



FHRI NEWSLETTER

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE

FHRI'S 22ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD

At 10.30am on 15th August 2020, the Hon. Secretary to the Board of Directors, Ms. Bernadette N. Bakkidde called the 22nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) to order. It was the first of its kind, with both physical and online attendance owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the FHRI members present were; Trustees, Working Group and Board of Directors as well as the Auditors and members of the Secretariat. BBS Terefayina aired live the AGM proceedings.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Rosseti Nabbumba Nayenga, Chairperson, Board of Directors extended her appreciation to members present for creating time for the AGM physically and virtually amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting registered an attendance of over 250 members with



Members of FHRI Board of Directors at the 22nd Annual General Meeting that took place at the Human Rights House on 15th August 2020 receive Audit Report 2019.

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ACCESS TO COUNSEL: A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH



Members of the Uganda Coalition Against the Death Penalty plant a tree during the 18th World Day Against the Death Penalty in Uganda at the Human Rights House on 10th October 2020.

Without access to effective legal representation during arrest, detention, trial and post-trial, due process cannot be guaranteed. In a capital case, the consequences that can arise from lack of effective legal representation can be nothing less than the difference between life and death.

On 10th October 2020, the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) joined the world

community to commemorate the World Day Against the Death Penalty under the theme: Access to Counsel: A matter of Life or Death. The climax of the 18th World Day Against the Death Penalty in Uganda events took place at the Human Rights House where several delegates met.

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MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, CHAMPIONS OF THE 11TH INTER-UNIVERSITY HUMAN RIGHTS COMPETITION

On 17th and 18th September 2020, the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) organised the 11th Inter-University Human Rights Competition under the theme: **access to a counsel: a matter of life or death**. The student competitions were held at Mountains of the Moon University in Fort Portal. The event brought together 12 Universities namely: Uganda Martyrs University—Nkozi, Mountains of the Moon University, Uganda Pentecostal University, Busitema University, Makerere University, Kyambogo University, Islamic University in Uganda, Cavendish University, Kampala International University, Nkumba University and Gulu University.

Prof. Edward Rugumayo the Chancellor of Mountains of the Moon University who was the guest of honour lauded FHRI's unique programmes that target the youth. He noted that such events are important for equipping students with current affairs and improving their research skills.

Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana the Executive Director of FHRI noted that the event comes at a critical time

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FHRI'S 22ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD *continued from page 1.*

220 online and 28 in-person. Ms. Nabbumba is also the District Governor (DG) of the Rotary District 9211 (Tanzania & Uganda), the first female Ugandan to become the DG for District 9211 in the 60 years of Rotary in Uganda.

She assured members that despite the challenges being faced by FHRI, the sector and the entire world, FHRI has remained a formidable brand and fit for the purpose for which it was established 28 years ago. She noted that with support from FHRI's invaluable partners and friends, a lot was achieved under the one year of leadership of the 10th Board of Directors and the Management of FHRI. "Even with the limited resources, the Board is proud of the organisation's achievements", she said. Key among the highlights were: keeping the membership vibrant, amidst the social, economic and political challenges; keeping the FHRI field offices in Kalangala and Wakiso districts operational; adapting new work methods amidst the COVID-19 pandemic; the continued efforts to promote awareness and observation of rights by speaking out strongly and openly on pressing human rights issues. In other milestones, the Five Year Strategic Plan program continues to run under the key areas: *My Rights, My Power; Access to Justice; Rights and Rule of Law; Freedom from Pre-trial detention and the Campaign Against the Death Penalty in Uganda.*

The Executive Director (ED) and UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order, Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had affected the quality of life of the majority of the population, more especially the urban poor. He said that the areas that were severely affected include; access to justice,

health, education, freedom to worship, and enjoyment of social services. He decried the increased poverty levels which have mostly affected children, youth and the elderly. He regretted that the electoral process was adversely affected as candidates for elective positions had to meet "scientific" requirements, seen by many as restrictive, burdensome and overly costly to observe.

He informed members that FHRI would execute her human rights mandate mindful of those exceptional circumstances and that significant energy would be devoted to human rights advocacy, assisting clients who would report mistreatment by security forces, more particularly the police and Local Defence Units (LDUs).

Dr. Sewanyana thanked the partners that have supported FHRI during her 28 year existence. These include DIGNITY (Danish Institute Against Torture), National Endowment for Democracy (NED), World Coalition Against the Death Penalty/European Union, OXFAM, HannsSeidal Foundation (HSF), Federation of International Human Rights Defenders (FIDH), Defend Defenders and Dan Church Aid among many others. He recognised the members, staff and friends of FHRI for their relentless support towards FHRI's activities.

Special mention was made of the tree that was planted in the Human Rights House gardens by Her Royal Highness Princess Marie, who is also the Protector of Dan Church Aid when she visited Uganda in March 2020. In conclusion he expressed his concern on the growing feeling of hopelessness due to the uncertainty brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. He assured members that FHRI shall cut her coat according to her cloth and will no doubt, continue to make her contribution.

Mr. Wycliffe Birungi one of FHRI's Trustees urged members to always participate in FHRI programmes whenever approached. He noted that these are platforms that easily help them to not

only get feedback and updates but also monitor the performance of the organization.

Mr. Ndebese Mwambutsya, a member, thanked the Executive Director and the secretariat for sustaining the institution especially in this era of donor fatigue. He noted that if it was not for organisations like FHRI to keep the state in check, a lot of things would have gone wrong. On the other hand he felt that new methods of work like going to the grassroots should be devised in fulfilling FHRI's mandate and reduce on the boardroom and workshop approaches. He said human rights awareness should be deepened thereby strengthening the human rights movement and eventually neutralise the excesses of the state and its coercive machinery. He said this was evidenced during the total lockdown particularly when Local Defence Units misapplied the MoH directives and interfered with the citizens' rights. He called upon FHRI to follow up on that matter. Mr. Ndebese also commented on the statements made by the Head of State during the lockdown. He was not comfortable with some of his proposed penalties which he felt were too harsh to those who failed to adhere to the MoH guidelines.

In her closing remarks, the Chairperson also noted that conducting hybrid or online meetings was cost friendly as opposed to full board physical meetings. As a parting shot, she urged all members to stay focused but also follow the MoH guidelines to stay healthy and safe as we cope with the COVID-19 challenges.

FHRI is a membership organization with over 1400 members spread across the country.

