

Newsletter

Q1 - JANUARY TO MARCH 2024



Defender's Digest: THRDC Coalition Highlights *January to March 2024*





Dear Our Esteemed Members, Partners and Stakeholders,



I am pleased to present the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition's (THRDC) newsletter for the first quarter of 2024 (January to March) highlighting our journey in enhancing protection, empowerment, and advocacy for Human Rights Defenders (HRDs).

In this issue, we focus on the diverse activities undertaken by THRDC to advance our coalition's vision, including efforts to create a better working environment and ensure smooth operations for Tanzania's human rights defenders (HRDs).

We are deeply grateful for the invaluable support and continued cooperation from our members, partners, and government officials over the past three months. Our collaborative efforts have been fundamental to our success, helping us





overcome challenges and celebrate key achievements together.

The first quarter of 2024 has been notable for several milestones: THRDC established a dedicated desk for Defenders with Disabilities, fostering a safe and inclusive environment for their advocacy. THRDC in collaboration with DefendDefenders also launched the Network of Environmental Human Rights Defenders (NET-EHRD). THRDC sustains its advocacy initiatives for Women HRDs and we celebrated International Women’s Day with a Roundtable Discussion of WHRD "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress."

Additionally, THRDC is actively involved in shaping the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP-BHR) as a member of the National Steering Committee.

We are also working closely with the Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs (MOCLA) to complete the long-pending National Human Rights Action Plan II (NHRAP II), initially drafted in 2018.

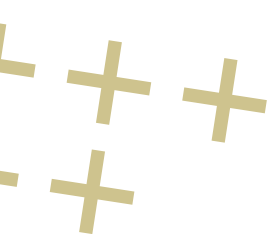
Our ongoing initiatives focus on building the capacities of HRDs to better serve society through the civil society sector. We remain committed to fostering goodwill and mutual understanding with all our stakeholders, empowering, protecting, respecting, recognizing, and reaching out to a broad network of Human Rights Defenders.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement with THRDC as we strive to defend and promote human rights across Tanzania.



Onesmo Olengurumwa

*National Coordinator Tanzania
Human Rights Defenders
Coalition (THRDC)*





1. Highlighting Progress in Litigation, Emergency Support, and Rescue

From January to March 2024, we have made remarkable progress through our Litigation, Emergency Support, and Rescue program, aimed at aiding Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) under threat. Our dedicated efforts have provided 12 HRDs with legal support, ensuring they have the representation and advice needed to confront challenges. Furthermore, to protect HRDs from immediate danger, we've successfully relocated 15 HRDs to safe environments and extended psychological support to 7 HRDs, acknowledging the mental strain involved in their work.

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Legal Support

15

Relocation

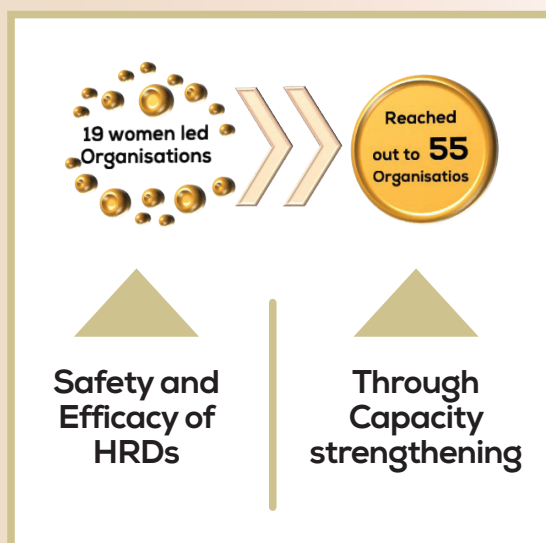
07

Psychological Support

As we proceed, we aim to further integrate HRD concerns into national frameworks and address the critical issues they face. The support from our community and stakeholders is invaluable in this journey.

2. Protection Planning and Risk Management

These efforts aim to equip HRDs with the necessary tools for physical and digital security management, ensuring adherence to regulatory laws and effective documentation and reporting of human rights violations. Throughout the year, THRDC with continue empowering lawyers and judicial officers with knowledge on public interest litigation and human rights-based adjudication, further strengthening the legal framework protecting HRDs.





Training of new members on physical and digital security management, Legal Compliance and effective documentation and reporting of human rights violations held in March 2024.

3. Protection Engagement, Advocacy, and Research

The first quarter of 2024 has seen us fortify our preventive protection mechanisms through dynamic Advocacy and Engagement aiming to enhance acceptance, recognition, and the operational environment for HRDs through constructive engagement with stakeholders at all levels: National. Regional and International.

