

# PROCESS REPORT

# 2019 SOUTHERN AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS SUMMIT

REFLECTING, INNOVATING AND CO-CREATING A SUSTAINABLE  
PROTECTION AGENDA BASED ON TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



27-30 November 2019 | Johannesburg, South Africa



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## Acronyms

2019 SAHRD Summit	2019 Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Summit
ARISA	Advancing Human Rights in Southern Africa
AU	African Union
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CIVICUS	Civil Society Organizations World Alliance for Citizen Participation
EU	European Union
HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
MNCs	Multi-National Corporations
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAHRDN	Southern Africa Human Rights Network
WHRDs	Women Human Rights Defenders
UN	United Nations

## *Executive Summary*

From the 27th to the 30th of November 2019, over 100 Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), policy makers and human rights experts from across Southern Africa and a broad spectrum of local and international human rights groups met in Johannesburg, South Africa, with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs, Mr. Michel Forst. This landmark engagement took place as part of the 2019 Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Summit (2019 SAHRD Summit) hosted by the Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (SAHRDN) in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Advancing Rights in Southern Africa (ARISA), World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS Alliance) and Lifeline.

The summit was held under the theme; “Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Southern Africa: Reflecting, innovating and co-creating a sustainable protection agenda based on trends and opportunities.” It was attended by over 100 HRDs, policy makers, and human rights experts from eleven Southern African countries and various organisations, attended (See Annex 1: Participants list).<sup>1</sup>

The SAHRD summit served as a platform for capacity building as well as collective reflection and planning for SADC’s HRDs. Through democratic participation and engagement, the summit produced actionable ideas which were situated in the Southern African context. These ideas were built on a studied understanding of emerging trends and extant opportunities in the region as well as veritable entry points for human rights defense within the United Nations (UN) system.

The four-day summit revealed that the regional context of HRD’s work in Southern Africa was in flux, dynamic, and fraught with challenges and threats. A combination of factors which, often, undermines HRD’s efforts and endangers their lives. The summit noted that the myriad challenges confronting HRDs in the region included, inter alia, state and nonstate sponsored actions that range from assassinations and extrajudicial killings; online and physical attacks, threats and harassment; abductions and enforced

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<sup>1</sup> The following SADC countries had some representation at the summit: Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



disappearances; as well as politicization and criminalization of HRD work. It also noted that most of the stated attacks against HRD work had a clear illegal character although, in most instances, the perpetrators of egregious human rights violations, victimization, targeting and harassment of HRDs went scot-free. The summit noted a worrying, region-wide, increase in impunity regarding attacks on civil society in general, and HRDs in particular.

The 2019 SAHRD summit also reflected on the deleterious consequences for HRDs abilities to operate freely and execute their mandate on account of Southern African governments' choices on human rights issues.

The summit resolved to keep monitoring context (structural, cultural and institutional elements with an impact on HRD work) and the need to increase advocacy efforts aimed at influencing SADC states. Beyond direct advocacy aimed at the SADC states, the summit also resolved to engage in collaborative actions aimed at increasing the costs of state intransigence regarding the promotion, respect, and upholding of human rights in the region.

In addition to the preceding, the 2019 SAHRD summit came up with ten specific resolutions as follows:

1. Collaboratively works towards increasing HRDs, CSOs and media practitioners' access to human rights centered capacity building opportunities on key areas like security and protection of HRDs, investigative journalism, and analysis.
2. Facilitate increased Southern Africa's human rights NGOs and HRDs access to, and full use of UN Human Rights mechanisms and other regional mechanisms and instruments like the European Union (EU) guidelines for HRDs and the African Human Rights System centered on the Banjul Charter.
3. Coordinate the Southern African HRD community to conduct joint advocacy towards bridging the gap between international law and domestic laws (domestication and implementation of international covenants).
4. Encourage collaboration across the broad spectrum of HRDs and sponsor "unusual synergies" between strategic stakeholders such as the media,

parliaments, artists, lawyers and doctors for human rights, as well as movements and grassroots organizers.

5. Consistently monitor and share perspectives, information and actions regarding the human rights situation in all countries in the region on a regular basis.
6. Support the development of standardized, simple, data collection and documentation tools to ease the burden of systematic data collection and documentation of human rights issues in SADC countries by different HRD organisations, networks, movements and activist.
7. Support the building of a radical women's movement that addresses human rights related issues directly affecting women, including but not limited to reproductive health rights.
8. To support the institutionalization of democratic and transparent principles and mechanisms that ensure that women are not left behind in the collective struggle for rights internally (within the CSO and HRD community) as well as support periodic consultations on the situation of HRDs and WHRDs at national and regional level.

The rest of this report provides summaries of proceedings and outcomes of the 2019 Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Summit (2019 SAHRD Summit).

## DAY 1: Training on UN Human Rights Mechanisms

**Facilitators**      *Jean Fokwa Tsafack (OHCHR–Regional Office Southern Africa)*  
*Anganile Mwenifumbo (OHCHR–Regional Office Southern Africa)*

On day 1 of the summit, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights' Southern Africa Regional Office staged a full day training on the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Mechanisms. The training took participants through five sessions covering almost the full gamut of UN mechanisms on human rights with a special accent on how HRDs and CSOs could fully utilize UN mechanisms for advocacy purposes. This accent was informed, in part, by an OHCHR commissioned study on civic space in Southern Africa which revealed the need for the UN to be more accessible to HRDs in Southern Africa. Table 3-1 outlines the program as it was executed on the day.

<b>Session Summaries Day 1 2019 SAHRD Summit</b>	
<b>Session</b>	<b>Session Focus &amp; Brief</b>
<i>Session 1: Overview of the United Nations Human Rights System</i>	Participants were introduced to the UN Human rights system through a participatory multi-media session. The session also established baseline information regarding participants knowledge of the UN system with the facilitators filling the gaps and providing further information especially regarding treaty bodies that had human rights as part of their official remits.
<i>Session 2: Functions of treaty bodies and the role of CSOs</i>	Session also saw participants effectively contributing to the process through group exercises and plenary presentations from the same. This session also laid the foundation for consolidated outputs on CSO interfaces with treaty bodies which was covered in session 3.
<i>Session 3: Stages of the treaty reporting cycle and the role of CSOs</i>	Session 3 consolidated the work done in session 2 on treaty bodies' reporting cycles and possible entry and points of engagement for CSOs. The facilitators consolidated participants knowledge and outputs from session 2 on UN treaty bodies and facilitated some experiential learning based on puzzles and identifying potential entry points for CSOs during the reporting cycles of treaty bodies.

## Session Summaries Day 1 2019 SAHRD Summit

### *Session 4: Mechanisms under the Human Rights Council (The Universal Periodic Review, Special Procedures and the role of CSOs)*

Session 4 zeroed in on the Universal Peer Review (UPR) mechanism as well as UN special procedures. It focused on orienting participants to both processes and the opportunities available for CSO reporting and shadow reporting in the UPR process as well as engagement with the UN special procedures thematic and country mandates. The facilitators also encouraged HRDs and CSOs to initiate inquiries into human rights violations by their respective states, a mechanism which, they indicated, was underutilized yet it presented a direct route to treaty bodies without the need for domestic remedies.

### *Session 5: Effective engagement with UN human rights mechanisms*

The last session of day 1 consolidated sessions 1-4 through an exercise-based consolidation process that tested participants understandings of the various mechanisms and official communication shared during the course of the day. The facilitators consolidated the learning outcomes through closing expert presentations and a question and answer session.

