

HAKI NEWS

A silhouette of a person wearing a hooded jacket, with their right arm raised in a fist, set against a background of a sunset or sunrise over a body of water. The sky transitions from a pale blue at the top to a warm orange and red near the horizon.

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2024 ISSUE // A PUBLICATION OF THE DEFENDERS COALITION

Equipping the Defenders

Winners of the
2024 Human Rights
Defenders Awards
Feted

Court Sentences Man
Guilty of Stabbing a
Woman Human Rights
Defender



Friends and Supporters of Human Rights Defenders in Kenya!

We champion the safety and security of Human Rights Defenders in Kenya

What we Do



Supportive Policy, Legal and Institutional Frameworks



Human Rights Defenders Safety and Security.



Enhancing the Socio-Economic Wellbeing of HRDs



Institutional Excellence

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Executive Director Remarks

At the Defenders Coalition, we take immense pride in being at the forefront of initiatives that uplift and empower Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), particularly in regions facing complex challenges such as climate change, socio-economic inequality, and human rights violations. The initiatives highlighted in this newsletter highlight our unwavering commitment to ensuring HRDs are equipped to continue their vital work, despite the many obstacles they encounter.

In 2024, we welcomed the 9th Human Rights Academy, marked by the participation of 112 passionate, visionary, and resilient community leaders from all 47 counties in Kenya. This platform for capacity building, enables HRDs to engage in meaningful discussions, share experiences, and learn from experts across various fields.

One of the key highlights of the year was the 2024 Human Rights Defenders Awards,

**Kamau Ngugi,
Executive
Director,
Defenders
Coalition.**



organized in collaboration with the Working Group on Human Rights Defenders and the Embassy of Denmark in Kenya. This event publicly honored and celebrated the tireless work of HRDs, reminding us all of the profound sacrifices these individuals and their organizations make. The HRD Awards offers a rare, safe space for HRDs to connect, network, and be celebrated for their courage and dedication.

This edition also shines a spotlight on our collaboration with duty bearers through the County Conversation Circle, which brings together HRDs and duty bearers for crucial dialogue on pressing human rights issues.

We also celebrate our joint efforts with WHRDs to end femicide in Kenya, marked by a solidarity march and the 16 Days of Activism. We honor the resilience and determination of women in their pursuit of justice, exemplified by the victorious landmark ruling of the late Elizabeth Ekaru at the corridors of Justice..

Looking ahead, our continued engagement with global mechanisms—such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Universal Periodic Review—demonstrates our steadfast commitment to advancing human rights and upholding the rule of law at every level. Together, we will continue to empower defenders, protect their work, and ensure their voices drive meaningful change.

I invite you to engage with this newsletter and share with your networks.



Defenders Coalition with HRDs and frontline lawyers at a ACPHR side event and launch of the report " We are Coming After Them" by Legal Resources Foundation Zimbabwe



Defenders Coalition Staff celebrating with a dance at the HRD Academy 2024 Dinner



Left:Lentepes a HRD Academy beneficiary recieves a certificate of completion presented by Kamau Ngugi ,Executive Director



Editor Achieng ,a Woman Human Rights Defender chanting to the 'Wimbo Wa Mapambano' at the HRD Awards 2024



Attendees pose for a photo at the Human Rights Defenders Awards 2024



Friends and Supporters of Climb For Justice at the summit of Seven Ponds ,Aberdare Ranges



Defenders Coalition staff at the Voices for Climate Action Communication workshop under the HIVOS Project in Kilifi County.



Human Rights Defenders from Kayole Social Justice Centre in a Group Debrief.

Justice for Elizabeth Ekaru: Landmark Ruling in Gender-Based Violence

Patrick Naweet Sentenced to 30 years in Prison for the Murder of Woman Human Rights Defender, Elizabeth Ekaru.



Patrick Naweet, the security guard, sentenced to 30 years in Prison for the murder of Elizabeth Ekaru in Meru Law Courts

ON 24 OCTOBER 2024 and after three years in the corridors of justice, Meru High Court Judge Hon. Justice Edward Muriithi made a landmark ruling of the murder trial and **SENTENCED Mr. Patrick Naweet to 30 years in prison for the gruesome murder of Isiolo-based woman human rights defender Elizabeth Ekaru.**

In a significant milestone for gender justice and human rights advocacy in Kenya, the Meru High Court has sentenced Patrick Naweet to 30 years in prison for the murder of Elizabeth Ibrahim Ekaru, a prominent Woman Human Rights Defender (WHRD). Ekaru was brutally killed on January 3, 2022, in Isiolo County during a land dispute. The court's ruling, delivered in just three years, has been hailed as a victory for justice and the broader human rights community.

During the trial, Naweet's defense exposed deep-seated patriarchal norms, with the accused citing his Turkana background as a factor in his inability to accept Ekaru's activism and outspoken nature. This revelation underscores the cultural biases that WHRDs like Ekaru face as they fight for justice and equality. Ekaru's case not only brought attention to the rising violence against WHRDs but also highlighted the urgent need for systemic reforms to address cultural and institutional barriers to justice.

