



NATIONAL  
COALITION OF  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
DEFENDERS  
UGANDA

# STRATEGIC PLAN

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2022 - 2026

**Abridged**



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## Acknowledgements

Development of this strategic plan would not have been possible without the commitment of our key stakeholders whose engagement and value input facilitated development of the change we collectively want to see, and the ways in which this change will happen, in this ever changing national and global operating context. We appreciate USAID/CSSA/EWMI for addressing the cost aspects of executing the task walking the journey with us. NCHRD secretariat staff have been exemplary in this effort, committing extra time and effort to the very end.

## Foreword

Over the years, National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders-Uganda has focused on making use of the constitutional provision under Article 38(2) that speaks to civic rights and activities by participating in peaceful activities to influence policies of government in terms of upholding the dignity and rights of every human rights defender(HRD).

With a mission to protect and promote the work of HRD's in a safe and secure environment through linkages with national, regional and international like-minded entities, our distinctive position is further testified by over 100-member organizations countrywide. As we stride forward into a decade of distinction, it is an opportune time for us to consolidate our strengths and identify opportunities for further development, so as to steer the organization to the next level of excellence through growth with regional networks established in the country.

After extensive achievements and lessons learnt from our previous implementations to enable us do better, a new Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 has been formulated. In the context of the changing governance, management, operation system and structures both on national and global competence in the human rights arena, we considered it a priority to further strengthen our mission including increased coordination, institutional and capacity building, advocacy and protection to strengthen our work to sustain HRD's noble work.

Part of this initiative includes leveraging our wealth of experience in service delivery including establishing a knowledge portal, training and mentor activities as the Strategic plan will entail. This will be achieved through enhancing the various objectives that we have outlined in the plan.

HRD's are always our first priority at NCHRD-U as we pride ourselves on transforming not only individuals and organizations endeavors for a peaceful and harmonious society but also enabling efficiency and effectiveness of human rights impactation in our nation at large. We believe our mission as a coalition is not only about safe guarding our member organizations, but also instilling in them a critical mind, a sense of care enabling a suitable environment for HRD's.

We would like to take this opportunity to offer our sincere gratitude to all our national and international partners those who have contributed to the various stages of the formulation of this Strategic Plan. We look forward to continued support by the entire citizenry to make this plan a success.



**Robert R. Kirenga**

Executive Director



### About the National Coalition for Human Rights Defenders-Uganda



**Vision:** A society that upholds the rights and freedoms of every human rights defender



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



**Core Values:** Integrity, Inclusiveness, Confidentiality, Transparency and Responsiveness.

**Institutional 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.

## Developing strategic plan 2022-2026

The process for formulation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> strategic plan for the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders-Uganda (NCHRD-U) was made possible by USAID/CSSA/EWMI. It took a strategic thinking and strategic planning pathway that entailed deep reflection on the status quo of the Coalition, the external environment, and the desired change whose statements of aspiration facilitated formulation of the overall and thematic goals. A corresponding Theory of Change (TOC) was developed and strategic pathways clarified. The content of the two engagements was harmonized to frame the master concept for the strategic period 2022-2026. This highly participatory process attracted approximately 120 participants from different categories of stakeholders including representatives of the HRD fraternity from all regions.

## Stakeholder Engagement

For purposes of leveraging our action we have analysed and further selected and evaluated stakeholders whose strategic consideration is a success factor in our journey towards the desired change<sup>1</sup>. We have analysed these beyond mandate, based on the NCHRDU interests, the current situation of HRDs, and the more explicit characteristics that will facilitate or constrain our success.

## NCHRDU Theory Of Change

At NCHRDU we believe that change will happen in Uganda, among human rights defenders, and around the issues they pursue, when defenders themselves are resilient to stress and shocks, exercise knowledge and competence-based engagement within an enabling environment. The desired enabling environment includes HRDs'-own systemized, inclusive, and vibrant platforms; their established collaborative facilities and mechanisms optimized and promoted; HRDs as brand advocates attracting wide national and trans-national recognition and influencing decision making at various levels; a broad-spectrum protection system inclusive of an appropriate protection fund that supports HRDs in crisis. Within this change situation HRDs of different walks of life will promote and protect their rights and those of others collectively as well as individually, they will seek and realise redress, and respect, as they hold duty bearers accountable. NCHRD-U will support these desired changes by building HRD capacity based on their differentiated circumstances, needs and priorities. It will backstop and steer collective issues-based advocacy, facilitate HRD support structures, build and maintain strategic partnerships, and create opportunities for the desired change to be attained.

