



Kampala Plan of Action for Human Rights Defenders

African Human Rights Defenders Convention

Zanzibar, Tanzania, 12-14 June 2019

The Kampala Plan of Action for Human Rights Defenders (KAPA +10), was adopted on 14 June 2019 in Zanzibar, Tanzania. KAPA+10 is a follow up to the Kampala Plan of Action for Human Rights Defenders (KAPA) adopted on 23 April 2009 in Kampala, Uganda at the “Johannesburg +10 All Africa Human Rights Defenders Conference,” organised by DefendDefenders.

The convention organised by the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network (AfricanDefenders) reflected on the progress and achievements made since the adoption of the Kampala Plan of Action for Human Rights Defenders in 2009. The Convention brought together regional and sub-regional networks, coalitions, country focal points, and members of National Human Rights Institutions, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

The African Human Rights Defenders Convention:

1. **Welcomes the establishment of AfricanDefenders** as an umbrella network dedicated to supporting human rights defenders (HRDs) across the African continent, hosted by the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (DefendDefenders) in Kampala, Uganda, and a Steering Committee representing both sub-regional networks of human rights defenders and thematic focal points.
2. **Notes with satisfaction** the progress made by AfricanDefenders under the leadership of its Chairperson and DefendDefenders to enhance the protection of HRDs and their rights across the continent, especially the outstanding innovation establishing the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative as a medium and long-term support mechanism for HRDs within the continent.
3. **Urges continued collaboration** to reinforce the work of sub-regional networks, national coalitions, and key interest groups.
4. **Reiterates the composition of the Steering Committee** as follows:
 - The Cairo Institute for Human Rights, as the host of the North African Human Rights Defenders Network (assisted by the Tunisian League of Human Rights);
 - The East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (hosted by DefendDefenders);
 - The West African Human Rights Defenders Network;
 - The Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network hosted by the International Commission of Jurists Africa Regional Programme;
 - The Central African Human Rights Defenders Network; and
 - The representatives of key interest groups identified as requiring specific protection due to their unique vulnerabilities: women HRDs, HRDs working on sexual orientation



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Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network

and gender identity issues, journalists fighting impunity and corruption, HRDs working in armed conflict areas, HRDs working on election processes, HRDs working on extractive industries, natural resources and land rights, and a representative of the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative.

The mandate given to AfricanDefenders under the KAPA+10 is as follows:

5. Provide technical assistance to existing sub-regional networks and national coalitions based on their needs:
 - A. Conduct a needs assessment and strengthen the institutional capacity of the sub-regional networks and national coalitions (establishment of national coalitions where they do not exist);
 - B. Design a plan to strengthen sub-regional HRD networks and national coalitions, with a focus on revitalising the network in North Africa;
 - C. Create a guide on the functions (mandate and activities) of regional human rights networks (based on best practices);
 - D. Develop a clear partnership between the Secretariat and sub-regional networks, and between sub-regional networks and coalitions;
 - E. Coordinate with staff designated by each sub-regional network to enhance safe communication among networks;
 - F. Develop early warning methods and a response system with clear indicators; and
 - G. Enhance the visibility of the work of the sub-regional networks and national coalitions.
6. Undertake regular assessments of HRDs' needs in Africa to inform interventions:
 - A. The five sub-regional networks in collaboration with their members or with national coalitions of HRDs will carry out systematic monitoring and documentation of the situation of HRDs at the national level on a bi-annual basis;
 - B. National reports will feed into regional regular trend analysis which, in turn, will be used to ensure that AfricanDefenders interventions remain up to date;
 - C. Strengthen collaboration with the special mechanisms of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to enhance the protection of human rights defenders in Africa.
7. Enhance collaboration of HRDs with regional and international mechanisms:
 - A. Develop continental advocacy strategies and campaigns on key issues identified by the needs assessment;
 - B. Enhance collaboration between urban and grassroots HRDs;
 - C. Develop and design proactive efforts and measures aimed at strengthening collaboration between state and non-state actors identified as potential partners in the promotion of the rights of HRDs;
 - D. Build strong, effective, and sustainable alliances with international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other pan-African NGOs;



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- E. **Develop memoranda of understanding** with organs and institutions of the African Human Rights System to position AfricanDefenders as a continental and global partner for the protection of HRDs; and
- F. **Aim at developing a reliable database** to systematically report and engage with regional and international mechanisms on the protection of HRDs.

