



FHRI NEWSLETTER

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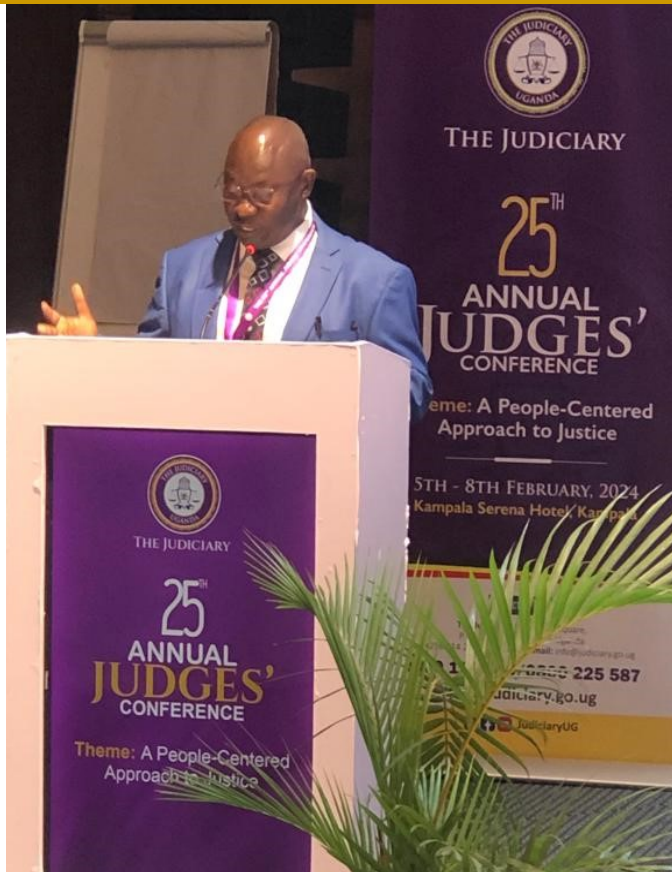
EXECUTIVE OFFICE

A PEOPLE – CENTERED APPROACH TO JUSTICE: PRESENTATION BY DR. LIVINGSTONE SEWANYANA AT THE 25TH ANNUAL JUDGES CONFERENCE

Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, the Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) gave a Keynote Address at the 25th Annual Judges Conference on 5th February 2024 held at Serena Hotel in Kampala. In his address, he noted that the theme of the conference was timely and relevant to effective justice delivery. He further noted that justice users deserve appropriate treatment as well as awareness of how the justice system works so as to trust it.

Justice delivery systems are on the edge. They can hardly address every day challenges, neither do they deliver justice for all. They are perceived as serving the privileged few and focus more on rules, procedures and guidelines without addressing the needs of justice seekers. Effective access to justice demands that 'No one is left behind'. How do we move from Justice for the few, to Justice for All?

There is a new movement for social justice that promises to reverse the current trend and bring the justice user at the center of the



Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana giving the Keynote Address at the 25th Annual Judges Conference, Serena Hotel, Kampala on 5th February 2024.

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FHRI CELEBRATES 33 YEARS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM DURING HER 25TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



FHRI's Board of Directors led by Dr. Josephine Ndagire, Chairperson, (2nd right) handing over a Certificate of Appreciation from FHRI to Dr. Stephen Okello, (right) Secretary, National Bureau for NGOs during the 25th AGM held on 9th November 2024 at the Human Rights House, Nsambya.

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The Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) celebrated her achievements of 33 years of tireless human rights activism for justice and equality in Uganda. This was during her 25th Annual General Meeting (AGM) that took place at the Human Rights House based in Nsambya, Kampala with over 200 members in attendance.

FHRI has continued with her efforts in advancing justice the country and beyond by focusing

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A PEOPLE – CENTERED APPROACH TO JUSTICE: A PRESENTATION BY DR. LIVINGSTONE SEWANYANA AT THE 25TH ANNUAL JUDGES CONFERENCE

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justice system. A people –centered Approach to Justice (PCJ) is a model of justice delivery that promises to make individuals the universal denominator in the justice delivery chain.

His paper examined the normative framework for a People-Centered Justice system; looks at Uganda's demographic and governance challenges, and examines the current justice delivery model. In this paper, Uganda's economic and social issues were also tackled such as the level of poverty, the Human Capital Index, literacy levels, health, water and sanitation, employment, crime, rule of law, justice delivery as well as gender equality.

Besides the justification for this new thinking, the paper examines the benefits of PCJ, and spells out enablers for its success. *A full presentation in PDF (744 KB) can be accessed on this link: <https://fhri.or.ug/presentations/>*



Centre: Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, Executive Director, FHRI having a light moment with Justice Damalie Lwanga after giving the Keynote Address at the 25th Annual Judges Conference at Serena Hotel on 5th February 2024.

DR. SEWANYANA ATTENDS THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FOOD JUSTICE FROM A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE



The National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) of Qatar in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), the Office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Arab League, organized a two-day International Conference on Food Justice in Doha, Qatar under the patronage of the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar H. E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, on 6th and 7th February, 2024.

Themed "From a Human Rights Perspective - Challenges of Reality and Future Stakes," the conference hosted more than 1,000 officials and experts, providing a global platform for the exchange of knowledge and experiences. Whereas the conference aimed at enhancing capacities and scrutinizing legislation, policies, plans, and programs related to food justice from a human rights standpoint, the primary objective was to establish frameworks and foundations for those engaged in the realm of food justice and human rights. Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, the then United Nations Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order and Executive Director of Foundation for Human Rights Initiative was among the key dignitaries who participated in the discussions during the conference.

FHRI CELEBRATES 33 YEARS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM DURING HER 25TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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on critical human rights issues ranging from access to justice, defence of personal liberty, civic empowerment, the campaign for the progressive abolition of the death penalty, advocacy for policy reforms to networking and collaboration with regional and international players.

The guest of honour, at the AGM Dr. Stephen Okello, Secretary, National Bureau for NGOs (NGO Bureau), from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, commended the good work done by FHRI and her membership in fighting for justice as well as supporting many people from all walks of life in the country. He noted that this work requires resilience and a lot of resources and therefore called upon members to continue with the culture of supporting the organisation through regular payment of subscription fees, funding organisational activities and donations where possible.

He pointed out that foreign funding, a major source of finance for the NGO sector is slowly dwindling; whereas it is this sector that plays a critical role in holding the government accountable as well as defending the marginalised and disadvantaged people. For example the Citizens Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU) that played a key role in carrying out voter and civic education in the previous electoral cycles was defunct. CCEDU's operating license was not renewed and this paralysed her efforts of sensitizing the citizens about the entire electoral process and its benefits to expanding the democratic space. He urged FHRI and her membership to speak out and continue lobbying the government so that action can be taken to help the electorate in making informed electoral decisions. He noted that the decline in foreign aid has incapacitated many NGOs leading to their closure especially in cases where local philanthropy is still very low and more so in areas of public interest. He urged the sector to consider carrying out self-sustenance activities.