## NCHRDU Strategic Plan 2022-2026

This strategic plan 2022-2026 is the 3<sup>rd</sup> since inception of NCHRDU. It builds on achievements and lessons learnt from prior implementation as well as on emerging opportunities for optimal delivery on the coalition mandate.

### Overall Goal:

**By 2026, Human Rights Defenders are recognized, and are productively promoting, and protecting human rights within an enabling environment.**

Objectives, Outcomes, and Key activities

**SO1 To establish and maintain a high-level performance coordination system that enhances members' satisfaction, and their collective success regarding prioritised issues, by 2025**

One of the priorities we have set is to re-conceptualize the coordination framework and operations as a core business and pre-condition for coalition business success. We will expand the scope of digital migration that was initiated earlier to consciously harness the potential it provides. These adjustments will include strengthening sub-regional and thematic structures while ensuring their semi autonomy, relevant capacity, inclusive participation, appropriate facilitation, and accountability. An ambitious coordination intervention will enhance organizational efficiency, member satisfaction, constituency building and significantly contribute to overall effectiveness of coalition programmes.

Outcomes and Key activities

- Outcome 1.1** Enhanced, inclusive, adaptive, and digitized coordination system
- Outcome 1.2.** Thematic, referral and other interest structures at local, sub-regional, national and trans national levels are strengthened
- Outcome 1.3** Common but differentiated knowledge-based member support services enhance member satisfaction and collective goal attainment,

**SO2 To empower 75% of NCHRD members with preventive and responsive skills, strategies and facilities that build their resilience by 2025**

Building capacity of NCHRDU members is one of our priorities. We will undertake a comprehensive capacity assessment of NCHRDU members, and that of the thematic, sub-national and issues-based platforms/structures we have established to derive a comprehensive capacity building plan. We will build a cadre of trainers for targeted training outreach that will result into re-tooling of HRDs and provision of extension support. Resource groups, platforms for engagement, peer support and learning will also be promoted.

Outcomes and Key activities

- Outcome 2.1** HRDs are confident, have, and are applying appropriate tools and support structures for their growing vibrance
- Outcome 2.2** Communities of practice, interest group support platforms, knowledge hubs, technical resource groups, are functional and enabling membership strengthening and organized influence actions by HRDs
- Outcome 2.3** Access to capacity support services enhanced through a cadre of trained trainers promoting skilling extension and support

**SO3 To raise the profile of human rights defenders and support their collective influence initiatives at national, regional, and international levels**

Recognition of human rights defenders can be an instrument of power to influence, since such recognition would earn them respect, access, favourable consideration among other desired characteristics within the operating environment. It would also bring them to negotiating tables and engagement spaces without prejudice against them. In this strategic plan we will build onto the 2021 achievements and lessons learnt from HRD visibility initiatives as a way of mobilising

public support and changing duty bearer attitudes.

Greater effort is provided for HRDs' own issues-based platforms and productive engagement that is evidence based, foresighted and effectively planned. A thematically driven and empowering advocacy strategy will guide their individual and collective response.

### **Outcomes and Key activities**

**Outcome 3.1** HRDs advocacy engagement is evidence based, advanced through winning approaches and transcends national boundaries.

**Outcome 3.2.** HRDs realise greater visibility, are recognised, and their work appreciated.

**Outcome 3.3** Issues-based advocacy gains realised

**Outcome 3.4** HRDs strengthened monitoring, reporting and structured participation in strategic sector processes (the Universal Peer Review, African Commission participation, SDG review, NDP review and others)

### **S04 To improve availability, access, timeliness and utilization of emergency response and protection services to HRDs**

HRDs 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. In this phase of implementation, we will invest further into preventive measures as a way of providing a holistic protection model. We will expand the national, regional and grassroots structures whose emergence we have facilitated, among these are Regional Referral Networks along with their respective Regional Committees whose purpose 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.

