National stakeholders forum

Strategic Donor CSO-Development Partners Roundtable

Ahead of the rolling out of the CSO Roadmap on the 3rd cycle UPR CSO engagements, the NCHRD-U secretariat working with the stakeholders' forum held a Strategic Round Table discussion on the UPR with Development Partners to share the CSO Roadmap and seek possible collaboration and issues of mutual interest around Uganda's UPR. The meeting was organised with the purpose of updating the Diplomatic Missions on the CSO UPR process and the strategic role of CSOs and share the CSO Third Cycle roadmap with a view of stimulating a discussion on the areas with funding gaps for resource mobilization. The key recommendation from the meeting was to undertake bi-lateral engagements with the diplomatic corp. In April-June 2021, held bilateral meetings with the UN Office, EU Delegation, British High Commission, Netherlands Embassy, Swedish Embassy, Norwegian Embassy and Austrian Cooperation, USAID. Also, held further meetings with the Traditional donors: Dan Church Aid, EWMI, American Bar Association and Small Media UK

Re-constitution and Consolidation of UPR Thematic clusters

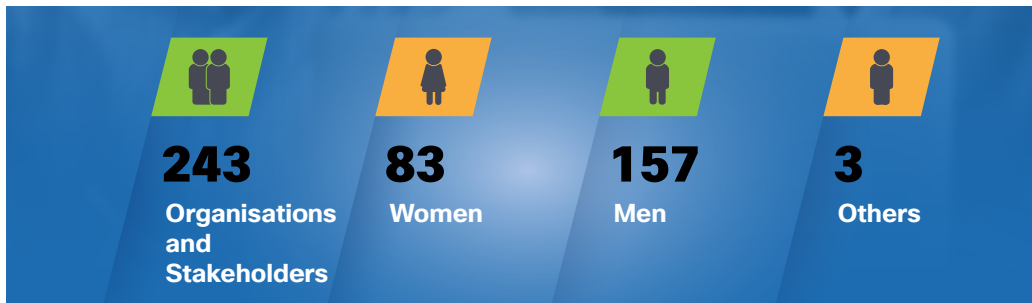
The Coalition undertook a process to constitute and consolidate clusters through notifying new cluster conveners. Interested newer organizations with particular interest in the NCHRD-U to join clusters of interest. Confirmed and expanded clusters from 16 to 22. In preparation for the UPR review, we convened sixteen (16) cluster meetings to revitalize their planning and preparations to engage with the process.

Strategic Engagement with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights

Across April to May 2021, held UPR Stakeholders' Forum outreach to particularly government ministries, departments and agencies. These were a couple of activities aimed at reaching out to various government entities key in the process of UPR to strengthen collaboration between them and the Coalition now hosting the FORUM. The focus was on MOFA & MOJICA. As a result of these engagements, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights that coordinates government's reporting on human rights at regional and international level co-opted the NCHRD-U as the CSO representative. It enabled representatives of the CSO National Stakeholders' forum to participate in government consultations and also engage the government on its state report. On 1st July, 2021, NCHRD-U, Convened CSOs to participate in the governmental consultations on the state's report on progress in implementation of UPR recommendations. This was a great space for advocacy and also for CSOs to appreciate the kind of report the government shall make to be able to make an appropriate response.

In November 2021, the NCHRD-U Executive Director led a delegation to engage the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the post report submission process. The MOFA delegation was led by Ambassador Arthur Kafeero, Director Legal and International relations.

Structured virtual regional consultations with grassroots Human Rights Defenders



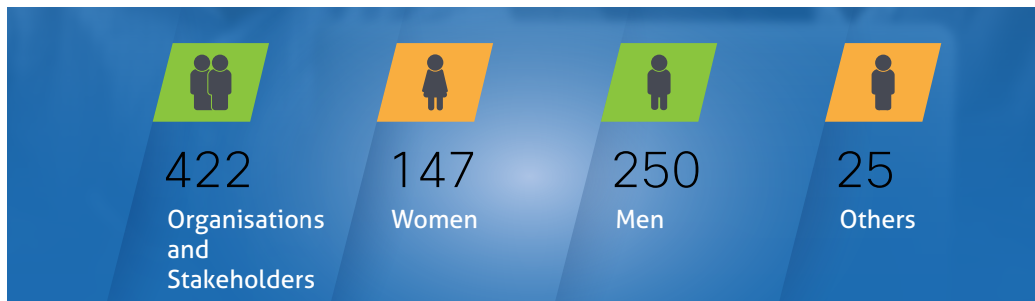
Human rights defenders working on the Disability rights UPR report in a discussion on key issues [May, 2021]

