

# 9.

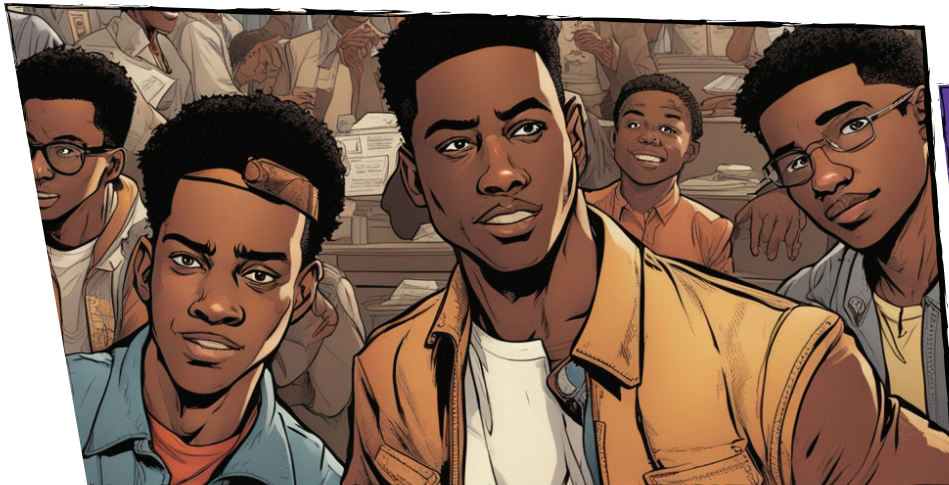
# THE STORY OF MARCUS GAVI




**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'.**