## SESSION ONE: Program Overview, Opening, & Welcome Remarks

*Program Director* Washington Katema (SAHRDN)

*Presenters* Ms Abigail Noko (Regional representative, Regional office for Southern Africa, OHCHR),  
Mr. Arnold Tsunga (Chairperson of the SAHRDN),  
Ms. Lysa John (Secretary General of CIVICUS Alliance)  
Ms. Tiseke Kasambala (Chief of Party, ARISA).

Day two marked the beginning of the non-training element of the summit. The Program Director, Mr. Washington Katema of the SAHRDN provided an overview of the regional context regarding the situation of HRDs in Southern Africa. He reported that in 2018 and 2019, Southern Africa had seen an uptick in human rights violations, including, targeted assassinations of HRDs. Citing data from Frontline Human Rights Defenders, Mr Katema highlighted that human rights groups working on environmental rights natural resources appeared to be the most targeted in the region and elsewhere.



Mr Katema exemplified the increase in violations as seen through the increased use of enforced disappearances and abductions in Zimbabwe at the hands state proxies, and the instrumentalization and abuse of the law to persecute HRDs working on elections in Mozambique.



*Mr. Washington Katema providing an overview.*

While the increases were worrying, Mr Katema also highlighted that the state and non-state actors opposed to HRD's work in the region were also introducing new and sophisticated ways of delegitimizing HRDs. These he noted as including the criminalization of human rights works, the demonisation and scandalization of activists as criminals, as well as the institutionalization of repression through the introduction of repressive laws such as cyber laws which had the effect of closing down operational space for HRDs in several countries in the region. Following his brief on the context, Mr. Katema shared the summit's objectives as follows:

1. To develop a shared understanding amongst HRDs of trends, threats and opportunities facing the HRD community in Southern Africa, and to develop response and redress mechanisms at the national and regional level.
2. To identify strategic areas for follow up, joint advocacy, and strengthening of the HRD network in Southern Africa.
3. To exchange best practice in addressing: threats and attacks against HRDs; identifying and addressing gaps and challenges; and promoting active citizen participation and social responsibility on human rights defense issues.
4. To provide a platform for meaningful engagement between Southern African HRDs, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs, and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

5. To build the capacity of HRDs to effectively engage the UN human rights mechanisms in pursuit of civic space protection.
6. To review OHCHR study on civic space in Southern Africa's findings.

The director of program also shared that the objectives had informed the summit programme, which he pledged would be executed using a participatory approach to leverage participants' experiences, expertise and research as part of the collective conversation. He shared that program would venter on 5 key strands, with strand one having been covered during day 1. These strands constituting key program pillars as described by Mr Katema are shown in figure 4-1 (see Annex 1 for full program).

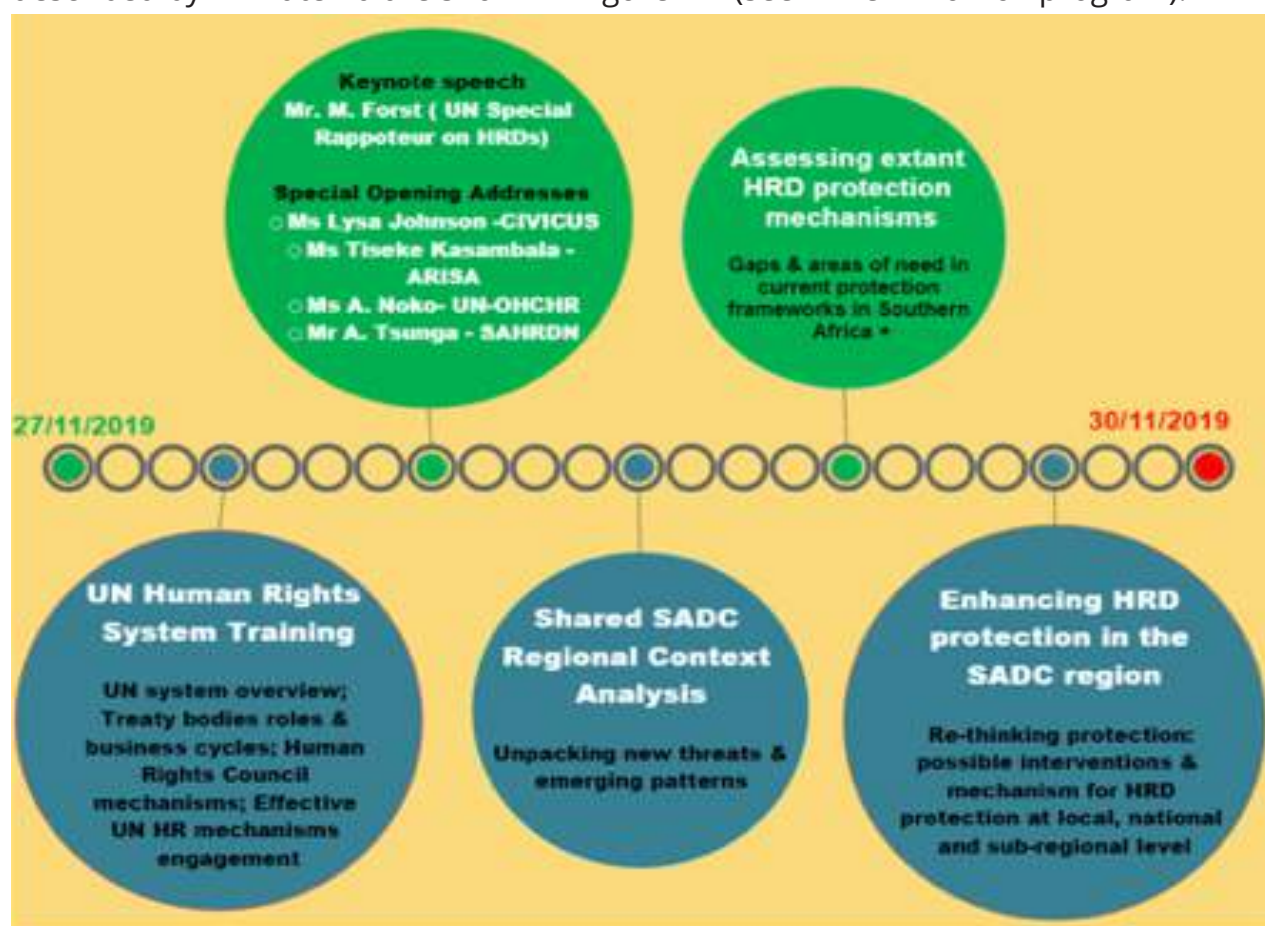


Figure 4 1: 2019 Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders' Summit main program elements

The next sections sequentially presents summaries of remarks from the heads of the convening institutions.

## ***Remarks: Ms. Abigail Noko***

**OHCHR - REGIONAL OFFICE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

Ms. Abigail Noko, head of the UN OHCHR Regional Office of Southern Africa welcomed summit participants and expressed her an honor and thanks to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs for availing himself to be part of the summit. She also expressed her gratitude to the collaborating partners for coming together to organize the summit. She also expressed gratitude to all participants for making the consultative process possible.



*Ms. Noko addressing delegates to the conference.*

Ms Noko noted that the summit was occurring during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence. She encouraged participants to reflect on the continued siege and suffering of women and girls and think through as well as commit to ensuring that violence against women, girls, and all HRDs end.

The OHCHR Regional representative acknowledged the formidable work of CSOs and HRDs, and encouraged participants to find new ways to better protect HRDs in Southern Africa given the changing context of HRDs in the region and the changing forms of repression. She declared that it was no longer business as usual and reaffirmed her office's commitment to expanding civic space and protecting the role of CSOs in advancing human rights.