In the period June-July 2021, NCHRD-U structured regional CSO Consultations on the UPR. In total the NCHRD-U facilitated 5 Regional Consultative Meetings on the UPR with particular focus on regional specific emerging issues undertaken with CSOs in these regions and also share the road Map to UPR 2021/2022. Over 243 HRDs engaged virtually in this process and region specific issues identified that were included in the final CSO Stakeholders report. These meetings were important because grassroots HRDs work within communities and therefore best understand their needs, challenges and strategic issues. Also, it was important for regional specific meetings because we were aware that not all regions were homogeneous in terms of pressing human rights issues they are confronted with on a daily basis.



Stakeholders at the Strategic Donor Roundtable on the UPR organized by the NCHRDU [April,2021 Sheraton hotel,Kampala]

Strategic Thematic Cluster meetings and report submissions



Over the period 1st-15th July,2021, the secretariat engaged robustly with all the clusters in simultaneous strategic cluster meetings to firm up thematic reports but also to ensure quality assurance in the quality of reports submitted. Validation exercises were held with each thematic cluster to ensure the highest level of quality reports but also that all issues highlighted had been thoroughly documented. Subsequently, a national validation exercise was conducted to validate the Civil Society National Stakeholders report. As a result and for the first time Uganda Civil society submitted 22 Thematic Cluster Reports and one National Stakeholder report ahead of the 15th July deadline at the United Nations Human Rights Council in the context of a very challenging COVID-19 period globally.

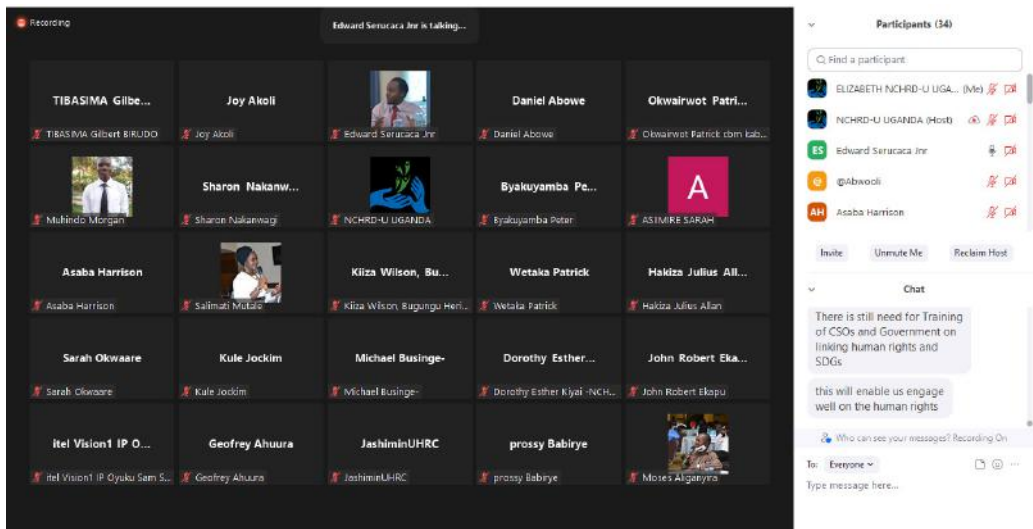


Dr. Roswitha Kremser, Head of Office Austria Development Cooperation officially closes the week long in-country UPR pre-sessions [November, 2021]

The Nexus between the UPR and SDGs regional workshop

In September, 2021, NCHRD-U organized a virtual regional dialogue meeting for HRDs in the Albertine region. The purpose of the meeting was deliberate on the linkage between the UPR and the Sustainable Development Goals and the contribution of HRDs

The meeting deliberated on UPR recommendations on human rights issues arising out of the region in relation to the sustainable development goals. The meeting attracted 32 (M), 15(W) members. Key recommendations from the engagement were increased awareness on SDGs through partnership with the Coalition of SDGs at the office of the Prime Minister, localizing the SDGs especially in context with grassroot HRDs in the Albertine region to ensure the region's contribution towards their attainment.



