



NEWSLETTER

April - June

2024



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As we look back over the past quarter, HRCU has continued to make strides and in contributing towards promoting and protecting the rights and wellbeing of human rights defenders in Uganda so as to create a safe and secure working environment through advocacy and policy influencing, provision of emergency and medium protection support, and capacity building interventions.

During the previous quarter, HRCU's national advocacy registered remarkable success, particularly with the launch and dissemination of a national Community Based Organisations (CBOs) register by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, during the quarterly dialogue meeting between Government and the CSO Leaders which was held by HRCU on June 20, 2024 in Kampala.

In a significant effort to promote human rights understanding among law enforcement officers, HRCU conducted two comprehensive training sessions at the Kabalye and Olilim Police Training Schools. These sessions were squarely designed to equip the officers with a robust understanding of human rights principles and their practical application in their daily duties. A total of 160 police officers participated in these trainings. These initiatives are part of HRCU's broader strategy to enhance the overall human rights environment in Uganda by empowering key stakeholders within the access to justice system.

On looking ahead, HRCU will continue with its interventions of enhancing a sustainable relationship between Government and the CSO sector in Uganda, reducing on cases of human rights violations in Northern Uganda, research, monitor and document the key emerging issues within the human rights and HRD environment. To that end, HRCU plans more national and community-based advocacy campaigns to ensure that every voice is heard and every right is protected.

HRCU extends its deepest gratitude to all its partners, donors, other key stakeholders. Your unwavering support is the backbone of our work. Together, we are making a difference and paving the way for a society where rights are protected and upheld.

Stay informed and get involved by following us on our social media channels and visiting our website for the latest updates and opportunities to support our mission.

Enjoy the read!



NEWS, INFORMATION AND KEY HIGHLIGHTS.

CSOs Appeal Museveni to Veto Amendment Bill, Expresses Concerns Over NGO Bureau Rationalization.

A group of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) urged President Museveni to reconsider approving the NGO (Amendment) Act, 2024, citing concerns about the rationalisation of the NGO Bureau. On Tuesday, April 23, 2024, Parliament passed the NGO (Amendment) Bill for the year 2024. The bill is currently awaiting the president's assent to become law.

The executive director of Human Rights Centre Uganda, Margret Sekaggya emphasised that the Bureau had developed expertise in the work of civil society and was being consulted within the region.

"Now that we have acquired this expertise, disbanding the NGO Bureau would mean starting from scratch. What happens to the expertise built over the years? Instead of abolishing the bureau, the government should strengthen it to ensure its continued effectiveness," she stated.

Sekaggya also expressed concerns about the efficiency of the department within the Ministry.

"It will take a lot of time to obtain a certificate of operation within a department. It was already difficult to obtain a certificate, and we would have preferred to improve the process. Now the bureau will go back to the ministry," she stated.

[Read more](#)



HRCU Trains Police Officers at Kabalye and Olilim Police Training Schools

HRCU in the previous quarter conducted a series of intensive training sessions for Uganda Police officers at Kabalye and Olilim Police Training Schools. These 2-day trainings attracted a total of 160 police officers and formed part of HRCU's wider strategy to enhance the capacity of law enforcement officers in applying the human rights-based approach principles in their daily duties, Human Rights Enforcement Act, 2019, while ensuring a respectable and humane approach to policing. The successful completion of these trainings marked a significant milestone in HRCU's efforts to promote human rights understanding within the law enforcement and access to justice sector.



Nabacwa Josephine (Programme Assistant- Legal) , while facilitating a session on human rights at Kabalye Police Training School, Masindi.

Dialogue Meeting between CBOs, NGOs and the Minister of Internal Affairs on Streamlining Community Based Organisation (CBO) Operations.

HRCU facilitated a significant dialogue meeting on June 20, 2024, bringing together over 250 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) leaders across the country and, the Minister of Internal Affairs. The meeting aimed at addressing critical issues related to the operations and regulatory frameworks of CBOs and NGOs in Uganda. The dialogue concluded with the launch and distribution of a national CBO register by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and a shared commitment to sustained engagement and dialogue. Plans were laid out for regular consultations between government officials, civil society representatives, and HRCU to monitor progress, address emerging challenges, and refine policy recommendations within the CSO sector. The launch of the CBO register was presided over by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Lt. Gen. Joseph Musanyufu.