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FHRI CELEBRATES 33 YEARS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM DURING HER 25TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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Left: Dr. Josephine Ndagire, Chairperson, FHRI Board of Directors together with the past and current top leadership of FHRI welcoming the newest members to FHRI's membership during the Annual General Meeting held on 9/11/2024 at the Human Rights House, Nsambya.

Dr. Josephine Ndagire, the Chairperson, FHRI Board of Directors urged organisations to learn from each other to acquire different funding models to promote self-sustainability. She noted that the FHRI membership of over 1500 people across the country remains committed to promoting human rights. She however noted that there is need to diversify in our methods of work and membership recruitment. She particularly encouraged the youth to join the movement and noted that the time is now. The campaign 'bring a friend to the Foundation' should be a collective goal. "This movement is a solidarity movement that not only defends human rights, but looks out for and extends support to one another even in challenging times", she concluded.

In his remarks, Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, Executive Director of FHRI expressed his dismay that NGOs in Uganda are increasingly finding it difficult to deliver their services due to a hostile legal and fiscal environment. He noted that it is not only the shrinking civic space that has affected civil society but also lack of automatic tax exemptions to their locally generated resources like real property that defeats their efforts of serving the marginalised communities. He called upon the government to appreciate and reconsider the great role played by civil society organizations working in the human rights sub-sector for the benefit of all stakeholders who need these services.

He updated the membership on the new developments at FHRI that include the recent establishment of Bushenyi Legal Aid Project (F-BLAP) which has contributed to reducing pre-trial detention rates at Nyamushekera Prison by over 30%, through provision of legal aid to hundreds of victims and advocacy for criminal justice reform in Western Uganda. He said that under the campaign for the progressive abolition of the death penalty in Uganda, there have been recent successes including a parliamentary vote in favour of abolition, a reduction in death row prisoners from 417 in 2009 to 104 in 2024, and FHRI's election as Vice President of the World Coalition against the Death Penalty (WCADP) in June 2023. FHRI together with other local and international actors, have conducted research missions in the oil rich region. Mid-term assessment of the implementation of the UPR was also undertaken and made recommendations to the government of Uganda in assessing progress and identifying gaps. Under the civic empowerment unit, exceptional students from Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi and Bishop Stuart University whose studies majored in human rights related-fields were given Human Rights Awards.

The Executive Director noted that a dedicated team of approximately 60 staff including volunteers and interns together with the Board of Directors continue to play a pivotal role in the organization's success and this has been further strengthened by the international exchange programmes with experts from South Africa and Zimbabwe, under a two-year Norwegian Exchange Programme.

He noted that FHRI's work is made possible by the support from her key partners, who have been critical in enabling the organization to carry out her activities such as the European Union (Brussels), Legatum Foundation, World Coalition against the Death Penalty, Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (NOREC), CIVICS/BPB Germany and Federation of International Human Rights Defenders (FIDH) "Our partners together with our local and international stakeholders are a key part of our success. Their unwavering support and collaboration have helped us to implement transformative programmes that are creating a lasting change in Uganda's human rights landscape" said Dr. Sewanyana.

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FHRI CELEBRATES 33 YEARS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM DURING HER 25TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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As FHRI looked forward to celebrating 33 years on 31st December 2024, FHRI remains steadfast in her mission to empower individuals, promote justice, and create a more inclusive society for all Ugandans amidst the current human rights landscape.

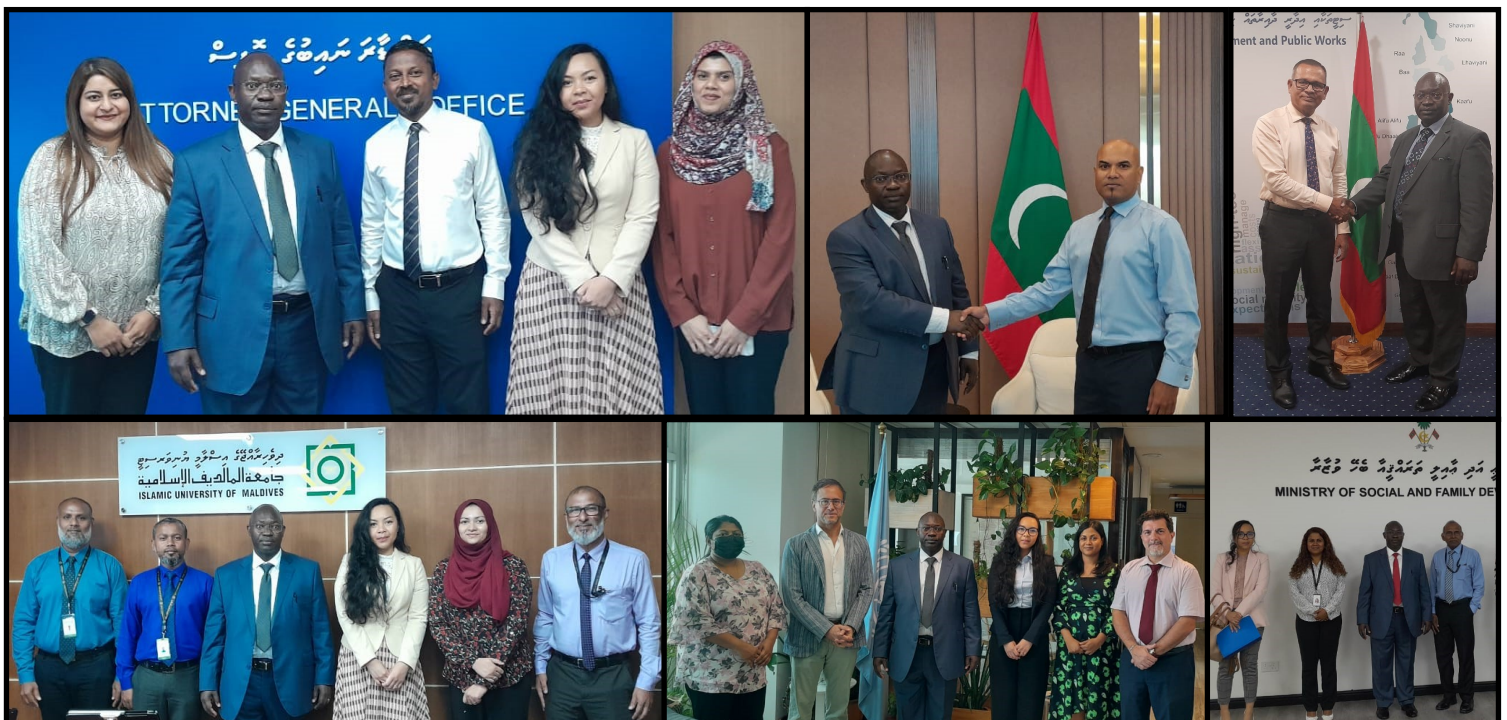
Some of FHRI's staff, at the 25th Annual General Meeting held on 9th November 2024, Human Rights House—Nsambya.



Group photograph of some of FHRI members who attended the 25th Annual General Meeting held on 9th November 2024 at the Human Rights House, Nsambya.