UPR IN-Country Pre-sessions Conference



In November, 2021, the NCHRD-U collaboratively with the Office of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for human rights, CEHURD and Defend Defenders organised an in-country UPR conference. The four day event was structured to generate an open discussion on previous UPR cycles and share experience. It was also important to reflect on reports and synthesize them further into fact sheets for purposes of advocacy and lobbying. The Pre-sessions conference climaxed into dialogue with representatives of the diplomatic missions represented in the country. A joint policy brief on concise CSO recommendations was released

on that day after consensus building within Civil Society. The four day engagement was formally closed by the Austrian Development Cooperation Head of Office Dr. Roswitha Kremser who acknowledged the important role of Civil Society in the holding government accountable for obligations made at the leading human rights mechanism; UN Human Rights Council.

Media Campaign on the Universal Periodic Review Process

NCHRD-U under the auspices of the CSO National UPR stakeholders Forum organized 5 live



TV Talk shows on Uganda's leading TV stations; NTV [2], NBS [2], UBC TV [1]. The talk shows were based on the most pressing human rights issues inclusive of Access to Justice, Transitional Justice², Civil Political rights, Women's rights and Economic and social cultural rights.

On 24th August, 2021, NCHRD-U organized a live TV talkshow on UBC-TV to discuss the Civil political rights questions. The show panelists included a representative from the Uganda Women's Network, African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda. The early morning show headlined the question of torture and women's rights and the progress thus far by the Uganda Government.

On the 26th August, 2021 on NBSTV³, NCHRD-U with the support of GIZ-Uganda hosted a talk show on Uganda's Universal Periodic Review live on NBS TV on 26th August 2021 at 3:00-4:00pm in NBS TV current affairs studio under the theme "Assessing Uganda's Human Rights progress in the context of Access to Justice bringing together panelists from FIDA and the Uganda Human rights commission.

On 31st August, 2021 on NTV⁴, NCHRD-U collaboratively with ISER Uganda and the Uganda

Human Rights Commission held a live tv talk-show to contextualise developments in Uganda's progress on Economic Social cultural rights.

On 30th September, 2021, on NTV⁵, Collaboratively with the Uganda Human Rights Commission, NCHRD-U with the support of GIZ Uganda, held a talk show on the question of Transitional justice process under the theme, "Assessing Uganda's progress on the transitional justice process." International Centre for Transitional Justice having developed a Civil society report on transitional justice joined the conversation to provide context to the discussion. While there is progress to address questions of Transitional justice with amnesty commission in place and steps to re-integrate women and formal abductees

Documentary on the Civil Society UPR 3RD Cycle Journey

When the NCHRD-U took over coordination of the UPR process, one major issue that was realised was the limited body of institutional memory on the previous UPR processes. So the NCHRD-U commissioned a documentary to tell the story of the UPR and provide some documented evidence of CSO perspectives on the process-not withstanding participation of the state actors.



Uganda's Civil Society 3rd Cycle UPR Journey 2020 22 #UGUPR2022

Screengrab of an excerpt from the Documentary "Uganda Civil Society 3rd Cycle UPR Journey 2022"

3.2. Research

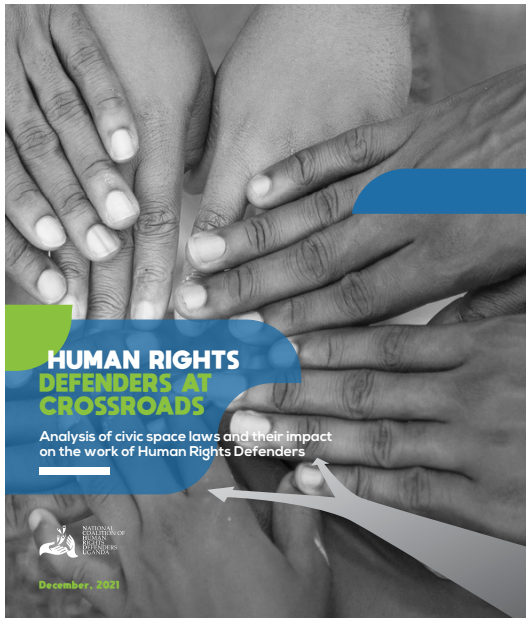
In 2021, we published 2 country-specific researches. The Coalition conducted both National specific and thematic research to inform its advocacy efforts nationally.