The case has intensified calls for stronger



Part of the 30 Women Human Rights Defenders from Isiolo who have continued to pursue justice for Elizabeth Ekaru.

protection mechanisms for WHRDs and the enactment of gender-responsive laws to prevent and address violence against women.

By holding Naweet accountable, the Kenyan justice system has sent a clear message that violence against women and human rights defenders will not be tolerated. This ruling empowers WHRDs and HRDs nationwide

to continue their work without fear. Ekaru's resilience and courage inspire women in Kenya and human rights defenders worldwide. As the human rights community honors her memory, this legal victory reaffirms the collective commitment to building a society where women's voices are recognized, and their rights are protected.

Read our Statement on the judgement by Meru High Court Here <https://defenderscoalition.org/court-finds-guilty-man-accused-of-stabbing-to-death-women-human-rights-defender-elizabeth-ekaru/>

Read the full judgement here <https://defenderscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/MERU-HC-1.pdf>

Links to Media coverage: <https://www.tv47.digital/man-who-stabbed-prominent-activist-elizabeth-ekaru-several-times-found-guilty-of-murder-67178/>

<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/central/article/2001501076/man-found-guilty-of-murder-of-human-rights-defender>

<https://youtu.be/Z9rx7qoJGtA?si=MbxhnyCozS2EXN>



A jubilant WHRD from Isiolo celebrates the land-mark ruling of Mr. Patrick Nawet at Meru Law Courts.



Engagement with the African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights

In October, the Defenders Coalition and civil society organizations in the region engaged at the 81st Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Gambia, Banjul.

The sessions were preceded by the NGO Forum, a platform for civil society organizations to discuss and recommend actions on state-specific and thematic human rights issues. Key discussions included state reports on human rights measures, CSO statements, and reports from special rapporteurs.

During the sessions, the Defenders Coalition presented an analysis of the Government of Kenya's compliance with its regional and international human rights obligations to create and maintain a safe and enabling environment for HRDs.



including civil society.

Particularly, we held side events with the Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa – Hon. Remi Ngoy, The Human Rights situation in Sudan, Women's Leadership in Climate Action, The Human Rights situation in Kenya following the pro-good governance demonstrations, Digital Reprisals in Kenya, The [Status of the Civic Space in Zambia](#) and the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Human Rights Lawyers in Africa.

We also presented an oral submission on the situation of HRDs and Civil society on the floor of the ACHPR on 20 October.

You can access the full submission here <https://defenderscoalition.org/statement-by-the-national-coalition-of-human-rights-defenders-kenya-defenders-coalition-to-the-chairperson-of-the-african-commission-of-human-and-peoples-rights-achpr/>.

Defenders Coalition supported two WHRDs who participated in thematic discussions on women's and indigenous people's rights.

Taking a Center Stage at the Universal Periodic Review



Universal
Periodic
Review

Kenya is coming up for review under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in May 2025.

The UPR accords human rights defenders the opportunity to highlight pertinent human rights situations in the country.

Defenders Coalition appreciates the significance of engaging with the process and has submitted reports jointly for Kenya's upcoming review.

At the national level, we contributed towards the drafting of the national CSOs report and particularly under the civil rights cluster and more specifically on the freedom of assembly, association and human rights defenders.

We participated at the drafting and validation workshop both in Machakos and Nairobi. At the regional level, we worked jointly with our partners Defend Defenders where we equally submitted a joint report.

The Defenders Coalition submitted a joint report on behalf of several human rights defenders organisations in the country.

The report highlighted the human rights situation in the country and implementation of the recommendations made under the last review. In addition, key recommendations are given.

Defenders Coalition will take part in the Pre-sessions of the UPR where they will make a presentation before the Council. We appreciate the significance of the UN human rights systems as critical advocacy tools thus our continued engagement.

Winners of the 2024 Human Rights Defenders Awards Feted!



ON 29TH DECEMBER 2024, The Working Group on Human Rights Defenders, in collaboration with the Defenders Coalition and the Embassy of Denmark in Kenya, publicly honored and recognised the great work done by Human Rights Defenders at the 2024 Human Rights Defenders Awards.

Since its establishment ten years ago, the HRD Awards has honored extraordinary individuals who relentlessly advocate for human rights. The monumental afternoon hosted at the Embassy of Denmark in Kenya awarded six rights defenders for their groundbreaking

contributions in four categories:

1. Upcoming Human Rights Defender of the Year Award
2. Human Rights Defender of the Year Award
3. Munir Mazrui Lifetime Achievement Award
4. Global Solidarity Award
5. Popular Vote Award

[Read more about the 2024 winners here](https://defenderscoalition.org/winners-of-the-2024-human-rights-defenders-announced-in-nairobi/)
<https://defenderscoalition.org/winners-of-the-2024-human-rights-defenders-announced-in-nairobi/>

Like-minded partners in civil society, development partners, foreign missions and UN agencies operating as a Working Group on Human Rights Defenders in Kenya, that are committed to the promotion of universal rights and freedoms as well as the protection of those who advance those rights have continued to organize this special fete.

