

# 8.

# THE STORY OF KELVIN YUSUF

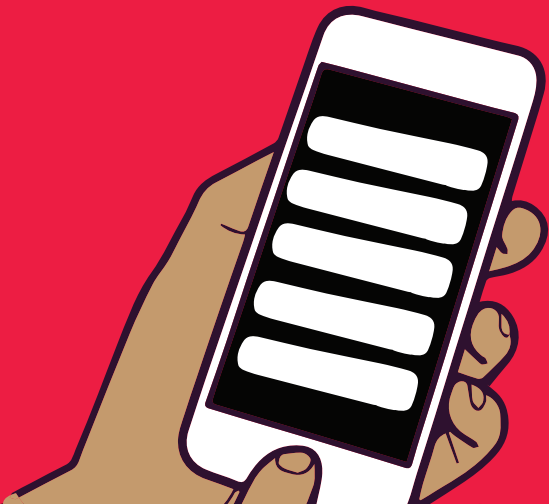
MY NAME IS KELVIN YUSUF FROM TURKANA COUNTY. HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS FROM TURKANA COUNTY HAVE BEEN FACING SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES. ONE OF OUR BIGGEST NIGHTMARES IS ARBITRARY ARREST. IT USED TO AFFECT US GREATLY WHEN WE STARTED OUT UNTIL OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH DEFENDERS COALITION.



IN 2019, WE ORGANIZED A DEMONSTRATION TO PROTEST AGAINST OUR THEN LEADERS. AMONG THE TEAM WE HAD MOBILIZED FOR THE DEMONSTRATION, ONE PERSON WAS TURNED BY THE POLICE

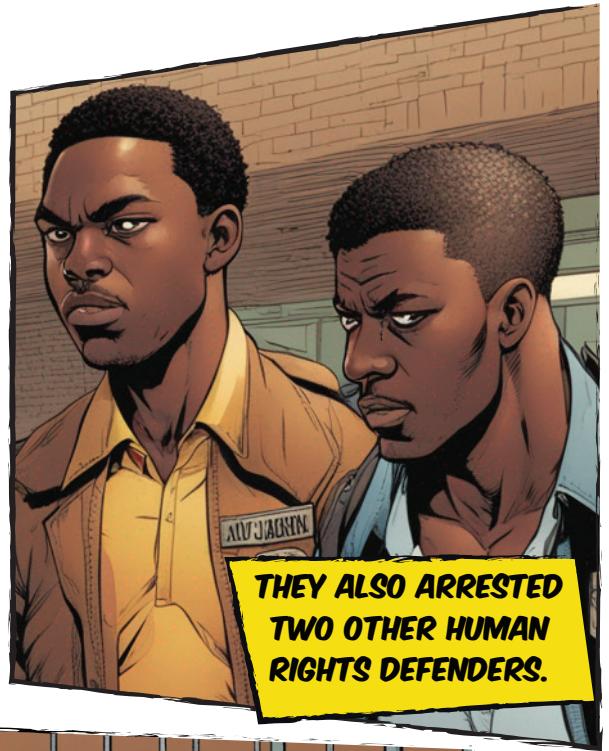


I WAS ARRESTED ON ARRIVAL



THEY CONFISCATED MY PHONE AND ACCESSED MESSAGES AND INFORMATION ABOUT OUR DEMONSTRATIONS AND OUR PLANS FOR MOBILIZATION.