Uganda: Civic Space Index, 2021: Clawback clauses and impunity stifling freedoms.



The NCHRD-U published Uganda’s maiden Civic Space Index. It is the first Index of this nature published that reports on the perceptions, trends and prevailing Civic Space in the country. The data generated from the assessment was used to report on the state of affairs and give projections where

possible on the increasingly fragile Civic Space in Uganda



Human Rights Defenders at Crossroads:

Analysis of civic space laws and their impact on the work of Human Rights Defenders with specific interest on the period within the COVID-19 context was undertaken by the NCHRD-U. While a number of the laws are generally progressive and appear to give effect to the human rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 (as amended), a number of them contain repressive provisions that undermine the ability of human rights defenders, civil society organisations and political opposition groups from exercising the freedoms of association, expression, peaceful assembly and other civic space rights. This analysis reviews the legal framework of the identified laws and relevant court decisions on the laws.



Jointly with Center for Policy Analysis in a meeting with the Rt Hon Speaker of Parliament to discuss the Human Rights Defenders bill and the NCHRDU's coordination role of the UPR process [Parliament of Uganda April, 2021]

3.3. Policy Influence

In 2021, the NCHRDU-U continued collaborating with other NGOs on the urgent need for the Human Rights Defenders Bill to be passed into law. The law if passed into law will provide for the explicit recognition of the legitimate work of HRDs and ensure protection. While the bill had been read for the first time and nationwide consultations undertaken and the committee on human rights had concluded its scrutiny of the bill, parliament's term ran out before the second reading of the bill. A delegation from the NCHRDU-U met with the then Speaker of Parliament Rt Hon Rebecca Kadaga to further persuade her on the importance of passing the bill in as far as protection of HRDs was concerned. While she had agreed to prioritise the Bill, unfortunately, that would mean the business would not be carried forward to the next parliament. The NCHRDU-U will continue to work with partners in 2022 to revitalise the process and ensure the bill is brought back on the floor of parliament.

3.4. Annual General Assembly



NCHRDU staff at the Annual General Assembly

The NCHRDU-U held its 5th Annual General Assembly under the theme; "Uganda: Standing side by side with Human Rights Defenders in Uganda" The AGA is an accountability space where the secretariat reports to its membership. The AGA chaired by Hassan Shire received and adopted both the 2020

Annual progress report and the secretariat's financial statements. Members applauded the NCHRD-U for gradual growth and consistency on delivering on its coordination and protection role. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the NCHRD-U registered growth in the number of organisations subscribing.

3.5. Commemoration of International Human Rights Defenders Day 2021

As is the tradition, the NCHRD-U collaboratively with Defend Defenders held a day long commemoration of International Human Rights Defenders day 2021. The day is set aside globally to celebrate and profile the work of HRDs globally. Annually the NCHRD-U has been using that important space to convene HRDs to discuss emerging issues and agree on ways to respond to some of these emerging issues. It has also been an opportunity to award the most resilient HRDs at regional and national level through "The Human Rights Defenders Impact Awards". The 2021 AGA commemoration was held under the theme; "Defending Civic Space: Human Rights Defenders Voices at the centre.



3.6. Communication

In furthering its visibility, the NCHRD-U adopted a new branding style guide that focuses more on creativity, content development and visibility of the Coalition. In 2021, we had growth in our social media engagement and following. In creating awareness on the NCHRD-U's protection mandate, the secretariat rolled out two digital campaigns. At the start of the year, the coalition ran a campaign on the urgent need to protect HRDs during the 2021 general elections, also providing tips for vigilance, equally highlighting the coalitions avenues for response particularly the toll-free line and helplines. One of the campaigns was on the UPR under hashtag #UGUPR2022 that engaged close to 1,500,000 people across the campaign period. The online campaigns were conducted side by side with traditional media campaigns.