Defenders Coalition wishes to thank members of the Working Group for their commitment and all the participants who made the awards a success.

Honoring extraordinary work of defending human rights serves as a reminder of the sacrifices of these selfless, passionate individuals and their organizations who most time remain unnoticed except when they inhale teargas, jailed or injured because of speaking truth to power. HRD Awards provides a rare safe space for activists to have fun, network, be recognized, honored, and celebrated for their courage and sacrifice.

Through the Awards, we keep the public well informed on the important role that individuals and groups in societies play to defend and promote human rights.

Media links

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/15NNUkgM8u/?mibextid=WC7FNe>

<https://x.com/defenderske/status/1861699940654682122?s=46>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/15HdD2MEbi/?mibextid=WC7FNe>



From Left; Boniface Mwangi, Hanifa Farsafa and Hussein Khalid celebrate their recognition as the Winners of the Human Rights Defender of the Year Award Category.

Study on the Gendered Nature of the Right to Protest in Kenya Launched

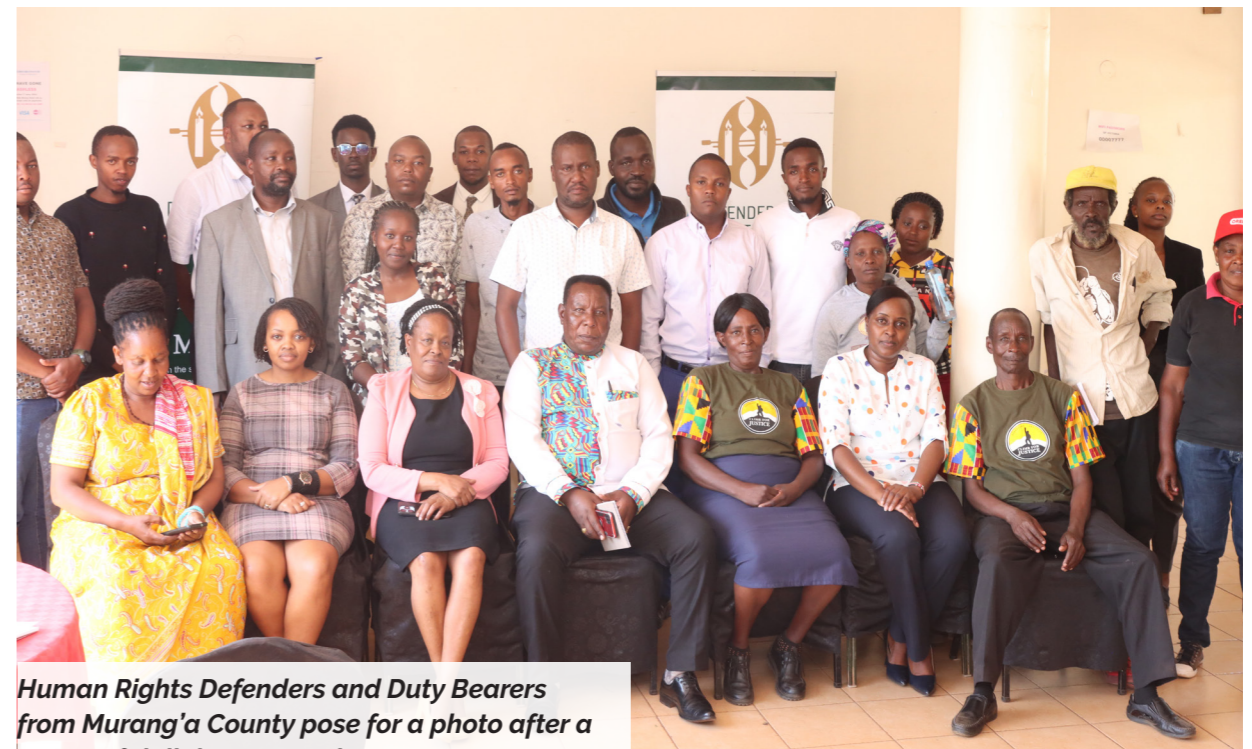


On International Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) Day, the Defenders Coalition proudly launched a groundbreaking study titled "The Gendered Nature of the Right to Protest in Kenya." This comprehensive study sheds light on the unique challenges women human rights defenders face in their quest to exercise the right to peaceful protest, practical

steps to enhance collaboration and advocacy. During the engagement, several actionable steps were identified to advance the interests of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and community-based organizations: [You can access the report here: https://defenderscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/The-gendered-nature-of-the-right-to-protest-in-Kenya-Report-Screen.pdf](https://defenderscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/The-gendered-nature-of-the-right-to-protest-in-Kenya-Report-Screen.pdf)



Official Launch of the Study on the Gendered Nature of the Right to Protest with Our Partners



Human Rights Defenders and Duty Bearers from Murang'a County pose for a photo after a successful dialogue meeting.

Enhancing Collaboration Between Duty Bearers and Human Rights Defenders

ON 22ND OCTOBER 2024, The Murang'a County Conversation Circle brought together Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and duty bearers for an important dialogue on pressing human rights issues and the challenges faced by HRDs in the region.