THRDC Embraces Consultative Approach in NGO Contributions Review

On January 24, 2024, the THRDC contributed to a landmark consultative workshop aimed at reviewing NGOs' contributions to the national development and their reporting processes. Hosted in Dar es Salaam by the Office of the Registrar of NGOs and the National Council of NGO in Tanzania (NaCoNGO), this event marked a significant shift towards inclusivity, engaging Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) directly in the evaluation process for the first time since 2015.

The anticipated 2023 NGO contribution report, set for release this year, builds upon the foundation laid by its predecessors from 2015, 2020, 2021, and 2022. Historically, the preparation of these reports was primarily the responsibility of the NGO Registrar's office, with limited NGO involvement. THRDC lauds this new collaborative approach, underscoring the importance of participatory processes in enhancing NGO contributions to national development.



The workshop featured Deputy Director of NGOs as Adv. Musa Sanganya and Dr. Lilian Badi-Chairperson of NaCoNGO, alongside representatives from approximately 20 NGOs, including THRDC's Ms. Nuru Maro, representing National Coordinator Adv. Onesmo Olungurumwa. THRDC remains dedicated to advocating for the recognition of NGOs' roles in advancing national development and pledges continued support to the NGO Registrar in achieving this objective.



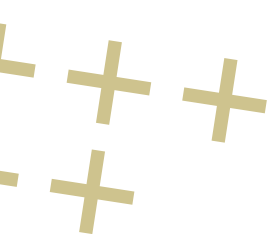


NGO Network Meeting: A Leap Towards Collaborative Growth

February, THRDC engaged in discussions with the Registrar of NGOs and Network of NGOs in Tanzania focusing on the sustainability and empowerment of NGOs in Tanzania. Hosted by the Office of the Registrar and TANGO, this dialogue opened pathways for collaborative solutions between the government and NGOs, aiming to tackle prevalent challenges together. From THRDC, our Advocacy Officer Adv. Nuru Maro represented the Coalition.



THRDC is at the forefront of building a resilient NGO network in Tanzania, dedicated to creating a unified and strong civil society. By facilitating dialogue and collaboration among NGOs, THRDC fosters an environment where these organizations can share resources, best practices, and innovative solutions to challenges. Their efforts include training sessions, advocacy campaigns, and creating platforms for NGOs to voice their concerns and contributions.





Championing Inclusivity and Rights of People with Disabilities (PWDs)



On February 08, 2024 THRDC participated a disability rights stakeholders' engagement meeting aimed at addressing the rights and conditions of individuals with albinism in Tanzania. This significant event was organized by the office of the UN Resident Coordinator in collaboration with Ms. Muluka Miti-Drummond, the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of rights by persons with albinism.

Representing THRDC, Ms. Perpetua Senkoro engaged with distinguished participants, including Ms. Joy Maongezi from the Prime Minister's Office, and representatives from pivotal organizations like the Tanzania Albinism Society and the Legal and Human Rights Centre. Motivated by the insights from the 2023 assessment report, THRDC is embarking on a new initiative aimed at bolstering support for Human Rights Defenders with Disabilities. This endeavor seeks to foster a secure, inclusive, and empowering environment for these defenders, leveraging strategic partnerships and networking to achieve these objectives.





Network of Frontline Environmental Human Rights Defenders in Tanzania (NET-FEHRD) established.



THRDC, DefendDefenders joined forces for a game-changing 2-day workshop on March 25th-26th in Dar es Salaam bringing together 31 Environmental Human Rights Organisations forging a stronger coalition for environmental and climate justice. Thirty visionary environmental human rights defenders (EHRDs) joined forces and adopted a declaration to establish the Network of Frontline Environmental Human Rights Defenders in Tanzania (NET-FEHRD).

Key Outcomes:

- i. NET-FERHRD, a new network for frontline environmental defenders in Tanzania, is born!
- ii. NET-FERHRD will operate under THRDC, uniting defenders across mainland and Zanzibar.
- iii. A dedicated Steering Committee will guide the network's growth and future.



A Call for Collaboration: THRDC Hosts UN Human Rights Champion

THRDC was honored to welcome Ms. Nada Alnashef, the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, to their Zanzibar office on March 10, 2024. Accompanied by esteemed delegates from UN human rights bodies, Ms. Alnashef embarked on a crucial dialogue with local CSOs.



The air crackled with a shared purpose: amplifying the voices of human rights defenders and strengthening the vital role of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Tanzania. Discussions centered on creating a more robust partnership between CSOs and the OHCHR to ensure human rights mandate reaches every corner of the nation.

Development of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP-BHR)

We are pleased to inform our members and partners that the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) is playing a pivotal role in the development of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP-BHR). THRDC is a member of the National Steering Committee represented by our National Coordinator Advocate Onesmo Olungurumwa.