### **Outcomes and Key activities**

**Outcome 4.1** Broad spectrum, protection mechanism for HRDs is functional and popularised

**Outcome 4.2** HRD satisfied with protection services and actively utilize the protection system

**Outcome 4.3** Emergency response and protection facility strengthened and appropriately funded

### **S05 To enhance governance, management and operations systems and structures, establish and manage strategic national and trans-national partnerships.**

Limitations arising from under funding this portfolio are a risk factor to implementation of this strategic plan, yet the organisation is at infancy and has a speedily growing programme portfolio that is sometimes, inevitably, operating in escalated circumstances, requires high level of competence/high calibre staff, and innovations towards their motivation and retention. We plan to enhance the institutional structure by adopting a structure corresponding to the coordination mandate and ensure the positions and competencies are aligned to the deliverables committed in this SP. Effect migration from projects to programme-wide approach and facilitate productive staff team processes that contribute to programme synergy, quality, and effectiveness.



## Outcomes and Key activities

**Outcome 5.1.** Enhanced efficiency and effectiveness

**Outcome 5.2.** Human resource management systems enhanced

**Outcome 5.3** Institutional security and NCHRD member security strengthened

**Outcome 5.4** Financial policy, systems and tools updated



## Theory of Change

Impact				
By 2026, Human Rights Defenders are widely recognized, and are productively promoting, and protecting human rights within an enabling environment				
	Coordination	Capacity	Advocacy	Protection
Goals	NCHRDU's Compelling Coordination system is sustained increases stakeholder satisfaction and collective success regarding prioritized issues.	Human rights defenders are equipped with preventive and responsive skills, strategies, and facilities to mitigate risks arising from their work.	Effective advocacy by Human rights defenders improves their recognition, safety, and attainment of success in human rights work at national, regional, and international levels	Strengthened protection mechanisms secure and sustain HRDs' work
	⬅️ ⬅️ ⬅️	⬅️ ⬅️	⬅️ ⬅️	
Mid-term outcomes	<p>Effective coordination systems attract due funding, facilitate collaborative initiatives and enhanced NCHRDU national and global public image</p> <p>Robust and functional HRD database and a digitized knowledge management platform facilitates effective member and stakeholder servicing, collaboration and strengthening</p>	<p>Empowered HRDs managing their safety and security challenges</p> <p>Informed HRDs are confident, have appropriate tools and known support structures for their growing vibrance</p>	<p>Enhanced (informed, targeted, and tactical) advocacy and promotion of HRDs work at local, national, and international levels</p> <p>Increased effective individual, clustered and Network of HRDs productive influence on a range of interest issues including improvement in the operating environment and establishment of a protection fund</p>	<p>Functional broad spectrum, popularised, protection mechanism for HRDs</p> <p>Accessible and comprehensive HRDs protection fund</p> <p>HRD more satisfied with protection services and actively utilize the protection system</p>
	⬅️ ⬅️ ⬅️	⬅️ ⬅️	⬅️ ⬅️	
Early Outcome	<p>Thematic working groups and sub-regional networks are functional, focused and increasing vibrance of HRD engagement</p> <p>A one stop HRD information centre, communication and feedback mechanisms are commissioned.</p> <p>Knowledge based coordination infrastructure and soft skills are functional at Secretariat, at various platforms and among selected HRDs</p>	<p>Communities of practice, interest group support platforms, knowledge hubs, technical resource groups and platforms for stakeholder engagement are functional and enabling organized influence actions by HRDs</p> <p>HRDs analyse issues, contexts, risks and confidently select and apply appropriate skills in their work. The concept of HRDs is also better understood.</p>	<p>HRDs engagement is enhanced with calculated and firm issue-based positions advanced through winning approaches</p> <p>Stakeholders appreciate and support HRD protection initiatives</p> <p>Awareness on HRDs issues is practical and sustained. HRDs issues are prioritized, documented, and advanced.</p>	<p>Improved responsiveness and timeliness in dealing with protection of HRDs from grass root to national level.</p> <p>Standardized protocols and early warning system are adding value</p> <p>Referral network members and protection service providers are actively utilizing a strengthened referral system</p>
	⬅️ ⬅️ ⬅️	⬅️ ⬅️	⬅️ ⬅️	
Broad Outputs	Member satisfaction survey and technical audit of coordination prescribes due frameworks, tools, and skills for optimization	Designed constructive manuals for ToT to evolve a cadre of trainers as well as guidelines for enhancement of the coordination and protection systems	Advocacy policy and customized manuals for HRD strategic engagement	Conceptual design for a comprehensive, accessible, and effective protection model.
	⬅️			
Gap analysis ascertaining a range of skills and structural gaps requiring intervention, including advocacy, risk management, knowledge management, capacity of protection service providers. Applied research into best practice protection models including advocacy, capacity building and coordination elements				

