Capacity Building

During this period EHAHRDP's Capacity Building team successfully conducted three workshops for human rights defenders in South Sudan, Somalia/ Somaliland and Tanzania. EHAHRDP appreciates the effort of our network members and partners that were involved in the planning of these workshops.

Claiming Spaces:
Tactical Tools for Human Rights Defenders in South Sudan

In December 2013, EHAHRDP's flagship annual workshop was held in Juba, South Sudan for HRDs from different parts of the country to strengthen the capacity of civil society, to increase awareness of their human rights and to equip them with practical tools to ensure respect for their rights. It was also an opportunity for the HRDs to engage and learn from each other, to explore new and emerging technologies and strategies that can be used to advance human rights and mobilize communities for human rights promotion. The training took place before the outbreak of conflict in mid-December. EHAHRDP expresses our solidarity and support for HRDs seeking the restoration of peace and respect for the rule of law in South Sudan, and hope that the experience and knowledge obtained during the training may strengthen those efforts.

▲ Participants of the 2013 Claiming Spaces workshop in Juba, South Sudan

Financial and Organisational Management Workshops

Lack of finances not only affects the capacity of HRDs to effectively carry out their work but also compromises their personal and organizational security. Following interactions with our members and HRDs in the sub region, it was revealed that HRDs lack basic fundraising skills necessary to ensure regular funding for their work. EHAHRDP organised the Financial and Management Training for Human Rights Defenders in Somalia/Somaliland from 13th to 15th August and in Tanzania from 3rd to

5th September 2013 to address these issues. At the end of the three day training, participants from both countries confidently demonstrated that they had grasped the skills transferred to them and were keen on using this knowledge to improve their work.

▲ Opening panel of Claiming Spaces. (Left to right): Edmund Yakani, Chair South Sudan HRD Network; Paul Tholen, Dep. H.O.M. Embassy of the Netherlands; Hassan Shire, E.D. EHAHRDP; H.E. Susan D Page, US Ambassador to South Sudan

Advocacy and Research

As part of our efforts to raise awareness of the situation of human rights defenders in the sub-region, EHAHRDP engages regularly and actively with regional and international human rights mechanisms with our members and partners. At the September 2013 session of the UN Human Rights Council, EHAHRDP's main area of focus was the situation in Somalia. We successfully advocated for a Representative of Civil Society to be included in the high level stand alone interactive dialogue on the human rights situation in Somalia. EHAHRDP staff and members also presented three statements on Somalia during the course of the session, and organized a side event that included the participation of the interim head of the UN Human Rights Office in Somalia.

During the 54th ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, held from 22nd October to 5th November 2013, EHAHRDP and network members highlighted the major human rights developments in the region and called for a stronger protection of human rights defenders. In particular, EHAHRDP joined other NGOs in highlighting the urgent need for a strong response by the Commission to the serious and ongoing human rights violations in the conflict areas in Sudan, as well as urging the Commission to follow up with States where its decisions remain unimplemented, for example in Eritrea.

Social Media and Online Advocacy

During the 16 days of activism against gender violence from 25th November to 10th December 2013, EHAHRDP carried out an online campaign to highlight and honour the work done by women human rights defenders throughout Africa and to campaign for their better protection. Each day during the campaign, EHAHRDP posted a profile or video of a WHRD on Facebook, or resources and information useful to WHRDs. Judging by the increased traffic to EHAHRDP's Facebook page, the campaign generated a lot of interest in the work of WHRDs in the region. If you missed it, the campaign materials are still available on our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/humanrightsdefendersproject

In September, EHAHRDP initiated a social media campaign calling on diplomats in Geneva to #StepUp4Sudan, which was shared with our network and to Amnesty International's national sections, as part of our combined advocacy efforts for a stronger response on the human rights situation in Sudan by the UN Human Rights Council. In total, there were at least 197 tweets using the hashtag with 61 twitter users taking part, and at least one embassy in Geneva responded to explain their position on the resolution. (More information on the campaign here: https://www.facebook.com/humanrightsdefendersproject/posts/636084126423088)

Research

In August 2013, EHAHRDP's Executive Director, the Coordinator of the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network and EHAHRDP's Research Associate attended the second meeting of the Study Group on Freedom of Assembly and Association of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in Cotonou, Benin. The Study Group, made up of members from human rights NGOs across the continent, has been mandated by the ACHPR to complete a detailed study on freedom of assembly and association. The Study Group is currently working towards finalising the report and presenting it to the Commission later this year.