DR. SEWANYANA'S TENURE AS UN INDEPENDENT EXPERT RENEWED

The mandate of Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana as the UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order, has been renewed for the second term. Dr. Sewanyana was first appointed to this position by the United Nations Human Rights Council in March 2018, and he took up his mandate on 1st May 2018. As the UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order, he is charged with ensuring that all rights are promoted and protected in an environment that gives due recognition to issues of participation, inclusion and transparency. Dr. Sewanyana has collaborated with a broad cross-section of stakeholders to create a better understanding as well as identify possible obstacles to the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order. During his first term, he made several recommendations to the Human Rights Council on possible actions in that regard in his annual reports to the Council and the UN General Assembly.

Dr. Sewanyana also identified best practices, raised gender-sensitive awareness at different international platforms, engaged with state actors to foster global understanding of ideas in respect to the promotion and protection of a democratic and equitable international order.

In September and October 2018, he presented his first report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/39/47) and to the General Assembly (A/73/158), in which he outlined his vision and priorities. His focus in the three years (2018–2020) was on;

- The promotion of democracy being more realisable in practice than in theory through engaging the state and relevant stakeholders.

DR. SEWANYANA'S TENURE AS UN INDEPENDENT EXPERT RENEWED *continued from page 2*

- Lobby for public participation and people centred institutions to be more responsive and ensure citizens are, included in decision-making enabling them to influence and share control over development initiatives and make informed choices on the utilisation of resources that affect their lives.
- Engagement of states and other stakeholders on good practices that demonstrate effective private-public partnership, the enforcement of labour rights and environmental protection, as well as the commitment of businesses to non-discrimination and other rights-respecting practices.
- The protection of civil society organisations to ensure that states are more transparent, more accountable and more responsive to their own citizens.
- Identifying the dangers faced by anti-corruption campaigners, as well as other human rights defenders working in the field of good governance.
- Advancing citizen participation among inter-governmental, multi-sectoral and private groupings, such as the Group of Seven (G7), the Group of 20 (G20), the Group of 77 (G77), the World Economic Forum, the World Social Forum, and the Community of Democracies, applying the principles of transparency, participation and accountability to strengthen their contributions to democratic governance.
- Assessing how the international community could better respond to these world economic challenges in a way that promotes a world order that is more democratic and equitable.
- And finally, advocacy for youth inclusion that has been severely underrepresented in national and international governing bodies, and whose space in multilateral settings is particularly limited.

In light of his mandate, Dr. Sewanyana assessed whether countries are democratic and promote equity in the execution of their duties and whether or not there is improvement at country level. He made three presentations to the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly and also visited several countries in the first three years of his mandate.

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY



The Independent Expert presenting his third thematic report to the UN General Assembly on 19th October 2020

The Independent Expert presented his third thematic report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/45/28) and the General Assembly (A/75/206) on 21st September and 19th October 2020 respectively. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, he participated on-line in the two interactive dialogues.

The Independent Expert decided to focus on the **interplay between economic policies and safeguards of international financial policies (IFIs) and good governance at the local level**. The IFIs referred to in this report are the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Through the various policies they pursue and the safeguards they have put in place to manage the related impacts and risks associated with investment lending, **IFIs have a direct influence on how good governance is realized at the local**

level, and ultimately on the enjoyment of a democratic and equitable international order.

For the purposes of this report, and owing to the word limit, the expert looked at the following key issues, which relate to some of the thematic priorities laid down in his vision report (A/HRC/39/47):

- 1) **Stakeholder engagement and issues of public participation, transparency and reprisals;**
- 2) **State responsiveness to the needs of the population and retrogressive measures; and**
- 3) **The fight against corruption.**

The issue of accountability is mainstreamed throughout the report. He looks mainly through the prism of State responsibility in upholding good governance and human rights. This report is not meant to be an exhaustive study of the present topic, but rather an overview of some of the main issues at stake, which could pave the way for further reflection.

In the report, the Independent Expert stresses that **IFIs must systematically take all the measures necessary to ensure that their activities and the projects that they support do not lead to human rights violations, including those committed by clients, whether in the public or private sector. They must similarly use their substantial leverage to ensure that those clients respect human rights and the principle of good governance.**

While IFIs should always aspire to be actors of positive change on the ground, **it is first and foremost the responsibility of States, in particular in their capacity as clients of IFIs, to ensure good governance and respect for human rights on the ground. This responsibility starts with ensuring a safe environment that is conducive to the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms, and pursuing accountability.**

Crucially, **respect for human rights, good governance and the interests of local communities must be at the very heart of what drives sustainable development.** This requirement is all the more important in the context of the current COVID-19 Pandemic, which has exacerbated several of the challenges identified in the report and increased the vulnerability of groups at risk.

The Independent Expert makes a series of recommendations addressed to various stakeholders, i.e. IFIs, member States, and local communities and civil society.

Read the report: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IntOrder/Pages/interplayreports.aspx>

A VOICE FOR GLOBAL CITIZENS: A UN WORLD CITIZENS' INITIATIVE

The coronavirus pandemic, climate change and many other challenges underline the fact that all people on this planet are connected to each other. As world citizens we are all in the same boat but we have no say at the United Nations (UN) as the most important arena of global politics. For instance, the Security Council decides on matters of international peace and security and the General Assembly makes recommendations, launches treaty negotiations or is engaged in international agenda-setting.

As it is, the UN is an exclusive club of appointed government diplomats. The UN's democratic deficit has been complained about for decades. While the UN has made some effort to include civil society organizations and other major groups in some of its deliberations, there are no means for ordinary citizens to participate.

Because of this glaring gap, the idea of a UN World Citizens' Initiative (UNWCI) was sought at the United Nations level under the name "We the Peoples" in that if a certain number of global citizens endorses a citizen-launched initiative, UN bodies such as the General Assembly or the Security Council have to put the item on their agenda and give representatives of the initiative the floor to make their case. In terms of the General Assembly, this could be done during the annual general debate while Heads of State and Government are present.

The initiative promoted by Democracy International, together with Democracy without Borders and CIVICUS will allow global citizens to have more impact in a world with growing dilemmas that require global cooperation of both states and citizens alike. It will help create a citizen-based global political sphere.

