

THRDC Newsletter

FIRST
QUARTER



P.O. Box 105926 | Dar es Salaam, Tanzania | info@thrdc.or.tz

(January - March 2020)



**RELENTLESSLY
DEFENDING HUMAN
RIGHTS AMID THE
COVID-19 CRISIS**



A WORD FROM THE COORDINATOR

Dear Readers,

It's my pleasure to introduce you to THRDC's first quarterly newsletter of the year covering the work we have done so far between January and March 2020. We also thank the Almighty God for a new year 2020 despite having to deal with the risks and challenges presented with the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

One of the many interesting stories covered in our newsletter is of course the eventual release of Tanzanian freelance Investigative Journalist, Mr. Erick Kabendera, after being remanded in prison for more than 8 months and later entering a plea bargain agreement with the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

Others include the commemoration of the International Women's Day on 8th March that brought together young women HRDs and prominent Tanzanian women HRDs. Also between January and March this year, a joint CSOs-TRA taskforce initiated the development of a Simplified CSOs Tax Compliance Toolkit. Through this assignment, officials from the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA)

conducted consultative visits with 185 CSOs representatives across 8 regions within THRDC's Zones in Tanzania to address their taxation issues while collecting inputs for the development of the toolkit that will suit CSOs needs.

It's also clear by now just how much of an impact the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has had on CSOs' operations in Tanzania. This newsletter has covered a little bit on that and how Tanzania CSOs are coping with the pandemic so far.

On behalf of the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), I'd like to remind our members, fellow human right defenders, other CSOs and the public to adhere to all necessary safety precautions against COVID-19 as instructed by the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization (WHO) and in the many COVID-19 protection guidelines available. Stay at Home, Stay Safe! After all, "A human rights defender is better alive than dead!"

Enjoy reading,

Onesmo Olengurumwa,
National Coordinator
Tanzania Human Rights Defenders
Coalition (THRDC)

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1 “WORKING FROM HOME!”: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CSOs IN TANZANIA

In late December 2019, a pneumonia-like flu broke out in the Wuhan province of China. In a space of just 4 months, what was initially branded as the ‘Wuhan disease’ and perceived by the world to be under total control, was later officially declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11th March 2020. The Corona Virus disease (COVID-19) is claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands around the globe at an unprecedented pace, with a cure yet to be found. Just 5 days after it was declared a global pandemic by WHO, on 16th March 2020, Tanzania registered its first Corona Virus (COVID-19) case. In Tanzania just like in many other countries, this crisis has prompted decisive measures by the Government, Businesses and Civil Society Organizations alike to try to curb infections.

While our government’s preventive measures like the closure of schools, universities and colleges, imposing restrictions on public gatherings and the ‘Stay at Home’ policy seem to be realistic options and even plausible, without a shadow of a doubt, the general situation has taken a toll on Civil Society Organizations, Human Rights Defenders and their human rights interventions.

It’s clear now that, despite the fact that there were early warnings that the virus would have spread to Tanzania, local CSOs were not fully prepared financially with planned emergency budgets to handle the current situation. The spread of the disease has therefore hugely affected

CSOs’ operations and their sustainability at the moment. Many organizations have now been compelled to suspend office work and field activities in response to the outbreak, forcing employees to work from home. It is anticipated that, working from home will have adverse effects on the overall performance of CSOs due to varying adjustments among employees to their new working spaces at home and being confined to working online, not to mention the psychological effects of self-isolation.

However, during these challenging times, CSOs like the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) and international organizations like the World Health Organization, the United Nation and Front Line Defenders have been publishing their protection guidelines to help CSOs, HRDs and Journalists adhere to safety measures against coronavirus infections as they work from home or even in the field.

Most notably, the Tanzania Civil Society Organizations Directors’ Forum developed a CSOs position paper and strategic intervention areas on COVID-19 addressing human rights thematic groups prone to human rights violations at this time. This document together with its corresponding year-long Action Plan will guide the implementation of CSOs activities during the crisis but will also be submitted to the Tanzania Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children for action.

2 CIVIL SOCIETY AND TAXATION IN TANZANIA: A ROAD TOWARDS COMMON UNDERSTANDING ON COMPLIANCE AND RELIEF

One of the major concerns from the government towards the Civil Society Sector in Tanzania has always been the failure of some CSOs to fully abide by national laws, and in this case, complying with the rather ambiguous CSOs taxation laws. And although most CSOs are willing to comply, there is still a huge knowledge gap in the sector, coupled with misconceptions, policy dilemmas and the ambiguity of taxation laws in Tanzania.

