

**6<sup>TH</sup>** ANNIVERSARY OF  
TANZANIA  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
DEFENDERS' DAY

# AWARDEES PROFILES YEAR - 2018

Date: 28<sup>TH</sup> April 2019

# INTRODUCTION

Today on the 28th of April 2019, the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders' Coalition proudly celebrates its 6th Anniversary of the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Day. This year's theme is: **'CLAIMING AND PROTECTING ONLINE CIVIC SPACE FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN TANZANIA'**.

The theme for the year is based on the consideration that Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right. Freedom of Expression is essential for enjoyment of other rights. If people can't express themselves freely, other rights suffer more.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, freedom of expression is the right of every individual i.e to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.

As part of the celebrations, THRDC is also recognizing and awarding distinguished Human Rights Defenders who have showed dedication to promote and defend human rights through online platforms. The 2018/19 awards go to the following distinguished individuals and institutions that have excelled in defending human rights online, claiming and protecting online Civic Space in Tanzania and beyond through online platforms:





# MAXENCE MELO

## **RECOGNIZED FOR DEFENDING ONLINE FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN TANZANIA 2018**

Maxence Melo is a Tanzanian Online Human Rights Defender, Founder and Executive Director of JamiiForums. JamiiForums has been an active member of Coalition since 2014. Currently, Maxence Melo is a Board Member of THRDC's Board of Directors. He is enthusiastic, creative and passionate about the promotion and protection of Online Freedom of Expression and Digital Privacy.

Apart from internet governance, digital rights and civic space advocacy, Maxence Melo is also a digital innovator who has used JamiiForums to provide a secure, credible and as the most reliable whistle-blowing online platform in Tanzania. He believes that Whistleblowers play critical roles in any system. Those who have seen ills, Injustice and Corruption in the system should feel a sense of protection as they expose them.

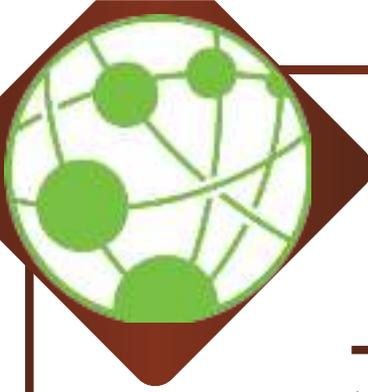
Maxence has played an enormous role in making the JamiiForums platform revolutionize online information, the state of Freedom of expression, promotion of transparency and accountability. JamiiForums consistently stood its ground against legal charges that have interfered with the rights to privacy and Freedom of Expression for 16 years. Currently, Maxence Melo is facing judicial harassment from state authorities, including 2 pending cyber-crime related cases, the confiscation of his passport and a travel ban including restricting him from leaving Dar es Salaam region.

As a certified digital security expert, Maxence Melo helps Human Rights Defenders in Tanzania to remain safe while using digital platforms. He works hard to protect Online Freedom of Expression, Online Privacy and Data Protection and always pushes for political accountability, transparency and good governance.

At an International level, Maxence Melo has been recognized by the African Union as one of the top 3 **Leading African Innovators for Change in 2018** but also by H.E President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria for strengthening the viability of whistleblowing policy tools in the same year. He is also a member of the **Forum for African Investigative Reporters**.

The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), therefore recognizes Maxence Melo as a Distinguished Human Rights Defender of Online Freedom of Speech in Tanzania through the JamiiForums platform.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**



# ACCESS NOW

## RECOGNIZED FOR CHAMPIONING DIGITAL RIGHTS GLOBALLY 2018

Access Now is an international non-profit organization, human rights, public policy, and advocacy group dedicated to an open and free Internet. It was founded by Brett Solomon and Cameran Ashraf in 2009, after the contested Iranian presidential election of 2009. During the protests that followed this election, Access Now played a notable role in disseminating the video footage which came out of Iran. This year, Access Now celebrates 10 years since its founding.

Access Now manages to operate worldwide with a team of only 40 staff, with local staff in more than 10 locations around the world; Berlin, Brussels, Cordoba, Delhi, London, Manila, Nairobi, New York, San Jose, Tunis, and Washington D.C. The organization maintains four legally incorporated entities; Belgium, Costa Rica, Tunisia, and the United States with its tech, advocacy, policy, granting, and operations teams distributed across all regions.