Some countries have instruments that allow citizens to provide input for consideration of the executive or legislative branch of government. In some regions, like Europe, under the European Union there is the official instrument of a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) which gives citizens the power to submit a legislative proposal to the European Commission. In principle, the ECI enables everyday citizens to identify a problem, propose a solution and submit their proposal, based on the support of one million EU citizens, to the European Commission for review. The ECI represents the first transnational tool of participatory democracy in the world that can be used as a learning platform.

According to Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, UN Independent Expert, in his reflection on the WCI he said that he proudly associates with A UN World Citizens' Initiative and a UN World Parliamentary Assembly that represents innovative mechanisms for citizen involvement in global affairs. This he said during a webinar on Modern Direct Democracy on 22nd September 2020.

Of course, the level of support that the WCI receives from members states will ultimately determine its fate. Some States have already indicated their interest to discuss this new proposal. Feedback at the Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy in Taiwan on 3rd October, 2019 was also almost unanimously positive.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR PAYS COURTESY CALL ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE



Front row, centre: H.E Jules-Armand Aniambossou, the French Ambassador to Uganda together with the staff of Foundation for Human Rights Initiative and DefendDefenders at the Human Rights House on 29th October 2020.

On 29th October 2020, H.E Jules-Armand Aniambossou, the French Ambassador to Uganda, paid a courtesy call on the Human Rights House on the occasion at which he officiated the opening of Maison TV5 Monde Kampala, a new centre for promoting French language and Francophonie in Uganda.

The centre is open to children, youth and young adults and offers a platform for learning French using TV5 materials, skills training and accessing information on the Francophone world, including news, arts, sports, music, poetry, literature and films available on the new TV5 among other things.

Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, Executive Director of Foundation for Human Rights Initiative and Mr. Hassan Shire, Executive Director of Defend-Defenders witnessed the launch of Maison TV5 Monde Kampala in Uganda. Currently, Maison TV5 Monde is operating in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Togo, Benin, South Africa, Nigeria, DRC and Tanzania, with one being established in Cameroon.



R—L: H.E Jules-Armand Aniambossou, the French Ambassador to Uganda launching Maison TV5 Monde Kampala in Uganda at the Democracy House. Looking on is Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, the Executive Director of Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, Mr Thomas MbussaLetakamba, the Director of Bonjour Kampala and Mr. Hassan Shire, Executive Director of DefendDefenders on 29th October 2020.

RESEARCH DIVISION

'RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON' ABUSED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN UGANDA



LET MY PEOPLE GO: RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN UGANDA, 2020.



Cover page of the research report on right to liberty and security of person released by FHRI on 20th December 2020

Following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, several measures were taken by governments to curb the spread of the deadly pandemic. Concerned that people are living under difficult times full of uncertainty which has led to abuse of their rights, FHRI initiated a study to establish the observance and protection of the right to liberty and security of person during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

The report titled: *Let My People Go: Right to Liberty and Security of Person during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Uganda, 2020* was published and launched at the Human Rights House on 20th December 2020.

The report highlights incidences of non-adherence to the constitutional safeguards that protect the right to liberty and security of person during the outbreak of COVID-19 in Uganda.

The report investigates the method of arrest employed by law enforcement agencies in the implementation of the COVID-19 preventive guidelines, the right to legal representation and the trial process during the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda.

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HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS AT RISK IN THE ALBERTINE REGION – STUDIES CONCLUDE

On 10th September 2020, a report titled *"New Oil, Same Business? At a Crossroads to Avert Catastrophe in Uganda"* was publically launched at a joint press conference in Uganda and France. Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, the UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International order launched the report at the Human Rights House, Kampala.

The report is the result of two year Community-based human rights impact assessment of the Lake Albert project conducted by FHRI and International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) between 2018 and 2020. According to the report, there have been a number of human rights violations and abuses resulting from the activities of the State of Uganda and the companies developing the oil projects in the Tilenga and Kingfisher areas. In particular, the report focuses on the right to land, housing, and an adequate standard of living, the right to health and clean water, and the right to a healthy environment. The report reveals that "violations of these rights are inextricably related to violations of the right to information, the right to participation, and the right of access to justice."

The report also emphasises the great risks of further harm to human and environmental rights in decades to come if Total, CNOOC, and the Ugandan Government fail to enact a series of preventive and remedial measures, as well as larger policy changes, before moving on with the project.

Launched at the same ceremony, research findings of a study conducted by Oxfam between 2018 and 2020 among communities along the pipeline route in Uganda and Tanzania highlights the social, environmental, cultural, and human rights risks of the East African Crude Oil pipeline for communities located along the proposed pipeline corridor in Uganda and Tanzania. The findings were released in a report titled: *"Empty promises down the line? A Human Rights Impact Assessment of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline"*.

It was co-researched and produced by Global Rights Alert (GRA), Civic Response on Environment and Development

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L– R: Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, the UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order launching the report titled *"New Oil, Same Business? At a Crossroads to Avert Catastrophe in Uganda"* at the Human Rights House on 10th September 2020.

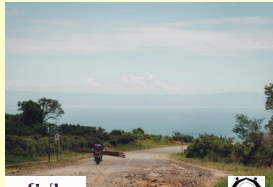
HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS AT RISK IN THE ALBERTINE REGION – STUDIES CONCLUDE continued from page 5.



EMPTY PROMISES DOWN THE LINE?

A Human Rights Impact Assessment of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline

www.oxfam.org



fidh

New Oil, Same Business?

At a Crossroads to Avert Catastrophe in Uganda

Community-Based Human Rights Impact Assessment of the Lake Albert Oil Extraction Project and Related Developments in the Albertine Graben, Uganda

Source: Oxfam

(CRED), Northern Coalition for Extractives and Environment (NCEE), and Oxfam under the Human Rights Impact Assessment of the Crude Oil Pipeline project. The report identifies and documents the actual and potential human rights implications of this major infrastructure project and makes recommendations to the governments and the companies to mitigate the adverse impacts, and to increase the positive impacts of this project, and advocate for inclusiveness, transparency and accountability.

The report observes that since the arrival of Total and CNOOC in the region, some preventive measures have been put in place, but they remain insufficient. The reports contain detailed recommendations for the authorities and companies involved in the project. In particular, they point to a number of emergency measures that must be implemented before the start of the extraction phase.