DR. LIVINGSTONE SEWANYANA IN MALDIVES

Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, former UN Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, held several meetings with various officers on his mission to Maldives from 12th to 21st March 2024 among whom were Heads of Multilateral agencies, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Minister of Higher Education; the Attorney General; Deputy Ministers of Finance; the UN Country Team; the Islamic University of Maldives; Minister of Economic Development and Trade; Minister of Cities, Local Government and Public Works; Minister of Finance and also held a press conference.



FHRI PAYS COURTESY CALL ON HON JUSTICE AMOS KWIZERA, RESIDENT JUDGE OF BUSHENYI



Hon Justice Amos Kwizera (3rd from left) the new Resident Judge of Bushenyi poses for a photo with FHRI team led by Dr Livingstone Sewanyana, Executive Director, FHRI (2nd from right), Ms Gorreth Ayebale, Project Manager, FHRI Bushenyi Legal Aid Project, (FLAB), (extreme right), Ms. Sheila Muwanga, Deputy Executive Director Programs, FHRI (3rd from right), Ms. Charmaine Ncube, NOREC Fellow (2nd from left) and Her Worship Arinaitwe Goretti, Registrar, Bushenyi Court on 23rd October 2024 at Bushenyi High Court, Bushenyi.

'We are very proud of FHRI's work in Greater Bushenyi. The organization is well known. The work is responding to the needs of the justice system.'

Hon Justice Amos Kwizera during the courtesy visit.

A courtesy visit conducted during the 3rd monitoring visit to the F-LAB, was an opportunity for the FHRI delegation led by the Executive Director, Dr Livingstone Sewanyana, to appraise the partnership between FHRI and the criminal justice actors in Bushenyi - in the course of implementing the 2 year project titled: *"Enhancing Criminal Justice Reform in Uganda: Promoting Alternative Punishment in Greater Bushenyi District (2024-2025)"*, supported by the Legatum Foundation. FHRI expressed gratitude for the support extended to the project staff by the Resident Judge during the plea bargain sessions, legal assistance to pre-trial detainees, High Court sessions and the district advocacy forums. In turn, Hon. Justice Kwizera, appreciated FHRI for the role played in assisting vulnerable inmates and for supporting the criminal justice actors in Greater Bushenyi. Discussions centred on case backlog, support to witnesses and civic engagement on legal procedures.

AT A GLANCE: FHRI AT BISHOP STUART UNIVERSITY (BSU) MBABARA



Dr Sewanyana Livingstone, Executive Director FHRI (right) and Ms. Charmaine Ncube, NOREC (left) participant handing over the Human Rights Award to Ms. Arinda Julian, best student in Bachelor of Arts in Ethics and Human Rights at the 20th Bishop Stuart University Graduation Ceremony, 25th October 2024.



FHRI team led by Dr Sewanyana poses for a photo with the BSU Human Rights Club. From right is Ms Sheila Muwanga, FHRI, Ms Israela Nsingwire BSU, Club (Secretary) Dr Livingstone Sewanyana, FHRI, Ms Alleluah Orishaba, BSU, (Chairperson of the club) Mr. Mugisha Robert, BSU and Ms Charmaine Ncube, NOREC Fellow, FHRI on 25th October 2024 at BSU, Mbarara.

FHRI PARTICIPATES IN THE MAIDEN NATIONAL COURT OPEN DAY, 2024



Standing on the left: Ms. Connie Numbi talking to the Uganda Police Officers during the maiden National Court Open Day held on 15th April 2024 at Kololo Independence Grounds.

On 15th April 2024, the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) joined the Judiciary in marking the National Court Open Day, a significant milestone in its commitment to a people-centred approach to justice. The event started with a procession from the Judiciary headquarters to Kololo Independence Grounds. The Chief Walker was the Principal Judge, Hon Justice Dr Flavian Zeija.

The Chief Justice (CJ) Alfonse Owiny Dollo, the Deputy Chief Justice Richard Buteera, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs Hon. Norbert Mao, Judicial Officers from the High Court, the Lower Bench, Senior Administrators and staff of the Judiciary, representatives from Civil Society Organisations, representatives from the criminal justice system, and members of the public among others graced the occasion.

RESEARCH DIVISION

Norwegian Exchange Project: 'Transforming the Justice Sector in East and Southern Africa through Exchange of legal technical experts' - (NOREC)



Left -Right: NOREC participants—Ms. Charmaine Ncube from AJJF and Ms. Priviledge Tsumbirani, from LRF on their first day of attachment to FHRI. They were at the offices of Uganda Prison Service, Bushenyi district —21st February 2024.



Left: Ms. Omega Kasirye, NOREC participant from FHRI at Rottenrow Criminal Court Harare after bail hearing for Namatai Kakwenza and 2 others that were arrested at the airport on their way to Victoria falls for the African Philanthropy conference, August 2024.



Left: Mr. Derrick Namakajjo, Legal Officer, FHRI being awarded by NOREC a certificate of preparatory training on 15th February 2024 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

FHRI ATTENDS THE NOREC PARTNER TRAINING, HELD AT THE INDABA HOTEL, SPA AND CONFERENCE CENTRE IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, 8TH - 10TH APRIL 2024

As part of a consortium comprising four organizations including: the African Judges and Jurists Forum (AJJF) in South Africa, International Commission of Jurists (ICJ-Kenya), Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) in Zimbabwe and the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) in Uganda, FHRI was part of the participants that attended the Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (NOREC) training for partners. Norec, <https://www.norec.no/en/about-norec/> is a competence centre for international cooperation. Through work exchanges, NOREC strengthens global partnerships and provides young people with international work experience. As part of this program, FHRI is currently hosting two NOREC participants from AJJF and LRF while the participants from FHRI are being hosted by LRF and AJJF.



The consortium members during the NOREC Partners Training, 8th April, 2024, at Indaba Hotel, Spa and Conference Centre in Johannesburg. **From right to left** is Mr Arnold Tsunga, (AJJF), Mr. Demas Kiprono, (ICJ Kenya), Ms. Sheila Muwanga, (FHRI), Mr. Itai Mafara, (AJJF), Ms. Sandra Muengwa, (LRF), Mr. Wallace Nderu, (ICJ Kenya), Ms. Florence Bumhira, (LRF), Dr Livingstone Sewanyana, (FHRI) and Mr. Martin Masiga, (AJJF).

FHRI was represented by Dr Livingstone Sewanyana, Executive Director, FHRI and Ms Sheila Muwanga, Deputy Executive Director, Programs. The training offered FHRI, and consortium partners an opportunity to meet representatives from various partner organizations and companies that are participating in the exchange program, share best practices, discuss dilemmas and challenges, and build networks for a future sharing of experiences. The training provided a more detailed introduction to the Norec partnership model, and covered program issues such as project management, monitoring, and reporting routines. Subjects related to diversity management, mentoring and communication were also included.

The training inspired FHRI and her consortium partners and offered new tools and insights that increased the chances of a successful exchange project within the Norec framework, and in line with NOREC principles and values. FHRI and consortium partners are implementing the first round of this exchange from February 2024 – February 2025.



(ICJ Kenya), Mr. Wallace Nderu, (ICJ Kenya). Standing from Left: Mr. Itai Mafara, (AJJF), Arnold Tsunga, (AJJF).