Access Now has championed a number of online digital rights issues since it was founded in 2009, with an emphasis on five major policy areas: **BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS, DIGITAL SECURITY, FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, NET DISCRIMINATION and PRIVACY**. Also, Access Now's Digital Security Helpline offers real-time, direct assistance and advice to activists, independent media and civil society organizations.

For a decade now, the organization has campaigned against internet shutdowns, online censorship, international trade agreements and government surveillance. Access Now has also supported Net Neutrality, the use of encryption, and thoughtful cyber security laws and regulations. Access Now's campaigns target various stakeholders in support of its mission, including governments and technology companies. It also engages with telecommunications companies on a variety of issues, such as transparency reporting.

Furthermore, Access Now defends and extends the digital rights of users at risk around the world by combining direct technical support, comprehensive policy engagement, global advocacy, grassroots grant making, and convenings, such as the RightsCon conferences, to fight for human rights in the digital age. **RightsCon** is an annual multistakeholder event that features participants from civil society organizations, technology companies, and critical internet users to deliberate on human rights issues in the digital age.

The **RightsCon** conference was first held in Silicon Valley in 2011, followed by events in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2012), Silicon Valley (2014), Manila, Philippines (2015), and Silicon Valley (2016), thus alternating between Silicon Valley and a key city in the Global South. After being held in Brussels and Toronto, this year, RightsCon 2019 will take place in Tunis, Tunisia.

The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) hugely appreciates the role played by Access Now at an international level, in influencing global Internet policy, the promotion and protection of Online Civic Space and Digital Rights for more than 10 years now, and hereby proudly recognizes Access Now as a Champion of Digital Rights Globally.

**FELICITATIONS!**



# CIPESA

## RECOGNIZED FOR CHAMPIONING INTERNET FREEDOM IN AFRICA 2018

The **Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA)** was established in 2004 under the Catalyzing Access to Information and Communications Technologies in Africa (CATIA) initiative, which was funded by UK's Department for International Development (DfID).

CIPESA focuses on decision-making that facilitates the use of ICT in support of development and poverty reduction. CIPESA's four key thematic areas are Online Freedoms, Open Data & E-governance, Internet Governance and ICT4Development.

CIPESA's establishment was in response to the findings of the Louder Voices Report prepared for DfID and the G8 Dot Force Implementation Team, which cited the lack of easy, affordable and timely access to information about ICT-related issues and processes as key a barrier to effective and inclusive ICT policy making in Africa.

While based in Kampala - Uganda, CIPESA has worked across the East and Southern Africa region, informing policy-making, and stirring debate and convening productive gatherings. CIPESA works with networks, individuals and organizations (private sector, governmental, academic, civil society) across the region, and they are key members of several African and international initiatives that aim to improve the inclusiveness of the Information Society.

CIPESA is also a member of the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), the Global Network Initiative (GNI), IFEX, the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) and the Association for Progressive Communications (APC). CIPESA is a proud member of Access Now's **#KeepItOn** campaign and also supports other ongoing campaigns like **#BringBackOurInternet**, **#AfricanInternetRights**, **#ICT4SI (ICT for Social Innovation)** and **#ImagineAFeministInternet**. Further more, CIPESA was one of the pioneer members of the Cyber Stewards Network ([www.cyberstewards.org](http://www.cyberstewards.org)) and one of two African members.

Since its inception in 2004, CIPESA has positioned itself as a leading centre for research and analysis of information aimed to enable policy makers in the region to understand ICT policy issues, and for various multi-stakeholders to use ICT to improve livelihoods.

In commemorating the 6th Tanzania Human Rights Defenders' Day on 28th April 2019, the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) acknowledges CIPESA's role in championing Internet Freedom in the African continent for the year 2018/19.

**KUDOS!**



# FRIDAY SIMBAYA

## FRIDAY WESTON SIMBAYA - RECOGNIZED FOR DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH ONLINE BLOGGING 2018

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Friday Weston Simbaya is a human rights defender, a blogger and a freelance journalist with over 13 years of professional journalism experience working with several newspapers including The Guardian and Nipashe published by IPP MEDIA. Additionally, he is also a news correspondent to The Guardian newspaper. Friday Simbaya lives in Iringa region at the moment.

Friday Simbaya also owns the **TUMBUSI BLOG** and **ONLINE TV** (Tumbusi means a 'Vulture'), but unfortunately, on 9th October 2018, he was apprehended by the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) working with the Police, and later charged for owning an unregistered blog and 'Providing Online Content without License', contrary to regulations 14 (1) and 18 of **Tanzania's Electronic and Postal Communication Act (2018)** also known as **Online Content Regulations**.