The scientific media launch of the reports: "New Oil, Same Business? At a Crossroads to Avert Catastrophe in Uganda" and "Empty promises down the line? A Human Rights Impact Assessment of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline" at the Human Rights House on 10th September 2020

'RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON' ABUSED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN UGANDA

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FHRI staff holding the research report on right to liberty and security of person released by FHRI at a scientific press launch held on 20th December 2020 at the Human Rights House, Nsambya.

The report further gives an overview of other human rights issues in Uganda such as Gender Based Violence, right to organise and access to healthcare.

The research was carried out through a wide consultation with victims, families of the victims, Justice Law and Order Sector institutions, Civil Society Organisations and legal practitioners. During the study, prisons in the districts of Busia, Tororo, Sironko, Mbale, Pader, Kitgum, Gulu and Nwoya were inspected to assess the adherence to the right to liberty with regard to respect of the 48 hour rule, grant of bail and the remand period.

Key among the findings was an increase in both arbitrary and unreasonable arrests across the country, especially in the enforcement of the COVID-19 Guidelines that were issued by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Presidential Directives. This had far reaching effects and led to many cases of human rights violations of a varied nature to almost all groups of people such as men and women, the disabled, the youth and children, expectant mothers, the sick among others.

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'RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON' ABUSED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN UGANDA

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In the wake of COVID-19 in Uganda, many suspects were not granted the right to legal representation. This was attributed to the COVID-19 Prevention Directives which did not include legal services among the essential services.

Notwithstanding the travel restrictions during the lockdown, a few lawyers who tried to access their clients were faced with further restrictions by the administrations of detention facilities in Uganda, particularly the Uganda Prisons Service (UPS).

It was noted that irrespective of the situation, there is little appreciation of the Human Rights (Enforcement) Act, 2019 (HREA) by both state institutions and public defenders. Whereas the law makes various progressive provisions aimed at the realisation of human rights, including the right to liberty and security of person, public defenders have not invoked the law in protecting the rights of suspects.

It was noted that State actors continue to act with impunity regardless of the individual criminal liability that was introduced by the law. Due to this knowledge gap, court continues to deny bail to suspects who have clocked their mandatory bail period. Prisons are not willing to unconditionally release suspects who have been unreasonably detained in accordance with the provisions of the HREA. Lawyers have also not been able to bring to the attention of court that long periods of remand are unreasonable and warrant unconditional release as per the HREA.



The press launch of FHRI's research report titled: *"Let My People Go: Right to Liberty and Security of Person during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Uganda, 2020"* on 20th December 2020 at the Human Rights House.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS TRAINED



Human Rights Defenders at the training at Wakiso held between 22nd and 24th September 2020.

In partnership with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) and the Citizen's Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU), FHRI held two training sessions for the youth to equip them with skills on how to report, monitor and document human rights violations during elections.

The training targeted the youth and human rights defenders (HRD) from Kampala and Rwenzori regions, and were held between 15th and 17th September, 2020; and those from Wakiso were trained from 22nd to 24th September 2020.

The training focused on human rights standards and laws at both national and international level. The international, regional and national laws are a point of reference for efficient reporting by the HRDs. Special emphasis was put on electoral laws and how they fit in Uganda's electoral process and how they are violated. Given the challenges that HRDs face, participants were tipped on digital security.

The training was facilitated by among others, Mr. Robert Ayeda Kotchani, the Country representative UNOHCHR; Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, the Executive Director, FHRI.

LEGAL SERVICES DIVISION

DEATH PENALTY CAMPAIGN

ACCESS TO COUNSEL: A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH *continued from page 1.*



A cross-section of delegates during the commemoration of the World Day Against the Death Penalty at the Human Rights House, Nsambya, on 10th October, 2020.

Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, the Executive Director, FHRI recognised the challenging times given the COVID-19 pandemic. He took note of the many efforts to find solutions that would wipe out COVID-19 and assured the delegates that in a similar way, the death penalty will someday attract everyone's attention and will be history.

He noted that despite the contestation and belief about the death penalty, popular public opinion is increasingly in favour of the abolition of the death penalty. He noted that the United Nations General Assembly would again discuss the 8th Resolution on the Moratorium on the death penalty. The resolution has been tabled for the 8th time. The overall number of countries are increasingly in favour of the abolition of the death penalty and have improved over the years from 104 in 2007 to 121 countries. Abolition countries have also increased from 90 in 2017 to 106 in 2020. The latest countries to abolish the death penalty are Angola and Kazakhstan, one in Africa and the second in Eastern Europe, respectively. Sewanyana informed the delegates that he led a special advocacy mission to Angola who have since deposited the instrument ratifying the 2nd Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

In the case of Uganda, he noted that owing to continuous lobby efforts on the death penalty, on 4th November 2019, President Museveni signed into law the Law Revision (Penalties in Criminal Matters) Miscellaneous Amendment Act, 2019, that will increasingly see the abolition of the death penalty in Uganda. This is a clear testament of progress, he said.

Sewanyana reiterated that the abolitionist movement does not condone crime, offenders must be punished strongly, and the punishment must be restorative and a lesson for the rest.

On the other hand, the discussion around the death penalty is now youth centred. The 11th Inter-University Competition held at Mountains of the Moon University focused on the abolition of death penalty. Students from 12 Universities submitted excellent research on the death penalty and also debated it so well. Since the future of Uganda lies in the hands of the youth, then substantive progress is assured on the death penalty campaign.

During the 2020 Inter-University competition, Mr. Benson Mayanja, a law student at Makerere University, Kampala argued that when you deny people the right to hope for a better future, you challenge the very nature of their humanity built on hope. His presentation touched on the trauma faced by inmates on death row and the executioners. He also discussed how the legal fraternity can help end the death penalty and the role of institutions or individuals in this campaign. He took note of the famous case of *Susan Kigula & 417 others* being the most historical judgement in the fight against the death penalty.

According to him, this court ruling changed the course and the dynamics on death penalty. This, he said, was enough evidence to know that we have the power to change the future. The legal process is neither perfect nor adequate. False convictions occur but life is more important. To avoid this, a plea to abolish the death penalty is paramount.

In attendance were former death row prisoners and testimonies were heard from Ms. Susan Kigula, now human rights lawyer and Mr. Patrick Zizinga, now a human rights activist. Their common concern was the miscarriage of justice in the judicial system that sometimes lead to execution of innocent people. Once sentenced, an individual lives in trauma of being executed. Ms. Atukunda Ariyo, Assistant Commissioner, Uganda Prisons Service (UPS) in charge of the Legal Department attended. She noted that UPS is happy with the moratorium and they are in support of the cause for abolition.