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The consortium members at the NOREC Partners Training on Monday 8th April, 2024, at Indaba Hotel, Spa and Conference Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa. Seated from left: Dr Livingstone Sewanyana (FHRI), Mr Martin Masiga, (AJJF), Ms Sheila Muwanga, (FHRI), and Mr. Demas Kiprono, (AJJF).

MY NOREC EXPERIENCE - Ms. CHARMAINE NCUBE

As I reflect on my time here in Kampala, Uganda, I'm struck by the unexpected joy and fulfilment that this experience has brought me. When I first embarked on this journey, I had no idea what to expect. Yet, three months later, I find myself immersed in a vibrant culture, surrounded by passionate individuals, and deeply engaged in meaningful human rights work that will enrich my legal career.

Being hosted by the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) has been nothing short of transformative. Their dedication to promoting and protecting human rights in Uganda is inspiring, and I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to their important mission. Through my work with FHRI, I have gained invaluable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing this country and honed skills which are invaluable to my legal career.

Furthermore, the invaluable support of the Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation has played a pivotal role in enriching this experience. Their steadfast dedication to nurturing professional cross-cultural exchange and collaboration has cultivated an environment conducive to profound learning and development. Through this programme, I have had the honour of collaborating with legal experts from varied backgrounds, each contributing their distinctive viewpoints and specialised knowledge to our discussions and projects.

But perhaps what has surprised me the most is the warmth and hospitality of the Ugandan people. From the bustling streets of Kampala to the serene beauty of the countryside, I have been welcomed with open arms wherever I go. Whether engaging in collaborative legal projects with colleagues from diverse backgrounds or establishing connections with organisations spanning corporate players, NGOs, or government institutions, I have felt a profound sense of welcome and belonging in the professional exchange arena. This early exposure to a wide spectrum of legal expertise has been immensely valuable, providing me with opportunities for growth and learning that I deeply appreciate at this early stage in my career.

Of course, this journey has not been without challenges. Navigating the complexities of a new culture and adjusting to life in a foreign country has tested my resilience and adaptability. Yet, it is precisely these challenges that have fueled my personal and professional growth, pushing me to step outside of my comfort zone and embrace the unknown.

I look ahead to the remaining months of my stay in Uganda, I am filled with excitement and anticipation for what lies ahead. There is still much to learn, much to experience, and much work to be done. But one thing is certain: my time here has already left an indelible mark on my legal career. It serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative power of stepping outside of one's comfort zone and embracing new experiences with an open mind and heart.

MS. PRIVILEGE TSEMBIRANI REFLECTION ON HER EXPERIENCE AT FHRI



Ms. Privilege Tumbirani at the Supreme Court of Uganda, Kampala attending the 7th Annual Plea-Bargaining Conference on 21st June 2024.

Being selected by my home organization, the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) to be a part of the East-South Legal exchange program has been like a dream come true. I am grateful for their confidence in me. This experience has broadened my horizons and has given me the platform to share and gain knowledge and skills in the legal practice. The extract below is a highlight of some of my accomplishments.

Over the past ten (10) months I have managed to develop criminal litigation skills from the work I have been doing attached to the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative Bushenyi-Legal Aid Project (F-BLAP), a pilot project that aims to advance criminal justice in Greater Bushenyi. As a human rights activist, who is very passionate about promoting human rights and access to justice, championing justice for marginalized groups under this project for inmates in prison and suspects at police has been fulfilling. Every person has a right to enjoy their human rights and receive criminal justice within the shortest period

Ms. PRIVILEGE TSUMBIRANI REFLECTION ON HER EXPERIENCE AT FHRI continued from Page 7

of time and being part of a team that has been advocating to reduce pre-trial detention, overcrowding in prisons and the lack of respect for the integrity of the offender has been life changing.

My advocacy skills have been sharpened through the prison and police outreaches that I have participated in, with the help of paralegals, we shared legal awareness on the rights of the incarcerated, criminal procedure, bail, plea bargain amongst others. I have also facilitated the training of Local Leaders and Social Workers (Prison Officers) and I have also actively participated in mediation sessions at police, court and locus visits. All of these activities have honed my communication skills which will greatly assist me in my community outreach work at my home organization.



Right: Ms. Privilege Tsumbirani attending to a prisoner during a Plea-bargaining session at Nyamushekera Prison, Bushenyi. on 6th June 2024.



This experience has also perfected my legal research and writing skills. I have worked hand in hand with the advocates at BLAP with their cases through research and drafting legal opinions, bail applications and submissions. From this experience, I was able to gain insights into the laws, legal structure and processes of Uganda's legal system. I was also able to appreciate the fact that as African countries we share a similar legal system but there are still unique aspects that we can share and learn from each other to make our African justice system exceptional.

I also had the privilege of attending the 7th Annual National Plea-Bargaining Conference at the Supreme Court of Uganda. This conference was graced by the Hon. Chief Justice, Deputy Chief Justice, Principal Judge, Judges, Magistrates, Prosecutors, Advocates, amongst other key legal stakeholders. It was also honored by the President and Vice President of Pepperdine University. From this great opportunity, I learnt more about plea-bargain concept through the practical and interactive session with the founders and seasoned senior learned colleagues in the legal profession. I got to appreciate how effective this pilot project had been in Uganda in reducing case back log and pretrial detention and how best it can improve the African legal systems.

Finally, beyond professional growth, this experience has granted me access to explore and appreciate Uganda, the Pearl of Africa. I have had a splendid time engaging with the people of Uganda, learning their culture, language and food. It has been joyful to meet and work with cheerful, hardworking and result oriented people. I am very grateful for the meaningful contacts and networks that I have made over this past year through this opportunity. It has been life changing indeed.

NOREC PARTNERS DISCUSS COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCES IN ENHANCING ACCESS TO JUSTICE



On 10th September 2024, member organizations in the NOREC Partnership met in Nairobi, Kenya. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the comparative experiences in enhancing access to justice .

In attendance were Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, Executive Director and Ms. Sheila Muwanga, Deputy Executive Director— Programmes from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) together with the other organizations that are members in the NOREC partnership.

NOREC partners who attended the NOREC meeting on 10th September 2024 held at Pride Inn, Plaza, Nairobi, Kenya.

LEGAL SERVICES DIVISION

FHRI A BEACON OF HOPE TO THE VULNERABLE



Standing: Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, the Executive Director together with the legal team at the Legal Services Division addressing the victims of Lubigi land evictions seeking legal support from FHRI at the Human Rights House on 15th August 2024.

By Awotunde Agnes, Legal Officer, FHRI.

As the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) proudly upholds its motto, **“Together we can make a difference”**, the organization’s Legal Service Division (LSD) has been a shining embodiment of this promise through her access to justice campaign. Access to justice is a fundamental human right, yet many individuals in Uganda face significant barriers in seeking legal recourse. FHRI’s provision of legal aid and pro bono services to the indigent and vulnerable, has been a beacon of hope for those who have lost faith in the legal system and there are several achievements to celebrate despite the various challenges. FHRI’s success story of 2024 in providing legal services is not only derived from the Kampala office at the Human Rights House, Nsambya but rather stretches to Kalangala, Wakiso and the Greater Bushenyi districts. LSD has impacted on many through promotion of justice and human rights regardless of race, gender, or religion.