Seeing this gap, since 2018, THRDC through the Tanzania CSOs Directors' Forum, has been consulting and engaging with the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) on many occasions to get a viable solution on behalf of other CSOs.

Last year, between 13th and 14th October 2019, THRDC coordinated a high level session at the 5th CSOs Directors' Annual Reflection Meeting hosted in Mwanza region, themed: The meeting was attended by 100 Executive Directors from Civil Society Organizations across the country together with special guests from the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA).

One of the main resolutions adopted by both CSOs Directors and officials from the Tanzania Revenue Authorities at the meeting, was for THRDC to coordinate the joint development of a 'Simplified Tax Compliance Tool Kit' led by TRA, that will later serve as a guiding document for Tanzania CSOs to ensure they on taxation issues and ease their compliance with taxation laws.



CSOs representatives listening attentively to the Kilimanjaro TRA Regional Manager, Mr. Gabriel Mwangosi during a consultative meeting in Moshi

Between 10th and 17th March 2020, TRA officials met with 168 CSOs representatives in Mbeya, Iringa, Morogoro, Dodoma, Kilimanjaro, Arusha, Manyara and Mwanza. Here's how CSOs benefited from the coordinated TRA consultative visits:

Advice on Tax relief for NGOs (Charitable status)

According to the Tax law, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have the right to request for tax relief from the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA); in other words, requesting for Charitable Status. Tax relief or charitable status may be awarded to NGOs based on their not-for-profit nature. Throughout their consultative visits in all sampled regions, TRA officials made this point crystal clear to CSOs representatives and

advised them to opt for tax reliefs including tax relief from the Skills Development Levy (SDL).

Establishment of special TRA help-desks to cater for CSOs' needs

CSOs representatives also managed to convince TRA officials to establish special help-desks to serve CSOs in their respective regions. The request has already been agreed to by the TRA Manager in Manyara region who promised to put a special mechanism in place to serve and solve tax challenges for CSOs in Manyara. THRDC will follow-up on the eventual establishment of this TRA help-desk and how it's going to serve CSOs in Manyara region, but also use it as a case study and achievement to push for establishment of similar help-desks in other regions in Tanzania.

CSOs
*Representatives in
Manyara region
also hosted a
meeting with Mr.
Maternus Mallya
– Principal Tax
Officer TRA (Far
front corner)*



CSOs Oriented on the Tax Consultation Bureau (TCB)

Few years ago, the Tanzanian government introduced a specialized department at the TRA Head Quarters in Dar es Salaam, to specifically deal with the provision of consultative advice to Tax Payers.

Through the TRA consultative meetings, CSOs were introduced to the functions of the newly

established “Tax Consultation Bureau”. The Bureau is located at NHC Building along Samora Avenue in Dar es Salaam. It was emphasized that the Bureau is a ‘FREE ZONE OFFICE’ for disclosure of all kind of tax grievances. CSOs are urged to visit the Centre for consultation on all tax issues.

Forging closer ties with the Tanzania Revenue Authority

Apart from the fact that CSOs gained experience from TRA officials, these consultative visits generally served as an opportunity to forge better relationships going forward between Civil Society Organizations and the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) in Tanzania. Furthermore, at the end of the visits on 17th March, TRA officials urged CSOs representatives to feel welcome and seek further guidance on tax matters where necessary from TRA's tax experts.

Speaking after the meeting with TRA officials, one CSO representative in Manyara region said,

“The meeting went well. We learnt a lot and our questions and concerns were addressed accordingly. We believe improvements are underway.”

Currently, inputs from the visits collected across all 8 sampled regions are being drafted into a working Simplified Tax Compliance Toolkit by TRA officials in partnership with the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), WAJIBU Institute of Accountability, National Council of NGOs (NaCoNGO) and AcT2. We hope that the final guiding document will be of great benefit to all Human Rights Defenders and CSOs in the Tanzania.

3 DETAINED, CHARGED, BERIEVED, FINED AND TRAUMATIZED: ERICK KABENDERA'S LONG BITTER ROAD TO FREEDOM

Erick Kabendera is a Tanzanian independent Investigative Journalist who writes for both local and international newspapers. On 29th July 2019, his rather simple life took a dramatic turn. Around 18:00p.m that day, five unknown individuals who identified themselves as policemen wearing plain uniforms invaded Erick Kabendera's residence in Mbweni, Dar es Salaam. Some of them surrounded his residence, blocking neighbors from entering while others dragged him into their vehicle and disappeared with him to an unknown location. His whereabouts were unknown for at least two days.