This roundtable offered a unique opportunity for stakeholders to share their experiences, build mutual understanding, and outline practical steps to enhance collaboration and advocacy.

During the engagement, several actionable steps were identified to advance the interests of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and community-based organizations:

The court representative welcomed HRDs and civil society organizations (CSOs) to participate actively in the Court Users Committee (CUC).

The regional representative of the National Land Commission (NLC), Mr. Patrick Waweru, encouraged the community to initiate a formal, community-led petition that will be supported by the Defenders Coalition.

The County Secretary urged the Mithiini community to petition the Governor, the County Assembly, and the County Commissioner.



Protection Interventions

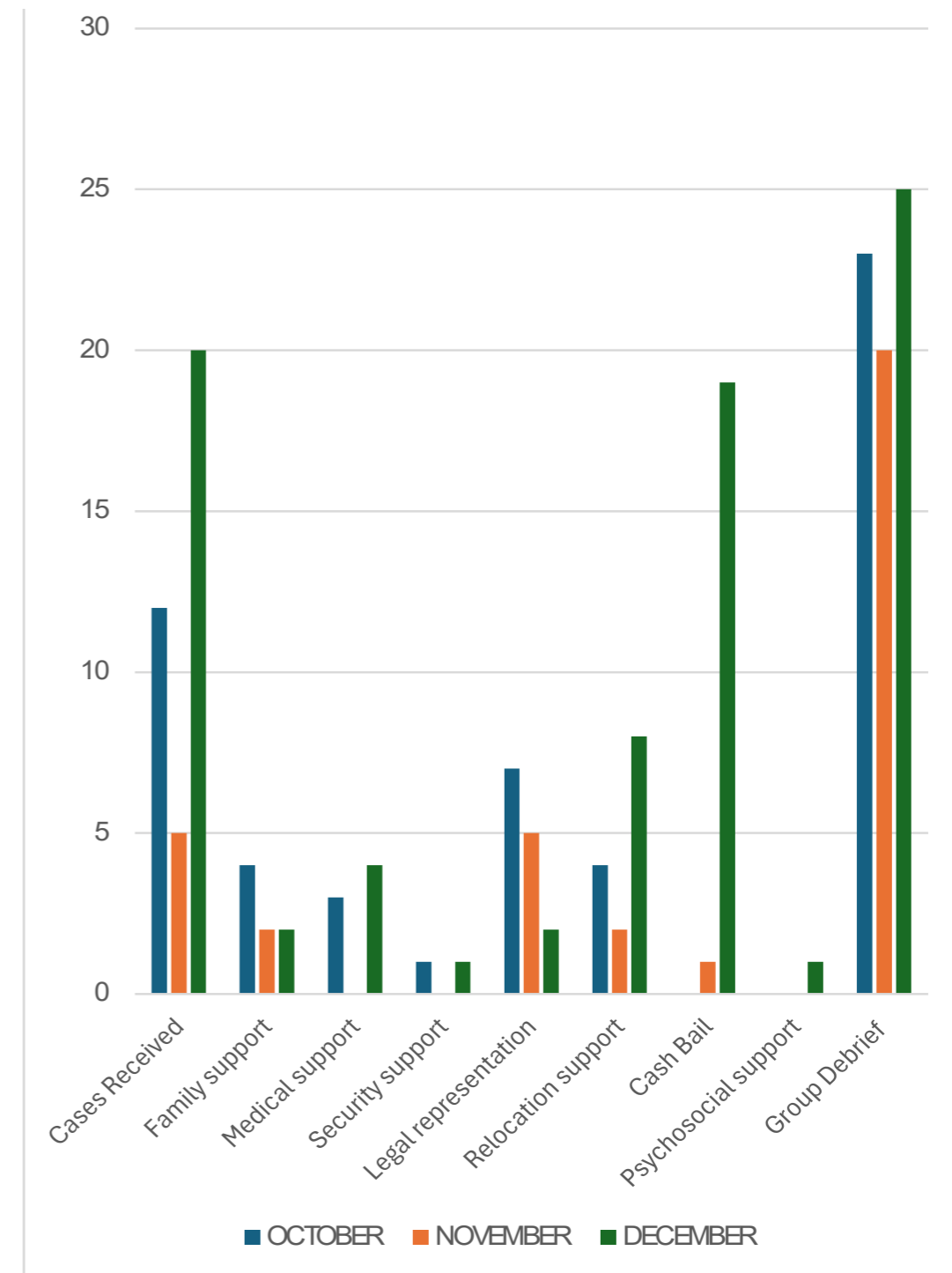
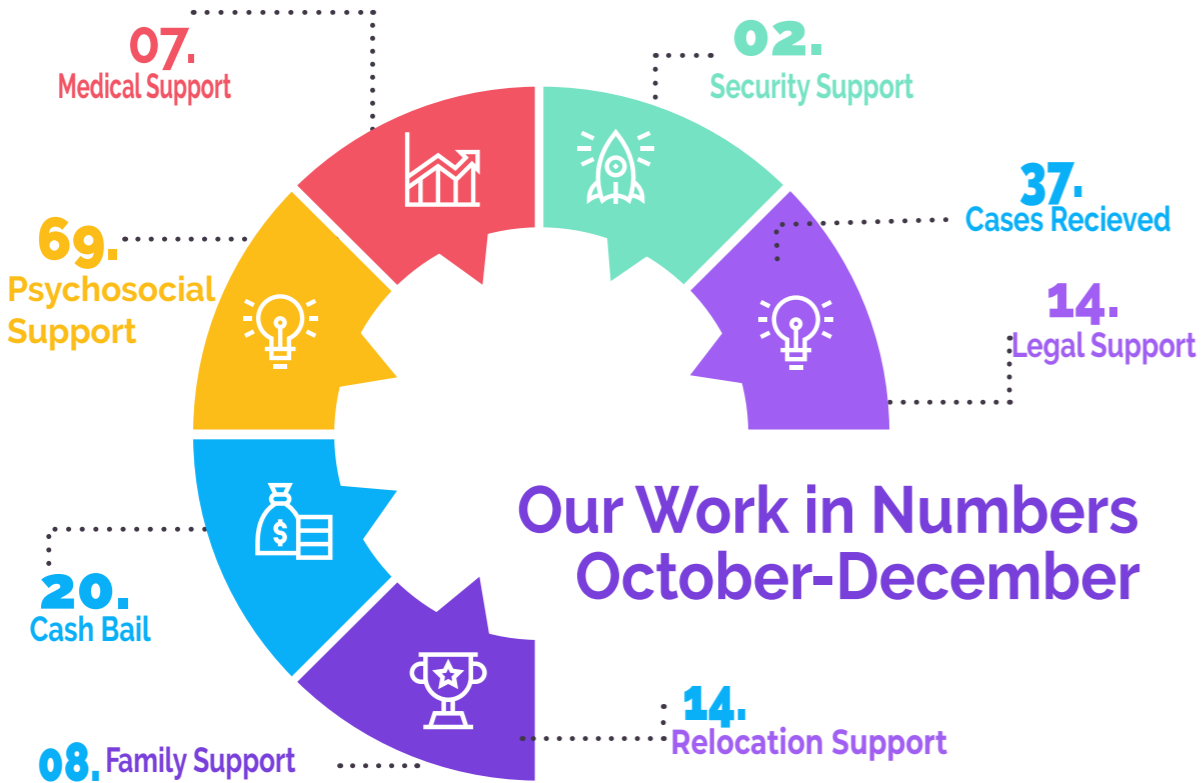
As part of Defenders Coalition core mandate to champion Safety Security and Well-being of Human Rights Defenders, Defenders Coalition facilitates timely and appropriate responses to all forms of threats or insecurities to HRDs. This is achieved by strengthening the capacities of HRDs and other service providers, more so, duty bearers, lawyers, medical personnel and counsellors among others.