Press Conferences and Press releases

Over the last year, the NCHRD-U conducted four press conferences and issued 7 press releases on pressing HRD issues. In February, the coalition held a press conference to brief the public through the media on the current operating environment of Human Rights Defenders specifically highlighting pre and post polling HRD specific issues. The coalition secretariat and its strategic partners deployed a team of human rights monitors in nine sub-regions with a view of understanding the patterns, identifying HRD specific issues and purposes to hold a press conference to highlight emerging HRD concerns and draw attention of the relevant state and non-state actors towards protection of Human Rights Defenders. The NCHRD-U submitted a written memorandum to the Human Rights Committee of Parliament highlighting the observations and human rights concerns arising out of the 2021 general elections among some of the issues that had been raised in the sustained press engagements.





NATIONAL COALITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS UGANDA
ANNUAL REPORT 2021
PERIODIC REPORT

Enhancing Civic Space
HCRD Uganda
PR 2021



4. Challenges, Lessons learnt and forging forward through 2021

4.0. Challenges and lessons learnt

- a. The suspension of DGF posed a challenge of inadequate resource which hindered some of the operations of NCHRD-U. NCHRD-U was entirely dependent on DGF who were contributing a large amount of resource to the institution for both administrative purposes and activity implementation. This led to postponement of activities which were aimed at creating a safe and secure working environment for HRDs.
- b. The outbreak of the second wave of Covid-19 equally had devastating effects as the first wave. We were all required to change the way we were conducting business/activities nationally. We resorted to virtual platforms which required huge investment of time and internet costs to HRDs in remote areas given there intermittent internet connectivity yet most of these were our targeted audience.
- c. HRDs still have diverse protection needs that go beyond the current direct support of legal medical, relocation, financial support, rest and respite and psychological support which are reactionary measures rather than preventive. The ever-changing trends in the threats faced by HRDs require change in the response strategy in protection of HRDs and what the protection fund carter for, the Coalition will further fundraise in order to include the preventive strategies.
- d. Delay and deliberate denial of accreditation: Due to deliberate-late communication from the Independent Electoral Commission, the NCHRD-U failed to secure accreditation for her monitors. This affected the level of vigilance on the part of monitors of the entire electoral processes and kept a distance on the tally centers as they could not be allowed in without being accredited by the Electoral Commission.

- e. Due to the Covid'19 pandemic, HRDs have had diverse needs ranging from protection needs to also humanitarian needs that needed to be addressed which went beyond what the protection fund covered; legal and medical support and hence offering limitations to respond and accommodate their other needs like relocation, upkeep, safe transport. The HRDs needs and requests were geared towards Covid relief for survival unlike the work threats they faced.
- f. There are changing trends in the threats and strategies of attack on HRDs especially those working on governance, accountability and land rights which also call for new strategies of response to be included in the protection fund.
- g. HRDs also had high expectations of the response mechanism to address the Covid'19 related issues as they were faced with a challenge of humanitarian support, general welfare to support them travail through the pandemic season until when they are back onto their feet to work. The expectation that response would be inclusive in a holistic manner. The risks HRDs face affected and even extended to their family members either psychologically, physically and also financially. It is expected that the Coalition will include Covid relief and gender aspects while responding to them.
- h. There are gender /societal biases that exist for certain categories of HRDs especially the LGBTI, women and journalists. The biases include phobia, smear campaigns for the LGBTI, patriarchal perceptions and attitudes towards women and journalists are seen as opposition.
- i. The ever increasing restrictive legislation environment characterization by laws that shrink the working environment of HRDs through frivolous charges and use of certain laws like the Anti-money laundering Act and Anti-terrorism Act used to paralyze and frustrate the work of HRD organization by freezing their accounts and delaying any prosecution of the HRDs to keep them in limbo of their human rights work. The continuous misapplication of the laws governing the NGOs like the Public Order Management Act 2013, the NGO Registration Act 2014 still affects the day to day work of HRDs and their freedom of assembly, association and expression in all manner and forms.



Bilateral meeting between the NCHRDU leadership and Norway's Ms. Kjersti Lindoe Deputy Head of cooperation, Norwegian Embassy on Uganda's forthcoming UPR

Lessons learned

- i. Building relationships and maintaining partnerships is very integral in fulfilling our mandate. NCHRD-U continues to build strong alliances national and international that will lead to the attainment of its overall goal.
- ii. Embracing and investment in technology following the covid-19 outbreak is key to business continuity.
- iii. It was noted the men HRDs are more responsive to the Coalition activities compared to women HRDs and youth HRDs. The Coalition has no control over who the different organisations send to the different engagements and it intends to be deliberate and emphatic on the participation of women and youth HRDs.
- iv. Support the secretariat team to develop the technical capacities to encounter the ever-changing trends in the sector. The work benefits and remunerations will lead to retention of existing work force hence reducing turnover.
- v. Resource Mobilization. NCHRD-U is in process of developing a fundraising strategy to help in mobilization of resources internally and externally.
- vi. Media Engagements. NCHRD-U will continue to work with both press and electronic media to ensure that the mandate of NCHRD-U is well understood and felt in every corner of the country.