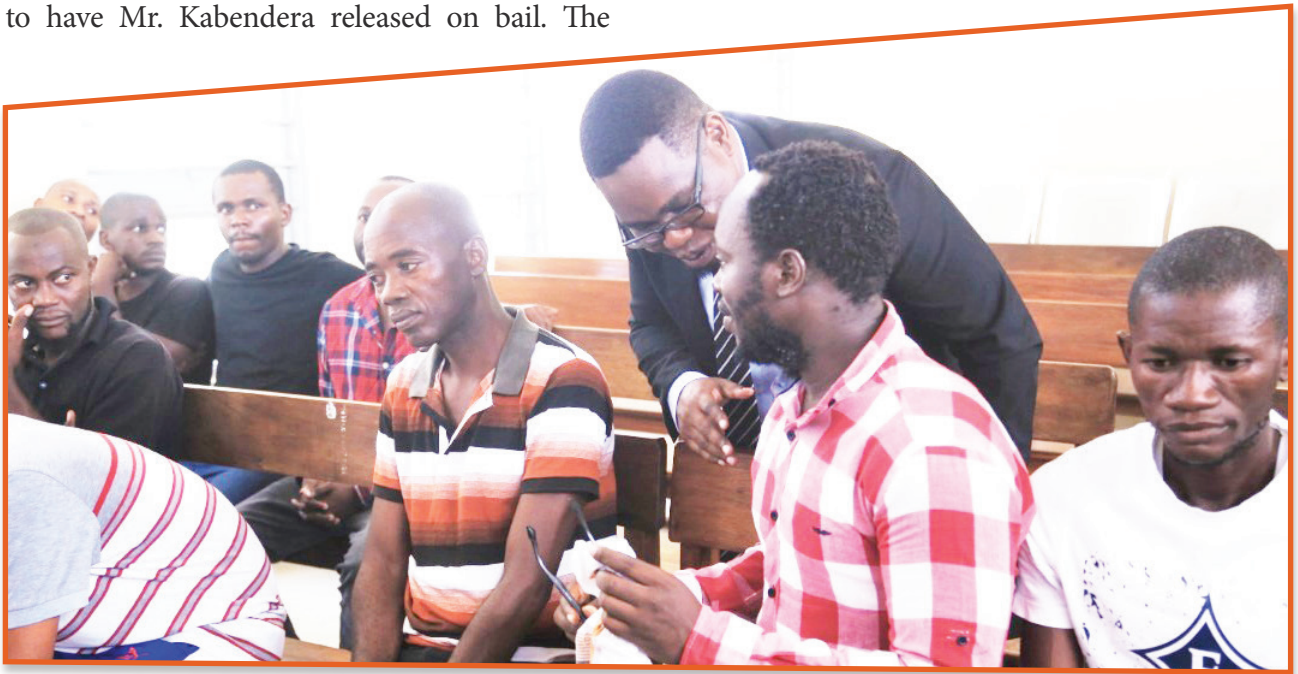
Erick Kabendera's wife then looked for her husband at every police station allover Dar es Salaam unsuccessfully. However, after sparking public outrage and a mounting pressure from Human Rights Defenders and the international donor community on the police force about Erick Kabendera's whereabouts, on 30th July 2019, the Dar es Salaam Special Zone Police Commander, Lazaro Mambosasa eventually acknowledged that, the police force had been holding Journalist Erick Kabendera for questioning. He informed the press that, Erick Kabendera was being interrogated about him citizenship and that, they would release him as soon as the interrogation was complete.

However, after being interrogated for several hours by immigration officers, Erick Kabendera was later detained and interrogated further on charges related to online sedition. These sedition

charges were connected to his article on “The Economist” Newspaper that was published on 31st July, 2019.

On 31st July 2019, the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) through its Advocate Jebra Kambole lodged a bail application to have Mr. Kabendera released on bail. The

following day, on 1st August, 2019, at 09:00 a.m, Journalist Erick Kabendera was then brought before the Kisutu Resident Magistrate’s Court but his bail application was adjourned to 5th August 2019. In the meantime, the police conducted a thorough search back at his Mbweni residence but found nothing incriminating.