Defenders Coalition intervenes in a timely way whenever HRDs are at risk and deliberately establishes strategic partnerships with complementary referral systems in order to ensure a systems approach to HRD support.

In the months of **October, November, December**, the **Defenders Coalition** facilitated **timely and appropriate responses to all forms of threats or insecurities on HRDs**.

This was achieved by strengthening the capacities of HRDs and other service providers, more so, duty bearers, lawyers, medical personnel and counsellors among others.

Below is a summary of the interventions:



EQUIPPING THE DEFENDERS

9th Annual Human Rights Defenders Academy. Theme; Radically dreaming for the future of our communities.



Judy Kipkenda a Woman Human Rights Defender from Baringo County attending the Ecological Justice and Carbon Credit Mechanisms Class.

FROM 25TH to 29TH NOVEMBER 2024, The Annual Human Rights Defenders Academy 2024 was held, in Nairobi.

The Academy attracted both physical and virtual participation with a total of 342 participants working on thematic areas like sexual minority rights, (S)GBV, ecological and climate justice, media rights, PWDs, SRHR among other rights.

One hundred and twelve of these were human rights defenders (HRDs) drawn from all the 47 counties in Kenya with demographic representation of 41 men, 63 women and 8 sexual minorities

The 9th HRD Academy offered an enriching program tailored to the needs of HRDs navigating an increasingly shrinking civic space. Sessions covered diverse and critical topics, including; Civic Space and statutory compliance of frameworks governing community based organizations and NGOs, majorly, the Community Group Registration Act 2022 and the Public Benefit Organizations (PBOs) Act 2013; Ecological Justice and Carbon Credit mechanisms; Digital Security including emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence. Other key sessions focused on First Aid and Psychosocial Well-being, emphasizing self-care in civic spaces.



Participants of the HRD Academy engaging in a discussion at the Civic Space Class

Beyond the learning opportunities, participants gained an expanded toolkit of resources that will contribute to strengthening their work and help them confidently and innovatively navigate the challenges they face in the course of their work.

Participants further benefited from peer learning and networking. As a result, participants forged solidarities that will be useful post the Academy.

The 3-day skill strengthening sessions culminated in a General Assembly Dinner, offering a moment of celebration and reflection. This gathering highlighted the collective progress made during the week while encouraging dialogue about the future of human rights advocacy in Kenya.

