

Congratulations

**2022 HRD
AWARDS**

*Nominees &
Laureates*



DEFENDERS
COALITION



Kamau Ngugi
Executive Director, Defenders Coalition

Dear Colleagues, partners and friends of the Defenders Coalition,

On behalf of the Working Group on Human Rights Defenders, Defenders Coalition and the Embassy of Sweden in Kenya congratulates the winners of the 2022 Human Rights Defenders Awards after a feting ceremony held on 2 December 2022 in Nairobi.

The winners in the various categories are individuals and groups that have exemplified unbelievable courage, commitment and selflessness in the defence of human rights and promotion of justice for the weak in the society.

Through the Awards, we aim to motivate and showcase what ordinary citizens should do with their own communities to speak truth to power and advance constitutionalism.

The 2022 Human Rights Defenders Awards are unique in recognition that young kids can also contribute and set the pace for adults in doing what is right.

For instance, the case of Lia Gem – the winner of the Upcoming Human Rights Defender of the Year Award – is a model for every citizen in terms of what they ought to do, no matter how young or old they are.

**KAMAU NGUGI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - DEFENDERS COALITION
CHAIPERSON - EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS
DEFENDERS NETWORK**



Her Excellency Caroline Vicini
Ambassador, Embassy of Sweden in Kenya

Today, human rights are under increasing pressure in many parts of the world and it is therefore important to come together and remind each other that positive changes are taking place.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Promoting and defending human rights often involves exposing wrongdoings, criticism of policies and actions. It can be seen as negative and even uncomfortable when actions are exposed and opinions are challenged.

However, independence of mind, freedom of expression and free debate is fundamental in a democracy and is a tried and tested way of establishing a better level of protection of human rights. Consultation processes with actors of diverse opinions can help to improve legislation, national plans and strategies on human rights that are beneficial for all. An example of that is the long-term engagement from the civil society, religious leaders and other actors in Kenya that led to a successful and peaceful general election. I want to thank you for this.

Today, we celebrate all positive steps that are taken each day by individuals and groups that are ready to defend human rights even if it means with great and unacceptable risks. We celebrate you who risk your own peace and person to defend others. You who stand up for the principles of universality of human rights and defend those who can't fend for themselves.

Thank you Jury Members of the HRD Awards



RACHAEL MWIKALI
Jury Panel Chairperson.



ANDREW MAINA
Jury Panel Vice Chairperson



DR. WILLY MUTUNGA
Jury Panel Member



KAMANDA MUCKEKE
Jury Panel Member



IKAL ANG'ELEI
Jury Panel Member



GRACE LOLIM
Jury Panel Member



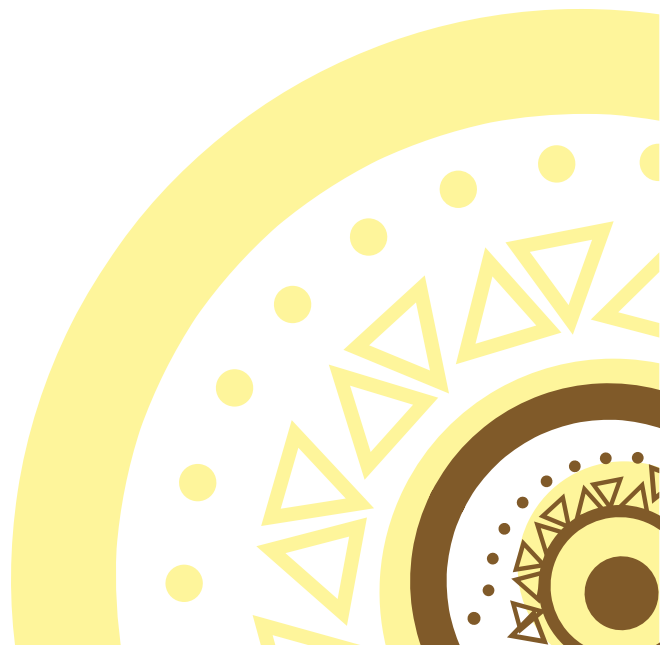
NJERI KABEBERI
Jury Panel Member



GODFREY MWAMPEMBWA
Jury Panel Member



*The
Laureates*





Winner

Upcoming HRD Of The Year Award

Billy Hani



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Billy Hani

Billy Hani is a queer artist and activist based in Kenya. They use writing and photography to explore African queerness, sexuality, gender identity and expression, bodies and mental health. Billy co-curates HeART Out Kenya, an art therapy initiative for feminists, LGBTIQ+ folks and activists. Billy's feminism and activism are grounded on Queer Joy and Rest.

