

# Newsletter

Q1 - April to June 2024



## Commemoration Day of the African Child

Protection for all children in Africa... time is now'

Child Human Rights Defenders Coalition for Empowerment and Protection

2024... High School



# Human Rights Defenders in Action

# Dear Esteemed Members, Partners, and Stakeholders,



I am pleased to present the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition's (THRDC) newsletter for the second quarter of 2024 (April to June). This issue highlights our ongoing efforts to enhance the protection, empowerment, and advocacy for Human Rights Defenders (HRDs).

The second quarter of 2024 has been marked by several significant achievements. THRDC has established the Tanzania Child Rights Human Rights Defenders Annual Forum, providing a platform for children to express their concerns, raise awareness, and influence policies affecting their well-being. Our advocacy efforts continue to focus on creating an enabling environment for HRDs through legal and policy reforms, collaborations with government and state departments, public awareness campaigns, regional and international advocacy strategies, and empowering HRDs in risk assessment and security management. We are also dedicated to strengthening institutional capacity, improving fundraising efforts, and learning from regional and international actors to enhance our performance and sustainability.

The security of Persons with Albinism (PWAs) remains a pressing concern. Cases such as that of Asimwe highlight the ongoing threats they face. Despite efforts to improve safety through increased patrols and community awareness campaigns, incidents of violence, discrimination, and ritual attacks continue. Asimwe's case, among others, underscores the urgent need for stronger legal protections and more effective law enforcement responses.

With the upcoming elections, there has been a rise in reprisals against opposition members and government critics. THRDC is advocating for enhanced security protocols and inclusive policies to protect the rights of PWAs and Human Rights Defenders. Collaborative efforts with government bodies and civil society are essential to effectively addressing these security concerns.

Our ongoing initiatives aim to build the capacities of HRDs to better serve society through the civil society sector. We remain committed to fostering goodwill and mutual understanding with all our stakeholders, and to empowering, protecting, respecting, recognizing, and reaching out to a broad network of Human Rights Defenders.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement with THRDC as we strive to defend and promote human rights across Tanzania.  
Best regards,

Onesmo Olengurumwa  
National Coordinator  
Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC)

# 1. Highlighting Progress in Litigation, Emergency Support, and Rescue

From April to June 2024, we have made remarkable progress through our Litigation, Emergency Support, and Rescue program, aimed at aiding Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) under threat. Our dedicated efforts have provided 18 HRDs with legal support, ensuring they have the representation and advice needed to confront challenges.

Furthermore, to protect HRDs from immediate danger, we've successfully relocated 12 HRDs to safe environments and medical support for 1 HRD, Edger Edson Mwakabela @Sativa.



As we proceed, we aim to further integrate HRD concerns into national frameworks and address the critical issues they face. The support from our community and stakeholders is invaluable in this journey.

## 2. Protection Planning and Risk Management: "Empowering Grassroots Organisations for Stronger Human Rights Advocacy in Tanzania"

These efforts aim to equip HRDs with the necessary tools for physical and digital security management, ensuring adherence to regulatory laws and effective documentation and reporting of human rights violations.





On May 25th and 26th, 2024, the THRDC conducted a capacity-building training for defenders of the rights of pastoralist and indigenous communities in Tanzania to 55 CSOs representatives.



On April 29th to 30th 2024, THRDC conducted a training session on human rights monitoring, documentation, and reporting for grassroots HRDs and CSOs at the Flomi Hotel in Morogoro bringing together. A total of 31 members (13 men and 18 women) from the Central Zone, Southern Zone, and Southern Highlands participated.



## ***Empowering Parliamentarian on Human Rights to execute their role in Human Rights Promotion and Protection***



On 11 and 12 May 2024, THRDC in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) organized a training session for parliamentary committees (MPs) and secretariat bring together about 40 participants aiming to enhance the role of parliament in human rights implementation. Key outcomes included:



1. Developing a comprehensive action plan to amend laws violating human rights.
2. Identifying priority areas such as ratifying human rights instruments, establishing implementation strategies, and law reforms.
3. Proposing the establishment of a Parliamentary Human Rights Working Group.
4. Strengthening parliament's capacity in human rights promotion and protection.