The HRD Academy remains a cornerstone of the Defenders Coalition's mission to support and uplift human rights defenders.

Looking ahead, the HRD Academy holds immense potential for further growth and impact, expanding its reach, strengthening its network, and providing even more robust support to those on the frontlines of human rights advocacy, even as it continues to evolve in response to the ever changing challenges faced by HRDs. As we look to the future, we aim to provide ongoing support, fostering an environment where HRDs can continue to enhance their skills, share knowledge and grow towards positive change.



HRD Academy Participants chanting to the 'Wimbo Wa Mapambano' Anthem



Honoring Human Rights Day with Partner Human Rights Organizations

DEFENDERS COALITION PARTNERED WITH NINE ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS SEVEN COUNTIES COMMEMORATING THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM. The activities aimed to engage local communities and duty bearers in meaningful dialogues to increase understanding and foster action on critical human rights issues, with a special focus on gender-based violence

(GBV) and social challenges affecting women. These discussions sought to raise awareness of the importance of activism in addressing injustices, and empowering individuals to contribute to societal change.

The success of these activities was evident in the increased community sensitization on activism and GBV issues. Participants gained greater knowledge of human rights, the significance of advocating for

justice and how to address the systemic social issues that disproportionately affect women. Through these engagements, communities were better equipped to take proactive steps in combating GBV and promoting gender equality, marking a significant stride towards lasting social change.



Joining Hands to End Femicide in Kenya

The International Day of Human Rights Defenders was marked by a significant nationwide march organized by the #EndFemicide movement in Kenya. The event was part of a series of impactful activities aimed at raising awareness and inspiring action against the widespread gender-based violence that affects the country. The campaign mobilized local communities, leaders and key stakeholders to address the urgent issue of femicide and advocate for meaningful change.

The march successfully highlighted the issue of femicide across 20 regions in Kenya, drawing attention to the need for immediate and sustained efforts to combat gender-based violence. By bringing together diverse groups and fostering dialogue, the campaign contributed to a broader conversation about protecting women's rights and ensuring their safety in society.



Wuoth Ogik Social Justice Centre in a solidarity March for End Femicide in Kenya

Don't Wait For More Women To Be Killed To Address !



Published on 10th December 2024 by Wallace M. Nderu, an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya and the Advocacy Advisor at Defenders Coalition

25th November 2024 being the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, marks the commencement of the 16 days of activism against all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls. During this period, collective voices are raised to air the plight of women and girls calling for the end of all forms of gender-based violence to include, physical, emotional and psychological against them.

In addition, states are especially tasked with putting in place effective measures to curb the increase of GBV and to eliminate the same in totality. Unfortunately, we have not been successful in curbing these vices in totality as more and more cases of GBV to include SGBV continue to be reported, this is despite the fact of having in places laws that

address some of these unfortunate issues. What is more concerning to me as the 16 days commence, is the nature in which femicide cases are being addressed in this country. Femicide, the intentional killing of women based on their gender, becomes one of the worst forms of gender-based violence women and girls experience. Femicide Count Kenya, an organisation dedicated to tracking femicide cases in Kenya, recorded that at least 500 women were victims of femicide between 2017 and 2024. Although this is what has been reported, there is a likelihood that there are more cases which have not been brought to light.

This is year alone, in three months between August and October it was reported that 97 women had been killed. In a period of three months, that is a very significant number and cannot just be ignored. The discovery of women's decomposing and dismembered bodies in Kware area, Mathare was harrowing. The recent attempted murder of

Florence Wanjiku in Nakuru County, having been stabbed 18 times and her some of the fingers chopped of depicts a picture of society that cares less about women and the violence they endure.

Women in this country and those who care about women's rights have marched, held rallies, drafted petitions and even started movements to address and end femicide in the country. Despite the call to have femicide declared a national disaster, the same remains to be seen, a mirage at a distance.

One of the asks and which I support fully is the criminalisation of femicide in totality, the same is yet to be fully addressed. It is rather unfortunate that despite calls for action to be taken, women and girls have been killed while their perpetrators continue to walk free. Where is the justice for all those women who have lost their lives in some very inhumane ways.

For those prosecuted and convictions upheld, have been a result of collective noise from the public and civil society. People cannot seat back, arms folded while victims have no justice and families left with deep wounds, they only are aware of. We need to see more prosecution of perpetrators of femicide even as we discuss its criminalisation.

The numbers mentioned above are actual women, not just figures, whose lives were cut short because someone felt they could. It cannot be business as usual as such atrocities continue being witnessed in our present times.

The appointment of the 12 members committee to develop policies on femicide in sports and the country is rather reactionary rather purposeful, this can be viewed as the sacrifice offered to appease the 'gods'. Femicide is not a foreign concept in Kenya, has been present. Unfortunately, despite this

fact, little to nothing has been done to curb it and especially from the states side.



The development of polices and laws is one thing and the implementation is another. There is need for clear and proper commitment from the government, all arms of it, to comprehensively address femicide once and for all. Women are tired of marching and demanding for the respect and protection of their human rights, they can only shout so loud and jump so high. We cannot be waiting for more women to be killed, or 16 days of activism to raise these concerns.