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ACCESS TO COUNSEL: A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH *continued from page 8*



Several members of the Coalition Against the Death Penalty were in attendance. They include: Saint'Egidio, Uganda Prisons Service, Katika Child Africa, Community Restorative Initiative, Scope Foundation, Uganda Joint Christian Council, Wells of Hope Ministries, Penal Reform International and Justice Defenders.

Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, Executive Director, Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, (Middle) with (L) Mr. Benson Mayanja Makerere University student, with children and representatives of Katika Child Africa during the commemoration of the World Day against the Death Penalty at the Human Rights House, Nsambya on 10th October 2020 .

DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION ACTIVISTS RENEW CAMPAIGN

On 30th July 2020, members of the Uganda Coalition Against the Death Penalty held a planning meeting to discuss the new project code named: *Securing the abolition of the death penalty in Africa and countries at risk*.

The meeting attracted representatives from Sant'Egidio, Community Restoration Initiative Project, BAPCAM/Prison Gates Uganda, Uganda Prisons Service, Human Rights Club-Cavendish University, Katika Child Africa, SCOPE Foundation, FHRI and Mr. Edmary Mpagi, a former death row inmate.

Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, the FHRI Executive Director noted that prisoners on death row as at 30th July 2020 were 131 (127 male, 4 females). He briefed them about The Law Revision (Penalties in Criminal Matters Miscellaneous (Amendment) Act, 2019 noting that the Act is very progressive although it raises more questions than answers.

Under the new four year project, '*securing the abolition of the death penalty in Africa and countries at risk*', the following activities are being undertaken:

- Advocacy and lobbying to push for legal reforms in East Africa.
- Regional seminars for lawyers and Judges in Uganda.
- Meeting of the East African Coalition against death penalty.
- Public debates in Universities in Uganda.
- Public Opinion Surveys (Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania)
- Events to commemorate the world day against the death penalty in Uganda.
- Legal assistance to four (4) prisoners on death row in Uganda.

Coalition members were urged to keep in touch, issue coordinated opinions and statements, and share regular information about new developments in order to overcome the continued use of the death penalty. Dr. Sewanyana noted that although the President of Uganda strongly favours the retention of the death penalty, with combined efforts, there is room to make progress in securing abolition of the death penalty in Uganda.

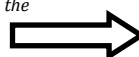
3RD SOLIDARITY VISIT TO DEATH ROW INMATES AT LUZIRA PRISONS



In commemoration of the World Day Against the Death Penalty, FHRI conducted the 3rd solidarity visit to death row inmates in both female and male sections at Luzira Upper Prison on 8th October 2020. Representing the Uganda Coalition Against the Death Penalty, FHRI donated masks and foodstuff for a special meal for the prisoners on that day. The visit was supported by the European Union, World Coalition against the Death Penalty and the Uganda Coalition Against the Death Penalty with representation from the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative.

Due to COVID -19, pandemic, coalition members could be not allowed to meet and interact with the prisoners as it has been during previous solidarity visits.

Some of the items presented to the death row inmates during the solidarity visit on 8th October 2020.



RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW

'MY RIGHTS, MY POWER' CAMPAIGN PROMOTES PEACE DURING THE ELECTION PERIOD

In pursuit of 'My Rights, My Power' campaign, a team from the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) held a meeting with the Electoral Commission (EC) to brainstorm on actions that would bring about a peaceful, free and fair 2021 election period.

In furtherance thereof, FHRI *partnered with the EC, Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) and, NTV to run 'My Rights, My Power' campaign* on NTV with support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). FHRI co-hosted three 2-hour Live television dialogues on NTV Uganda focussing on the concerns of Ugandans about the 2021 polls.

The inaugural two hour TV dialogue was aired on 28th October 2020 under the theme '*Human Rights during elections*'. Panellists included Mr. Bukenya Paul, the Spokesperson EC, Ms Ruth Ssekindi, Director Monitoring and Inspections, UHRC and Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, Executive Director, FHRI.

The panellists discussed the implementation of the revised Electoral Roadmap 2020/2021, and provided clarity on emerging and pertinent election-related concerns. They also deliberated on the human rights situation in the country.

The public raised concerns about the inadequacy of civic and voter education, the negative impact of COVID-19 on the 2021 elections, the need for wider involvement of youth in the electoral process, the academic qualifications of candidates, and electoral violence in the NRM primaries. The talk show attracted 772 viewers on Facebook Live.

The 2nd hybrid dialogue was aired on 25th November 2020, under the theme '*Law Enforcement during Elections*.' The panel included Hon. Justice Simon Byabakama, Chairperson of the EC, Mr. Frank Rusa, Executive Secretary, Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD), Assistant Commissioner of Police and Head of Community Policing, Mr. Anatoli Muleterwa, Lt. Col. Deo Akiiki, Deputy Spokesperson, Uganda Peoples Defence Force (UPDF) and, Mr. Robert Sempala, Coordinator, Human Rights Network for Journalists (HRNJ).

The dialogue was hosted shortly after more than 54 people had been killed and others grievously injured by security officers as a response to the demonstrations that erupted following the arrest of presidential aspirants, Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu and Eng. Patrick Oboi Amuriat in Luuka District and Gulu District respectively on 18th and 19th November 2020 for allegedly flouting the COVID-19 preventive guidelines.

The public raised concerns about the increasing incidents of human rights violations perpetuated by police, the army and other security agencies against the opposition politicians, human rights defenders and journalists. They decried the increased cases of excessive use of force by law enforcement officers, arbitrary arrests, and total disregard of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. The EC and security agencies on the panel were questioned about the disproportionate use of force in the enforcement of COVID-19 guidelines.

The dialogue provided an opportunity for the state actors/policy makers to explain the role of law enforcement agencies in elections, the role of the newly established *Elections Joint Security Team*, the role of media, and the role of the EC in ensuring the safety of candidates and the public, existing mechanisms to address public concerns/human rights violations during elections, access to justice mechanisms available for victims of election violence, the responsibilities of candidates during campaigns and the role of political parties in the electoral process.