THRDC’s National Coordinator Mr. Olengurumwa consoling journalist Erick Kabendera prior to a court session

On 5th August 2019, Mr. Erick was brought before the court for the second time, but surprisingly, fresh charges were read against him. This time around, Investigative Journalist Erick Kabendera was charged with three counts of unbailable economic crimes: Money Laundering contrary to section 3(u), 12(d) and 13(1)(a) of the Anti-Money Laundering Act No. 12 of 2006, Failure to pay tax of Tanzanian shillings 173 million contrary to section 105(a) of the Income Tax Act [332 R.E 2008] and Leading Organized Crime contrary to paragraph 4(1)(c) of the First Schedule to, and section 57(1) and 60(2) of the Economic and Organized Crime Control Act [Cap 200 R.E 2002].



THRDC’s Advocate Jebra Kambole conversing with his client Erick Kabendera in court

Due to the nature of his new charges, the Kisutu Resident Magistrates' Court denied him bail because the offenses charged against him are unbailable under section 148(5)(d)(v) of the Criminal Procedure Act Cap 20 R.E 2002. He was then remanded at Segerea prison since then. Throughout its entirety, Erick Kabendera's case was mentioned before the Kisutu Resident Magistrates' Court and adjourned 16 times under committal proceedings with no trial. And just when the situation seemed to be at its worst, on 31st December 2019, Ms. Verdiana Mjwahuzi, Erick Kabendera's mother passed away at the age of 80 at Amana hospital in Dar es Salaam where she had been receiving treatment. According to her in an interview with BBC Swahili on 13th December 2019, she had been relying on her son for medical support. Even after this tragic loss, Erick Kabendera's request to attend his mother's funeral was not granted by the court.

Eventually, on 24th February 2020 after languishing behind bars for more than 7 months, Erick Kabendera through his Advocate Jebra Kambole, entered a plea bargaining agreement with the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Kisutu Resident Magistrate's court then acquitted Erick Kabendera of one charge of Leading Organized Crime. However, he pled guilty to

the Money Laundering and Tax evasion charges. Investigated Journalist Erick Kabendera was then set free after agreeing to pay a fine of TZS 172 Million (\$ 74,000/=) for Tax evasion and TZS 100 Million (\$ 43,000/=) for Money Laundering. In total, the fines amounted to TZS 272 Million and was supposed to be paid within 6 months after entering the agreement.



Investigative Journalist Erick Kabendera speaking to journalists outside the Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court shortly after his release on 24th February 2020

In his media address outside the Kisutu Resident Magistrate's court, Erick Kabendera thanked THRDC, his Advocate and all well-wishers for supporting him from the start. As of now, Erick Kabendera has rejoined his family as a free man.

4 TWO HRDs CHALLENGE UNCONSTITUTIONAL LAWS THROUGH STRATEGIC LITIGATION CASES IN HOPE OF THE HIGH COURT'S RULING

CASE 1: Onesmo Olengurumwa vs the Attorney General Misc. Civil Cause No. 36 of 2019

On 16th December 2019, THRDC's National Coordinator and Human Rights lawyer Mr. Onesmo Olengurumwa petitioned before the High Court of Tanzania at the Dar es

Salaam registry, challenging the committal proceedings and preliminary inquiries brought to subordinate courts that lack jurisdiction to oversee those cases. This subjects accused persons to delayed hearings and negates the right to fair trial and delay provision of justice by the court. The petitioner Mr. Olengurumwa specifically challenged section 178, 243, 244, 245,

246, 247 248, 249, 250,256, 257, 258 and 259 of the Criminal Procedure Act Cap 20 R.E 2002 for being unconstitutional, null and void and requested the sections to be expunged from the statute book.

As seen in the handling of Erick Kabendera's case and many other cases, these challenged sections are said to contravene other provisions of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania. They also prolong the provision of justice to detainees unnecessarily, violating the fundamental rights and freedoms of people. The sections also suppress the rule of law and the due process of the law, and encourage continuous abuse of power and authority.

CASE 2: Paul Kisabo vs the Attorney General Misc. Civil Cause No. 35 of 2019

Also, on 16th December 2019, another Lawyer and Human Rights Defender Mr. Paul Kisabo petitioned before the High Court of Tanzania at Dar es Salaam challenging the denial of the right to bail for people charged with the money laundering offence in Tanzania. The petitioner is challenging section 148 (5)(a)(v) of the Criminal Procedure Act Cap 20 R.E 2002 that, it is unconstitutional since it contradicts the provisions of Articles 4 (1) & (2), 13 (4) & (6) (a), (b) and (d), 15 (1) and 17 (1) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977.