Billy started activism in 2018 through education on LGBTIQ+ issues on Social Media. They first volunteered as a Sexual Reproductive Health Rights advocate at Q-Initiative Eldoret, where they championed the rights of Sexual and Gender Minorities. Over the past five years, they have advocated for LGBTIQ+ rights online and physically in different local and national spaces aiming to improve understanding, acceptance and the upholding of LGBTIQ+ people's rights in Kenya.

They have written extensively on the issues that Sexual and Gender Minorities go through and continue to document similar stories through writing and photography. As an activist, Billy believes that education and accurate information are necessary to realize LGBTIQ+ human rights. Billy's articles can be found in FemInStyle Magazine, Minority Africa, Adventures From the Bedrooms of African Women and The Continent, among others. Currently, they are working on using art to promote mental wellness, especially among activists and feminists, through HeART Out Kenya, which they co-founded in 2021.



Winner

Upcoming HRD Of The Year Award

Grace Kalekye



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Grace Kalekye

Grace Kalekye Mwangangi is an anti-human trafficking advocate and intern at Free the Slaves, a journalist and musician. In 2018 she was trafficked to India and forced into sex work, an experience that inspired her to become an anti-human trafficking advocate. Since 2019 when she returned to Kenya, Grace has been using TV, radio and online platforms to share her story and create awareness of human trafficking.

Being an anti-human trafficking advocate has opened opportunities for Grace, which have helped her grow as a leader and expounded her network to other human rights defenders. She hopes to one day have her platform where survivors will tell their stories and connect victims to their families.

Grace also intends to work with government agencies, non-governmental organizations and religious leaders to advocate for strict anti-human trafficking policies and frameworks.

Human trafficking is a sensitive area due to its illegality and criminal nature. However, Grace loves her work and is willing to continue the cause to help others who may find themselves in such situations.

Winner

Upcoming HRD Of The Year Award

Lisa Gem




Lisa Gem

Lisa is a 10-year-old, grade 4 pupil from M.M Shah Primary School in Kisumu and is a human rights defender who believes she was born to change the world through her words and actions. Her starting point was with children and the environment because that is where she found a home. She desires every child to enjoy life and a loving upbringing free from abuse and lack of necessities.

Through her advocacy actions, Lisa has conducted campaigns supporting pediatric cancer survivors, ecological justice, and the rights of health workers in Vihiga and Kisumu County. She also petitioned the Kisumu County Government to invest in pediatric cancer management at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital.

Lisa also started Children's rights clubs in 5 public schools in Kisumu. She spends her free time doing sanitation campaigns in Manyatta and Mamboleo settlements in Kisumu and teaching children photography as a communication tool.

Lisa enjoys playing scrabble, modeling, dancing, and storytelling in her free time.



Winner

HRD Of The Year Award

John Allan Namu



John Allan Namu

John-Allan is a Kenyan investigative journalist and the co-founder of Africa Uncensored. He has been a journalist for 17 years and has spent considerable time focusing on numerous social justice issues. Notable among these is his journalistic work about excessive use of force, extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances perpetrated by Kenya's security agencies. His most recent work on the subject is titled "Justice be our shield", a documentary profiling the planning and execution of a murder plot against human rights lawyer and investigator Willie Kimani, his client Josephat Mwenda and their driver Joseph Muiruri.

Africa Uncensored, the organization he co-founded in 2015, is earning a reputation for honest, incisive, and hard-hitting journalism, both locally and on the African continent.