The establishment of this comprehensive CBO register marked a significant milestone in the journey toward greater transparency and accountability within the civil society sector. By providing an accessible and up-to-date database of all CBOs operating within the country, this initiative aims to advance and create a more collaborative environment for CBOs to thrive.



A group photo of some of the high-level attendees at the quarterly Dialogue meeting.



A photo of the HRCU's Executive Director Ms. Margaret Sekaggya together with other stakeholders and the Ministry of Internal Affairs Permanent Secretary, Lt. Gen Joseph Musanyufu while launching the national CBO Register.

Launch of the 28th State of Rule of Law Report by Uganda Law Society.

On April 19, 2024 HRCU's Executive Director Ms. Margaret Sekaggya represented HRCU at the launch of the '28th State of Rule of Law' report by Uganda Law Society. Her presence underscored HRCU's commitment to promoting human rights and ensuring adherence to legal standards across Uganda. Ms. Sekaggya's participation also highlighted HRCU's active engagement in shaping legal discourse and fostering a culture of accountability and justice as way of improving on the working environment of HRDs.

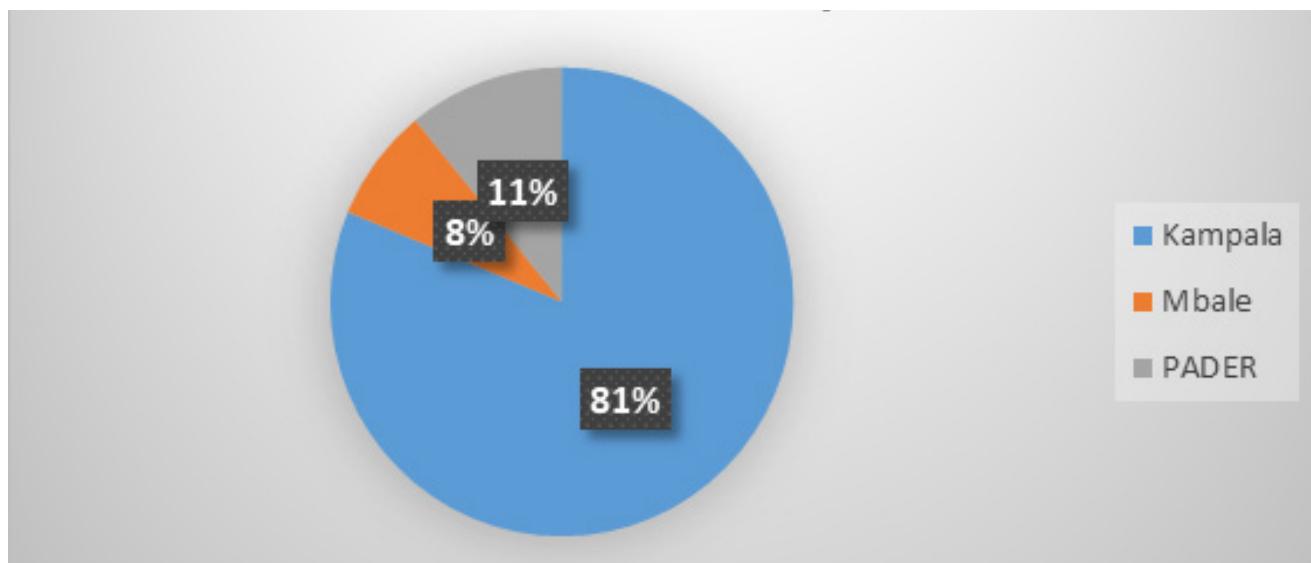


ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING

In the previous quarter, HRCU's advocacy efforts reached a significant number of stakeholders and community members, demonstrating the impact and breadth of their initiatives. Specifically, a total of 395 stakeholders, comprising 265 men and 130 women, from the districts of Kampala, Mbale, and Pader, were actively engaged. These stakeholders were provided with essential information and training on human rights principles, access to justice, good governance, and accountability, reflecting HRCU's commitment to promotion an informed and empowered populace.