There must be deliberate and demonstratable efforts to address and end femicide in Kenya.

Voices For Just Climate Action

Communication Training to Amplify Climate Action

Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) Kenya organized a Communication Training for New Partners from October 22-23, 2024 to amplify the visibility of locally driven climate solutions.

The two-day event was designed to equip participants with vital skills in storytelling, digital media, and impactful messaging. The training aimed to bolster the capacity of VCA Kenya's partners to engage communities effectively, fostering a robust culture of knowledge-sharing and collaboration. The training culminated in a reflective session where participants shared insights and prepared for a transformative three-day boot camp.



Defenders Coalition Staff with VCA Partners engaging in a discussion at the workshop in Kilifi County

Defenders Coalition Partners with UAF-Africa

From October 17th to 19th, 2024, the Urgent Action Fund (UAF)-Africa held its Annual Registry Partners Meeting, bringing together partners from across Africa to reflect, collaborate, and strengthen feminist activism. Grounded in Pan-African feminist principles, the workshop emphasized resilience, healing, and collective action to tackle challenges in advancing women's rights.

Key highlights included sessions on historical reflection, crisis resilience strategies from movements in Sudan and Burkina Faso, and addressing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV). Participants also explored the integration of healing practices into activism, fostering solidarity and sustainability in their work. The meeting reinforced the importance of collaboration, innovation, and care in driving social justice. Partners left equipped with tools and strategies to continue championing women's rights across the continent.



Defenders Coalition and UAF-Africa partners in South Africa.

Empowering Communities Through Alternative Justice System



The Defenders Coalition, in collaboration with the Social Justice Centres Working Group and with the support of GiZ, recently concluded an impactful project aimed at enhancing access to justice for communities across Kenya.

The Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) project focused on empowering grassroots communities by promoting sustainable and community-driven mechanisms for resolving disputes. This initiative was designed to complement formal legal systems while ensuring justice was accessible to everyone, particularly marginalized groups.

To build awareness and encourage participation, the project conducted trainings in Nairobi, Kisumu and Kajiado, where individuals learned about Alternative Justice Systems.

These engagements provided platforms for learning and engaging, allowing community members to share their experiences and concerns. One significant achievement was the early-stage involvement of marginalized groups, such as women and youths in the project. Although the project was still in its infancy, there was a noticeable increase in

participation from these groups, suggesting that the project was beginning to break traditional barriers to access to justice.

Capacity-building efforts targeted at Social Justice Centres (SJs) also showed initial success, with local actors expressing increased confidence in their ability to manage disputes, though these skills are still being developed.

Collaboration with Social Justice Centres (SJs) and local authorities experienced a significant boost during the project, with these partnerships showing increasing potential for fostering local support for Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and promoting the effective use of Alternative Justice Systems (AJS).

This progress was particularly evident when members of the SJs actively engaged with various AJS spaces to participate in mediation efforts. On a broader level, while the project did not yet see large-scale reductions in conflict or the full reconciliation of deeply entrenched grievances, the groundwork for such changes was laid. Early interactions through AJS mechanisms suggested a potential for more inclusive and nonviolent conflict resolution, but further time and engagement would be needed for these changes to take root.



Stakeholders (Chiefs, Village Elders, Officers and Nyumba Kumi) attending the Alternative Justice System Training in Kajiado.

Strengthening capacities of Human Rights Defenders in Kenya.



1. Security Management Training

Defenders Coalition conducted a Security Management training session that convened the End Femicide KE Movement in Kajiado: Our team led a session on safe cyber hygiene

practices, emphasizing the importance of digital security in human rights work and addressing Technology-Facilitated gender-based violence(TFGBV)



Defenders Coalition ICT team during a security audit in August.



Defenders Coalition ICT team during a security audit in August.

2. Security Audits for Partner Human Rights Organizations

The Defenders Coalition recently conducted thorough security audits for four human rights organizations underscoring our commitment to safeguarding human rights defenders (HRDs) and the organizations that support them. These audits are part of our ongoing efforts to ensure that HRDs can continue their critical work in advocating for the rights of marginalized communities, free from threats and harm.

These audits are not just about identifying risks; they are about empowering HRDs with the knowledge and tools they need to protect themselves and their work. By taking proactive steps to enhance their security, The Defenders Coalition remains dedicated to supporting HRDs across Kenya. As threats to human rights activism evolve, so too must our strategies to protect those on the frontlines. Through initiatives like these security audits, we reaffirm our commitment to creating a safer environment for all those who stand up for justice, equality, and human rights.

During these audits, the Defenders Coalition team worked closely with each organization to assess their offices, digital security practices, and overall operational procedures.

3. Help-Desk Support

On 21st -29th November 2024,Defenders Coalition set up a help desk that provided technical and software support to 112 participants at the Human Rights Defenders Academy.

Strengthening Digital Capacity of Staff

1. Digital Repression Workshop

The Defenders Coalition participated in a Digital Repression Workshop that brought together representatives from 18 countries across Africa and Asia. Organized in collaboration with DefendDefenders, this workshop focused on the pressing issue of digital repression, a challenge that has increasingly impacted civic spaces, human rights defenders, and activists worldwide.