## ***Remarks: Mr. Arnold Tsunga***

**SAHRDN**

Mr. Arnold Tsunga, the SAHRDN chairperson joined in welcoming participants and appealed to them to honestly reflect on the HRD protection mechanisms to identify where these mechanisms were functioning well and where enhancement was required. He

also challenged participants to also focus on solutions not just from the UN system and other bodies, but also on what the collective community of HRDs in the region could do. Mr. Tsunga stated that protection of HRDs was the core business of the SAHRDN, but also stated



*Mr. Arnold Tsunga delivering his remarks.*

that this was a mandate that the network could only fulfil with full knowledge of the extant gaps and challenges as well as programing outlook informed by the demands and needs of HRDs in the region.

Mr. Tsunga reemphasized that HRD protection and defense was of paramount importance to the struggle for the respect, promotion and upholding of human rights in general because the defenders often have no one to defend them. Yet the protection of frontline HRDs had tremendous intangible positive effects on the communities they save and the communities ability to enjoy human rights. He called on participants to take advantage of the summit to deepen and expand their networks, as well as establish solidarity linkages, strengthen each other, love each other, and look out for one another.

## ***Remarks: Ms. Lysa John***

### **CIVICUS**

The CIVICUS Secretary General, Ms. Lysa John, started by stating how privileged they felt as CIVICUS Alliance to be associated with the SAHRD Summit process and the people who dedicate and sacrifice their lives to defend their communities. She acknowledged the efforts of the participants to defend themselves, each other and the world.

Ms John shared that a recent CIVICUS Alliance study had revealed that Anti-Rights Groups were on the rise across the world, meaning that HRDs were not only dealing with attacks from governments but also from other individuals (Anti-Rights Groups and non-state groups often connected to political actors). She reported that CSOs and HRDs,





*Ms. Lysa John addressing conference delegates.*

the globe and explore ways to:

1. Collectively respond to the rise of Anti-Rights Groups.
2. Establish strategic alliances with unusual partners including states, political actors, media organizations and other like-minded organizations.
3. Engage more with regional and global frameworks and institutions that support and promote human rights.
4. Understand Anti-Rights Groups' tactics, sympathizers and funders, and respond accordingly as a collective.

## ***Remarks: Ms. Tiseke Kasambala***

**ARISA**

Ms. Tiseke Kasambala, the ARISA Chief of Party welcomed participants stated how she greatly appreciated their presence and commitment to bettering the lives of their respective communities. She also extended a warm welcome to the UN Special Rapporteur, and stated ARISA's commitment to expanding the recognition, awareness and enforcement of human rights across Southern Africa. She emphasized that ARISA's focus was on assisting HRDs working on land and customary rights, indigenous people's rights, media freedoms, digital rights and the protection of HRDs.





*Ms. Tiseke Kasambala giving her remarks.*

Ms. Kasambala expressed worry over the concerted attacks on HRDs and the closure of civic space in the region. She highlighted that governments were routinely using laws and criminal justice systems to deter HRDs through arbitrary arrests and detention, forced persecution, harassment, and

threats on a daily basis. She lamented how, in some parts of the region like Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, governments were using deaths and disappearances to stem the efforts of HRDs. She also highlighted how governments were increasingly using cyber laws (so called Cyber Crime Bills) to shrink civic space and target HRDs. She shared that in their estimation, defenders from marginalized communities and environmental activists, were the most vulnerable to attacks by state and nonstate actors including private business

The ARISA Chief of Party, picking the thread sponsored by Ms. Noko of the UN stated that ARISA was committed to paying special and emotional attention to the plight of women HRDs, and other vulnerable groups, considering the unique challenges they face. She also stated ARISA's commitment to supporting individual HRDs at risk as well as providing platforms for engagement at national, regional and international level. She also highlighted ARISA's willingness to supporting learning, knowledge searches and sharing, as well as opportunities for HRDs to share motivation and innovation. Ms. Kasambala concluded her remarks by inviting participants to utilize the summit to delve deeper into human rights defense issues and more through substantive engagements that lead to sustainable recommendations for the protection of HRDs in the region, the continent and the globe at large.

## ***SESSION TWO: KEY NOTE ADDRESS – Top priorities, trends, challenges and the Situation of HRDs Worldwide***

*Speaker*                      *Mr. Michel Forst (UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs)*

Mr. Forst started his keynote address by thanking the organizers and participants of the summit. He shared that the challenges that HRDs in Southern Africa faced were disturbing and peculiar but unfortunately not unique because of a rising trend of HRD persecution across the world.



*Mr. Michel Forst delivering his keynote address.*

He noted parallels between what he had heard as challenges with what he had encountered in his other visits in other regions of the world. He specifically regretted that challenges like killings, abductions, assaults, defamation, infiltration of CSOs, compromised judiciary systems, harassment and intimidation, among others were the common denominator regarding challenges faced by HRDs across the world. He especially stressed that one of the most worrying trends across the globe was the targeted and state sponsored killings of HRD leaders, with impunity. He shared that often, the perpetrators were known and included state security agents like the police and the army, yet no action to arrest or bring to account followed. For Mr. Forst, state's failure to combat impunity associated with targeted killings of HRDs, despite great strides in combating homicides, remained a blithe on most states. He regretted the absence of political will to combat impunity and the reluctance of associated states to institute investigations into killings of HRDs leading to lack of justice for victims.

The Special rapporteur on the situation of HRDs expressed disappointment at the manner in which most governments shunned efforts by international institutions to promote and protect human rights through engagement with the UN Human Rights System. This includes states deliberately refusing to grant UN Special Rapporteurs permission to conduct state visits and monitor the human rights situation in various countries. He also noted that when they do conduct state visits, the HRDs who share their experiences with them are sometimes harassed and attacked by their governments for cooperating with UN Special procedures. He noted that HRDs involved in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) activism Africa and Asia are often treated as enemies of the state and accused of being proxies of trojan horses for Western values.

Mr Forst encouraged donors to desist from working in silos, and encouraged greater cooperation with HRDs and vulnerable communities. He noted that the European Union (EU), had set the right tone through introducing guidelines which compel their representatives to ensure the protection of HRDs. The guidelines encourage EU ambassadors and staff to be proactive and aware of the human rights situation in their posts through monitoring trails, relocating victims where necessary, as well as having regular briefing meetings with HRDs. He, however, noted that the reality on the ground indicates that most embassies are not implementing their own guidelines.

Mr. Forst concluded his keynote by encouraging HRDs in Southern Africa to:

1. Continuously monitor legislative changes and human rights related developments in their respective countries. He noted that the UN Special procedures cannot be on all fronts, but through HRD vigilance, all fronts can be covered.
2. Bridge the gap between legislation and practice.
3. Ensure regular monitoring and identification of gaps between international law and domestic law.
4. Lobby states to ratify new international treaties and conventions.
5. Work closely with international embassies particularly the EU, which already has a mechanism to protect and defend HRDs through its Guidelines for HRDs.

6. Be proactive and invite the EU and other embassies to conduct visits to affected areas and have interfaces with HRDs on the ground.
7. Call perpetrators to account including states, religious leaders, traditional leaders, business leaders, international leaders, military leaders, abusive husbands, abusive fathers and HRDs.
8. Provide solidarity to each other and to be transparent and accountable at all times.