The 3rd dialogue, took place on 16th December 2020 under the theme, "Unwrapping Election Day -14th January 2021'. It focused on the polling day which was barely a month away. The panelists included Mr. Paul Bukenya, Spokesperson, EC, Ms. Ruth Ssekindi, Director, Monitoring and Inspections, UHRC, Mr. Joseph Beyanga, Secretary General, National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), Mr. Abdulsalam Wasswa, Head Legal and Compliance Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), Maj (RTD) Rabwoni Okwir, UPDF and Mr Ronald Mukasa Ssenkubuge, Alliance for National Transformation (ANT). The discussion was guided by some of the public concerns generated on telephone, and other NTV social media pages. The interactive dialogue was viewed by over 1 million followers of NTV Uganda.

LEGAL SERVICES

WAKISO DISTRICT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE AND LEGAL AID OFFICE LAUNCHED

In a bid to assist indigent and vulnerable persons obtain redress for human rights violations, the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) Legal Services were extended to Kalangala and Wakiso districts.

On 5th August 2020, the Wakiso District Human Rights Committee in partnership with FHRI officially launched the Human Rights office at Wakiso district headquarters at a function presided over by Ms. Ruth Ssekindi, Director-Monitoring and Inspections, Uganda Human Rights Commission. The Wakiso District Human Rights Committee is chaired by Mr. Elly Kasirye who also doubles as FHRI's Project Officer-Civic Education. Representatives from Justice, Law and Order Sector agencies attended. At the same event, the Legal aid clinic was launched to provide outreach services to marginalised and vulnerable persons especially those that were afflicted with human rights abuses during the lockdown due to Covid-19 Pandemic.

Legal assistance to walk in clients is now available at three FHRI locations; Human Rights House, Nsambya; Kalangala and Wakiso field offices. Clients across the country can also seek assistance through the FHRI toll free line on 0800100016. The FHRI legal aid offices provide legal advice, legal representation, draft documents, mediation, empowerment for self-representation, referrals as well as follow up to ensure that clients obtain justice.

*The FHRI Legal Aid Unit
will always be there for you on matters of legal*



INJURED EMPLOYEE SECURES MEDICAL TREATMENT AND COMPENSATION FROM EMPLOYER

21st September 2019 was a dark day for Ms. Twikirize Fiona. Aged 27, Fiona is a single mother and a resident of Kanaba LC1 village, Wakiso District. While executing her duties at one of the Cementers Uganda Limited construction sites in Kigo, she was hit by a 9x9 concrete block that fell off the first floor of the building under construction, causing several fractures on her arm.

She was rushed to St. Francis Hospital, Nsambya for treatment, however after a few days, and before she could get better, the hospital administration told her to go back home claiming that the fractures would heal while she was at home. Cementers Uganda Limited, her employer also started demanding that she returns to work claiming that she would get healed in due course.

She felt cornered and scared that she might end up losing her hand since she was going to be discharged prematurely, and worst of all she could not afford to pay the medical bills for further treatment.

Helpless at that point, Fiona was referred to FHRI to seek for legal assistance to compel Cementers Uganda Limited to pay her medical bills for further treatment and to also compensate her as the injury occurred as a result of the company's negligence of not providing protective gears to workers at construction sites.

When Fiona approached FHRI in 2019, a notice of intention to sue to Cementers Uganda Limited was served and after several mediation meetings Cementers accepted to continue footing Fiona's medical bills until she fully recovers. Cementers Uganda Limited, through Jubilee Insurance compensated Fiona with **3,731,000 UGSHS (Three Million Seven Hundred Thirty One Thousand)**.

Fiona who could not hold anything with the injured hand can now use it to wash clothes and she is going to start up a business of around 3 million Uganda shillings. She now sees a bright future that she could no longer see before FHRI's intervention.

THE FAMILY OF OMUSEBE NAKOYI REGAINS THEIR LAND

By Owori Muchanji Zadoc of Magale Village, Masaba Parish, Masaba Subcounty, Busia District

I come from a family where the grandfather of my father is called Omusebe Nakoyi. He had three sons and a girl i.e. Muchaki, Owori, Nagaya and Makhulo.

He owned two pieces of customary land; one at Budiba Village, Namutumba Sub-county, Namayingo District and another one at Magale Village, Masaba Parish, Masaba Sub-county, Busia District.

Aaron was the first son of Muchaki. Brasio Osinya my father was the first son of Owori. Misiserra Egesa was the first son of Nagaya.

Before Omusebe Nakoyi died, he willed his son Nagaya to be in charge of the family matters and the land. Nagaya, before his death, willed my father Brasio Osinya his successor.

In 1985, before he died, Brasio Osinya also called Misiserra Egesa son of Nagaya and Benefasio Ojambo, son of Muchaki and willed them as administrators of the estate. Aaron Okumu son of Muchaki had died in 1980.

Soon after my father's death, Brasio Osinya in 1985, confusion ensued in the family and this was due to my elder brother Edward Nyegenye and his son George Osinya who decided to chase away the leaders our father had authorised to be in charge. He offered no reason for chasing them away to the family or even the clan.

This was also followed by Edward Nyegenye's son George Osinya coming up with the kangaroo judgements from Local Council leaders and grabbing property from the family, several

THE FAMILY OF OMUSEBE NAKOYI REGAINS THEIR LAND *continued from page 11.*

arrests were made and a number of concocted criminal charges were filed as follows:

Edward Nyegenye versus Wanyama Michael Osinya Criminal No. MT: 416/2001,
Edward Nyegenye versus Wanyama Michael Osinya Criminal No. BSh: 0264/2012,
Edward Nyegenye versus Wanyama Michael Osinya Criminal No. 630/2019,
Edward Nyegenye versus Wanyama Michael Osinya Miscellaneous application No. 030/2012,
Edward Nyegenye versus Wanyama Michael Osinya Civil Suit N. 0033/13.

All the above mentioned cases brought before various judicial organs were all meant to grab the family land. The civil suit was the last one to be concluded on 1st October 2020 and was dismissed with costs.

I am happy to report that all these cases were concluded in favour of the family. All these fabricated cases were being brought about with the aim of grabbing land from the family. It was the hard work of the lawyers from the Legal Services Division of Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, their legal advice at all times and intervention that led to our success.

FHRI SECURES THE RELEASE OF CURFEW DETAINEES IN KALANGALA

Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, Kalangala office brokered the release of scores of people arrested and detained for flouting the curfew restrictions. In March 2020, President Yoweri Museveni announced several measures to curb the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. The restrictions included a dusk to dawn curfew. In Kalangala, many people failed, for one reason or another, to adhere to this order, and were arrested and remanded.