4.1. Recommendations and Way Forward

- a. The NCHRD-U will continue to fundraise more to ensure that the Protection desk continues to support HRDs and refer cases to partners.
- b. There is a need to strengthen regional networks in each region by capacitating with the necessary knowledge and materials to enable them become resource persons to their communities.
- c. There is need for a digital and cyber security training for HRD organizations in the different regions.

- d. Under our protection desk, we realize that there is need to have a flexible protection fund with emergency funds to cater for the diverse emergency situations of HRDs for holistic and timely response.
- e. With the changing trends in the threats and strategies of attack on HRDs, there is need to venture into more preventive strategies that will equip the HRDs when at risk.
- f. The NCHRD-U Protection desk will continue to conduct thorough assessments and refer cases to partners.
- g. Under our protection desk, we realize that there is need to have a flexible protection fund with emergency funds to cater for the diverse emergency situations of HRDs.

5. Institutional development

5.0. Monitoring, Evaluation and Documentation

In 2021, our internal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was geared towards an effective, integrated, and coherent programme framework, to deepen the impact of our work. We conducted one internal monitoring exercise, and evaluated our strategic plan. By the end of 2021, we had reached an average of 80% performance and the evaluation guided the development of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. To increase the effectiveness of our programmes, we also undertook follow-up and documentation processes. Additionally, we followed up with HRDs and HRD organizations in Busoga, Teso and Bugisu sub-regions that took part in our trainings and initiatives. We evaluated how they benefitted and what still needs to be improved. The conclusions were integrated into our planning and trainings.

5.1. Review of the Strategic Plan 2019 - 2021

NCHRD-U's Three-year Strategic plan ended December, 2021. The Coalition found it imperative that the status of its implementation is established. The review engagements were

attended by (47 -F, 54-M) representing all regions. The evaluation process entailed document study with a special focus on the current Strategic plan: 2019-2021, engagement with the Board of Directors (BoD), Coalition Secretariat staff, members of Thematic Technical Working Group and members of the Coalition. Summary findings indicated the following:

1. Recognition by Development partners and Diplomatic Missions as a competent NGO which can promote and protect the rights of the Human Rights Defenders hence, embracing them as their implementation partners;
2. Acknowledged by HRDs as an organization with capacity and the will to promote their work and protect them in due course of their work of human rights defending. This is reflected in the numbers of human rights defenders who have joined the Coalition and seeking to be members;
3. Increased understanding and appreciation of by the duty bearers of the work of the Coalition and that of HRDs;
4. Willingness of other Coalition and organizations the area of human rights to partners with the Coalition;
5. Recognition by the Government of Uganda that the work of the Coalition is not intended to tarnish its name. This is evidenced by giving them registration certificate and work permit by the NGO Registration Bureau.

The development of a 5 year Strategic plan is premised on the evaluation report.

5.2. Staff Development.



Ms Esther Kajura Head of Communications and Manager International Relations at the Financial Intelligence Authority receiving information documents about the Coalition from the Executive Director Mr Robert Kirenga. This was after an informative baraza to share with staff on anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism obligations for non-profit organizations. This took place on the 9th April 2021 at the NCHRDU offices

5.3. Partnership engagement

Visit of the Ambassador of the Royal Netherlands Embassy

H.E Karin Boven paid a courtesy call on the NCHRD-U secretariat. In the meeting, the leadership at the coalition offered a briefing on our current interventions with specific focus on the protection mandate and current role to coordinate CSO participation in the UPR. Since inception, the NCHRD-U has benefited from the strategic support of the Royal Netherlands Embassy channeled through our longstanding partners Defend Defenders. We invited the head of the Technical Thematic Working Group and Regional Focal Person from Kampala to bring their perspectives to the meeting and offer lived realities.