## ***SESSION THREE: Unpacking the challenges, threats and emerging patterns***

*Session Chair*      *Roshnee Narrandes (ARISA)*

*Panelists*      *Mr. Anganile Mwenifumbo (OHCHR)*  
                       *Ms. Nonhle Mbuthuma (Amadiba Crisis Committee)*  
                       *Ms. Buhle Moyo (Women's Rights Activist)*  
                       *Mr. Hassan Shire (Pan African Human Rights Network)*

Ms. Roshnee Narrandes of ARISA chaired the first substantive panel of the summit. The session focused on unpacking the challenges, threats and emerging patterns affecting the work of HRDs. It consisted of a panel discussion with as panelists. The session analyzed the legal, policy and operational challenges affecting HRDs in Southern Africa and explored opportunities for expanding civic space in the region. The session collectively flagged the following issues as material to context:

Structural and Legal Challenges	Social and Political Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic and structural violence against women</li> <li>• Some meetings and other important national issues are discussed during ungodly hours to strategically eliminate women and girls</li> <li>• Patriarchy</li> <li>• Most countries do not have rapid response facilities for HRDs except for Zimbabwe, where HRDs have access to emergency legal and medical facilities.</li> <li>• Litigation costs are high and out of reach to most HRDs such as those operating in Angola.</li> <li>• Lack of judicial mechanisms to protect HRDs. It was reported that Judges in some countries such as Mozambique lack adequate information, knowledge and experience on human rights issues</li> <li>• States also teaming up with Multinational Corporations to violate human rights.</li> <li>• Promulgation and implementation of repressive laws (cyber, counterterrorism, restriction legislation especially of assembly and information).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of rape and sexual harassment weapons against WHRDs.</li> <li>• State sponsored smear campaigns against HRDs (defamation and criminalization of HRDs-political and financial allegations).</li> <li>• Demonisation- HRDs accused of being Western and regime change agents.</li> <li>• Cyber threats and cyber bullying.</li> <li>• Clampdown on CSOs providing assistance and rapid response to HRDs (e.g. Lawyers for Human Rights in South Africa and Zimbabwe).</li> <li>• Donor fatigue hitting women's organizations most.</li> <li>• States turning to unconditional aid and funding from China.</li> <li>• Digital technology gap (HRDs not keeping up with technology being used by states to stifle and suffocate HRD efforts).</li> <li>• Dwindling spirit of Activism.</li> <li>• New activists using different strategies (e.g. social media) but no mentorship.</li> <li>• State non-compliance with progressive court judgments -no implementation and enforcement mechanisms of judgments).</li> </ul>

The table below summarizes key inputs from individual panel submissions:



## Panelist Input Summaries: Challenges, Threats and Emerging Trends

**Mr. Anganile Mwenifumbo**  
*OHCHR - ROSA,*

- Highlighted that in addition to traditional forms of repression, countries in Southern Africa were gravitating towards legislative impediments (laws and policies) to HRD work and civic space opening (e.g. Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi).
- Noted the arbitrary and repressive use of access to information laws and requirements for operational licenses for CSOs and HRDs.
- Noted an increase in reports of states violently clamping down peaceful protests, particularly during election periods, as a way of intimidating HRDs.
- Despite encouraging signs from Angola and South Africa, which are either opening up civic space more or allowing HRDs to freely operate.

**Ms. Nonhle Mbuthuma**  
*Crisis Committee*

- Shared that the operational environment in South Africa may not be as free as some may believe.
- Narrated a series of challenges that South Africa HRDs working on land and natural resource governance encountered as well as the dangers associated with pursuing economic justice and socio-economic rights in South Africa.
- Highlighted that HRD efforts were often hampered and the danger increased because of the financial and economic interests at stake, especially when confronting mining companies.
- Confrontations with capital resulting in HRDs being harassed and assaulted by private security as well as the police.
- Noted that many lives had been lost at the hands of the South African state which appeared to prioritize profits at the expense of people and their lives.

**Ms. Buhle Moyo**  
*Women's Rights Activist - Zimbabwe*

- Shared that in 2013, Zimbabwe adopted a very progressive constitution especially regarding the respect of women's rights, but it has not been fully implemented.
- Bemoaned the lack of mechanisms for enforcement and implementation of laws and policies that promote and protect WHRDs, as well as UN treaties and conventions that governments sign up to.
- Highlighted that Elections in Zimbabwe continued to be characterized by violence against women hindering participation & the absence of structured and effective protection mechanisms.
- Highlighted how patriarchy continues to play a huge role in undermining women's rights.
- Suggesting that:
  1. CSOs and HRDs needed to work closely with institutions with mandates to monitor full implementation of women's rights such as the Gender and Human Rights Commissions.

**Mr. Hassan Shire**  
*Pan-African Human Rights Network*

- Reported HRD targeting through draconian laws.
- Highlighted that states were learning from and copying each other regarding mechanisms of repressing civil society.
- Noted continued targeting of vocal HRDs as individuals and organizations leading to self-censorship for safety.
- Argued situation of HRDs in Africa worsened by the influence of China and Russia who collude with African governments to close space for HRDs and CSOs.
- Linked the attacks on HRDs to personalization of power by African heads of states. Who see HRDs work as threatening their (politician's) oil, gold, and diamonds?
- Noted increased government investments in surveillance systems to monitor HRD movements, meetings, and personal engagements.

## Panelist Input Summaries: Challenges, Threats and Emerging Trends (continued)

**Mr. Anganile Mwenifumbo**  
OHCHR - ROSA,

**Ms. Nonhle Mbuthuma**  
Crisis Committee

- Reported that women HRDs were often accused of being anti-development and constantly reminded that their “place is in the kitchen.”
- Highlighted how WHRDs often had their phones hacked, impeding their freedom of expression and taking away their right to privacy.

**Ms. Buhle Moyo**  
Women’s Rights Activist - Zimbabwe

2. a need for HRDs to regroup and re-strategize on how to effectively work with women in the communities.
3. The need for CSOs to address negative perceptions surrounding human rights work and WHRDs and the need to link human rights issues with day-to-day life experiences.
4. That donors and international institutions ensure that women’s organizations were adequately funded.

**Mr. Hassan Shire**  
Pan-African Human Rights Network

## ***SESSION FOUR: Special WHRDs lunch meeting with Special Rapporteur Forst***

Women Human Rights Defenders at the summit had a special working lunch meeting with the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Michel Forst to discuss HRD issues specific to women and commemorate International Women Human Rights Defenders day (commemorated globally on the 29th of November). The WHRDs took the opportunity to call on the international community to reaffirm, unambiguously, its commitments to fulfill the unfinished agenda on the promotion and protection of human rights, significantly increase political will towards and investment in women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights. They also called upon decision-makers to put women's and girls' human rights at the center of policy considerations and to meaningfully involve women and girls themselves in all decisions affecting them.



The above and other sentiments were captured in the form of a statement and summit recommendations on gender equality and protection of WHRDs in Southern Africa, which the attending WHRDs presented to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs (see Annex 3 for full statement). Mr. Forst received and shared the statement

with the press and a broad audience using his official social media handles and email. The statement also highlighted:

1. WHRD's consensus to develop a critical platform in the process of unpacking new threats and emerging patterns affecting women.
2. Continued challenges with resolving structural causes of inequality as seen through the rising financial crisis and sexual violence against women and girls.
3. A commitment to bringing a human rights perspective to gender inequalities to clarify stakes and ensure coherent, and effective responses to the those most affected.
4. The need for WHRDs to seek grant making opportunities and with the assistance of the Special Rapporteur, engage the World Coalition of Women Human Rights Defenders.
5. The need for WHRDs to participate in future events of the Special and public events at UNCSW64 (March 2020) and the Generation Equality Forums on Beijing+25 processes in Mexico(June 2020) and Paris (July 2020)

## ***SESSION FIVE: Gaps in Current protection approaches and rethinking the protection of HRDs***

<i>Session Chair</i>	<i>David Kode (CIVICUS Alliance)</i>
<i>Panelists</i>	<i>Ms. Camile Cortez (Regional Campaigner, Amnesty International)</i>
	<i>Mr. Fidelis Mudimu (Frontline Human Rights Defenders)</i>
	<i>Ms. Isabella Matambanadzo (Chairperson of the Other Foundation)</i>
	<i>Ms. Nomsa Sizani (Shack Dwellers)</i>
	<i>Tumeliwa Mphemo (Association of People with Albinism)</i>

The final session for day 2 consisted of a panel discussion gaps in current protection approaches. It reviewed existing protection mechanisms with a focus on identifying strengths and critical gaps; factors that shape the development of national policies for the protection of HRDs; and sharing best practices on addressing threats and attacks.