**THEY PORTRAYED ME AS A NOTORIOUS DEMONSTRATOR WHO HAD PARTICIPATED IN PREVIOUS DEMONSTRATIONS.**



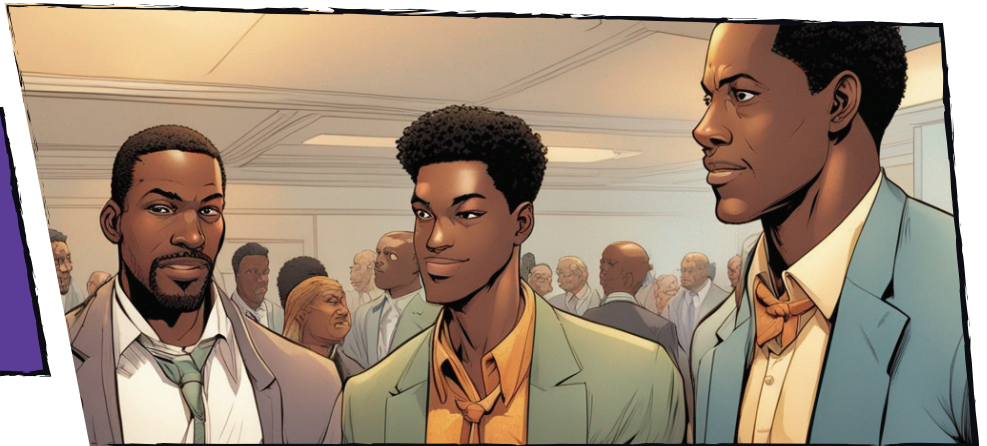
**THEY ALSO ARRESTED TWO OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS.**

**I WAS ABLE TO REACH OUT TO DEFENDERS COALITION, WHO THEN ORGANIZED FOR US TO HAVE A LAWYER.**




**BAIL WAS DENIED WE HAD TO SPEND THE NIGHT IN THE CELL**


**THE COALITION MANAGED TO SECURE OUR RELEASE THE FOLLOWING MORNING, ON A FREE BOND.**



**THE MOST RECENT DEMONSTRATION I WAS INVOLVED IN WAS ON JULY 7, 2023. WE WERE PROTESTING AGAINST THE HIGH COST OF LIVING. DURING THE DEMONSTRATION, I WAS ARRESTED, AND AS USUAL, WE HAD TO CALL IN DEFENDERS COALITION.**



**I FIRST MET DEFENDERS COALITION IN 2013 WHEN I WAS IN NAIROBI. I ATTENDED A MEETING AT JIVANJEE GARDENS, BUNGE LA WANANCHI. I WAS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN ACTIVISM AT THE TIME. DURING THIS EVENT, I INTERACTED WITH DEFENDERS COALITION AND WAS IMPRESSED BY THEIR WORK SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS.**



**DEFENDERS COALITION HAS CONSISTENTLY PROVIDED INVALUABLE SUPPORT. THEY ARE PUNCTUAL, PROFESSIONAL, RELIABLE, AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, TRUSTWORTHY.**

**UNFORTUNATELY, MY COUNTY GOVERNMENT'S WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN TO THE TRUTH AND DO THE RIGHT THING IS SEVERELY LACKING. WHEN WE REPORT OUR AGENDAS AND REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT, THEY OFTEN MAKE EMPTY PROMISES. GETTING MEANINGFUL SUPPORT FROM THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN TURKANA IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE.**

**POLICE BRUTALITY IS A WELL-KNOWN PROBLEM IN KENYA AND CONTINUES TO BE USED BY PEOPLE IN POWER TO SILENCE OUR HRDS, IN SOME CASES ACTIVISTS HAVE ENDED UP AND PERMANENTLY MAIMED AFTER INTERACTION WITH THE POLICE FORCE. DEFENDERS COALITION OFFERS HRD PROTECTION AND SAFETY, TYPICAL PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS FOR HRDS AT RISK INCLUDE: LEGAL SUPPORT, MEDICAL SUPPORT, PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT & RELOCATION**



**I HOPE YOU ARE ENJOYING THESE STORIES BECAUSE THERE ARE MORE TO COME...**

**MARCUS GAVI IS A STUDENT ACTIVIST AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, WHO HAS A FEW RUN IN WITH THE AUTHORITIES**