EHAHRDP staff undertook a research mission to South Sudan in November 2013. With considerable help from members of our network, they were able to meet with and interview numerous human rights defenders in Juba and Yei. This research was then incorporated into a detailed report, "Change will not come until we talk about reality: The closing space for human rights defenders in South Sudan", which documented a progressively deteriorating environment for South Sudanese human rights defenders over the course of 2010-2013. The report was officially launched in Juba in December 2013, on the opening day of EHAHRDP's annual workshop, Claiming Spaces: Tactical Tools for Human Rights Defenders.

▲ Meeting with H.E. Mohamed Ziad Duale of Djibouti, Permanent Representative to the United Nations. With EHAHRDP delegation. (From left to right): Hassan Shire, H.E. Mohamed Ziad Duale, Abukar Albadri, Sagal Jibril, and Fartun Aden.

Programs

Staff Retreat

Our staff convened a staff retreat from 13th to 15th November to reflect on EHAHRDP's achievements, challenges and lessons learnt in 2013 and to plan for the activities of 2014. At the end of the retreat, we developed a comprehensive one year programmatic action plan based on the discussions. The action plan identifies the objectives of each program and gives clear indicators and timelines of activities. This will ultimately enhance the synergy between all programs.

▲ EHAHRDP staff at the Staff Retreat, held at the Serena Lake Victoria Hotel in November 2013.

Protection and Security Management

The protection programme continues to extend emergency support to human rights defenders at risk, to reduce their vulnerability to the risk of persecution and enhance their capacity to effectively defend human rights. The support includes protection grants, medical support, family support and security advice. 101 HRDs received support from the programme between August 2013 and January 2014. Due to the volatile situation of some of the countries in the sub region and the security risks that they face, some defenders have been compelled to leave their countries of origin for temporary relocation or to seek asylum abroad. EHAHRDP considers this option only as a last resort after other forms of assistance have been explored and found not to be practical. HRDs that have been relocated must strictly adhere to the immigration rules and legal requirements of the host countries. Human rights defenders under the programme are provided with immigration briefings and updates.

During this period, the programme trained the new protection officer at the Southern African HRD Network to build his capacity in handling protection cases of human rights defenders at risk.

Security Management

Our Security Management Officers successfully conducted three trainings for human rights defenders at risk in the sub region. The trainings included individual risk assessment for HRDs and collective training for human rights organisations. In December 2013, human rights defenders from South Sudan took part in a training on risk assessment and security management, during the Claiming Spaces workshop. The objective of this training was to equip the HRDs with tactical tools on how to manage security in their activities in the environment of South Sudan.

The Security Management Officers in collaboration with the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network (PAHRDN) carried out trainings for the sub-regional security management officers in Lome, Togo and Johannesburg, South Africa. The participants were equipped with the knowledge, tools and methodology to manage security and be able to train other HRDs in their regions.

Somalia Protection Programme

EHAHRDP organised a five-day training on Monitoring, Documenting and Reporting (MDR) in Mogadishu, Somalia. The purpose of the training was to provide a space for project partners to discuss and analyze human rights issues in the country, share experiences and gain supplementary knowledge and skills on assessing, researching, editing and relaying reports of human rights violations and establishing a robust HRD reporting system.

In the first half of 2014, the programme expects to improve on national advocacy in Somalia through strategic advocacy trainings for HRDs. It will also give an opportunity to HRDs to engage with Somali law enforcement officers and judiciary to enhance the understanding of policing and judicial reform with the aim of improving human rights protection for all.

EHAHRDP also expects to make use of social media tools including photography to illustrate the work of the Somalia protection programme.

Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network

On 22nd October, 2013, PAHRDN launched the very first African Human Rights Defenders Award to recognize and honour the achievements of individual HRDs in promoting and protecting human rights. A jury comprising Hon. Commissioner Reine Alapini-Gansou, Special Rapporteur on HRDs in Africa, Ms. Margaret Sekaggya UN Special Rapporteur on HRDs and Mr. Hassan Shire, Chairperson of PAHRDN selected the eventual winners: Ms Yara Sallam (North Africa), Mr. Livingstone Sewanyana (East Africa), Ms. Maria Lucia Da Silveira (Southern Africa), Ms. Paulette Oyane Ondo (Central Africa) and Imam Baba Leigh (West Africa and overall winner).

http://www.flickr.com/photos/africandefenders/

Protection and Security Management Officers were appointed in the sub regional networks to support the work of the secretariat in protecting defenders in each sub-region. The newly appointed officers were trained in the area of risk assessment, security management and protection case handling.