8. Strengthen the capacity of sub-regional networks and national coalitions:

- A. **Build their capacity and enhance their protection mechanisms**, including the drafting and dissemination of a manual based on best practices (systematic information sharing; innovative approaches to circumventing the constraints of mechanisms);
- B. **Create expertise** on digital security, security management, and emergency protection within national coalitions and sub-regional networks, with a focus on prevention, and including specific strategies for contexts related to freedom of Association and Assembly as pertaining HRDs;
- C. **Develop a mentorship plan and strategies** on media and communication, project management and fundraising, gender and sexual orientation, and documentation and data management; and
- D. **Strengthen and coordinate** national coalitions and sub-regional networks advocacy activities at both the regional and international level, including strategies to protect at-risk HRDs,

9. Enhance sub-regional networks and national coalitions' active use of and engagement with the regional and international human rights systems:

- A. **Support sub-regional network efforts to effectively engage the human rights mechanisms** at the national, regional, and international level;
- B. Widely disseminate the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; and the manual on the use of these mechanisms described above;
- C. Support sub-regional networks to conduct strategic litigation and engage with relevant stakeholders involved in strategic litigation;
- D. Help sub-regional networks and national coalitions by:
 - i. Guiding them in preparing and submitting reports and appeals for communications on the situation of HRDs with the support of international partners that have extensive knowledge in this field;
 - ii. Enhancing national coalitions and sub-regional networks' involvement with the African human rights mechanisms and the United Nations Human Rights Council special procedures both in a formal and informal manner;
 - iii. Ensuring participation of HRDs at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as the United Nations Human



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- Rights Council to advocate for the rights of HRDs and to promote the participation of national coalitions and sub-regional networks;
- iv. Supporting efforts by sub-regional networks to enhance the capacity of national coalitions in their advocacy activities aimed at pushing for country visits, helping to create space for an active collaboration of civil society with the African human rights mechanisms and the United Nations Human Rights Council special procedures;
 - v. Verifying that there is an active follow-up on cases taken up by the African human rights mechanisms and United Nations Special Procedures;
 - vi. Assisting national coalitions and sub-regional networks in making use of and disseminating the European Union Guidelines on the protection of human rights defenders throughout their region;
 - vii. Advocating throughout the continent for the creation of similar guidelines to protect HRDs by other States and regional entities;
 - viii. Assisting sub-regional networks in providing guidance to coalitions in engaging national human rights institutions;
 - ix. Following up on the implementation of decisions of regional and international human rights mechanisms; and
 - x. Supporting systematic reporting to the African human rights mechanisms and the United Nations Human Rights Council special procedures including advocacy on state reporting.
- E. AfricanDefenders and its Steering Committee members will seek to advocate for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to adopt a comprehensive strategy for the protection of HRDs through its field presence (Geneva Office); and
- 10. In collaboration with the sub regional networks, ensure that States, intergovernmental organisations, and NGOs strengthen their assistance and protection to HRDs notably by:**
- A. Providing protection grants (that include funds for evacuation and relocation, family support, psycho-medical assistance, and legal assistance);
 - B. Developing medium and long-term strategies for comprehensive assistance to HRDs;
 - C. Continuing to strengthen and expand the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative for the relocation of HRDs at high risk;
 - D. Enhancing communication with HRDs (both through formal and informal means and forums) and promoting awareness of protection mechanisms among all HRDs, including marginalised and grassroots HRDs;
 - E. Coordinating a mapping of protection actors across the continent, at the national, regional, and international level, which should be regularly updated;
 - F. Supporting the establishment of structured alert and referral systems at the



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- national, regional, and continental level;
- G. Providing support to build the protection capacity of newly formed coalitions and enhance the capacity of existing protection officers;
 - H. Promoting the harmonisation of protection processes and procedures among network members to facilitate the swift exchange of information;
 - I. Promoting the establishment of working groups at the national and sub-regional level, which should regularly hold case management meetings to improve coordination in the provision of services to HRDs and avoid duplication; and
 - J. Working to ensure that cooperation partners actively support national coalitions and sub-regional networks enabling them to carry out their work.
- 11. Ensure continued engagement with African Union organs and progressive African states:**
- A. Disseminate and contextualise the local implementation strategies of the European Union Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders based on their needs;
 - B. Build on the African Union and European Union human rights dialogue platform to strengthen the protection of HRDs in Africa; and
 - C. Establish a forum for constant interaction between HRDs and key relevant stakeholders (national authorities, African Union, and ACHPR mandate holders).
- 12. Actively develop:**
- A. A comprehensive communication strategy incorporating alternative and new media;
 - B. Terms of reference for its steering committee members underlining roles and responsibilities; and
 - C. A five-year strategic plan based on this adopted KAPA + 10.

Adopted in Zanzibar, Tanzania, 14 June 2019