The event served as a platform for participants to share firsthand experiences and insights on the various manifestations of digital repression in their regions. Through interactive sessions and collaborative discussions, we explored innovative strategies to counteract these challenges and strengthen digital resilience.

2. Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence Training.

In October and December, The Defenders Coalition participated in Training of Trainers sessions on Technological Facilitated Gender Based Violence facilitated by IREX in Nairobi.

These sessions equipped our staff with the skills necessary to address and mitigate TFGBV effectively.



3. Security Management Training

Defenders Coalition in collaboration with DefendDefenders facilitated a Security Management training sessions for Defenders Coalition staff members. The training equipped our staff members with the knowledge and skills to develop security management strategies based on individual and organizational risk assessments and enhance their capacity and confidence to practice and transfer these skills to others.



Defenders Coalition Staff during the the Security Management Training

Providing Psychosocial Support to Human Rights Defenders

2024 has proven to be an exceptionally challenging period for human rights defenders (HRDs) in Kenya, marked by deaths, abductions, arbitrary arrests, and police brutality.

In response to this increasingly hostile environment, the Defenders Coalition conducted psychosocial debrief sessions for 68 grassroots HRDs from three organizations: Mukuru Social Justice Centre (23 HRDs), Social Justice Travelling Theatre (20 HRDs), and Kayole Community Justice Center (25 HRDs).

These sessions provided a crucial safe space for participants to address the emotional and psychological toll of their work, particularly given the heightened risks and trauma they face while handling cases of injustice, violence, and oppression. As a result, participants reported improved mental well-being, stronger peer support networks, and enhanced resilience in handling challenging cases

. These outcomes have strengthened their capacity to continue their vital human rights work while maintaining their psychological health during these difficult times



Our toll-free Dial-a-Counselor line - **0800 724 280** is open

Connect with a professional counselor for your mental and psychosocial needs today.





Defenders Coalition Staff Retreat and Recognition

From December 6th to 9th, 2024, our team gathered for a memorable and rejuvenating annual staff retreat in Kwale County.

The retreat aimed at enhancing the staff's overall well-being and fostering stronger team bonds, while providing an opportunity to relax, recharge, and connect outside the workplace. Investing in the wellness of our staff not only nurtures a positive workplace culture but also enhances individual performance and team collaboration.

Our time together included rejuvenating wellness sessions focusing on self-appreciation and personal growth, reflecting on strengths and contributions, as well as team-building activities to strengthen communication, collaboration and trust among colleagues.

In the spirit of Christmas season, we participated in a Christmas gifts exchange,

spreading joy and appreciation for one another. The retreat was a valuable experience, leaving everyone feeling energized, appreciated, and more united as a team



Defenders Coalition Board Members and Executive Director, Kamau Ngugi at the Staff Retreat

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Conquering New Heights!

The Defenders Coalition team and other Human Rights Defenders embarked on a hiking adventure to Seven Ponds-Aberdare Range, united in the commitment to "Climb for Justice." The event was not only a physical challenge but a powerful symbol of solidarity for anchoring human rights in our culture.. While some reached the summit, others showed resilience and determination at different points along the way, embodying the diverse paths taken in pursuit of justice. Each step taken served as a reminder that the journey towards justice is not always easy, but it is worth every effort.

This experience taught everyone

the importance of perseverance, teamwork, and supporting one another through challenges. We learned that even when we face setbacks, our collective commitment can push us forward. As a team, we are committed to continuing this climb, both metaphorically and literally, as we work together towards a more just and equitable future. The journey doesn't stop here—we will keep climbing, supporting each other, and advocating for justice every step of the way together!



Heading to Kilimanjaro in March 2025!

Exciting news for all adventurers and justice seekers! Our highly anticipated Climb for Justice expedition to Mt. Kilimanjaro now has new dates, and we're inviting YOU to join us in this incredible movement for change!

Kilimanjaro Expedition: 8th-15th March The main aim of this pillar will be to facilitate timely and ap-

propriate responses to all forms of threats or insecurities to

HRDs.

This will be achieved by strengthening the capacities of HRDs

and other service providers, more so, duty

Prepare at the Aberdares in October

But First, We Prepare!

As we get ready for the Mt. Kilimanjaro expedition in 2025, we invite you to join us this January for a thrilling preparatory hike at the beautiful Mt. Kinangop

Date: 25th January 2024

Destination: Mt. Kinangop

Cost: Ksh 3,000

Payment Details:

M-Pesa Paybill Number: 810896

Account Name: Your Name

Don't miss this chance to enjoy stunning views, make new friends, and support the journey to Haki Village. Book your spot now and let's Climb for Justice!

The National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders-Kenya
P. O. Box 26309- 00100, Nairobi.

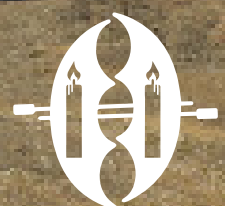
Contact Us On

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