Additionally, HRCU's outreach extended to 696 community members, with a notable gender distribution of 319 men and 377 women, from the same districts. This extensive engagement ensured that critical knowledge and resources were disseminated widely, promoting a deeper understanding of human rights and the mechanisms available for access to justice and governance.

People engaged Per District (395)



Regional Reflection Meeting between NGO Bureau, District/City NGO Monitoring Committees (D/CNMCs) and other key stakeholders.

In a bid to enhance relations between the civil society organization (CSO) sector and the Government, HRCU conducted two intensive 2-day reflection meetings. These meetings brought together the NGO Bureau, District/City Non-Governmental Organizations Monitoring Committees (D/CNMCs), various NGOs, and other key stakeholders from the Acholi sub-region and the Bugisu sub-regions. The engagements were held on 12th-13th March 2024 and 7th-8th May 2024, respectively.

The meetings attracted a total of 78(45males 33 Females) participants who included NGO leaders from the various districts making up Acholi and Bugisu sub regions, NGO Monitoring Committee members, and other key representatives from different Government MDAs. This initiative not only deepened relationships but also laid a solid foundation for ongoing dialogue and joint initiatives aimed at addressing underlying NGO regulatory issues.

These reflection meetings also served as an opportunity for CSOs to voice their concerns and share experiences directly with government representatives, ensuring that their perspectives

were heard and considered in policy-making processes. The constructive dialogues paved the way for identifying practical solutions and strategies to enhance cooperation and build trust between the CSO sector and the government.

During the reflection meetings, the Executive Director of the NGO Bureau, Mr. Okello Stephen, facilitated insightful sessions focusing on the NGO Regulatory policy. He emphasized the critical compliance obligations that NGOs must adhere to, highlighting the importance of transparency, accountability, and adherence to the legal frameworks governing NGO operations.

Other key regulators, including Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), Personal Data Protection Office (PDPO) and Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA) took participants through their respective legal and compliance requirements in order to enhance their operational integrity, build trust with stakeholders, and contribute to a more transparent and accountable CSO sector.



Mr. David Ngobi from the Financial Intelligence Authority while facilitating a session on money laundering, terrorism financing and good practices for NGOs



Mr. Okello Stephen, while facilitating at the reflection meeting in Gulu district.



Some of the participants during the reflection meeting in Mbale district





RADIO TALK SHOWS

From April to June 2024, HRCU embarked on a series of engagements and informative radio talk shows as part of its intervention aimed at reducing human rights abuses and violations in Northern Uganda. During this period, HRCU held three radio talk shows in Pader, Kampala, and Moroto districts, focusing on the human rights-based approach and its underlying elements.

The first talk show was held on Rapa Fm in Pader district on Thursday 18th April 2024, the second talk show was held on Thursday 2nd May 2024 on Radio One Fm 90 in Kampala and the third radio talk show was held in Moroto district on Ateker Moroto Fm.

These radio talk shows were instrumental in spreading knowledge about human rights and empowering communities with the information needed to advocate for their rights effectively. By utilizing radio, HRCU was able to reach diverse audiences across different regions, fostering a greater understanding of human rights issues and encouraging active participation in human rights advocacy.

The discussions highlighted among other things the importance of integrating human rights principles into various aspects of governance and community development in the districts.

Community Dialogue in Gulu and Mbale

HRCU under the good governance and enhancement of a sustainable relationship between Government and CSOs intervention, held two (2) community dialogues on 15th March and 9th May, 2024 in Gulu district (Paicho Sub County) and Mbale (Busoba Sub County), and these were organized and conducted to assess the composition and effectiveness of the Sub County NGO Monitoring Committee and observe the level of appreciation of the roles of NGOs/CBOs operating in the sub county. The community dialogue also sought to provide a platform for community members, NGOs/CBOs to come together and discuss the NGO regulatory framework, share their collective concerns and challenges arising from the NGO regulatory framework.