The organization's goal to investigate, expose and empower is founded on the belief in the power of investigative and in-depth journalism as a force for good. John-Allan hopes that his work as a journalist will inspire coming generations of journalists to hold power to account, doing so professionally and with passion for Africa.

John-Allan is the 2015 and 2017 joint journalist of the year Annual Journalism Excellence Awards, a 2019 Global Shining light award winner, a 2019 Trace International Prize on investigative journalism winner, and the 2009 CNN African Journalist of the Year. He is a 2009 CNN fellow and a 2017 Archbishop Desmond Tutu Fellow. He holds a BA in Journalism from the United States International University – Africa and is pursuing an Executive master's degree in media leadership and innovation. He is married and lives in Nairobi with his wife and four children.

Winner

Munir Mazrui Lifetime Achievement Award

Prof. Micere Mugo



Prof. Micere Mugo

Micere Githae Mugo is a renowned playwright, author, activist, instructor and poet recognized internationally for her literary works, essays and writings which she has used as a platform to advocate for social justice and human rights in Africa especially Kenya.

Mugo was a political activist who fought against human rights abuses in Kenya. Her political activism led to her being harassed by the police and arrested. Mugo and her family were forced to depart Kenya in 1982 after the attempted coup after which she became a target of government harassment and her citizenship stripped off.

Mugo went to Zimbabwe for a time, where she found a teaching post, and continued to write. Her second work of literary criticism, *African Orature and Human Rights*, appeared in 1991. The work is a discussion of the storytelling culture of the Ndia people in Kenya's Kirinyaga District and that culture is in relation to politics.

In such a society, Mugo's thesis maintained, the orature artist is a defender of human rights in the community. Her work has been cited as verbal arts that expresses both the society's negative and positive qualities, its strengths and challenges, its justice and injustices, its realities, and ideals.

Micere has continued to use her literature work to speak out and stir conversation at any time when she could not stand the myopic political elite as they oppressed the common citizen and continue to violate basic human rights.



Winner

Popular Vote Award

Boniface Mwangi



Boniface Mwangi

Boniface Mwangi is one of the most vocal and courageous Kenyans of his generation.

Recognized globally for his passion and excellence in photography, this photographer-cum-activist could not resist the call to activism after witnessing first-hand the brutality that disadvantaged Kenyans experienced in the wake of the Post-Election Violence in 2008. He then established Picha Mtaani, a travelling photography exhibition about the violence. The travelling photo exhibition toured Kenya and drew athen 2 million people. It offered a platform for individual reflection, honest dialogue, interpersonal healing and community reconciliation.

Boniface has been a state guest for championing justice and calling out influential leaders for their wanton corruption and blatant violation of human rights. His commitment to promoting social change has also come at a heavy price.

As a husband and father, his wife and children have endured hostilities from different quarters. The escalation of these hostilities has seen him being threatened with harm and death by powerful forces in government.

In 2012 Boniface founded PAWA254, a hub for creatives in Kenya where journalists, artists and activists find innovative ways of achieving social change. Those who have worked with him can attest to his diligence, compassion and self-drive.

Boniface has won the CNN Multi-choice African Photojournalist of the Year Award twice and is the youngest Prince Claus Laureate. New African Magazine named him one of the 100 Most Influential Africans of 2014, 2016 and 2020, and he is also a senior TED Fellow. Time magazine recognized Boniface as a Next Generation Leader in 2015, and he was selected as one of Kenya's Top 40 under 40 men in 2016. He was named in the top 100 Kenyans in 2019 and 2020. He received the Luxembourg Peace Prize 2020/21 and is currently a Tutu Fellow.

Boniface and his wife, Njeri Mwangi, are the loving parents of 3 adorable children.

He is the author of Unbounded – a poignant and riveting memoir that captures his incredible journey.