THRDC will continue to collaborate with the government and stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of human rights recommendations.



### 3. Protection Engagement, Advocacy, and Research

THRDC sustained its advocacy efforts in the second quarter of 2024 as a preventive protection mechanism through dynamic Advocacy and Engagement aiming to enhance acceptance, recognition, and the operational environment for HRDs through constructive engagement with stakeholders at all levels: National, Regional and International.

#### ***THRDC's Meeting with MoCLA on 07 May 2024***

THRDC and the Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs (MoCLA) strategized to improve Tanzania's human rights landscape. Key outcomes included:

1. Finalizing the National Human Rights Action Plan Two (NHRAPII)
2. Enhancing participation in regional and international human rights mechanisms
3. Advancing the Human Rights Defenders Policy
4. Creating an inter-ministerial committee for state reporting
5. Promoting human rights education nationwide

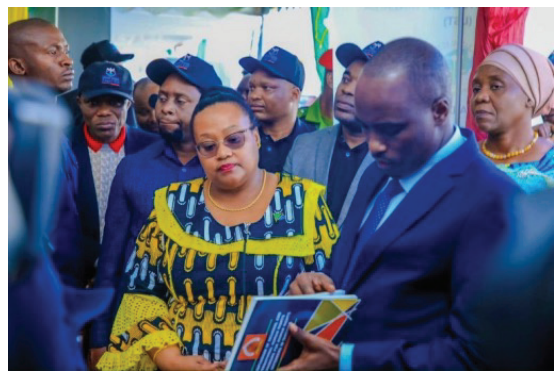


*Ambassador Dr. Pindi Chana, Minister for Constitutional and Legal Affairs along with Ministerial Directors of Departments Including Adv. Richard Kilanga (Human Rights); Adv. Emmanuel Mbega (Human Rights) and Edith Shekideye (Legal Aid Services Unit) and THRDC team THRDC Adv. Onesmo Olengurumwa, THRDC National Coordinator alongside with Adv. Nuru Maro, Coalition Advocacy Officer during THRDC and MoCLA meeting on 07 May 2024 at Bunge premise-Dodoma.*



## **Promoting Human Rights Education and Legal Aid through Mama Samia Lega Aid Campaign**

From May 26 to June 6, 2024, THRDC participated in the Mama Samia Legal Aid Campaign in Njombe, providing legal aid and human rights education. Supported by four lawyers, THRDC assisted around 250 clients, addressing land disputes, employment issues, gender-based violence, and estate administration. The campaign, inaugurated by Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Doto Biteko and other officials, highlighted the importance of accessible legal support and human rights for all Tanzanians, especially in rural areas.



*From left is THRDC lawyers educating children on human rights and their role in protection their own rights and human rights generally while at the left is Hon. Dr. Doto Biteko-Deputy Prime Minister; Ambassador Pindi Chana, Minister of Constitution and Legal Affairs, and Dr. Dorothy Gwagima, Minister of Community Development, Gender, and Children, alongside local government officials from Njombe Region during the Launching of Mama Samia Legal Aid Campaign in Njombe.*

## **THRDC Launches Tanzania Child Human Rights Defenders Forum**

On June 14, 2024, in celebration of the Day of the African Child, THRDC organized an event at Alpha High School with 70 children (39 girls and 31 boys) from various schools. This child-led gathering established the Tanzania Child Rights Human Rights Defenders Annual Forum, empowering children to advocate for their rights and protect their peers. This platform will enable children to voice their concerns, promote awareness, and influence policies affecting their well-being. In collaboration with Child Rights Networks like TCRF, ZCRF, and the Junior Council, THRDC will continue to nurture and support this forum, empowering children as active defenders of their rights.