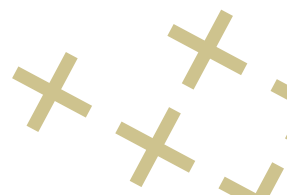
The National Steering Committee have nine (9) members including Prime Minister's office, Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs (MoCLA), Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance; and In Zanzibar include Second Vice President Office; President's Office-Constitution, Legal, Public Service and Good Governance; President's Office- Finance and Planning; THRDC and Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF).



- THRDC is providing practical insights of human rights violations within the business sector, informing the NAP-BHR Committee's policy decisions.
- THRDC's expertise enhances the National Committee's understanding of the intersection between business practices and human rights, facilitating effective policy formulation action.

Fostering relationships with Development Partners

THRDC continue to maintain a good relationship with its Partners by ensuring accountability to donors, compliance with their requirements, and keeping them updated on the Coalition activities. THRDC hosted/and attended several physical and virtual meetings with development partners. The Coalition used these meetings to share its strategic direction and leverage them to strengthen relationships for the protection and protection of human rights in the country.





THRDC was delighted to receive a visit from invaluable funding partner @swedenintz to discuss the progress of our three years project together aiming to enhance the working environment for Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in Tanzania, with a focus on HRDs protection, advocacy, capacity building, and institutional sustainability on 25 January 2024.



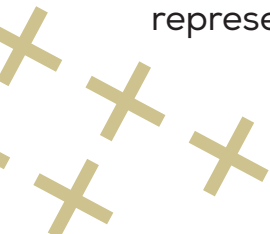
From Sweden Embassy Ms. Eva Ladeborn-Senior Program Manager- Human Rights and Governance; and Mr. Samwel Saigilu- Financial Controller represented the Embassy and from THRDC, Mr. Onesmo Olengurumwa-National Coordinator; Mr. Remmy Lema-Programs manager; and Ms. Minza Fimbo-Finance Manager represented the Coalition.



On 06th February 2024, THRDC was privileged to host a special visit from the US Government, Department of State led by Ineke Stoneham-Unit Chief for Africa from Office of International Religious Freedom (IRF), Washington DC. Others were Miriam Ernest - Foreign Affairs

Officer; Jeremy Beck Political -Economic Officer and Bahati Mhaville- Political and Economic Section at the US Embassy in Dar es Salaam.

The aim of this meeting was to facilitate a productive sharing of information regarding the human rights situation in Tanzania and to explore avenues for enhancing human rights and freedom of religions in the country. From THRDC, Adv. Onesmo Olengurumwa-National Coordinator and Ms. Nuru Maro represented the Coalition.



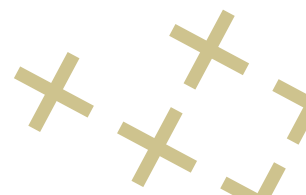


THRDC was delighted to have a bilateral meeting with Belgium Embassy in Tanzania on 14th February 2024 at the Belgium Embassy in Dar es Salaam aiming to facilitate a productive sharing of information regarding the human rights situation in Tanzania and to explore avenues for enhancing democratic governance and human rights and in the country.

From Belgium, Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs from the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ms.Bo Ampe from the Ministry and Fanny Heylen-Head of Cooperation from the Embassy participated in this meeting. From THRDC, our Advocacy Officer Ms. Nuru Maro represented the Coalition.

During the Commonwealth Law Ministers' Meeting (March 4-8, 2024) in Zanzibar, THRDC held a side meeting with Canadian Government Officials. The discussions involved Honorable Minister Arif Virani - the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Deputy Minister of Canada and the Canadian Ambassador to Tanzania, Honorable Kyle Nunas.

The meeting focused on understanding the THRDC's impactful human rights activities in Tanzania and how to improve the collaboration between THRDC and Canada. National Coordinator Advocate Onesmo Olengurumwa and Zanzibar Coordinator Mr. Baitani Mujuni Suleiman represented THRDC.



February 2024, THRDC had the honor of hosting distinguished guest from the European Union (EU) represented by EU Inspector Ambassador Oliver Nette. The visit aimed to discuss the state of human rights in Tanzania, share experience, explore effective strategies to protect and defend rights against violations,



identify the roles of development partners and civil society organizations (CSOs), and arrange avenues for collaboration. The meeting was also attended by Protection International (PI) Senior Protection Officer, Advocate Jones Sendodo, THRDC's National Coordinator, Advocate Onesmo Olungurumwa and THRDC program officers.

Championing Justice: THRDC at the Commonwealth Law Ministers' Meeting



On 08 March 2024, THRDC was privileged to participate in the significant closing ceremony of the biennial Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting (CLMM), which was presided over by His Excellency Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi, the President of Zanzibar.