THRDC provided journalist Friday Simbaya with legal support through Advocate Chance Luoga who is still representing Mr. Simbaya. Mr. Simbaya had formerly been transported to Dar es Salaam Central Police station and detained for more than 8 days before later being transported back and arraigned to the Iringa Resident Magistrate's Court in Iringa region. He is currently out on bail, as his case is still pending.

Friday Simbaya says that he is still keen to excel both in his career as a journalist and as an online human rights defender, and that's why he founded **TUMBUSI BLOG**. He loves his job and looks forward to seeing his work reaching everyone.

For these reasons, the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) celebrates and formally recognizes journalist Friday Simbaya as a Distinguished Human Rights Defender through Online Blogging.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**



# MARIA SARUNGI TSEHAI

## RECOGNIZED FOR DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH THE TWITTER PLATFORM 2018

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Maria Sarungi Tsehali is a Tanzanian online human rights activist known for her online campaign "**CHANGE TANZANIA**". Her campaign began as a hashtag on Twitter **#ChangeTanzania** to influence Tanzanian citizens mainly through the Twitter platform to participate in bringing about positive change in their communities.

Change Tanzania as a social media movement started as an informal grouping of individuals who are focused on bringing positive, sustainable change to Tanzania. The primary focus of Change Tanzania according to Ms. Maria Sarungi, is the change of attitude (behavioral change) which seeks to positively empower every Tanzanian to feel that change of his/her environment is possible without external help or support.

Through her online activism, her hashtag **#ChangeTanzania** has now over 400,000 members and followers on both Twitter and Facebook. It was through Change Tanzania, that Maria was recognized and appointed by the former President of the United Republic of Tanzania Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete to be a member of the Constituent Assembly back in 2014.

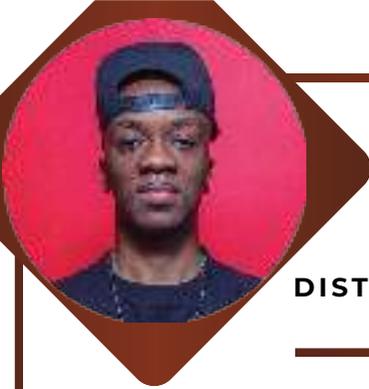
Maria Sarungi Tsehali is also the founder, owner and director of **Kwanza TV**; an online news television in Tanzania. She has been a presenter and producer of many well-known and highly viewed shows in Tanzania since 2000.

Aside from the independent production, Maria is also a communication consultant, having provided communication advice, Public Relations management and training to various organizations including UN agencies, civil society organizations and individuals. Her detailed CV lists some of these organizations including World Lung Foundation and Foundation for Civil Society.

Maria Sarungi is also known for being a helping hand to young aspiring women in the fashion industry as she is a Director at Miss Universe Tanzania. She is also known for her advocacy for change through the use of social media to promote the right to education for young women and fighting discrimination against women.

Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) therefore takes this opportunity to recognize Ms. Maria Sarungi Tsehali for her continuous efforts in defending human rights online as a Distinguished Online Human Rights Defender through the Twitter platform.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**



# MILLARD AYO

## **DISTINGUISHED CHAMPION OF ONLINE TVs IN TANZANIA 2018**

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Millard Ayo is a prominent Tanzanian journalist, blogger and founder of the famous AYO TV; one of the first online YouTube news channels in Tanzania.

Through AYO TV, Millard Ayo has set high standards in the Media industry. Millard also broadcasts for Clouds FM through **'AMPLIFAYA'** and his website millardayo.com has immensely contributed to his fame. His road to fame began after joining ITV / Radio One in 2008 before later working for Clouds FM in 2010.

Earlier in his broadcasting career, Millard Ayo worked for TVZ in Zanzibar, and later as a news reporter at Wapo Radio FM. He later joined ITV/Radio One in 2008 where he was heard on various occasions but it was 'MILAZO 101' and ITV sports news that made his breakthrough in the Media industry.

So far Millard Ayo has received 4 journalism awards in his career, including the Best Radio Presenter Award in 2006 from the Tanzania Radio Awards and the best Website Award in 2012 from Vodacom Tanzania.

In commemorating the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Day today, on 28th April 2019, the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) feels great pride in recognizing journalist Millard Ayo for Championing Online TVs in Tanzania over the years.