*The launching of Child Human Rights Defenders Annual Forum and new elected leaders for the period of two years (2024-2026)*

## **THRDC Champions African Child Day Across Tanzania: Celebrating with Impact on June 16**

THRDC supported the commemoration of the Day of African Child 2024 in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar with a focus on this year's theme: "Education for All Children in Africa: The Time is Now." Partnering with the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Elderly, and Children-Zanzibar, THRDC helped organize child-led activities, including parades, games, dialogues, and performances to combat child abuse. Key issues addressed were the elimination of corporal punishment, safe transportation, and improved educational facilities.

THRDC also supported Kaya Foundation, Ngorongoro Legal Aid Centre, and Kahama Human Rights Centre, reaching about 2,500 children across Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania. This initiative aimed to empower children and advocate for their rights effectively.



*Children participating in various programs of the African Child Day supported by THRDC in both Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar.*

## ***Empowering Widows for a Better Future: THRDC Supports African Widows' Conference, 20-21 June 2024***

THRDC backed the African Widows' Conference in Zanzibar, officiated by President Dr. Hussein Ally Mwinyi. This event united widow's organizations across the continent to discuss enhancing support and economic empowerment for widows, addressing legal rights, inheritance, and social service access. Key recommendations included amending inheritance laws, launching economic initiatives, and improving access to social services, aligning with THRDC's mission to advance gender equality and social justice.



## ***Monitoring the Implementation of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Recommendations***

As Tanzania prepares for the 2026 Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle, THRDC is actively monitoring the implementation of the 2021 recommendations. Following Tanzania's acceptance of 187 out of 256 recommendations, including 35 focused on child rights, THRDC is conducting a mid-term review to assess progress. To support this, THRDC held four key workshops:



1. General Rights, Political, Climate, and Inclusion (May 13-14, Morogoro)
2. Leave No One Behind (Youth) (May 17, Dar es Salaam)
3. Child HRDs for a Child-Led Report (May 30-31, Save the Children)
4. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) (May 28)

These sessions highlight a growing focus on human rights, with ongoing efforts to ensure effective implementation and advocacy leading up to the next review cycle.



## ***"Empowering Voices: National Forum Tackles Freedom of Expression and Media Laws in Tanzania"***



On June 27, 2024, THRDC hosted a pivotal National Forum on Freedom of Expression and Media Laws, co-hosted by THRDC and the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI). This forum, themed "Assessing the Current Legal and Policy Framework Governing Freedom of Expression & Media Laws in Tanzania—Progress and Challenges," provided a platform for in-depth discussions on Tanzania's media landscape and freedom of expression. Key issues addressed included recent legal reforms, ongoing challenges in media regulation, and the impact of restrictive policies on press freedom. Participants included

legal experts, media professionals, and civil society advocates who reviewed the progress made and identified critical areas needing reform. The forum underscored the importance of continuing efforts to enhance freedom of expression and ensure a robust and open media environment in Tanzania.

### **Public Hearing for the Finance Bill 2024**



THRDC represented Our National Coordinator Advocate Onesmo O Lenguruma, participated in the Public Hearing to and submitted its recommendation for the Finance Bill now the Finance Act before the Finance Parliamentary Standing committee. Among others, THRDC for commended the Ministry for amending Section 64 of the Income Tax Act to broaden the definition of Charitable Organizations, now including health and environmental institutions. While acknowledging this positive step, THRDC noted that these changes fall short of CSO recommendations, which call for a more comprehensive definition covering all areas of their work, such as legal aid and human rights advocacy. THRDC also urged for CSO representation in the tax law reform committee to ensure their concerns are fully addressed.





## **"THRDC Supports Youth Rehabilitation: Donates Mattresses and Sports Gear to Wami Prison"**

On June 23, 2024, THRDC visited Wami Youth Prison in Dumila, Morogoro, donating 30 mattresses and sports equipment to support the youth. Wami Youth Prison, established in 1968, is Tanzania's only facility offering vocational training in over seven skills, including electrical work and carpentry. Advocate Onesmo Olungurumwa stressed the government's duty to improve prison infrastructure and urged stakeholders to support human rights protection.