## Delivery mechanism

The mandate and work portfolio is delivered through 4 program areas (SO focused). Each of these hold projects that are aligned to the respective thematic goals and objectives. Both projects and programmes are mutually reinforcing and a programme coordination framework is charted out on the basis of mutually developed outcomes and indicators to which all pieces of work are accountable. This framework of delivery is a migration from a projectized approach. Greater programme cohesion within and across programmes will enhance the outcomes in terms of fast-tracking change as well as depth. The secretariat has also set up lower level delivery structures such as the Thematic Technical Working Groups, Regional Focal Persons, Referral Networks, and others that support the decentralized delivery of support services, HRD mobilization and co-implementation of activities. More effort will be placed in rolling out these and other relevant structures for wide coverage and due competence.

## Partnership Development and Management

Partnership development and retention of great importance to NCHRDU. Some partnerships exits while others are due. For instance MoUs have already been signed with Uganda Law Society and Uganda Youth Council (UYC) for collaboration on aspects of mutual interest. In the same vein, NCHRDU plans to co-develop a Memorandum of Understanding with state institutions such as Uganda Police to ensure a conducive environment for interface, and mutual outcomes. NCHRDU will periodically review existing and potential partnerships with a view to prioritizing its engagements with them and determining the differentiated nature of relationships and commitments that give it most value. This is intended to ensure that NCHRDU carefully determines where it invests its time and resources, and that it is able to deliver what it commits. members when addressing key HDR circumstances, in particular the duty bearers responsible for maintaining law and order, specifically the police and prisons.

## Sustainability

NCHRDU will ensure systems and structures for sustainability are in place and strengthened. These include Thematic

Technical Working Groups, Issues based platforms, Regional Referral network, a cadre of Trained trainers doing extension, strengthened member institutions, networking platforms and partnerships. Through these arrangements and other specific lobby efforts it is expected that institutionalisation of best practices for protection and promotion of HRDs will be realised within public and private institutional policies, programmes, plans and practices. It is expected that changes will be sustained beyond the duration of the strategic plan and will result in a lasting benefit for individual and institution based HRD women, men and youth. The rights-based approach to strategy implementation empowers them to realise ownership and promotion of the initiatives, structures, and processes as well as to interface with relevant duty bearers.

## Other specific aspects incorporated for the advancing sustainability include:

1. Establishing an accessible knowledge portal to make relevant information readily available HRDs and others
2. Influencing policies, laws and their effective implementation for protection and promotion of HRD rights.
3. Influencing behaviour and attitudes of all citizens to create an enabling environment for HRD rights enjoyment
4. Training trainers and supporting community and HRD own resource persons and structures will promote ownership and agency
5. Mentor activities, peer learning and exchange will ensure continuous advocacy and accountability on HRD issues
6. Documentation, Dissemination and scaling up of best practices on HRD promotion and protection