**EXTOLMENT!**



# SALMA SAID

## **DISTINGUISHED HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER THROUGH THE FACEBOOK PLATFORM 2018**

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Ms. Salma Said is a Zanzibari professional investigative journalist reporting for radio Deutsche Welle (DW) in Tanzania through 'MBIU YA MNYONGE' and THRDC's WATETEZI TV. As an investigative journalist, between the years 2000 and 2015, she published a number of news articles for Mwananchi and The Citizen Newspapers. She is also an active online Human Rights Defender mainly through the Facebook platform. Apart from being a Human Rights Defender, she is an active member of the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC).

Ms. Salma Said had been passionate about defending human rights since 2002 when her NGO (Zanzibar Women Rights) was denied registration, whence she resolved to pursue a career in Journalism. This was her alternative to speaking truth to power especially against human rights violations, especially women rights in her society.

In March 2016, Ms. Salma was abducted by unknown assailants shortly after landing at the Julius Nyerere International Airport. At the time, Ms Salma had been reporting on the Zanzibar political situation through Deutsche Welle (DW) and on her Facebook page. According to Ms. Salma, her series of Zanzibar political situation reports, had led to her receiving threats from anonymous people several times and that was possibly the reason for her abduction.

THRDC together with the Media Council of Tanzania and the Tanzania Editors Forum publicly condemned the abduction of Ms. Salma Said through a joint press statement on 19th March 2016, and she was later found.

For her continuous zeal in exercising her right to freedom of expression and her relentless efforts in defending human rights online through Facebook, today the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) recognizes Ms. Salma Said as a Distinguished Human Rights Defender on the Facebook platform.

**FELICITATION!**



# TTCL

NATIONAL ICT BROADBAND BACKBONE (NICTBB)

## **RECOGNIZED FOR CHAMPIONING RELIABLE INTERNET ACCESS IN TANZANIA 2018**

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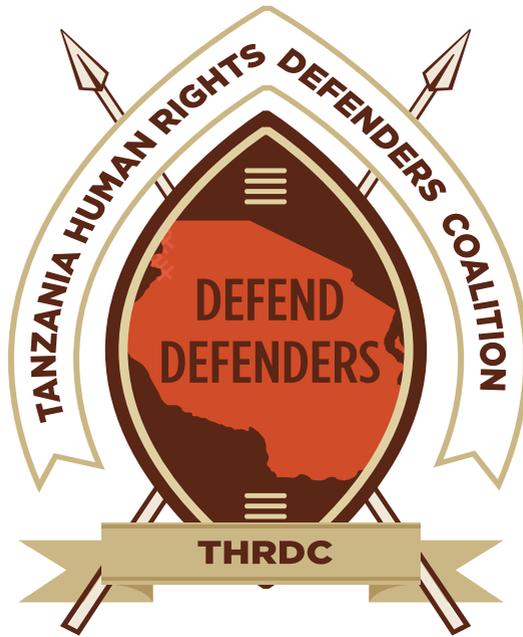
The number of internet users in Tanzania is fast increasing, from just about 520,000 internet users in 2009, to more than 23 million internet users now in 2019. This is hugely attributed to the establishment of the National ICT Broadband Backbone (NICTBB) in Tanzania back in 2009 by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to deliver Tanzanian Internet users with fast, efficient and affordable data traffic to support a range of industries, including e-education, telemedicine, e-agriculture, e-commerce, and e-governance – even in the remotest parts of the country. The NICTBB infrastructure also now serves more than 6 neighboring countries (some of them being landlocked); Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi, DRC and Zambia.

The National ICT Broadband Backbone (NICTBB) is managed and operated by the Tanzania Telecommunications Company Ltd. (TTCL) on behalf of the government of the United Republic of Tanzania, through the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology (MCST).

The National ICT Broadband Backbone (NICTBB) helps to fulfil the increasing demands of information services, strengthen competitive abilities of domestic data and voice operators as well as bridging the digital divide. It is necessary in developing high speed broadband and helps to efficiently exploit the benefits from undersea submarine cables landing in Dar es Salaam by providing high quality capacity fiber optic connectivity from Tanzania to within Africa and the rest of the world.

Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), therefore recognizes the contribution made by the **Tanzania Telecommunications Company Ltd. (TTCL)** towards increasing internet penetration in Tanzania and for Championing reliable Internet Access in Tanzania and neighboring countries through the **National ICT Broadband Backbone (NICTBB)**.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**



*“DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS IS NOT A CRIME”*



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