The LSD handles Family, Civil, Commercial, Land, and Criminal matters through legal representation, promotion of peaceful co-existence in the community through sensitization and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). The Kampala offices at the time of this article, have reached out to 485 (240 M: 245 F) new clients. Civil cases formed bulk of the complaints registered (144), followed by Domestic (124), Land (95), Criminal (93) and Commercial (29) respectively.

A significant impact in reconciling families and promoting child welfare through mediation and counseling has been made through various interventions that have been used by LSD. Approximately 20 families have successfully reunited and have ensured that the children are raised in a stable and loving environment. Additionally, LSD has addressed cases of child custody and maintenance, prioritizing the best interests of the child.

The Legal Services Division has also been instrumental in securing justice for innocent individuals through the criminal justice system. The unit has successfully obtained court bail and bond for over 38 clients, ensuring that they are not unfairly detained, and conducted several reconciliations between parties. Furthermore, the unit has secured the grant of a Habeas Corpus application, protecting the rights of individuals who have been unlawfully detained. In April, FHRI intervened in high-stakes case involving incessant arrests and unlawful detention of a group of refugees. This intervention not only brought relief to the affected individuals but also sent a strong message about the importance of upholding the rights and dignity of all persons, regardless of their nationality or immigration status. Among the cases FHRI has handled is that of the evicted community from Lubigi wetland by National Environment Management Authority (NEMA).

Community awareness sessions in addition to mediations were conducted and obtained consent judgments, resulting in the successful resolution of disputes. LSD also recovered around Uganda Shillings 147, 111,000/=. Not less than 20 pieces of property in land-related matters have been recovered through interventions from the various LSD offices. Clients were also empowered with basic legal and human rights knowledge to self-representation and this has yielded positive outcomes for many where distance and legal fees were a challenge.

FHRI A BEACON OF HOPE TO THE VULNERABLE *Continued from page 9*

Working together with others through partnerships and collaborations has also been impactful in making a difference. As a member of the Legal Aid Service Providers Network (LASPNET), LSD participated in the Emergency Pre-Trial Response Programme, that secured court bail and bond for over 12 clients. Wakiso Magistrate's Court, and Kabalagala Police Station (Family Unit) were among the partners LSD worked with in providing free legal services to clients thereby reducing the case backlog at the court and police cells respectively.

Reaching out to over 480 walk-in clients across FHRI offices, LSD has made a significant impact, not only in providing access to justice for the indigent and vulnerable but has demonstrated its commitment to upholding human rights and promoting justice. FHRI remains dedicated to breaking down barriers to justice, empowering individuals to claim their rights, and promoting a more just and equitable society for all.



The Kalangala District Chain-linked Committee (DCC) after one of its regular meetings that discuss matters regarding the criminal justice sector. (Front row, 2nd left) is Mr. Deo Mpola Mpola, FHRI Paralegal.

Sensitisation of inmates at Mugoye Prison Head Quarters, Kalangala District. Mr. Deo Mpola Mpola, FHRI Paralegal was part of the team.



LAUNCH OF THE HIGH COURT CIRCUIT IN BUSHENYI



By. Privilege B Tsumbirani - NOREC Participant

On the 19th of March 2024, the Judiciary through the Honourable Justice Dr Flavian Zeija launched the High Court circuit in Bushenyi under the theme **'Enhancing Judicial Accountability and Access to Justice.'** All key stakeholders from the justice system and civil society including the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) were present to witness this great milestone.

Right is the F-BLAP team at the launch of the High Court Circuit in Bushenyi on 19th March, 2024.

Consistent with the theme of the launch, the High Court Circuit in Bushenyi will serve to ensure effective access to justice in Greater Bushenyi as litigants from districts of Bushenyi, Mitooma, Rubirizi, Sheema, Buhweju will no longer have to incur extra costs in travelling to Mbarara High court in order to get justice. Mbarara High Court has also been relieved of its heavy load of being the only high court in the region. In his speech Justice Zeija noted that this initiative stems from the judiciary's commitment to bringing courts and judicial officers closer to the people they serve and eliminate case backlog.

Of importance to note, is that at the launch, the Resident Judge of Greater Bushenyi in his speech invited Ms. Gorreth Ayebale, Project Manager and Senior Lawyer of FHRI –Bushenyi Legal Aid Project (F-BLAP) and her team to formally greet and introduce FHRI to the Principal Judge Honourable Justice Dr Flavian Zeija. He also acknowledged the excellent work that F-BLAP is doing under her project of **"Enhancing Criminal Justice Reform in Uganda: promoting Alternative punishments in Greater Bushenyi."** He went on to applaud Senior Counsel Gorreth Ayebale and her team for the great work that the organization is carrying out in the criminal justice sector of Greater Bushenyi and also particularly made reference to the Plea Bargaining session for the capital offences that the organization had initiated at the beginning of March 2024.

The official opening of the High Court circuit in Bushenyi is a great milestone that will not only enable judicial accountability and access to justice in the districts of Greater Bushenyi but will also enable FHRI to fulfill its objective of reducing pre-trial detention and decongestion in prisons by providing legal services to not only petty offenders in the Magistrate Courts but to a larger number of capital offenders before the new High Court.

PERSONAL LIBERTY IS NOT A CHOICE, IT IS AN INHERENT RIGHT



Standing: Mr. Sentumbwe Yasin, Legal Associate FHRI, representing the evicted community members of Lubigi during a court session at Makindye Chief Magistrates Court together with Ms. Samantha Lubulwa, Legal Associate FHRI (Front row- 2nd right).



2nd left: Mr. Sentumbwe Yasin, Legal Associate, FHRI together with the evicted community members of Lubigi after being granted court bail by Makindye Chief Magistrates Court on 9th Dec 2024.



The community members of Lubigi evicted by NEMA in one of the court sessions in Makindye Chief Magistrates Court 2024.

FHRI reassures the public that, the right to personal liberty is not by choice but an inherent one. The reassurance followed protracted court applications for release on bail of over twenty six (26), "Lubigi NEMA evictees", that were arrested and detained for allegedly returning to the prohibited zone - Lubigi.

Following the enforcement of an alleged restoration order to restore 'Lubigi wetland', the public witnessed massive eviction and demolition of homes, schools, medical facilities and other social amenities by National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). Families rendered homeless, many evictees returned to the alleged prohibited zone, Lubigi, in a bid to find a roof on their heads with temporary structures, where a tent was set up.

The subsequent return of the evictees in what is termed as a 'prohibited zone' triggered NEMA's appetite to impose its order, whereupon, the agency arrested and detained all persons alleged to have returned to "Lubigi Wetland". The illegal arrest and detention of suspects for a week at Lubigi Police Post under Nansana Police station that saw the suspects neither released on Police bond nor produced in court, gravely contravened the mandatory 48 hours' rule.