## Risk Management and Mitigation Measures

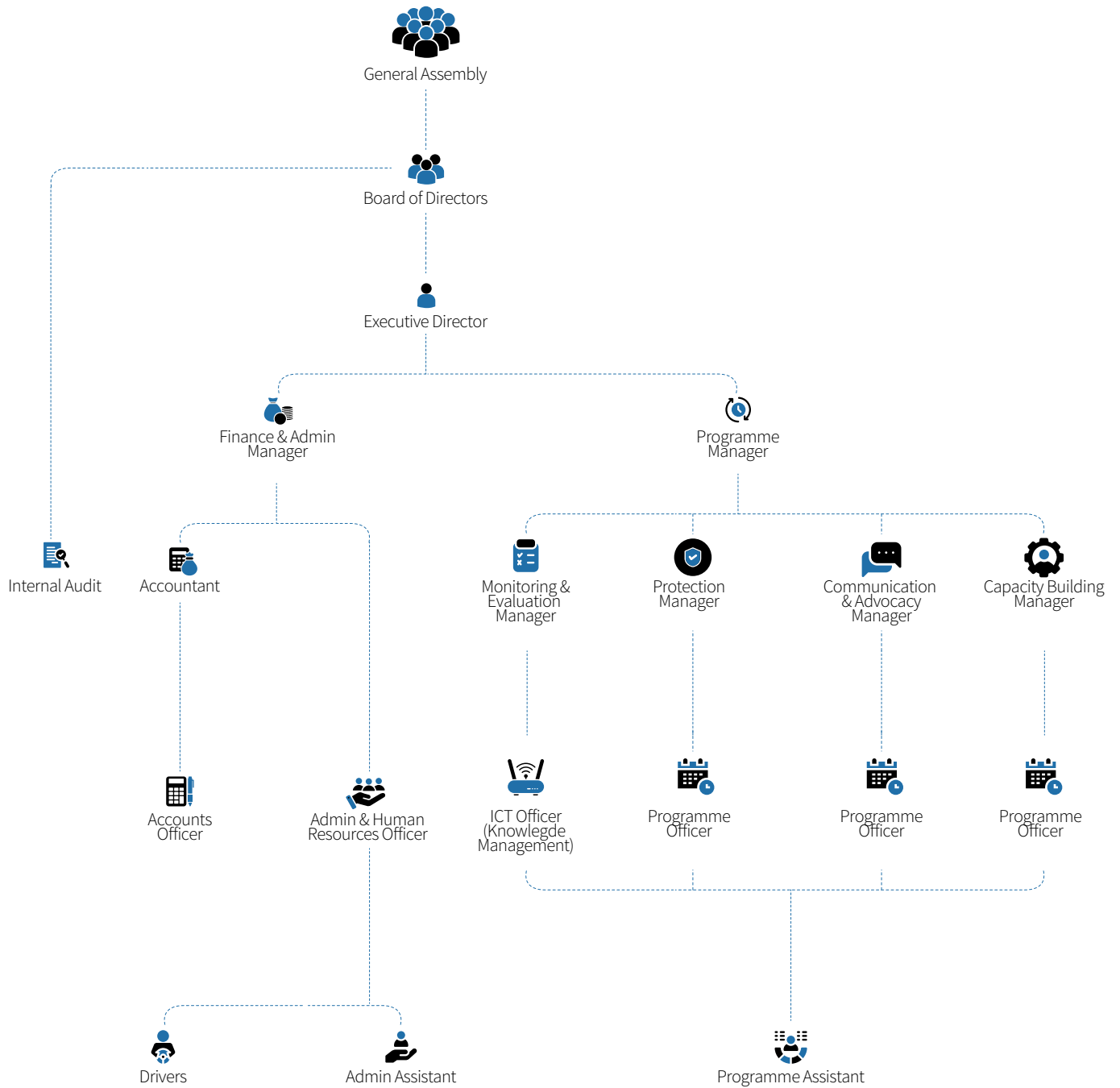
Principal risk	Likelihood	Consequences	Mitigation
1. Operating Environment for NCHRD and its members to execute the strategic plan	M	Self-censorship by HRDs, failure to implement activities or compromised activities	NCHRD has increasingly demonstrated value contribution towards lobbying for an enabling operating environment. A specific HRD Bill is being pursued for enactment by parliament. NCHRD and its members will invest in documentation, visibility of their work, productive collaboration priority state institutions in this context
2. Backlash against NCHRD and its members with claims that it is inciting the local public and undermining government	H	Activities and aspirations committed int the strategic plan will be obstructed and the risk to HRDs will increase	
3. Increased conflict between HRDs, in particular empowered HRDs and state operatives	H	Erosion of gains towards productive dialogue, undermining institutional relationships established/ MoUs,	Conflict sensitivity will be mainstreamed in all aspects of implementation and capacity for conflict management developed among HRDs and duty bearing agencies and individuals
4. The process of getting laws and regulations assented may be quite lengthy.	H	HRDs’ anticipated provisions for rights promotion, protection and enjoyment will be delayed thus injustices against them will prevail	A multifaceted strategy has been developed to address existing practice based on the volume of already enacted laws and corresponding guidelines; Policy engagement targets these challenges.