The session noted limitations of judicial mechanisms to protect HRDs in the region as well as insufficient political will to address human rights deficits on the part of Southern African governments. It also noted that SADC member states neither cooperate with regional and continental bodies nor accept accountability for their actions. In a critically reflective moment, the session also noted how protection mechanisms run by NGOs and civil society in the region often favored assisting and recognizing HRD organisations, often neglecting and leaving HRDs working as individuals open to systematic and state sponsored attacks with little to no recognition, solidarity and assistance from existing protection mechanisms. At the end of the session, participants had generated consensus on the following issues:

1. Joint advocacy on the adoption of model laws on HRD protection given that some Southern African countries do not have domestic laws that ensure HRD protection.
2. Advocacy on constitutional reforms and the need to encourage governments to repeal laws that infringe on human rights.



3. Collaboration between CSOs, individual HRDs and building cross-sectoral synergies with the media, artists, social movements, parliaments, justice ministries, Human Rights Commissions, and professional groups (e.g. doctors & lawyers).
4. Transparency and accountability from both state and non-state actors, including the private sector, and campaigning against impunity.
5. A region wide need for joint advocacy initiatives and engagement with policy makers and decision makers at national and regional level on key HRD issues.
6. Standardized and systematic data collection tools for HRDs in the region to ease data collection, management and distribution at country level while maintaining and sharing a region wide perspective on the state of HRDs.
7. Capacity building initiatives for HRDs, CSOs and the media through various trainings (e.g. security and protection, investigative journalism, and trial monitoring).
8. Close working relations with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs and other UN Special Procedures to submit periodic joint reports on the human rights situation in the region.

The table below highlights the individual inputs from the panelists.

## Panelist inputs on gaps in current approaches to HRD defense

<b>Ms. Camile Cortez</b> <i>Amnesty International</i>	<b>Mr. Fidelis Mudimu</b> <i>Frontline Human Rights Defenders</i>	<b>Ms. Nomsa Sizani</b> <i>Shack Dwellers</i>	<b>Ms. Tumeliwa Mphepo</b> <i>Association of People with Albinism Malawi (APAM)</i>	<b>Ms. Isabella Matambanadzo,</b> <i>The Other Foundation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted that most human rights related laws in the region are progressive but have no enforcement mechanisms.</li> <li>• Limited implementation of domestic laws, regional and international treaties and conventions that promote and protect HRDs.</li> <li>• Introduction of new laws in SADC aimed at undermining and criminalizing the work of HRDs and frustrating human rights.</li> <li>• Lack of political will to promote human rights by states.</li> <li>• The need for CSOs to come up with interventions to build/encourage political will.</li> <li>• SADC and AU politicized and heavily compromised (do not adequately monitor or address human rights in member states).</li> <li>• No formal platforms for HRDs and CSOs to provide objective and credible information on the situation of HRDs at SADC and the AU.</li> <li>• Africa Court inefficiency in hearing cases (e.g. eight years to handle a single case).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to protect HRDs, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, through offering rapid response protection plans, assessing different capacities of HRDs and empowering them on what to do when risk arises.</li> <li>• Mechanisms in place to defend and protect HRDs through Lifeline's Embattled CSOs Assistance Fund (Flexible and context specific Rapid response protection plans; Capacity building for HRDs; CSOs with community mobilization and media campaigns; Digital, physical and psychosocial protection training; Legal training and direct aid to respond to restrictive CSO legislation.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlighted the plight of shack dwellers in South Africa. - inhumane treatment by the government.</li> <li>• Constitutional safeguards on rights (including life, service delivery and other basic human rights) but shack dwellers are threatened, killed, and harassed by state actors on a frequent basis.</li> <li>• Shack dwellers and HRDs targeted for demanding service delivery and speaking out against corruption and nepotism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused on the plight of people with albinism in Malawi.- serious attacks since 2014.</li> <li>• Government inaction on victimization and addressing the crisis.</li> <li>• Penal Code was amended in 2016 but poor implementation led to APAM demonstrations under the banner of Human Rights Defenders Coalition with support from Front Line HRDs, forcing the government to respond and act on the plight of people with albinism.</li> <li>• recommended the need to create safe platforms and spaces to groom and mentor new and upcoming HRDs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reiterated the need to protect WHRDs.</li> <li>• Urged equal recognition of WHRDs in decision making spaces and processes</li> <li>• Highlighted opportunity to build a radical women's movement to disrupt issues such as the right to safe abortion to women and girls who are sexually abused.</li> <li>• Highlighted conflict between religious values versus human rights (e.g. Girls falling pregnant due to rape being forced to keep the babies).</li> <li>• Urged Continued pressure for gender equality at local, national and regional level and reflection on adverse internal practices in CSO spaces.</li> </ul>

## ***SESSION SIX: Launch of the South African Human Rights Defenders Fund and Southern Africa HRD of the year Award***

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*Speakers*                      *Mr. Arnold Tsunga (SAHRDN)*  
                                      *Ms. Milly Potgieter (Open Society Foundation (OSF), South Africa)*  
                                      *Mr. Sharan Srinivas (Open Society Foundation (OSF), UK-London)*

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Day two concluded with the launch of the South Africa Human Rights Defenders Fund and award ceremony for the Southern Africa Human Rights Defender of the year award. The SAHRDN Chairperson, Mr. Arnold Tsunga introduced the Fund, and explained that it was aimed at deliberately and consciously reducing the levels of vulnerability of HRDs in South Africa. He shared that the Fund would also be utilized to strengthen HRD capacities and offer cover and protection of WHRDs and other vulnerable groups in all provinces in South Africa.

Ms. Milly Potgieter, the Acting Executive Director of the Open Society Foundation (OSF), South Africa, added that although the South African Human Rights Commission was established in 1995, a gap still remained between rights guaranteed in the Constitution of South Africa and their respect and promotion on the ground. She stated that HRDs in South Africa continued to face threats, harassment and intimidation hence the through SAHRDN, OSF would complement current efforts to ensure the protection of HRDs in the country. Ms Potgieter reiterated the importance of the fund regarding efficient provision of immediate assistance to vulnerable HRDs through finance and other requirements and appealed to other donors to come on board to support the fund as part of civil society pursuits of democracy and respect for human rights in South Africa.

Mr. Sharan Srinivas, a Programme Officer at OSF also noted that there was little protection for local human rights activists and HRDs in South Africa. He shared that the agreement between OSF and SAHRDN was to deliberately focus the fund towards:

1. Mostly targeting community-based activities located in rural areas.

2. Providing emergency and rapid response in the form of medical and legal support.
3. Providing solidarity to HRDs.
4. Providing financial assistance.

Mr. Srinivas emphasized that despite the above deliberate focus which was meant to even up access, the fund was general open to all HRDs and encouraged SAHRDN to reach out to HRDs working on housing, shelter and environmental issues who sometimes are outside the orbit of orthodox human rights circles. He concluded by sharing that the fund's location in Johannesburg, South Africa, within the SAHRDN was meant to make it centralized for easy access and asked HRDs present to lend their support and expertise to make the fund a success.

## SOUTHERN AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER OF THE YEAR AWARD CEREMONY

Following the launch of the South Africa Human Rights Defenders' Fund, SAHRDN held a Human Rights Defender of the Year Award Ceremony. Samantha Kureya, a Zimbabwean comedian popularly known as Gonyeti, was the 2019 award recipient.