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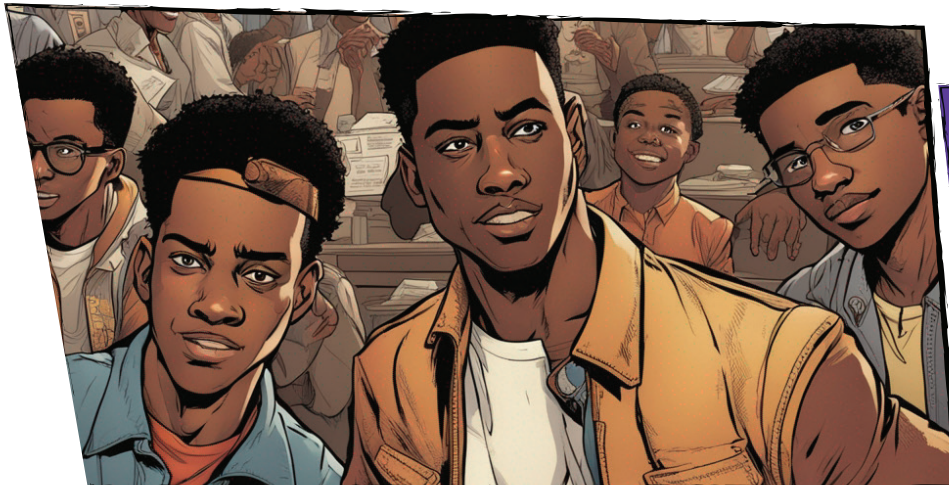
# THE STORY OF MARCUS GAVI




**MY NAME IS MARCUS GAVI. I CURRENTLY WORK AS AN CONVENER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. I AM ALSO A FINAL YEAR LAW STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.**




**MY FIRST INTERACTION WITH THE DEFENDERS COALITION WAS IN EARLY 2019. A TEAM OF STUDENT ACTIVISTS, INCLUDING MYSELF, HAD JUST BEEN SUSPENDED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI FOLLOWING ALLEGED PARTICIPATION IN A SERIES OF UNLAWFUL ASSEMBLIES WITHIN THE INSTITUTION.**



**THIS ENGAGEMENT MARKED THE BEGINNING OF MY PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DEFENDERS COALITION IN MY LONG JOURNEY AS A STUDENT ACTIVIST.**




THE COALITION HAS BEEN THERE FOR ME ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS. I EVEN HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO INTERN AT THE ORGANIZATION BETWEEN LATE 2019 AND EARLY 2020, AN EXPERIENCE THAT PROVIDED ME WITH VALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO THE BROADER HUMAN RIGHTS FRATERNITY.



I MUST ADMIT THAT MY CONTACT WITH THE DEFENDERS COALITION ADDED AN EXTRA LAYER OF CONFIDENCE, SERVING AS A CUSHION TO BRAVELY FACE THE CHALLENGES THAT COME WITH MY WORK. I FACED ANOTHER EXPULSION FROM THE INSTITUTION IN 2021, BUT THE COALITION SUPPORTED ME THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS, ULTIMATELY RESULTING IN AN OUT-OF-COURT SETTLEMENT EARLIER THIS YEAR.

THANKS TO THIS SUPPORT, I WAS ABLE TO RESUME MY STUDIES AND I'M CURRENTLY LOOKING FORWARD TO COMPLETING MY DEGREE THIS YEAR.

IN ADDITION TO THE ACADEMIC EXCLUSIONS THAT OFTEN ACCOMPANY STUDENT ACTIVISM, I HAVE ALSO ENDURED ARRESTS AND POLICE HARASSMENT.



**WE'VE SEEN STORIES OF RESILIENCE, SELF-SACRIFICE AND HOPE, WE'VE LEARNT THAT BEING A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER COMES AT A GREAT PERSONAL RISK, BUT WE CANNOT GIVE UP THE FIGHT.**

**WE NOW JUMP INTO OUR NEXT STORY, THE STORY OF MUENI, A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER AND ARTIVIST...**

**INTERNALLY, DEFENDERS COALITION SEEKS TO CONSOLIDATE ITS POSITION AS A DYNAMIC, EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION. WE WILL MAINLY FOCUS ON FURTHER STRENGTHENING/ DIVERSIFYING OUR RESOURCE BASE, HUMAN RESOURCE AND LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES, AS WELL AS OUR INTERNAL SYSTEMS, POLICIES AND STRUCTURES. THE KEY ISSUES THAT THIS STRATEGIC FOCUSES ON INCLUDE EXPLOITATION OF ICT; PROFILING AND VISIBILITY AND UTILIZATION OF COALITION'S NETWORKS. THIS PILLAR CONSOLIDATES ORGANISATION'S POSITION AS A 'DYNAMIC, RELEVANT, EFFECTIVE AND RESILIENT INSTITUTION'.**