## Institutional structure

This strategic plan seeks to maintain the pace of growth while deepening the quality and impact of NCHRDU work. The revised institutional organogram is to ensure that

- a) all functions within the structure are aligned to the nature of demands and required competencies
- b) the outlay of the human resource structure facilitates clarity of support supervision/mentorship, responsibility, and inevitable team effort
- c) the growing relevance and application of ICT as a programming vehicle redefines the placement and portfolio of the responsible function
- d) NCHRDU maintains a cost-effective, yet productive structure suitable for a coalition of its calibre
- e) the potential for competent members and partners to ably support the resident staff with implementation of selected activities is harnessed.

# Organogram



## Budget Summary

Overall Goal: By 2026, Human Rights Defenders are recognized, and are productively promoting, and protecting human rights within an enabling environment.								
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	UGX	USD
SO 1	To establish and maintain a high-level performance coordination system that enhances member satisfaction, and their collective success regarding prioritised issues, by 2025	705,200,000	706,000,000	560,000,000	542,000,000	542,000,000	3,055,200,000	848,666
SO 2	To empower 75% of NCHRD members with preventive and responsive skills, strategies and facilities that build their resilience by 2026	1,026,760,000	1,053,624,000	961,624,000	1,015,667,600	965,667,600	5,023,343,200	1,395,373
SO 3	To raise the profile of human rights defenders in Uganda by 2026, while supporting their collective evidence-based influence initiatives, at national, regional, and international levels	1,310,960,000	1,357,154,000	1,301,154,000	1,326,677,100	1,326,677,100	6,622,622,200	1,839,617
SO 4	To improve availability, access, timeliness and utilization of emergency response and protection services to HRDs by 2024, have in place a comprehensive and accessible system, by 2025.	693,240,000	1,508,046,000	1,443,046,000	1,511,412,900	1,473,412,900	6,629,157,800	1,841,433
SO 5	To enhance governance, management and operations systems and structures of NCHRDU, establish, and establish and nurture strategic national, and trans-national partnerships by 2025	1,224,440,000	2,222,976,000	1,359,976,000	1,417,742,400	1,466,742,400	7,691,876,800	2,136,632
		<b>4,960,600,000</b>	<b>6,487,800,000</b>	<b>5,625,800,000</b>	<b>5,813,500,000</b>	<b>5,774,500,000</b>	<b>29,022,200,000</b>	<b>8,061,722</b>

## Endnotes

1 Among these are 200 members of the coalition, AGA, Board of Directors, Technical Thematic Working Group, Sub-Regional Coalitions, Referral networks, Regional focal persons, Donors, Embassies, International NGOS, Philanthropist groups Diplomatic missions; UN agencies, National Youth Council, Uganda Law Society, Uganda human rights commission (UHRC), Uganda Medical Association, Law Development Centre, Inter-religious Council (IRCU) Media Houses (Print & Electronic), Bloggers & Influencers, Human Rights Network for Journalists, DefendDefenders, JLOS, Uganda Judicial Officers Associations, General public, Community leaders, elders, religious leaders, Cultural leaders, Parliamentary committee on human rights, Government of Uganda: IGPs office, Directorate of legal and human rights; Inter-ministerial committee on human rights MOJIGA; MOFA Legal and international relations, Directorate of legal services human rights MOLG DLD- CDO's, Equal Opportunities Commission, UPDF, Governance & Security Thematic Group, Minister of Presidency-RDCs, Private Sector Foundation (PSFU).





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