As seen in Erick Kabendera's case, Tito Magoti and Theodory Giyan's cases and other similar money laundering cases, the unbailable nature of the offence subject accused persons to long periods of detention pending completion of investigations.

Currently these two strategic litigation cases are still ongoing. As of 18th March 2020, both cases had already been mentioned three times pending the court's determination.

5 THE 'SHUJAA WANGU' CAMPAIGN

Human Rights Defenders are foot-soldiers at the frontline in the fight against human rights violations. Despite their hard work and the risks they face, most HRDs especially at the grassroots level have remained unnoticed, either due to a lack of visibility or inaccessibility to advocacy networks. To some extent, this demotivates HRDs' efforts. Nonetheless, THRDC through its SHUJAA WANGU advocacy campaign ensures that HRDs and their corresponding thematic areas of work are recognized and nurtured. Shujaa Wangu is a Swahili phrase for 'My Hero/Heroine'.

For the past three months since January 2020, through the SHUJAA WANGU campaign, at the end of every month a top nominated human rights defender by the community gets a chance on the spotlight. THRDC coordinates the nominations process and later recognizes a top nominee as a distinguished human rights defenders of the month in their particular thematic areas by publishing their profiles across THRDC's many social media platforms. This helps raise public awareness about HRDs' outstanding work, draws on the challenges HRDs face while protecting and promoting human rights, but most importantly, it boosts HRDs' morale and makes them feel valued.

Between January and March 2020, two HRDs have already been recognized through the Shujaa Wangu campaign. In January 2020, Young University HRD Joseph Malekela was nominated as a Distinguished Social rights and Accountability HRD. And in February 2020, Scholastica Pembe was nominated as a Distinguished Young defender of Women's Rights in Tanzania.

Joseph Brighton Malekela (left) (24), nominated as our Young Human Rights Defender of the month, for January 2020 through social rights and accountability and Scholastica B. Pembe (Right) (35) nominated as our Young Human Rights Defender of the month, for February 2020 through women's rights.



6 AN EQUAL WORLD, IS AN ENABLED WORLD #IWD2020 #EachforEqual



Every year on 8th March marks the International Women's Day. On the International Women's Day, women's social, economic, cultural and political achievements are celebrated globally. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality. International Women's Day (IWD) has occurred for well over a century, with the first IWD gathering in 1911 supported by over a million people worldwide.

In commemorating this year's International Women's Day, on 8th March 2020, the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) hosted its first ever Young Women Human Rights Defenders Dinner Gala themed "Equal for Each". Apart from just being a social function, the Dinner Gala was a chance for a group of young women HRDs who are driven to bring about equality and change to their society to meet and learn from

prominent Tanzanian Women HRDs like Dr. Hellen Kijo Bisimba, Dr. Judith Odunga, Martina Kabisama, Anna Kulaya and Dr. Mary Rusimbi, who were the invited inspirational speakers.

Unlike now, the late 20th Century in Tanzania saw the rise of many social activist movements led by vibrant women HRDs. The current generation of young women HRDs has failed to replicate their predecessors' success and this has been attributed to a mounting fear among young women HRDs and diminishing boldness, passion and spirit of activism over the years.

EACH FOR EQUAL
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2020
Young Women Human Rights Defenders
Dinner Gala
Inspirational Speakers:

- Prof. Ruth Meena**
Executive Director: Women Fund TZ
- Dr. Judith Odunga**
Former Executive Director: WILDAF
- Martina Kabisama**
Executive Director: SARINGO (Moderator)
- Mary Rusimbi**
Executive Director: Women Fund TZ
- Dr. Hellen Kijo Bisimba**
Former Executive Director: LHRIC

#IWD2020
#YWHRSDGala
#EachforEqual

8 March 2020
6:00pm - 10:00pm
Kisenga Hall - Millennium Tower
Kijitonyama, Dar es Salaam

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Throughout the Dinner Gala, Martina Kabisama, Dr. Hellen Kijo Bisimba, Dr. Judith Odunga, Anna Kulaya and Dr. Mary Rusimbi, inspired the young women HRDs through sharing their own past experiences and each revealing untold stories of their journeys towards defending human rights. Their stories equipped the young women HRDs with the right skills and knowledge on how to navigate challenges in their work, but also served as motivation for pursuing human rights defending with zeal and vigor.