In a sad turn of events, the Court copied and pasted the Police script by further declining to hear a bail application on grounds that their defence lawyers Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) had refused to select who to apply as an individual but instead considered applying for bail for all suspects at once rather than in phases as the court had guided.

In a statement dated 8th December 2024, NEMA blatantly criticised FHRI as follows; **"Ms. Namuddu and others are being misled by their defence lawyers and politicians who are taking advantage of them for political capital"**, the statement read in part. *The statement can be accessed on this link: <https://x.com/nemaug/status/1865708219089261004/photo/2>*

On 9th December 2024, FHRI through lead Counsel Sentumbwe Yasin Munagomba and Ms. Samantha Lubulwa, FHRI reaffirmed its stand on the protection of the right to personal liberty as one that is not by choice but one of an inherent nature. In this effort FHRI legal team applied and secured a non-cash bail of Ug Shillings 2,000, 000 for the suspects, except two, who did not present sureties although court assured them to be released once they secure sureties.

The case was adjourned to 10th January 2025, and FHRI is committed to represent the defendants in this court case to its logical conclusion.



F-BLAP MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE GREATER BUSHENYI REGION



2nd right – Resident District Commissioner (RDC) Mitooma district Mr. Bazigatirawo Kibuuka Francis Amooti handing over certificates to the trained Local Council leaders in Mitooma on 24th April 2024



Above is a duly constituted Sheema Court Seating at Nyamushekyera Bushenyi Main prison during plea bargain session on 6th June 2024. The Court was presided over by (extreme right) H/W Paul Mujuni Principle Magistrate Grade 1, (2nd right) Ms. Gorreth Ayebale F-BLAP Project Manager for defence, (3rd right) Resident State Attorney Ms. Ayebare Gemma for prosecution, and Ms. Musika Mercy Sheema prison orderly.



Extreme right is Mr. Tamale Joash, FHRI Legal Officer, after representing the above 3 inmates at Bushenyi Magistrates Court. Four (4) of them had their cases dismissed for want of prosecution, two (2) reconciled and (1) granted Community Service. These were all non-custodial sentences contributing to prison decongestion.

The FHRI Bushenyi Legal Aid Project (F-BLAP) launched in October 2022 was extended for another two years with financial support from Legatum Foundation after a pilot phase that ended in December 2023. F-BLAP has deepened its engagement with the Criminal Justice Sector in pursuit of its objective of enhancing criminal justice reform in Uganda through promotion of alternative punishment in Bushenyi District.

The F-BLAP has continued to use the three approaches in fulfilling the objective that include prevention, legal representation and advocacy.

Under the prevention approach, F-BLAP conducted a two-day capacity building training on 23rd and 24th April, 2024 at Mitooma District Head quarters for Local Council I and III leaders of Mitooma District to enhance the performance of the Local Council (LC) leaders in the administration of justice. The objective of the training was to empower LC Courts so that cases within the jurisdiction of Local Council Courts are diverted from the formal justice system. The facilitation was done by FHRI Staff together with resource persons from Uganda Police Force, Judiciary and the Community Service Offices.

While this approach is being considered, there are some challenges that were highlighted at an institutional and logistical level especially with LC. I such as; lack of proper office space, inadequate remuneration, poor filing systems, and lack of translation of the reference materials into the local language among others.

F-BLAP continued with legal representation under frequent court appearance and plea bargain sessions for both capital and petty cases. Two plea bargain sessions (one in March 2024) targeting capital cases and (another in June 2024) targeting petty cases within Greater Bushenyi were conducted. A total of 760 cases were concluded as a result of the intervention. Of the inmates supported through plea bargain, 186 cases have been resolved including High Court cases and magistrates' court cases. Some of the offenders were given custodial sentences, while others were given community service and a few sentenced to the period spent on remand.

F-BLAP MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE GREATER BUSHENYI REGION *continued from page 12.*

During the plea bargain camp, five (5) Magistrate courts from; Bushenyi (2), Sheema /Kagango (1) Rubirizi (1) and Mitooma (1) all converged at Nyamushyekera Bushenyi main prison to confirm sentences. The exercise greatly contributed to the reduction of the pre-trial population and court case backlog.

Besides the above, F-BLAP has carried out different activities that have supported clients through frequent court appearance, helping them secure bond, reconciliation and dismissal of cases for lack of merit and a total of 209 suspects have benefited from this activity. The support given was at the High Court, before the Magistrates Court where custodial sentences were given, case dismissal for want of prosecution, reconciliation, community service granted, bail granted, acquittals considered, fines given, cautions, court bonds and unconditional discharge. F-BLAP has also participated in the monitoring of 73 community service orders. Legal support to walk-in clients with cases of criminal nature was also provided to 9 cases where some were resolved using alternative dispute resolution methods. All these interventions have been key in enabling the decongestion of the prison population. F-BLAP has also offered free legal representation through frequent court appearance and a total of 462 inmates have benefitted.

FHRI has not only visited courts but also conducted routine monitoring of police and prisons within Greater Bushenyi to ensure adherence to Justice Law and Order sector (JLOS) standards by JLOs institutions. As a result of the interventions: FHRI has supported 178 (162M, 16F) suspects through routine monitoring of police and courts. Of those supported, 132 were supported at police stations and 46 at court during court users' sessions. 107 suspects were granted police bond, 32 reconciled, 14 dismissed for want of prosecution, 6 granted bail, 6 given custodial sentences, 6 closed for lack of merit, 4 granted community service, 2 cautioned, 1 given court bond and 1 issued sentence.

FHRI trained 5 social workers operating in the Uganda Prisons in Greater Bushenyi with basic legal knowledge to enable them support inmates in accessing justice in the absence of FHRI, and to update FHRI on the regular prison situation/capacity where necessary.

Advocacy is another strategy used to promote adherence to constitutional and human rights standards within the JLOS in Greater Bushenyi. F-BLAP convened two one-day advocacy forums on 25th April 2024 at Rubirizi RDC's Board room and on 23rd September 2024 at Kagango, Grade I Magistrates Court in Sheema District to sensitize leaders on legal safeguards.

The major advocacy issues, approaches and procedures noted during the forum include; sensitizing the communities and Local Council leaders about procedural guarantees, continuous lobbying for the construction of a remand home, lobbying for construction of day care centre for babies in prison, collaboration with Community Development Officers to monitor community service orders, involvement of faith based organizations in dispute resolutions.



Above is the Advocacy Forum meeting at Rubirizi RDC's Board room. In attendance was Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, the Executive Director of FHRI, RDCs of greater Bushenyi Districts; Magistrate of the greater Bushenyi, Magistrates Grade 1 Court, Greater Bushenyi, District Police and Prison commanders in April, 2024.



Above are members who attended the Resident City Commissioner's meeting on 13th June 2024 including the Resident Judge - Bushenyi High Court Hon. Justice Kwizera Amos, H/W Arinaitwe Gorreti the Deputy Registrar Bushenyi High Court, H/W Toloko Simon Chief Magistrate Bushenyi, Ms. Gorreth Ayebale, Project Manager F-BLAP, all Magistrates Grade 1 officers within the greater Bushenyi and Advocates in private practice.