As mentioned above, PAHRDN supported the study group on freedom of association and assembly to draft a report on FOAA and draft guidelines on the same, to be considered by the ACHPR in 2014. See

http://www.achpr.org/sessions/54th/info/communique54/;

http://www.achpr.org/news/2013/08/d94/

for more details.

▲ NGO Forum steering committee members with winners of the African Human Rights Defenders Awards.

PAHRDN, in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights, Pretoria; Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ); Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA); Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU); PEN International and the following national PEN Centres: Algeria, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and South Africa; Southern Africa Litigation Centre; and the World Association of Newspapers (WAN-IFRA) came together to address growing concerns over the use of criminal defamation laws to censor journalists and other HRDs in Africa.

▶ The group successfully petitioned the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights for leave to act as amicus curiae

On 12th December 2013, the group successfully petitioned the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights for leave to act as amicus curiae, or friends of the court, in a case which raises the use of criminal defamation and insult laws to silence government critics.

For more information on the Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network, please visit our website on http://www.defenddefenders.org/pan-african-human-rights-defenders-network/

What's New

EHAHRDP is pleased to welcome four new interns to the team: Ms. Eleanor Jenkin from New York University; Mr. Mark Kiggundu, an IT intern from Makerere University; Ms. Helen Nyinakiiza, from Uganda; and Mr. Chris Hacala, a design intern from Canada.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

▶ 25th Session of the UN Human Rights Council http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session25/Pages/25RegularSession from 3rd to 28th March 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland.

▶ 55th Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (www.achpr.org), 28th April to 12th May 2014 and preceding NGO Forum. Please check back on African Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) www.acdhrs.org for more details.

Information Technology

▲ Digital security training session for HRDs during the Claiming Spaces workshop in Juba, South Sudan

Digital Security: Off-The-Record Instant Messaging For Human Rights Defenders

Communicating with your partners, members, vulnerable communities, and donors is a necessity for most human rights defenders. We do this in person whenever possible, but just as often we are on the telephone, sending text messages, sending emails, and on instant messaging software. While using electronic communications is convenient, it is becoming increasingly apparent that they are subject to surveillance and interception, and thereby can put you and the people you communicate with at risk.

Instant messaging includes tools such as Skype, Google Chat/Hangouts, AOL Instant Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, ICQ, and IRC. Some of these services (but not all) use built-in encryption to secure the privacy of your communications while in

▶ **Shouldn't there be a way to communicate in privacy without relying on an unknown third party?**

transit through the internet. However even with this safeguard, your message is still received and stored in plain-text by the company which runs the instant messaging service. In other words, if you chat on Google Chat, your messages can be read by Google. If you use Skype, your messages could be read by Microsoft. Furthermore these companies may follow requests from law enforcement or intelligence agencies from around the world and pass on the content of your conversations to them.

Given the sensitivity of your work and your commitments to protect your beneficiaries, shouldn't there be a way to communicate in privacy without relying on an unknown third party? Off-The-Record (OTR) is a protocol which was developed to address this challenge. It is used specifically for instant messaging software and it can be used on top of existing instant chat networks. This means

that you can continue to use your Google account to chat with your Google buddies, and your Yahoo account to chat with your Yahoo buddies. Unfortunately it does not work with Skype accounts.

In order to use Off-The-Record chat you have to download an Instant Messaging client which supports it. Below is a table describing clients with built-in OTR chat which work on popular operating systems and mobile phone systems:

Windows	Jitsi
Mac OS X	Jitsi Adium
Linux	Jitsi Kopete
Android	ChatSecure
iOS (iPhone)	ChatSecure

Install one of these clients and you will be prompted to login with an account. It works with most of the services listed above, as well as an open service called XMPP. Once logged in, you will see your contacts listed. Chats are not automatically encrypted; however it is very easy to do.

Both sides in the communication need to be using an OTR-capable client. For example in Jitsi, simply click on the LOCK button: and if it is successful you will see this message: Unverified private conversation with YOURBUDDY started. Now your conversation is encrypted from end-to-end. That means that even the servers facilitating the communication cannot read your messages.

To download any of the software listed above and to read more about Off-The-Record, and to understand why the initial conversation is called 'unverified', visit the websites linked above. There is also an excellent tutorial available here from Security In A Box on how to use Pidgin, another instant messaging client with a free OTR plug-in.

Read more about secure internet communications here.

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