A Focused Agenda on Innovation and Access to Justice

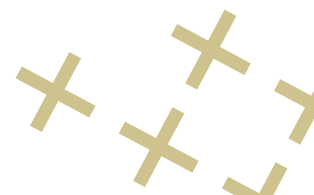
The CLMM revolved around the pivotal theme: "Technology and Innovation: How Digitalization Paves the Way for the Development of People-Centered Access to Justice." The conference opened last Monday with an inspiring address from President Samia Suluhu Hassan, who highlighted the critical role of technology in enhancing access to justice across Commonwealth nations.

Throughout the week, law ministers and attorneys-general from 56 Commonwealth countries engaged in robust discussion sharing insights on recent legal advancements within their jurisdictions and deliberated on innovative responses to the evolving justice issues impacting their citizens.

At THRDC, we remain dedicated to examining responsible methods to enhance access to justice. This includes actively supporting judiciary sector reforms in both Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar. We are hopeful that the outcomes of this week's discussions will fuel the ongoing mandates from the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings, steering further advancements in legal frameworks and access to justice initiatives.

THRDC was represented by our National Coordinator, Advocate Onesmo Olengurumwa, and our Advocacy Officer, Advocate Nuru Maro.

As we reflect on CLMM 2024, THRDC is inspired to continue its advocacy and efforts in promoting human rights and judicial accessibility. We are committed to implementing the insights and strategies gleaned from this gathering to further our mission of safeguarding human rights and facilitating access to justice for all.



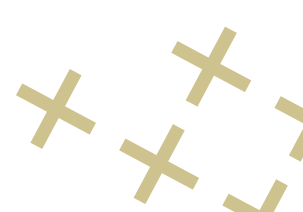


Progress in Collaborative Disability Advocacy



On 27 March 2024, THRDC and its Member Ngorongoro Legal Aid Center visited Sight Savers Tanzania aiming to establish strategic partnerships to enhance disability advocacy. The meetings also explored new collaboration avenues that promise substantial benefits for human rights defenders and individuals with disabilities in the country. Earlier this year, THRDC established a dedicated desk for Defenders with Disabilities to facilitate an enabling, safe, and inclusive environment for their human rights advocacy work.

From THRDC Ms. Perpetua Senkoro, Coordinator of Defenders with Disability Desk represented the Coalition and Mr. Moses Moreto, the Head of the Disability Program represented Ngorongoro Legal Aid Center.



Celebrating Women's Day with a Roundtable Discussion of WHRDs

"Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress"

06 March 2024

The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) in collaboration with Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders Tanzania (CWHRD) organized a thoughtful and impactful round table for 60 Women Human Rights Defenders in Tanzania to catalyze collaborative efforts, inspire commitment, and strategize actionable steps toward advancing gender equality and economic freedom on March 6, 2024, PSSF Commercial Building, Sam Nujoma Road - Dar es Salaam.

Reaffirming 2024 IWDs theme: "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress" the discussion focused on key areas including investing in women as a human rights imperative; ending poverty; implementing gender-responsive financing; advocating for a shift to a green economy and care society; and supporting feminist change-makers.

OUTPUTS

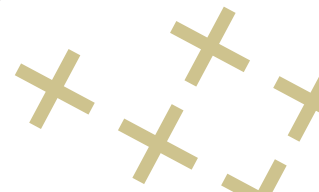
- a. Policy Recommendations on women empowerment which will be used for advocacy at national level.
- b. IWD Communique which was utilized to sustain momentum and promote ongoing awareness throughout the year and during the CSW 68.
- c. Adopting IWD resolutions in Tanzanian WHRD's statement during the CSW 68.



"Your voices and actions are indispensable in the quest for equality and justice serving as a cornerstone in fighting against discrimination and promotion of comprehensive participation of women in all spheres of life.-Rechael Mbona-Representative from UN Women Tanzania when addressing WHRDs



"From left: Dr. Ananileya Nkya- Board Chairperson of JUKATA; Mama Mary Rusimbi- Former Executive Director of Women Fund Tanzania; Mama Pili Mtambalike- THRDC Board Chairperson during Roundtable Discussion of WHRDs"Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress" on 06 March 2024.






"Acquiring information holds the power to liberate, particularly when it pertains to understanding and addressing the unique challenges faced by women. This information not only enlightens but also equips women to make informed decisions, drive change, and advocate for their rights and well-being. Thus, educating oneself can be a transformative tool, fostering personal liberation and enabling women to effect meaningful improvements in their circumstances. "Pili Mtambalike, THRDC Board Chairperson

There are numerous ongoing issues that continue to adversely affect women, much as they have in the past. However, often society expects these individuals to advocate for their own rights in isolation. I call upon everyone to deeply consider the lasting effects their actions and attitudes have on the fight for women's rights. It's crucial for each of us to actively contribute to a legacy that supports, empowers, and uplifts women, ensuring a just and equitable future. -Dr. Ananilea Nkya-Chairperson of the Tanzania Constitutional Forum



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