THE DEATH PENALTY CAMPAIGN

“THE DEATH PENALTY PROTECTS NO ONE: ABOLISH IT NOW”



Children of St. Egidio choir presented a song emphasizing that death penalty protects no one: abolish it now during the commemoration event on 10th October 2024, at the Human Rights House – Nsambya.



Mr. Sim Katende, a representative of Katende, Ssempebwa and Company Advocates delivers a keynote speech to the delegates who attended the 22nd commemoration event of the World Day against the Death Penalty at the Human Rights House, Nsambya on 10th October 2024.

On 10th October 2024, the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) together with the Uganda Coalition against the Death Penalty (UCADP) joined the rest of the world to commemorate the 22nd World Day against the Death Penalty at the Human Rights House, Nsambya. Under the theme **Security and the Death Penalty**, the event took on the slogan **“The Death Penalty Protects no One: Abolish it Now”** which was localised to Luganda: **Akalabba Tekatariza Muntu Yenna: Akalabba kadibizibwe.**

Participants and more especially law students were able to learn from the Keynote Speaker who was part of the legal team that argued *Susan Kigula and others Vs the Attorney General* case. In his speech, Mr. Sim Katende who represented Mr. John Katende who led the Katende, Ssempebwa & Co. Advocates shared his experience of arguing the Susan Kigula death penalty case. He noted that this was a unique case because of its context where all death row inmates collectively challenged the constitutionality of the death sentence. In his observation, the public opinion seems to be gradually shifting in favour of abolishing the death penalty and therefore called upon the Parliament of Uganda to do what it takes to abolish it.

Ms. Karolina Andrzejewska, from the European Union Delegation to Uganda re-echoed the statement on the abolition of the death penalty i.e. it is a relic of the past. Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, Executive Director of FHRI argued that the continued retention of the death penalty is not only ineffective in preventing crime but also goes against the global trend of death penalty abolition.

The event attracted 204 participants (97 Female, 107 Male). Among the delegates present were representatives from: Uganda Prisons Service led by Ms. Agnes Rebecca Gabu, Assistant Commissioner; Uganda Police Force; European Union Delegation to Uganda led by Ms. Karolina Andrzejewska, Dr. Brian Kalenge, Dean School of Law & Management Sciences, King Ceasor University; members of civil society organisations including Wells of Hope, Scope Foundation – Uganda, Sant'Egidio Uganda; Universities such as Pepperdine University, Bugema University, Islamic University in Uganda and Kyambogo University; children; government institutions; media personnel; security agencies; former death row inmates and advocates.



Group Photo of the participants during the 22nd Commemoration of the World Day against the death penalty, 10th October 2024 – Human Rights House, Nsambya.

STUDENTS OF TROPICAL HIGH SCHOOL EMPOWERED WITH HUMAN RIGHTS KNOWLEDGE



L-R: Ms. Numbi Connie and Ms. Nakimera Catherine listen to the students of Tropical High School during the training on human rights and the death penalty, on 8th October 2024, Nsambya.

Standing: Ms. Numbi Connie Samantha training the students on human rights and death penalty at Tropical High School, Nsambya on 8th October 2024.

On 8th October 2024, a human rights training was conducted at Tropical High School. The training sought to empower the youth with human rights knowledge and to introduce the campaign for the abolition of the death penalty. 89 students (42 male, 47 female) participated in the training. After the training, a movie **Sabrina's - Near Death Experience** was shown and students were able to ask questions about the death penalty.

Students requested for guidance on how to advocate for the rights of others especially those in prison and those sentenced to death. 5 students were enthusiastic and requested for mentorship, this has led to talks with the school administration to create a human rights club in the school.

SOLIDARITY VISIT TO LUZIRA PRISON MALE AND FEMALE CONDEMNED SECTION



2nd right: Ms. Sheila Muwanga – Deputy Executive Director—Programs, together with **(Extreme right)** Ms. Catherine Nakimera – FHRI team joins the Uganda Prisons Service team to eat lunch with the prisoners on death row during the Solidarity Visit at Luzira Maximum Prison – Condemned section on 16th October 2024.

FHRI team with the Uganda Prisons staff at Luzira Upper Prison during the Solidarity Visit to the male condemned prisoners section on 16th October 2024.

Under the theme: 'The Death Penalty Protects No One: Abolish it Now', a Solidarity visit to Luzira Upper Prison – (male and female condemned section) was conducted on 16th and 28th October 2024. FHRI was represented by Ms. Sheila Muwanga – Deputy Executive Director - Programs, Ms. Numbi Connie – Manager Campaign for the abolition of the death penalty, and Ms. Catherine Nakimera.

Male prisoners on death row were able to present their message against the death penalty through songs, and skits. A special meal was prepared for the male prisoners while items such as milk, cooking oil, sugar, soap, and pocket money were given to the female prisoners in commemoration of the World Day against the Death Penalty.

NEARLY FOURTEEN YEARS OF SERVING A BLIND CONVICTION AND SENTENCE IN PRISON

Under the stewardship of Ms. Numbi Connie Samantha, the Manager Death Penalty Project and Mr. Sentumbwe Yasin Munagomba, Legal Associate, the Right to Life Unit conducted several routine prison visits to the Prisons headquarters, Luzira Maximum Security Prison and Female Prison, Luzira .

Besides the overcrowding and poor living conditions of prisoners, missing files also hindered convicts to pursue their appeal in a timely manner . For instance, a female death row inmate had not been able to challenge her conviction and sentence because of her missing file since her conviction and sentence to death in 2011.

NEARLY FOURTEEN YEARS OF SERVING A BLIND CONVICTION AND SENTENCE IN PRISON



Right: Mr. Sentumbwe Yasin Munagomba Legal Associate FHRI together with two of the children of Molly Tumuheki, a death row convict at the High Court of Uganda, Fort Portal following pre-appeal hearing on the 20th August 2024.



R-L: Lead Counsel Mr. Sentumbwe Yasin Munagomba—FHRI, Mr. Freddie Humphreys, Ms. Marianne Alton (Evolve-Foundation) and Mr. Mwesigye Ephraim after the first physical strategic Meeting in Kampala, Uganda on 24th January 2024.

Convicted and sentenced to suffer death in 2011, over a charge of murder, there were two convicts, male and female that would neither trace their Trial Court's file nor challenge the conviction and sentence until after nearly fourteen (14) years of serving a blind conviction and sentence. In FHRI's efforts, prioritisation of this convicts' case was seen through continuous engagements that begun in 2022 and saw a window of hope in December 2024, when the Trial Court's file was discovered.

The discovery of the Trial Court's file attracted the attention and collaboration of other humanitarian organisations such as Evolve-Foundation for International Assistance which committed resources and legal representation to the male death row convict in the prosecution of the appeal.

With lead Counsel Mr. Sentumbwe Yasin Munagomba, Legal Associate, FHRI provided legal representation to a one Tumuheki Molly, through research, drafting and filing of court documents and Court legal appearances, while on the other hand a one Boniface Kapinda, received legal representation from Evolve-Foundation for International Assistance, through Counsel Ms. Julian Nyakairu. The hearing of their appeal was held on 14th October 2024.

