

Plan of Action of the National Coalition of Kenyan Human Rights Defenders for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

Introduction

We,

The Human Rights Defenders and resource persons from various non-governmental organizations, meeting at the Workshop for Kenyan Human Rights Defenders organized by the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project and Independent Medico-Legal Unit, held at the Lenana Mount Hotel, Nairobi from 26 to 29 November 2006 adopt this action plan, in conjunction with the Declaration of the National Coalition of Kenyan Human Rights Defenders.

The Situation of Human Rights Defenders in Kenya

Having analyzed the situation faced by Human Rights Defenders in Kenya, we recognize and express concerns for the following:

Concerns relating to the capacity of Human Rights Defenders

- Insufficient training, skills and knowledge in the understanding and use of existing regional and international mechanisms
- Weak national human rights networks
- Lack of adequate financial and other resources
- Inadequate access to information
- Lack of recognition of the work of Women Human Rights Defenders
- Inadequate numbers of Women Human Rights Defenders at the policy and decision making levels of human rights organisations

Concerns relating to the legal environment

- Lack of national legislation that complies with international and regional standards on the protection of Human Rights Defenders
- Unwillingness of the Government of Kenya to implement legal decisions when they have lost a human rights case in the courts
- Repeated arrests, harassment and other human rights violations by government authorities
- Malicious prosecutions
- Impunity and lack of redress for human rights violations experienced by Human Rights Defenders

Concerns relating to the political environment

- Lack of recognition of the particular experiences faced by Women Human Rights Defenders
 - Lack of awareness and acceptance of issues relating to sexual minorities and other marginalised groups
-

- Insufficient freedom of expression, government control of media
- Lack of community awareness of the value of Human Rights Defenders
- Persistence of harmful traditional practices affecting women's rights
- Harassment, intimidation and inadequate facilitation of the Kenya National Commission of Human Rights

Concerns relating to the psychosocial environment

- Human Rights Defenders are at high risk for direct trauma, vicarious traumatisation, and burnout
- Lack of institutionalized psychosocial support for Human Rights Defenders at all levels
- Lack of space and resources to deal with the trauma and fear experienced by Human Rights Defenders at all levels

Action Plan

This Plan of Action aims to define strategies to respond to the difficult situations faced by Kenyan Human Rights Defenders, and agree to carry out the following strategies and actions to enhance their capacity to conduct human rights work and to improve their protection.

- Capacity building for the training of trainers (TOT) and Human Rights Defenders building on: information, communication technology (ICT); women rights; child rights; investigation, monitoring and documentation; fundraising; regional and international human rights standards and security of HRDs
- Human Rights Educations targeting communities; government agencies and policy makers
- Strengthening the networks constituting the National Coalition of Kenyan Human Rights Defenders
- Resource mobilization
- Regular national and regional forums for Human Rights Defenders
- Development of a code of ethics for Human Rights Defenders
- Developments of rapid response mechanisms for Human Rights Defenders at risk
- Setting up resource centres
- Translation of resource materials for HRDs into national and local languages
- Lobbying and advocacy for reform of laws and policy on issues affecting HRDs
- Engaging the existing social community and religious systems in mainstreaming gender and issues of sexual orientation.
- Provision of legal and rehabilitative support (physiological and medical treatment) to HRDs
- Information sharing on issues affecting HRDs