SAHRDN Chairperson, Mr. Tsunga outlined the criteria and selection process and stressed that the selection had been conducted through online nomination and balloting by SAHRDN members across SADC. He noted the positive role played by social media activism and satire in particular. He reported that the award was in its second year and would continue on an annual basis. Ms Samantha Kureya received her award from the summit's guest of honor and keynote speaker, Mr. Forst.



*Samantha Kureya receiving the HRD of the Award*



## ***SESSION SEVEN: National Priority Issues and Strategies***

*Facilitators*                      *Mr. Washington Katema (SAHRDN)*  
    *Anganile Mwenifumbo (OHCHR-Regional Office Southern Africa)*

Day three of the summit started with a session that moved from the generic issues affecting HRDs in Southern Africa to identifying key national priority issues. Participants were divided into country groups and discussed thematic follow-up activities and support required to facilitate country specific work going forward. Boxes 1-7 illustrate the country level discussion outcomes from this session.

### **Box 1: Angola Country Group Discussion**

#### ***Priority Issues***

1. Right to land is more complicated for women owing to a deep-rooted patriarchal system.
2. Judiciary system inaccessible – HRDs cannot afford legal fees hence only have access to junior lawyers and interns.
3. No Human Rights Commission to monitor and encourage respect for human rights.
4. LGBTI rights very sensitive in Angola.
5. Freedoms of association and expression are restricted.

#### ***Strategy and Additional Support Required***

- Lobby and advocate for the establishment of a Human Rights Commission.
- Require legal assistance.
- Strategic litigation to challenge restrictions to freedom of association and expression.

## Box 2: Botswana Country Group Discussion

### *Priority Issues*

1. Right to information – cultural issues around LGBTI rights – difficult to communicate and provide information on these issues.
2. Freedom of expression suppressed – example of a foreign university lecturer who was deported for “speaking truth to power.”
3. Arbitrary arrests of HRDs and journalists.
4. HRD work and journalism poorly funded due to Botswana’s classification as an upper middle-income economy and perceptions that it is a peaceful country.
5. Cyber bullying – phone tapes

### *Strategy and Additional Support Required*

- Capacity building for HRDs on advocacy issues – “we do not want to be reactive.”
- Security training for HRDs and journalists.
- Mentorship programs for HRDs.
- Strategic litigation.
- Regional collaborations and networks – share funding ideas and explore pool funding.
- Lobby and advocacy for review of media laws to protect HRDs and journalists.
- Lobby and advocacy for constitutional reforms towards inclusion and protection of HRDs.

## Box 3: Lesotho Country Group Discussion

### *Priority Issues*

1. Clampdown on HRDs and CSOs by police and army.
2. High rate of impunity – perpetrators of human rights violations walking scot free – zero investigations – zero prosecution – zero justice.
3. Resistance by the government to engage on environmental issues.
4. Media suppression, denying citizens their right to access information. Propaganda and commercialization of journalism – compromising truth/objectivity for favors.
5. Suppression of freedoms of assembly and association.
6. Smear campaigns to discredit HRDs. WHRDs mostly affected.
7. Draconian laws – for example selection of election commissioners is being challenged through the courts as process lacks transparency.

***Strategy and Additional Support Required***

- Advocacy for constitutional reform.
- Lobby parliament to repeal laws that infringe on human rights. For example, the Public Gathering Act
- Empower and educate communities on human rights issues.
- Require technical assistance to implement strategic litigation against impunity and draconian laws.

**Box 4: Malawi Country Group Discussion*****Priority Issues***

1. Electoral Justice.
2. People living with albinism attacked.
3. Politicization of state institutions.
4. Criminalization of HRD work.

***Strategy and Additional Support Required***

- HRDs protection support.
- HRDs capacity building support.
- Media campaigns.

**Box 5: Mozambique and Democratic Republic of Congo Country Group Discussion*****Priority Issues***

1. Introduction of new laws and priorities to undermine HRD work and close civic space. An example of the Association Act, which was as a result of a constitutional amendment by the Parliament. The Act compels CSOs to make their funding partners public, and the Ministry of Justice enforces this
2. Rights to land – although Mozambique is a big country with lots of land, land is owned by the state.
3. Access to information remains an issue in the country – the government giving contracts to Multinational Companies without consulting the affected citizens and no adequate information is provided to the general public.
4. Politicization of public institutions.
5. Compromised judiciary system – no justice for HRDs and CSOs owing to the fact that judges lack adequate knowledge and experience on human rights issues. Litigation costs very high and out of reach to many HRDs and CSOs.

6. WHRDs affected by Gender Based Violence (GBV) – “One MP on record announcing that a certain female journalist must be raped and beaten up to silence her.”

#### ***Strategy and Additional Support Required***

- Advocacy for constitutional reform.
- Lobby parliament to repeal laws that infringe on human rights. For example, the Public Gathering Act
- Empower and educate communities on human rights issues.
- Require technical assistance to implement strategic litigation against impunity and draconian laws.

### **Box 6: Swaziland Country Group Discussion**

#### ***Priority Issues***

1. Criminalization of HRDs work - WHRDs, LGBTI, youth, PWDs at risk
2. Patriarchy and culture used to stifle the work of HRDs.
3. Abuse of “absolute” power by the King who is also the Head of State to suppress HRDs.
4. Cyber threats against HRDs.
5. Right to privacy under attack.
6. Suppression of freedom of assembly and expression despite constitutional guarantees

#### ***Strategy and Additional Support Required***

- Require financial assistance and human resources to challenge the system.
- Capacity building for security of HRDs and investigative journalism.
- Require legal support.
- Provision of psychosocial support to HRDs.
- Advocate for constitutional reform to address criminalization of HRD work and encourage respect and protection of HRDs.
- Lobby and advocate for repeal of Public Order Act and other laws that suppress human rights.
- Lobby and advocate for Cyber laws that are human rights sensitive.

## Box 7: South Africa Country Group Discussion

### *Priority Issues*

1. Level of impunity very high – no justice for victims of apartheid (e.g. TRC process, Marikana) – perpetrators not satisfactorily brought to book.
  2. The highest rate of GBV and femicide in the world – structural and cultural – a result of past atrocities – leaders did not heal the nation.
  3. Right to privacy, freedom of association and freedom of assembly under siege.
  4. Police brutality, killings and surveillance (ORICA, Cyber Security Bill, Gatherings Act).
  5. Freedom of expression – Whistle Blower's Act allows journalists to name and shame but suppressing this freedom by using previous laws particularly the Secrecy Act.
  6. Right to land – state is promoting the Traditional Leader's Act which gives traditional leaders sole custody of land which they can distribute to MNCs without consulting residents.
7. HRDs working on land and environmental issues are under attack.
  8. Intimidation and harassment of HRDs working on LGBTI and women's rights.
  9. Corruption – negatively impacting basic human rights (water, sanitation, health, education, unemployment, service delivery).

### *Strategy and Additional Support Required*

- WHRDs to educate and empower women and men, boys and girls on how to respect and treat women.
- Engage women politicians, Speaker of Parliament and other key stakeholders to take a stand against GBV.
- Lobby the judiciary system to be sterner and ensure justice for GBV victims.
- Advocate for end to assassinations and encourage more tolerance at local and national level.
- Ensure the work of HRDs is not criminalized.
- Advocate for land rights – work closely with relevant state institutions and journalists.
- Continue monitoring and engaging the media to advocate for prosecution of all those found guilty of corruption (e.g. the Zondo Inquiry).
- Documentation, awareness raising, continuous monitoring of HRDs situation.
- Media campaigns to demand accountability from government.