FHRI's timely intervention has not only benefited Tumuheki Molly and Boniface Kapinda, who were able to find their Trial Court file to challenge their conviction and sentence but also exposed the danger, the convict goes through.

With the convicts' return to court, after nearly a decade and half, Molly, like her children was happy. The process of collecting important information that was missing from Molly's file brought her family together. They appreciated the support which FHRI provided that enabled her to access justice.

Hinged on fundamental principles of an absolute right to a fair hearing, the pending judgement in the duos' appeal will not only reshape the nature of our criminal proceedings but if considered will also reaffirm the regional and international accepted criminal law jurisprudence.

INTERNSHIP

ONE-DAY TRAINING ON 'OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE' CONDUCTED FOR FHRI INTERNS

On 20th May 2024, NOREC participants Ms. Charmaine Ncube from South Africa and Ms. Priviledge Tsumbirani from Zimbabwe held a training session on 'Office and Professional Etiquette' for the 6 law interns that were attached to FHRI. The training begun with brief introductions from both the participants and the facilitators. The facilitators held a pre-survey to assess the extent of knowledge of professional etiquette that the participants already had.

A comprehensive interactive session was held to explore the fundamental principles of etiquette in a professional setting. The facilitators delivered a detailed presentation, addressing key aspects including punctuality, appropriate salutations, adherence to dress codes, dining etiquette, respectful conduct in shared work environments, and fostering a positive workplace atmosphere.

Following the presentation, participants engaged in an open dialogue to reflect on the rules and attributes underscored during the session. This discourse fostered an interactive examination of these attributes, allowing for deeper comprehension and mutual exchange of insights among attendees.

Subsequently, participants actively participated in role-playing scenarios, simulating client consultations and workplace conflicts. These practical exercises provided an opportunity for application and refinement of the etiquette principles discussed earlier. The session culminated in a robust question and answer segment, wherein participants had the opportunity to seek clarification and further clarify concepts discussed throughout the training. This interactive exchange served to reinforce understanding and solidify key takeaways from the session. In conclusion, the session served as a comprehensive platform for cultivating a culture of professionalism and mutual respect within the workplace, equipping participants with essential tools to navigate various interpersonal dynamics effectively.

CIVIC EDUCATION NETWORK FOR EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (CENESA)



CENESA AT THE NECE FESTIVAL 2024 IN PARTNERSHIP WITH REDENEC

The European Festival of civic education: Borders, Tirana, Albania, 14th - 17th November 2024.

Yet again, the Civic Education Network for Eastern and Southern Africa (CENESA) together with her new partner, the Brazil's National Network for Civic Education (RedeNEC), was represented at the NECE festival 2024 in Tirana. NECE which stands for Networking European Civic Education (www.nece.eu) has long been a familiar platform and annual conference for civic educators to connect, learn and grow. This time round, the NECE festival 2024 explored the various manifestations and meanings of Borders and what civic educators make of them. The elements of the festival included: Cubes with panels, pitches, world café sessions, side events, discoveries, interviews and celebrations.

CENESA AND REDENEC PARTICIPATED IN CUBE 1: CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREEN LITERACY.



CENESA and Brazilian Civic Education Network at a joint panel organized by Sister Network NECE in Albania, 15th November 2024



2nd Left: Mr. Cyrus Nkusi Munyaburanga (standing in black coat) CENESA member from Governance for Africa (GFA) in Albania, 15th November 2024.

Through a panel discussion titled: 'Green literacy in Brazil and Eastern & Southern Africa: Civic education as a climate justice tool,' this insightful CUBE session featured members of CENESA and the RedeNEC. The panel explored how civic education can drive climate justice, empowering communities across the Global South to tackle environmental challenges. The speakers were: Cyrus Nkusi Munyaburanga (Rwanda), CENESA member, from Governance for Africa (GFA), Sheila Muwanga (Uganda), CENESA member and host from Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), a young University Student from Uganda and member of CENESA, Simon Peter Luyima, João Tavares, co-founder of the Rede Nacional de Educação Cidadã, and Alice Pataxó an indigenous leader and ambassador for World Wildlife Fund Brazil who has represented Brazil at various Conference of the Parties (COP).

Using the lens of green literacy, the speakers shared perspectives on environmental education, indigenous knowledge, and youth engagement, highlighting the powerful role of civic participation in fostering climate resilience. Drawing on experiences from Brazil and Africa, the session sparked discussions on cross-border collaboration and the global push for climate justice.

FHRI PARTICIPATES IN THE MAIDEN NATIONAL COURT OPEN DAY, 2024 *Continued from Page 5*

The aim of the National Court Open Day is to promote transparency and accessibility in judicial processes with an understanding that *"Judicial power is derived from the people and shall be exercised by the courts established under this Constitution in the name of the people and in conformity with the law and the values, norms and aspirations of the people."* It is also intended to strengthen accountability, scale up stakeholder engagement, sensitise court users, and obtain feedback on court services provided.

In his remarks, the CJ, stated, that the National Court Open Day is an opportunity given by the Judiciary to the public to be appraised and to point out areas where improvement is needed. On the other hand, the judiciary is also given a chance to give accountability, listen to people's concerns, complaints and challenges that the public faces in accessing justice. He noted that the entire range of judicial officers from top to bottom were available and ready to interface with the public.

Hon. Norbert Mao, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, applauded the CJ and the Judiciary for their boldness and braveness to organise the National Open Court Day; a best practice benchmarked from Denmark. He highlighted the importance of this activity; as one that bridges the gap between courts and the public. He cautioned against interference with the judiciary's independence and urged the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) to uphold the integrity of the Judiciary.

The event was marked with activities that included public display and public education on court processes, as well as interactions with various law and order institutions like the Uganda Police, the Office of the Directorate of Public Prosecutions and the Uganda Prisons Service. Also present were exhibition tents from each department and division of Uganda's judiciary as well as stakeholders that included Foundation for Human Rights Initiative. At the same event, Ms. Connie Numbi, the Manager Death Penalty Project, FHRI also spoke about the campaign for the progressive abolition of the death penalty in Uganda.

FHRI's stall received visitors ranging from students, police personnel, Civil Society Organisations, friends and members of FHRI, Uganda Coalition Against the Death Penalty as well as members of the general public.

'OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE' TRAINING IN PICTURES *continued from Page 16*



Top left: Ms. Privilege Tsumbirani NOREC participant from Legal Resources Foundation (LRF), Zimbabwe conducting a one day training for interns.



Bottom right: Ms. Charmaine Ncube from Africa Judges and Jurists Forum (AJJF), South Africa conducting a one day training for interns.

Group Photos: FHRI Interns who attended the one day training session on 'Office and Professional Etiquette' on 20th May 2024 at the Human Rights House, Nsambya.



F-BLAP MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE GREATER BUSHENYI REGION *Continued from page 13.*

FHRI participated in the Resident City Commissioner's meeting held on 13th June 2024 at Bushenyi High Court and the District Chain-linked Committee meeting held on the 24th June 2024 at Rubirizi Magistrates court. In both meetings the impact created by F-BLAP in the reduction of pre-trial prison population, and court case backlog was recognized.

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