Partnership MOU with Uganda's National Youth Council

Uganda's population is largely youth below the age of 35 and therefore its critical to involve and engage youth in the human rights discourse. In 2021, the NCHRD-U signed a 3-5 year MOU with the leadership of the National Youth Council. The MOU sets out a clear plan of joint response on youth related human rights defenders issues but also joint action on emerging issues of human rights defenders that have a sharp effect on youth.



Security working group meetings organized by Defenders Protective Initiative (DPI)

The protection officer continued to participate and attend meetings of the security working group for the protection of SOGI Community across the year.

The Coalition is part of the Security working group hosted by DPI which is an initiative towards addressing issues affecting LGBTIQ HRDs and response strategies that are all inclusive of even the SOGI HRDs. The SWG provides a platform to coordinate response among the SOGI community, keep abreast of the security incidents and avoid duplication of services. The Coalition participated in 4 meetings organized to address the SOGI HRD issues and cases.

Exchange Visit by South Sudan Human Rights Defenders Network

NCHRD-U team led by the Program Manager met with a team from South Sudan and Non-Violent Peace Force to share some of the experiences of the coalition working with HRDs. The team was undertaking a second learning visit to understand how the NCHRD-U was progressing with its protection mandate.



A visiting delegation from the South Sudan Human Rights Defenders network to the secretariat for learning visit

Business and Human Rights Symposium

Resource rights convened the first Business and Human Rights symposium. The NCHRD-U participated and the Executive Director appeared on one of the panel discussions to situate the role of HRDs in business and human rights and why its important to ensure recognition of this role and work towards their protection. The symposium also laid focus on the Business and Human Rights Policy recently passed by the government of Uganda.



Robert R Kirenga makes a presentation at the 3rd Annual Symposium on Business and Human Rights on the need to mainstream HRD protection in the Sector

Annual Regional Probono day celebrations by The Uganda Law Society (ULS) 17th December 2021

The Uganda Law Society (ULS) organized and invited the Coalition to the Probono day celebrations held at both the Law Development Centre and other regions in the country under the theme: "Developing Probono Initiatives to strengthen access to justice in a post pandemic world". The objective of the event was to promote equality in access to justice for all. ULS is a board member of NCHRD-U and supports HRDs through its Probono advocates to support them access legal services such as bond and bail and legal advice.

The NCRD-U also got an opportunity to display the protection services provided to HRDs inclusive of legal services and also its staff got to participate in offering legal services to the to walk in clients on that day.



Staff from the Coalition participating in Probono day held on the 17th December 2021 at the Law Development Centre.

5.4. Board Members meeting

Members of the Board held four quarterly meetings to review both financial and program engagements and offer strategic direction.

6. Finance & administration

6.0. 2021 Financial status

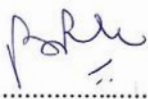
STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR NCHRD-U FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2021

Particulars	Notes	30.11.2021	30.11.2020
		UGX	UGX
Income			
Income	9.7	2,522,288,718	1,749,714,953
Total income		2,522,288,718	1,749,714,953
Expenditure			
Programme costs			
Protection Emergency Response	9.8.1	239,392,615	106,745,340
Capacity building	9.8.2	202,075,312	191,794,222
Advocacy in HRD issues	9.8.3	520,228,992	207,552,068
		961,696,919	506,091,630
Institutional strengthening			
Organizational structures	9.9.1	104,577,774	40,306,895
Administration	9.9.2	408,690,635	339,363,759
Payroll support	9.9.3	699,392,287	887,784,423
		1,212,660,696	1,267,455,077
Total expenditure		2,174,357,615	1,773,546,707
Net (surplus)/deficit for the year		347,931,103	(23,831,754)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FOR NCHRD-U AS AT 30.11.2021

Particulars	Notes	30.11.2021	30.11.2020
Non-current assets			
Property and equipment	9.2	91,492,726	116,080,937
		91,492,726	116,080,937
Current assets			
Project advances		82,000	77,300
Cash and cash equivalents	9.3	1,368,264,401	1,028,271,215
Total current assets		1,368,346,401	1,028,348,315
Total assets		1,459,839,127	1,144,429,452
Reserves & Liabilities			
Reserves			
Capital reserves	9.4	91,492,726	116,080,937
Revenue reserves	9.5	843,346,401	478,448,515
Total reserves		934,839,127	594,529,452
Current liabilities			
Differed income (ANY)	9.6	525,000,000	549,900,000
Total current liabilities		525,000,000	549,900,000
Total equity and liabilities		1,459,839,127	1,144,429,452

The financial statements set out on pages 9 to 11 were approved by NCHRD-U Management on 25/04/2022 and were signed on their behalf by:



.....