According to Mr Deo Miir, the FHRI staff in Kalangala, as the SOPs-related arrests piled up, he was concerned that the growing congestion in the prison was defeating the whole essence of the guidelines on social distancing issued by the Ministry of Health and the President's Office.

"I approached the Prison's officers led by Mr Owino Abdunson, the Grade One Magistrate of Kalangala Court and other stakeholders and held a meeting that discussed the plight of the suspects on remand."

On 11th August 2020, the court officials visited Mugoye Sub-county Prison and a court session was held at the prison. The prison, with an official capacity of 40 prisoners, had over 74 suspects (63 men, 11 women) out of which, court released 43 suspects (8 women, 35 men), and majority were victims of flouting the curfew. 29 suspects were cautioned and set free, 11 suspects were given community service orders, and 3 suspects were referred for mediation. The prison remained with only 41 suspects (2 women, 39 men).

FHRI also followed up three criminal cases of defilement involving 2 girls and a 15-year-old boy. The boy had come from Kyabi village in Sembabule district at the invitation of a one Namatovu who had promised the boy's grandmother that she was going to support him with school fees. Unfortunately, Namatovu decided to sexually abuse the boy. The boy's friend reported the case to FHRI offices and the boy was rescued and was taken back to the mother and Namatovu was jailed. Many cases of a similar nature in Kalangala brought to FHRI offices have been referred to Police for support.



Extreme Right : Mr Owino Abdunson, the Grade One Magistrate of Kalangala Court attending to people who were arrested and detained for flouting the curfew restrictions in Kalangala following the lock down due to Covid -19 pandemic.

Above: Namatovu charged in court for sexually abusing a 15 year old boy.

THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, CHAMPIONS OF THE 11TH INTER-UNIVERSITY HUMAN RIGHTS COMPETITIONS

continued from page 1



4th left: Prof Edward Rugumayo and 3rd left Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, 5th right: Prof. Dr. Kasenene Masse John Vice Chancellor, Mountains of the Moon University, Club Patrons and Club Presidents including the Panel of Judges of the Competition

when Uganda is preparing for the 2021 national elections. He noted that FHRI has been holding this event for 11 years and a lot of achievements have been registered overtime. “Many youth who have gone through the network are now leaders at all levels. Some have even been mentored to start their own human rights organisations to advocate for the rights of marginalised groups, Sewanyana said.

Makerere University emerged winners with 80.6% of the score, followed by Kampala International University with 76.2%, and Uganda Christian University with 72.8%. The winners were awarded certificates and cash prizes of UGX 500,000, UGX 300,000 and UGX 250,000 respectively. The two day event was closed by Rt. Rev. Reuben Kitembo, Bishop of Rwenzori Diocese .



UCU 2nd Runner Up with Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, extreme left and Prof. Dr. Kasenene Masse John, Vice Chancellor 2nd left and Dean of Students Mountains of the Moon University on receiving their award.

Topics debated at the 11th Inter-University Human Rights Competition	
“Access to counsel: a matter of life or death”.	Makerere University.
“Discuss the recommendations on the implementation of section 1 of the Law Revision (Penalties in Criminal Matters) Miscellaneous Amendment Act 2019”.	Uganda Christian University
“A review of recent Supreme Court cases on the Death Penalty: Judicial Review or Constitutional Litigation?”	Busitema University
“The death penalty is not consistent with any just purpose of punishment. It does not render justice to victims, but instead fosters vengeance.... There is no fitting punishment without hope! Punishment for its own sake, without room for hope, is a form of torture, not a punishment”.	Cavendish University.
The 'World without the Death penalty' is achievable. How can abolitionists in Uganda realise total abolition of capital punishment in Uganda?	Kyambogo University
“Discuss the ethical implication of capital punishment using a human rights perspective.	Nkumba University
“The Uganda Judiciary has adopted Sentencing Guidelines in Capital offences: Examine the mitigating and aggravating factors in respect of offences that attract the Death Penalty.	Uganda Martyrs' University
The Human Rights Enforcement Act 2019, challenges and opportunities”	Kampala International University
“Discuss the human rights implication of the recent court ruling in Foundation for Human Rights Initiative- vs. the Attorney General, Constitutional Petition No 53 of 2011”.	Islamic University in Uganda
“ Article 6 (4) of the ICCPR provides ‘Anyone sentenced to death shall have the right to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence of the death may be granted in all cases’. Discuss with reference to Uganda”	Uganda Pentecostal University.
Covid- 19 has had an adverse effect on Prisoners' Rights- Discuss.	Mountains of the Moon University.
The campaign against the Death Penalty in Uganda has made a positive contribution to Criminal Justice Reform in Uganda. Discuss.	Gulu University

11TH INTER-UNIVERSITY COMPETITION PREPARATORY MEETING

On 24th July, 2020, the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) hosted a preparatory meeting for 11 universities. They include Uganda Martyrs University (UMU), Islamic University In Uganda (IUIU), Kampala International University (KIU), Nkumba University (NU), and Uganda Pentecostal University (UPU). Others were Gulu University (GU), Mountains of the Moon (MOMU), Makerere University, Busitema University, Uganda Christian University (UCU), and Cavendish University (CU). The meeting was to held to plan for the 11th Inter-University Human Rights Competition that took place on 17th - 18th September 2020 under the theme “Access to Counsel: A matter of Life or Death”.

In his remarks, Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, FHRI's Executive Director highlighted FHRI's commitment to empowering the young human rights defenders by recognizing the best undergraduate student undertaking the Human Rights course at Uganda Martyrs University now for 3years. He noted that this annual recognition of awards would be extended to other universities.

It was at this meeting that the theme and the topics of the 2020 Inter-University Human Rights Competition were agreed were upon. The guidelines for the competition were discussed and agreed upon. Dr. Sewanyana noted that the award would be based on the research findings, style of presentation, dress code and demeanour. Participants in the meeting agreed on a common criterion of presenting the academic work .

The FHRI team organised a raffle draw from which each university had a random chance to pick a topic. Participants were urged to look at this activity not just as a competition but as a platform to learn from and teach others. Mountains of the Moon University (Fort portal) offered to host the event . In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was agreed that few people would participate physically to ease adherence to the standard operating procedures. The majority would attend using the available online platforms.