“Defending Human Rights is a difficult path to take, but worth it. There was a time slept in the middle of the road in protest, just to block government authorities from passing through because I needed them to give me a chance to talk to them.”

Advised Dr. Hellen Kijo Bisimba at the Dinner Gala.

“My husband had urged me to stop defending human rights... Little did he know that defending human rights is not a job, but an inner passion”

Advised Dr. Hellen Kijo Bisimba at the Dinner Gala.



Young Women Human Rights Defenders dancing and celebrating the International Women's Day at the Dinner Gala hosted by THRDC on 8th March 2020

7 FOSTERING WORKING RELATIONS WITH CHRAGG AND THE GOVERNMENT

In a bid to influence the government of the United Republic of Tanzania to reverse its decision earlier in November 2019; to withdraw the right of individuals and NGOs from directly filing cases against it and seeking redress at the African Court on Human and People's Rights, on 24th February 2020, THRDC through the National Coordinator Mr. Onesmo Olungurumwa, convened a meeting in the Dodoma capital with the late Minister of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Hon. Ambassador Augustine Mahiga.



A photo of the late Hon. Minister Augustine Mahiga (left) together with THRDC's National Coordinator Mr. Olungurumwa (right) after their meeting at the Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs in Dodoma on 24th Feb. 2020

In his meeting with the late honorable Minister Mahiga, Mr. Olungurumwa also suggested THRDC's intentions to have joint future interventions with the Ministry, aimed at reforming legal frameworks, plans and policies favorable to Human Rights Defenders' work in Tanzania.

On a separate occasion during the day, THRDC's National Coordinator also paid a courtesy visit to the Chairman of the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) Retired Judge Hon. Mathew Mwaimu. In their meeting, Mr. Olungurumwa acknowledged President Magufuli's long awaited appointment of CHRAGG's Commissioners and Chairperson.



THRDC's National Coordinator Mr. Onesmo Olungurumwa in a meeting with Retired Judge Mwaimu – Chairperson of the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) on 24th Feb. 2020

“..The long absence of commissioners within CHRAGG weakened the relationship between HRDs and the office of the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance...But now, we are confident your office is in full capacity to serve...”

Said Mr. Onesmo Olungurumwa –
THRDC’s National Coordinator.

This meeting followed a build up meeting that had been conducted in Dar es Salaam earlier on 6th February 2020, by the THRDC Secretariat, Representatives of the THRDC Board of Directors and Mr. Nyanda Shuli - one of the newly appointed CHRAGG commissioners.

Apart from just THRDC’s need to influence the legal framework and policies in favor of HRDs in Tanzania, these meetings also served as building blocks to strengthen partnerships and cooperation between HRDs, CHRAGG and the Tanzanian Government.

8 THRDC’S PHYSICAL VISITATION TO ITS MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

In the course of building a strong CSOs movement that serves to protect HRDs and human rights in Tanzania, THRDC provides technical support to more than 200 of its members and mobilizes them. To achieve this objective, the Coalition conducts periodic physical visits to the offices of its member organizations. Between February and March 2020, THRDC’s National Coordinator Mr. Onesmo Olungurumwa together with THRDC’s Members Affairs Officer Adv. Joyce Eliezer visited thirty nine (39) organizations in two zones; Northern Zone (Kilimanjaro, Arusha and Manyara) and the East Coast Zone which includes Dar es Salaam, Tanga and the Coastal Region. Some of the visited member organizations were; TNW+, HakiElimu, Wajibu Institute of Accountability, Legal & Human Rights Centre (LHRC) in Arusha, TNRF, TAWLA, SAHRINGON and Haki Madini.

During the physical visits, THRDC recorded a number of common challenges facing its members at the zonal level. THRDC also assessed the level

of coordination and solidarity of its members at zonal level. However, THRDC managed to address some of the organizational challenges on the spot i.e; offering expert advice on areas of improvement related to organizational management, security management, resource mobilization etc.



THRDC’s National Coordinator Mr. Olungurumwa listening to Ms. Joan Chamungu - Executive Director of the Tanzania Network of Women Living with HIV (TNW+) during his physical visit at TNW+ in Dar es Salaam on 13th March 2020

During the visits, the National Coordinator together with the Members Affairs Officer were both pleased by an increased level of performance by HRD member organizations, increased level of understanding and prioritization of security measures by members, and their overall compliance with the laws governing CSOs in Tanzania.