Winner

Global Solidarity Award

Angela Davis



Angela Yvonne Davis

Angela Davis is a prominent writer, feminist, political activist, and educator. She is most well known for her involvement in the civil rights and Black liberation movements, as well as for being a leading advocate for prison abolition. Ms. Davis rose to prominence in 1969 when her campaign to defend three black soldiers in Soledad Prison and her affiliation with the Communist Party led to her being fired from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Following her own experience with arrest and imprisonment, in the early 1970s, she went on to found Critical Resistance, a national grassroots organization aimed to dismantle the prison-industrial complex. Along with prison reform, Ms. Davis has advocated for social issues related to gender, race and class and has authored many books and articles on these subjects.

In 1997, Davis came out as a lesbian and has since continued to tackle oppression faced by the black community, women, and the LGBTQ+ community.

Her scholarly contribution has been a great influence on grassroots human rights movements organizing and the support and solidarity to the human rights struggles have been immense contributed to the growth and rising of global south feminist movements and minority right groups.



2022 HRD AWARDS

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1. Honour the extraordinary work of HRD's in the promotion and protection of human rights;
2. Profile the work of HRD and challenges they face as agents of social change and transformation;
3. Recognise and appreciate the human rights work of young and upcoming HRD's in Kenya;
4. Enhance the safety and protection of all HRD's in Kenya.

The Working Group on Human Rights Defenders brings together the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations, diplomatic missions and civil society organizations that are concerned with the protection of HRDs and Human Rights more broadly. The Working Group convenes every two months with the objectives of information sharing, coordination and advocating for a safe environment for the operation of HRDs and their organizations. The Working Group is co-chaired by the Defenders coalition and a rotating co-chair from the diplomatic missions. This post is currently held by the Embassy of Sweden in Kenya.

The Categories

2022 HRD AWARDS

The awards are
presented in three
categories:

The Munir Mazrui
Lifetime achievements Award

The Human Rights
Defender of the year Award

The Upcoming Human Rights
Defender of the year Award

Recognition Category

The
Global Solidarity Award

The winners in each category will receive:

- A cash award of \$ 1,000
- A plaque with the HRD's name on it
- Will be a guest at the 2023 HRD award ceremony



The Selection Process

2022 HRD AWARDS

Nomination:

The Working Group on Human Rights Defenders in Kenya develops a call for nominations, which is then widely circulated by the Defenders Coalition and other partners. This call outlines the criteria for eligibility for nomination. Individual HRDs can be nominated in the four categories.

Shortlisting:

A shortlisting panel composed of missions and CSO organizations involved in the planning of the HRD Awards then shortlists five individuals per category within the set-out guidelines for shortlisting candidates.

Verification:

The panel conducts verification of the nominees regarding their human rights work through field visits, and interviews with the nominators, the nominees and their references.

Selection:

The Independent Selection Panel, which comprises of eminent individuals in the human rights sector, makes a final decision, from the names submitted, on the recipient of the three awards and the runner up.

Award ceremony:

The celebration is held annually towards the end of the year. (November or December). The event is hosted by the Ambassador of the mission that co-chairs the Working Group on HRDs. The participants of the event are all the nominees, the family, missions, government officials and the media to commemorate their achievements.

The Selection Criteria

2022 HRD AWARDS



The following will be taken into consideration:

1. Demonstrable impact of the HRD's human rights work to the community.
2. The role of the HRD in promoting human rights, especially the rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups
3. Courage of the HRD in his/her human rights work
4. Demonstrated leadership, innovation and creativity in his/her human rights work
5. Contribution to development of a human rights-based approach within his/her county with regards to the thematic area of focus
6. Future goals and likely impact
7. HRD's acceptance on the universality of human rights.
8. Degree of difficulty of the achievement and sacrifices made
9. Visibility derived from the award to enhance the work of the HRD to promote human rights and active citizenship
10. The HRD should have a link to the community and his/her work should have built or is working towards building a movement
11. For the Global Solidarity Award, the choice of nominee must not be a sitting diplomat.



Moments from the Award Ceremony





2022 Funding Partners



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AMBASSADE
DE FRANCE
AU KÉNYA
ET EN SOMALIE

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

2022 Planning Committee

German Embassy in Kenya

Embassy of Belgium in Kenya

Office of the High Commissioner on
Human Rights (OHCHR)

Amnesty International Kenya

Defenders Coalition

Patricia Nyaundi



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