## **"Empowering Nonprofits: Launch of 2nd Revised CSOs Tax Toolkit Edition in Tanzania"**



The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), in partnership with the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA), the National Council of NGOs (NaCoNGO), and Wajibu Institute of Public Accountability (WIPA), launched the second revised edition of the Tax Toolkit for Nonprofit Organizations in Tanzania on June 2, 2024, at Miramonti Hotel in Dodoma. Mr. Alfred Mregi, Commissioner for Domestic Revenue, emphasized the importance of tax compliance and the role of civil society organizations in supporting revenue collection during the launch. He also addressed the challenges of obtaining exemptions as a legitimate right influencing TRA's decisions.

## ***THRDC Zanzibar Hosts Feedback Session on Media Law Reforms Amidst Calls for Faster Progress"***

*On May 8, 2024, THRDC Zanzibar hosted a feedback session at TAMWA Zanzibar Hall to review media law reforms. Stakeholders, including CSOs, journalists, and legal experts, discussed progress and expressed concerns over slow advancements. Action plans include engaging with the Ministry of Information for updates, meeting with policy makers, collaborating with the Law Reform Commission, and empowering journalists to advocate for press freedom and effective legal reforms.*



## ***"THRDC Engages in Impactful Dialogue with IFES Tanzania on Enhancing Human Rights"***



*On May 6th, 2024, THRDC hosted a visit from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems Tanzania (IFES), led by Mr. Lamin Lighe and Mr. Franklin Kebelo. The meeting aimed to discuss Tanzania's human rights situation and explore collaboration opportunities for improving human rights in mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. THRDC, led by Advocate Onesmo Olengurumwa, looks forward to ongoing collaboration with stakeholders to enhance human rights efforts.*



## 4. Progress In Collaborative Disability Advocacy



Some pictures of THRDC DDI Team during the visits and assessment of the Organisations of People with Disabilities in May 2024.

Earlier this year, THRDC established a desk for the Defenders with Disabilities Initiative (DDI) to support and empower human rights defenders with disabilities. From May 23–27, 2024, DDI visited Dar es Salaam OPDs to introduce the initiative, build connections, and understand their challenges. Despite their valuable work, these organizations face financial and systemic barriers. The meetings also explored new collaboration avenues that promise substantial benefits for human rights defenders and individuals with disabilities in the country.

Recommendations include financial support, capacity building, awareness campaigns, and policy advocacy to enhance the sustainability and impact of disability organizations in Tanzania.

THRDC will capitalize on strengthening this desk the rest of the year reaching out to more Organisations working on the rights of PWDs to enhance capacity building, conducting awareness campaigns, facilitating networking opportunities, offering technical assistance, supporting policy advocacy, and establishing regular monitoring and evaluation frameworks.


## ***Championing Inclusivity and Rights of People with Disabilities (PWDs)***

THRDC actively participated in the 43rd Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) held in Maseru, Lesotho, from April 15-25, 2024. Ms. Perpetua Senkoro, representing THRDC, highlighted significant challenges faced by children with albinism in Tanzania, commending the ACERWC's 2016 report for its valuable recommendations. She emphasized the issues these children encounter when separated from their families and proposed solutions to address these challenges. THRDC's engagement underscored its commitment to advocating for the rights and welfare of vulnerable children, aligning with its broader mission of promoting human rights and social justice.





 Mikocheni B, Eyasi Road, P.o.box 105926,  
Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

 +255 769 642208

 info@thrdc.or.tz

 www.thrdc.or.tz

Like us on



TANZANIA HUMAN  
RIGHTS DEFENDERS  
COALITION

Follow us on



@thrdcoalition

Follow us on



@thrdcoalition