**Box 8: Zambia Country Group Discussion*****Priority Issues***

1. Arbitrary arrest of HRDs.
2. Freedom of expression - Journalists and activists who speak out against state oppression - Insult laws section 33 of the CODE, Censorship Act.
3. Freedom of association and expression restricted.
4. Constitutional amendments to restrict civic and political space

***Strategy and Additional Support Required***

- Protection for HRDs
- Capacity building for HRDs.
- Public interest litigation.
- Strategic impact litigation.

**Box 9: Zimbabwe Country Group Discussion*****Priority Issues***

1. Freedom of association and assembly - Laws that are clearly targeted at limiting freedom of association and assembly such as MOPO, Section 37 of the CODE.
2. Freedom of expression - Journalists and activists who speak out against state oppression - Insult laws section 33 of the CODE, Censorship Act.
3. No respect of the rule of law by the state actors - threats on lawyers and doctors for human rights. The President of Zimbabwe recently threatened to clampdown on doctors and lawyers who assist HRDs.
4. The UN office in Zimbabwe has been unavailable and silent about the recent atrocities on human rights defenders and lawyers.
5. Women and girls bearing the brunt of economic meltdown and collapse of health sector.
6. Citizens failing to demand accountability from the state – fear and intimidation – owing to a culture of violence and intimidation by state apparatus. Continued attacks of civilians by the police and army. No accountability, perpetrators continue to walk scot-free.
7. Cyber bullying and surveillance of HRDs.
8. Abductions and assaults of HRDs - 2019 has recorded the highest number of abductions targeted at vocal HRDs.

***Strategy and Additional Support Required***

- Digital Security and Risk Management.
- Self Defense Trainings for HRDs
- Lobby and advocate for the UN Office to be more involved in local human rights issues.
- Create platform for exchange programs with human rights experts.
- Build strong networks- alliances that are able to fight the system.
- Ensure accountability by perpetrators of human rights violations.
- Empower HRDs on counter surveillance.
- Consider engaging the police, army and other state actors and make them understand the negative effects of brutality. "Not seeing the police as enemies but as people we can engage and educate them."

## ***SESSION EIGHT: Towards Effective Engagement with UN Human Rights Mechanisms and Bilateral with the UN Special Rapporteur***

*Session*                      *Abigail Noko ( OHCHR-ROSA)*

*Presenter*                *Michel Forst ( UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs)*

During this session, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs, Mr. Forst, outlined his role and how HRDs could effectively engage with him and the UN human rights mechanisms. He shared that he had done over 60 country visits in five years to assess the human rights situation in those countries as well as engage with HRDs on the ground, and was willing to do more for the remainder of his tenure.

Mr. Forst outlined the UN reporting process and how CSOs and HRDs could send communications to special rapporteurs. He explained that communications were amongst some of the most effective advocacy tools that CSOs could use and also that communications were relatively short documents of about two or three pages and could describe the human rights situation in the affected country, threats against HRDs or any new restrictive laws. He indicated that such communications enable UN Special Rapporteurs to seek audiences with states or companies involved, who in turn, are required to respond within 60 days. He also advised participants to carry out joint advocacy for more effective results.

Following the question and answer segment, the following emerged as consensus points and resolutions for the participants:

- To utilize the SAHRDN to facilitate more country visits by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs, prioritizing Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Angola and Zimbabwe because of the extant human rights situations in those countries.
- To facilitate periodic consultations on the situation of HRDs and WHRDs at national and regional level and share findings with relevant authorities for advocacy purposes.

- To escalate human rights issues through closely working with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs through submitting periodic joint communications (letters or reports).
- To also bring other relevant UN Special Rapporteurs on board.
- To develop mechanisms for the protection of HRDs in the form of panic buttons, rapid response (legal and medical assistance), and fundraise for such mechanisms individually and collectively.
- To develop gender sensitive protection mechanisms for HRDs that take into cognizance the different needs of men and women as well as women HRDs with young children or infants amongst other considerations.

## FIELD VISIT – MARIEVALE COMMUNITY

On the last day of the summit, the SAHRDN facilitated a field visit to Marievale Community where the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of HRDs engaged the Marievale community. The community narrated the harassment and abuse they suffered at the hands of the South African army.









## REGIONAL SUMMIT IN PICTURES







## **ANNEX 1 – CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS**

## ANNEX 2 – CONFERENCE PROGRAMME



### PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: Reflecting, innovating and co-creating a sustainable protection agenda based on trends and opportunities

27-30 November 2019

Venue: Garden Court Milpark

Johannesburg, South Africa

#### Programme

Day 1	Wednesday, 27 November 2019	Lead	Time
08:30 – 09:00	Arrival and registration	SAHRDN, OHCHR ROSA, CIVICUS	30 min
09:00 – 09:20	Outline of the training agenda and expectations	OHCHR ROSA	20 min
09:20 – 10:40	<b>Session 1: Overview of the United Nations Human Rights System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short video on the UN Human Rights system with specific focus on treaty bodies</li> <li>Short activity quiz</li> <li>Interactive presentation</li> </ul>	OHCHR ROSA Jean Fokwa Tsafack & Anganile Mwenifumbo	80 min
10:40 – 10:55	Coffee break		15 min
10:55 – 12:40	<b>Session 2: Functions of treaty bodies and the role of CSOs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group exercise</li> <li>Presentation by rapporteur</li> <li>Complementing presentation by facilitator</li> </ul>	Jean Fokwa Tsafack & Anganile Mwenifumbo	105 min
12:40 – 13:00	<b>Session 3: Stages of the treaty reporting cycle and the role of CSOs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group exercise- Construction of a puzzle of the treaty body reporting cycle</li> <li>Group exercise- Identification of the role of CSOs in every stage of the reporting cycle</li> <li>Complementary presentation by facilitator</li> </ul>		
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch		60 min
14:30 – 15:30	<b>Session 4: Mechanisms under the Human Rights Council (The Universal Periodic Review, Special Procedures and the role of CSOs)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation on UPR</li> <li>Group exercise on engagement with Special Procedures</li> <li>Presentation on Special Procedure Mandate Holders</li> </ul>	Anganile Mwenifumbo & Jean Fokwa Tsafack	60 min
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee break		15 min
15:45 – 17:00	<b>Session 5: Effective engagement with UN human rights mechanisms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group exercise</li> <li>Report back by rapporteurs</li> <li>Questions and answers</li> </ul>	Anganile Mwenifumbo & Jean Fokwa Tsafack	60 min
18.30 – 21:00	Organisers dinner with UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, <i>Mr. Michel Forst</i>	SAHRDN	