Mr. Robert Kirenga Rucogoza
Executive Director



.....

Ms. Margaret Sekaggya
Chairperson - BoD

6.1. Donors

In 2021, we received support from the following partners:

USAID/CSSA/East West Management Institute

DefendDefenders

American Bar Association

Innovation for Change

Royal Netherlands Embassy

Small Media Foundation

Democratic Governance Facility

GIZ-Uganda

Anonymous

Civil Rights Defenders

Freedom House

DanChurch Aid



6.2. Board Members (annex)

NAME		ORGANISATION	DISTRICT
Margaret Sekaggya	Chairperson	Human Rights Centre	Kampala
Robert Sempala	Vice -Chairperson	Human Rights Network for Journalists Uganda	Kampala
Yona Wanjala	Treasurer	Defenders Protection Initiative	Kampala
Biira Nasa	Member	Center for Innovation and Incubation Center.	Hoima
Margret Elem	Member	Lango Female ClanLeaders Association (LFCLA)	Lira
Clare Byarugaba	Member	Chapter Four Uganda	Kampala
Hassan Shire	Member	Defend Defenders	Kampala
Moses Okwalinga	Member	Uganda Law Society	Kampala
Gerald Kankya	Member	Twerwaneho Listeners Club	Kabarole

7. Technical Thematic Working Group

No.	Name	Organisation	Area of work	Region
1.	Jane Frances Oling	Women in Development Uganda	Women Rights	Oyam
2.	Bikeke Saimon	Umbrella Journalists of Kasese	Journalists	Kasese
3.	Jenipher Baitwamasa	Navigators for Development Association	Oil, extractives and natural resources	Hoima
4.	Real Raymond Twinamatsiko	Mbarara Rise Foundation	Sexual and Minority Rights	Mbarara
5.	Gad Semajeri	Batwa Development	Indigenous people	Kabale
6.	Winifred Mugambwa	Rights for Uganda Limited	HRDs	Central
7.	Ssenyonjo Suleiman	Kalangala Human Rights defenders	HRDs	Kalangala and greater Masaka
8.	Makweta Yusuf	Mbale Human Rights Defenders	HRDs	Eastern
9.	Jovia Matsiko	Kakyeeka Womens Group	women rights	Western
10	Anyolitho William	Life Concern Uganda	Governance & Accountability	Northern
11	Kaviri Ali	Youth Equality Centre	Youth	Wakiso
12	Elizabeth Kayanga	IDIWA -Iganga	PWDs	Iganga

7.0. Our Team (Annex)

Name	Designation
Robert. R. Kirenga	Executive Director
Sharon Nakanwagi	Program Manager
Andrew Lubanga	Finance Manager
Elizabeth Doreen Namuyanja	Monitoring and Evaluation officer
Prossy Babirye Wandera	Capacity Building Officer
Edward Serucaca	Advocacy and Networking Officer
Dorothy Esther Kiyai	Protection Officer
Joanitah Nabbaale	Administrative Officer
Frank Kigoye	Programme Assistant
Richard Engot	Transport Officer
David Muganwa	Care Taker
Jennifer Alum	Administrative Assistant

"Persistence in fragile Civic Space"

"In increasingly fragile civic space, protection of Human Rights Defenders for us was a priority"





“OHCHR engagement has equipped more than 300 civil society organisations and HRDs with knowledge and skills on human rights issues, reporting and advocacy at the international, regional and sub-regional levels.”

Javier Sanjuan Francisco,
Human Rights Officer OHCHR

Endnotes

- 1 <https://hrdcoalition.ug/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Democracy-on-Trial-Report.pdf>
- 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fhlnhHLnCW> last checked on 4th February,2022
- 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Z1mcRUCK-0&t=2s> last checked 16th January,2022
- 4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHKmxBX2hxw> Last checked 7th February,2022
- 5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fhlnhHLnCW&t=467s> last checked 6th February,2022

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