Representatives of the universities taking turns at the raffle to pick their topic for debate , 2020.

UGANDA TECHNICAL COLLEGE- ELGON HUMAN RIGHTS CLUB GETS NEW LEADERS

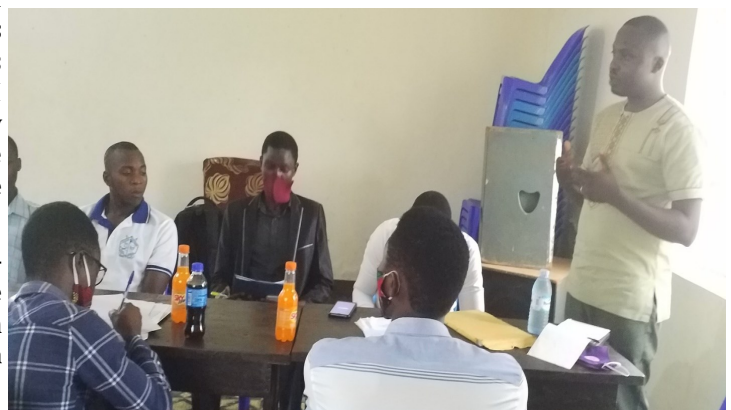
Uganda Technical College – Elgon (UTC-Elgon) , held a handover ceremony to renew her leadership team on 25th November 2020. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the elections were conducted online. The event started with a debate on the role of youth in elections. Students were urged to participate peacefully in elections by voting the right leaders, monitoring human rights violations and sensitising their communities on how to vote.

The Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) was represented at the event by Mr Elly Kasirye the Project Officer – Civic Education. He expressed FHRI's commitment to continue supporting these clubs. He informed the students that the European Union had committed funds to support the Inter- University Competition for the next 3 years. He encouraged them to participate in the next competition, come 2021. He encouraged them to remain supportive of the institution, if they are to continue securing support from the university administration. UTC-Elgon is one of the 30 human rights clubs that FHRI has established in institutions of higher learning in Uganda. It is one of the clubs that has remained active despite the minimal support provided by FHRI towards their activities. This is a credit to the sustainable model introduced by FHRI in the establishment of these clubs. Under this model, clubs must formally register with the university, have a patron who is a staff member of the Institution, and they have to be owned and partly supported by the university administration.

Students reported on some of the projects they are running including the paper making project – focused on preserving the environment through the reduced use of polythene bags. The club is also engaged in a sensitisation project through which they engage students on their rights. They have even generated some funds for their activities through these projects.



Above: Members of the outgoing cabinet with Mr. Elly Kasirye Project Officer – Civic Education after receiving their certificates
Below: Right ; Mr. Elly Kasirye, addressing students at the event.



CIVIC EDUCATION NETWORK FOR EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (CENESA)



CENESA HOLDS HER 1ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Pursuant to the resolution taken at the East African Civic Education Forum held from 22nd – 24th November 2017 in Kampala Uganda, and Section 1 of the Working Paper on Shape and Character of CENESA, the Interim Steering Committee of the Civic Education Network for Eastern and Southern Africa (CENESA) organised her 1st Annual General Meeting on 5th November 2020 using online platforms.

The 1st Annual General Meeting was an opportunity for the Interim Steering Committee (ISC) to report back to the founding members and the new members on the activities that had been undertaken and the progress of the Network since its inception in 2017. In this meeting, key among the things that were discussed by the ISC were CENESA's Founding Documents (Statutes) and adopted by the members. In addition, 14 new members were introduced to the network and admitted bringing the membership to 30. The CENESA website was also launched during the meeting on www.cenesa.org

CENESA HOLDS HER 4TH REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA



JOIN US

At the 4th Regional E-Conference on Civic and Voter Education in Eastern and Southern Africa

"Why civic and voter education matters in promoting electoral democracy: Lessons from Malawi, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda"



Dr Livingstone Sewanyana



Ms Naita Hishono



Mr Ollen Mwalubunju



Mr Gray Kalindekafe



Mr Israel Ilunde



Keynote:
Dr Nomsa Masuku



Ms Eulalie Nibizi



Ms Farida Lule



WEDNESDAY 4TH NOVEMBER 2020
10:00am (EAT)



The Interim Steering Committee (ISC) of the Civic Education Network for Eastern and Southern Africa (CENESA) and the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) with support from Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) organised their 4th regional conference on *'Why civic and voter education matters in promoting electoral democracy: Lessons from Malawi, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda.'* The 8 November 2020, virtual, conference was attended by 70 participants from across the African continent particularly CENESA's membership.

Mr. Ollen Mwalubunju, the Chairperson of CENESA and Executive Director of National Initiative for Civic Education, Malawi noted that the conference had come at a time when a number of member countries in Africa were having elections during an unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic, adding that "because of the pandemic, the factors affecting elections are different from the recent years."

He observed that the restrictions on all actors such as political parties during campaigns as well as the application of new strategies during these elections calls for an exchange of lessons and experiences in election governance and how best they can be shared through civic education in the face of COVID-19.

In her keynote address, Dr. Nomsa Masuku, Commissioner for the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa underscored the importance of civic and voter education. She noted that civic education improves knowledge and understanding of a specific election event and helps the voters to appreciate the process and how to effectively participate in it. At the same time, she argued that it is important that civic education prepares the citizens to hold their representatives or leaders accountable.

Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana, the Executive Director of Foundation for Human Rights Initiative noted that 17 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa were scheduled to hold general elections. He reiterated the role of every citizen in the national development process, particularly through the choices of leadership that they make. He noted that, "the choices made by empowered people must bring meaning to the electoral exercise; in a bid to enable them make the right choices, voters must sufficiently be knowledgeable about their environment: politics, social, economic welfare and understand the trend of events to enable them shift the gears accordingly". He observed that, "the importance of civic education is to create a degree of consciousness among the population to define the odds by being able to make well informed choices and to live to their expectations.

Other panelists at the Conference were Mr Israel Ilunde, Youth Partnership Countrywide, Tanzania; Mr Gray Kalindekafe, National Initiative for Civic Education in Malawi; Ms. Eulalie Nibizi, DefendDefenders, Burundi and Ms Faridah Lule, Citizen's Coalition for Electoral Democracy, Uganda.



#COVID-19
We Will Survive

"We are in this together - and we will get through this, together."

Antonio Guterres
Secretary General of the United Nations.

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