Day 2	Thursday, 28 November 2019	Lead	Time
08:30 – 08:50	Registration	SAHRDN	
08:50 – 09:20	<b>Director of the Programme – Washington Katema</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of the programme</li> <li>Presentation the objectives of the meeting</li> </ul> <b>Opening remarks and welcome</b>		10 min
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ms. Abigail Noko, Regional Representative, Regional Office for Southern Africa, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights</i></li> <li><i>Mr. Arnold Tsunga, Chairperson, Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network</i></li> <li><i>Ms. Lysa John, Secretary General, CIVICUS</i></li> <li><i>Ms. Tiseke Kasambala, Chief of Party, Advancing Human Rights in Southern Africa (ARISA)</i></li> </ul>		20 min
09:20 – 9:30	<b>Interlude – A Poem</b>		10 min
09:30 – 10:30	<b>Keynote Address – The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Mr. Michel Forst</b>  <b>Top priorities, trends and challenges, situation of defenders worldwide, followed by a Questions and Answers Session</b>	<b>Opening Session Chair: Siphosami Malunga</b>	60 min
10:00 – 10:15	Coffee break		15 min
10:15 – 12:00	<b>UNPACKING THE NEW THREATS AND EMERGING PATTERNS (Theme 1)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>PANEL DISCUSSION:</b> Anganile Mwenifumbo, Hassan Shire, Nonhle Mbuthuma, Deprose Muchena <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal, policy and operational challenges of and opportunities for civic space in Southern Africa</li> <li>New threats and the emerging trends in Southern Africa</li> <li>Key changes and continuities regarding HRDs and civic space in their respective contexts.</li> <li>Engaging on the question whether the civic space is closing or is changing and whether HRDs are focusing on the symptoms or root causes<sup>1</sup>?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Session Chair: Tiseke Kasambala</b>	105 min
12:00 - 13:00	<b>WORKING GROUPS:</b> Participants will choose among 2/3 working groups and continue the discussion on the topics presented by the panellists	<b>Session Chair - Ms Roshnee Narrandes</b>	60 min
13:00 – 14:15	Lunch  <b>N/B: WHRDS will have lunch with the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Michel Forst</b>	<b>Session Coordinators – Timothy Mtambo and Valentine Sebile</b>	75 min
14:15 – 14:45	<b>Feedback session on theme 1 followed by a Q&amp;A</b>		30 min
14:45 – 16:15	<b>Theme 2: GAPS IN CURRENT PROTECTION APPROACHES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>PANEL DISCUSSION:</b> Camile Cortze, Fidelis Mudimu, Neville Gabriel, Nomsa Sizani, Tumeliwa Mphepo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the current protection mechanisms;</li> <li>Identify strengths and critical gaps in protection mechanisms;</li> <li>Discuss factors that shape the development of national policies for the protection of HRDs.</li> <li>Sharing of best practices and insights on addressing threats and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Session Chair: Lysa John</b>	90 min

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Carothers, <https://carnegeieendowment.org/2019/05/31/defending-civic-space-four-unresolved-questions-pub-79250>



	attacks.		
16:15 – 16:30	Coffee break		15 min
16:30 – 17:30	<b>WORKING GROUPS:</b> Participants will choose among 2/3 working groups and continue the discussion on the main three topics presented by the panelists  Participants break early so as to prepare for evening events	OHCHR ROSA	60 min
18:00 – 20:30	<b>COCKTAIL</b> <b>Launch of the South Africa Human Rights Defenders Fund</b> <b>Human Rights Defender of the Year Award Ceremony</b> <b>Venue: Garden Court, Milpark</b>	OSF/SAHRDN	
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Friday, 29 November 2019</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Time</b>
09:00 – 10:45	<b>Break out discussions: Identification of key issues for national or thematic follow up activities and the development of strategies for engagement</b>	Co-Chairing Arnold Tsunga and Anganile Mwenifumbo	105 min
10:45 – 11:00	Coffee break		15 min
11:00 – 13:00	<b>Break out discussions: Identification of key issues for national or thematic follow up activities and the development of strategies for engagement, <i>cont'd</i></b>		120 mins
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch		60 min
14:00 – 15:00	<b>Presentation of outcomes of group discussion and plenary</b>	Anganile Mwenifumbo	60 min
15:00 – 16:00	<b>Dialogue on effective engagement with UN human rights mechanisms in the protection of HRDs by SR Michel Forst</b>  ▪ <i>Engaging Special Rapporteur Mandate Holders</i>	Session Chair: Abigail Noko	60 min
16:00 – 16:15	Coffee break		15 min
16:00 – 18:30	<b>By Invitation Only - Inaugural Steering Committee Meeting South Africa HRDS Fund</b> –(UN Special Rapporteur to give a 10 minute talk to Steering Committee before Steering Committee Meeting)	OSF and SAHRDN	150 min
16:00 – 18:00	<b>HRDs Bilaterals with UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Michel Forst</b>	Session Coordinator – Timothy Mtambo	60 min 60 min
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Saturday 30 November 2019</b>		
08:00 – 12:00	<b>Field visit to Marievale Community by UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Mr. Michel Forst</b>	SAHRDN	240 min

*Please note that the Chatham House Rule will be applied: No names of participants should be made public by the SAHRDN without permission. Please do not name or quote any participant to the conference unless you have asked for their permission first.*

#### Digital Security & Safety Clinic for HRDS throughout the Conference

HRDs are advised that there will be a dedicated booth for digital security advice to HRDs manned by a representative of the Digital Society of Zimbabwe (DSZ) in collaboration with the SAHRDN. If you have any issues to clarify and understand on digital security including updating software please feel free to visit the Digital Security & Safety Clinic. A Digital First Aid Kit may also be made available to those willing.

### **ANNEX 3 – JOINT STATEMENT BY WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (WHRD) IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, MICHEL FORST, TO COMMEMORATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS DAY (29 NOVEMBER 2019)**



This year, International Women Human Rights Defenders Day occurs during a meeting of Human Rights Defenders (HRD) in Southern Africa, who are meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa. This meeting is convened by the Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network (SAHRDN) and its partners.

The theme for the meeting is “Reflecting, Innovating and Co-creating a Sustainable Protection Agenda based on threats and opportunities” in the sub region and it must emerge and conclude with ideas on what could be done differently to strengthen the protection of HRD in the region.

The Situation of WHRD took center stage along with a wide range of country specific issues across the region. Thus a Coalition for WHRD in the region was identified to act as a critical platform in the process of unpacking new threats and emerging patterns affecting women.

Structural causes of inequality have not been successfully and fundamentally tackled. This is evidenced by rising financial crisis and sexual violence against women and girls. As many as 16 million girls in the world have been sexually assaulted most of which are from the global south.

Bringing a human rights perspective to gender inequalities not only clarifies what is at stake; it also helps to ensure that responses on protection are coherent, effective and responsive to the concerns of those most affected.

To unlock this process, women HRD affirmed in their side meeting with the Special Rapporteur, that they would “seek grant making opportunities and other forms of support such as training and publications”, citing that with the assistance of the Special Rapporteur, they will engage with the World Coalition of Women Human Rights Defenders, and together help to promulgate the Model Law on HRD.

They also sought to participate in future events of the Special Rapporteur on situations of women human rights defenders such as public events at UNCSW64 (March 2020) and the Generation Equality Forums on Beijing+25 processes in Mexico (June 2020) and Paris (July 2020).

On this occasion of the 13th International Women Human Rights Defenders Day, Women HRD in Southern Africa call on the international community to reaffirm unambiguously its commitments to fulfill the unfinished agenda on the promotion and protection of human rights, to significantly increase its political will towards and investment in women’s and girls’ sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We call upon decision-makers to always put women’s and girls’ human rights at the center of policy considerations and to meaningfully involve women and girls themselves in all decisions affecting them.

End.

For more information on this statement contact:

Arnold Tsunga, SAHRDN Chairperson

Email: [Arnold.Tsunga@icj.org](mailto:Arnold.Tsunga@icj.org)

Mobile: +27 71 640 5926

Lindiwe Khoza, on behalf of the Coalition of Women Human Rights Defenders in Southern Africa

Email: [Lindiwe@hurisa.org.za](mailto:Lindiwe@hurisa.org.za)

Mobile: +27 63 31 8346

Mary Da Silva, on behalf of the Coalition of Women Human Rights Defenders in Southern Africa

Email: [mpsdasilva@gmail.com](mailto:mpsdasilva@gmail.com)

Mobile: +268 760 0076

This statement has been endorsed by the following HRD organizations and partners in Southern Africa:

Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights, Michel Forst

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR)

The Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network (SAHRDN)

CIVICUS

Lifeline

Open Society Foundation for South Africa

Human Rights Institute of South Africa (HURISA)