Through these visits, the Coalition documented the following achievements:

- (i) *Strengthened membership bases and members networking and improved members performance*

Under this support, THRDC has observed the strengthened membership networking and performance as a result of continuous support provided to members by the secretariat. This has been observed through increased in members' reports submission, addressing human rights issues in their areas of operation, increased in annual fee subscription as provided by the Constitution. Through the visits, level of partnership and networking among members to the grassroots level has been increased. The overall impact of the increased networking among members is that the protection of HRDs will eventually be improved.

“ Gender Based Violence and Violence towards male and female children are high in Tanga. Many Human Rights Defending organizations in Tanga do not work together in speaking against human rights violation. Lack of a union voice among human rights defenders is a big challenge. Through THRDC we are now brought together ”

Said Advocate Latifa, TAWLA coordinator in Tanga.



A demonstration of joint efforts by CSOs in Tanga – the Centre for Informal Sector Promotion in collaboration with Chief Kimweri Organization have been offering mechanical trainings to youth aiming to solve challenges affecting the youth such as drug addiction, loitering, theft and unemployment. . In the Photo above, is a garage used jointly to train unemployed youths in Tanga.

(ii) Increased level of understanding and security measures taken by members

Despite the fact that for the last four years, there has been an increase of security threats to HRDs, most of organizations have admitted that the security trainings and guidelines offered by the coalition (THRDC) have to a great extent assisted in improving their security measures. These include measures such as installing security cameras, electric fences and employing professional security guards for the security of their offices. Zonal coordinators have been providing assistance to the members including highlighting security challenges and submit them to the Secretariat through their reports.

 *Speaking during zonal visits the Executive Director of BHRT, Ms. Flaviana Charles said the security policy manual for Human Right Defenders published by the coalition, trainings and directives from the Secretariat has assisted members including her organization to identify risky environments and how to protect themselves.* 

(iii) Increased Members Compliance with laws governing CSOs operation

During physical visitations the Secretariat noted an increase of CSOs compliance with the laws governing their operations in Tanzania. One of the notable challenges affecting CSOs space has always been the lack or poor knowledge of legal requirements for CSOs operation. This put most of CSOs in risks of being fined, suspension or total deregistration.

Therefore, the Coalition has always been emphasizing its members and HRDs to take relevant steps to understand legal requirements and comply with such laws. This has been done through trainings and advice provided by the Coalition through legal briefs and one to one meetings including those conducted during physical visits.

Through visits conducted in Arusha, Kilimanjaro and Tanga, it was evidently observed that currently there is a rise of awareness among CSOs on the laws and how to comply with them. All of 20 Organisations visited in the three region admitted that their level of compliance with the laws including the NGOs Act, Tax laws and other relevant laws of the country is higher compared to few years back.

However, there are still some other challenges in the process of complying with the laws. Some of these challenges include those posed by the existing draconian laws and other practical obstacles. For example CSOs in three Regions have complained that, there has been a delay of permits from the responsible authorities. Permits to conduct activities such as research and other engagement with the local government authorities have (for several times) been rejected, denied or completely unanswered.

(i) Satisfaction of Members on the services rendered by the Coalition

All of 39 CSOs visited by the Secretariat are satisfied with the work of the Coalition in the protection of Human Rights Defenders in Tanzania. Visited members have commended the work of THRDC including its efforts to mobilize HRDs in the struggle for the expansion of civic space, capacity building and protection of Human Rights Defenders. Members have urged the Secretariat to conduct periodic visits as part of capacity building and as a way of collecting emerging concerns and protection issues from the members.

SOME SAFETY TIPS FOR HRDs AMID COVID-19 CRISIS:

DOs:



Use medicated soap to wash your hand regularly with clean running water for more than 20 seconds



Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer regularly



Use face masks to protect yourself and others from contracting COVID-19



Whenever you are about to cough or sneeze, cover your mouth with a disposable tissue or the inner part of your elbow



Keep fit and exercise regularly

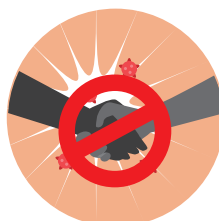


Stay at home and avoid congestions

DONTs:







Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean



Don't indulge in the negative COVID-19 news or bad habits



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