Photo| Community dialogue at Busoba Sub County, Mbale district.



District Public Dialogue in Pader District.

A district public dialogue was held in Pader with the aim of bringing together duty bearers and human rights defenders in a unified forum. This event provided a platform for a comprehensive discussion on the human rights situation within Pader district and the broader Acholi sub-region.

During the dialogue, participants engaged in full-bodied discussions addressing key human rights issues affecting the region. These included topics such as access to justice, Sexual and Gender Based Violence, protection of vulnerable groups, and the promotion of social and economic rights. The forum also provided an opportunity for the compilation/development of an issues paper that shall inform discussions at the national level during the roundtable meetings with the Access to Justice Sub Programme actors.

Community Dialogues on Human Rights and Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to Law Enforcement.

In a bid to raise advocacy on the human rights-based approach to law enforcement in Northern Uganda region, HRCU conducted 2 community dialogues in the districts of Pader and Moroto targeting local leaders, cultural leaders, law enforcement officers, community members, and human rights defenders.

The first community dialogue was held in Pader district at Pajule Town Council Headquarters on Friday 19th April 2024 and brought together a total of 268 participants (103 males and 165 females). The second dialogue took place on 7th June 2024 in Moroto district at Katikekile Sub County and drew 247 participants (107 males and 145 females).

Both dialogues emphasized the critical role of community engagement in promoting human rights and the need for continuous education and advocacy. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, HRCU aimed to create a supportive environment for addressing human rights concerns and enhancing the capacity of law enforcement agencies to operate within a human rights framework.

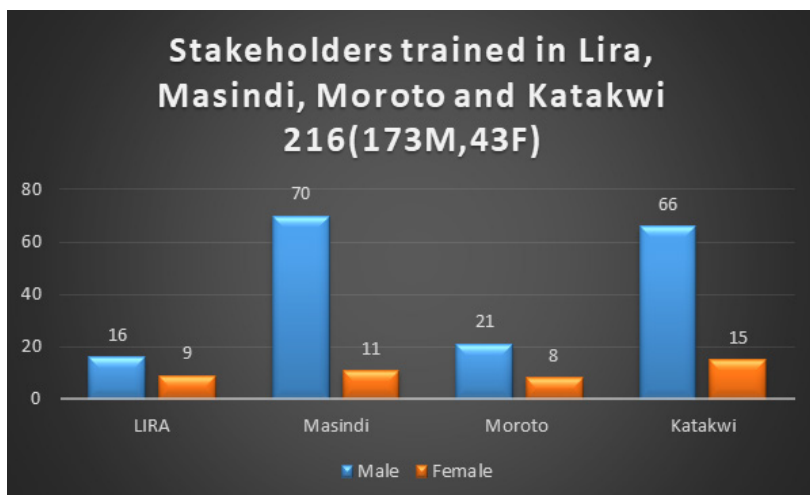




CAPACITY BUILDING

Throughout April and June, HRCU's capacity-building docket implemented a range of activities aimed at empowering Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), key government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), access to justice actors, and the broader community. These initiatives are designed to enhance their understanding and application of human rights principles, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach to defending and promoting human rights across various sectors.

A total of 216 (173M 43F) state and non- state actors were vigorously trained and reached on different concepts including human rights, access to justice, measures to combat torture and good practices in the realm of defending human rights.



NON-RESIDENTIAL WORKSHOPS ON HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWS

Two non-residential workshops were organised and conducted between April and June 2024.

The first workshop took place in Pader district on 16th and 17th April 2024 and it was attended by twenty-five (25) (16 male and 9 female) duty bearers and human rights defenders from Pader district.

The second workshop took place on 5th and 6th June 2024 in Moroto district and was attended by twenty-nine (29) out of the thirty invited participants. Of these, twenty-one (21) were males and eight (8) were females.

The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to law enforcement emphasizes the integration of human rights principles into the daily activities of law enforcement officers. This approach ensures that the enforcement of laws does not infringe upon the rights of individuals but rather protects and promotes these rights.



Stakeholders during the workshop training in Pader district.

TRAINING WITHIN POLICE TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Two workshops were conducted to build the capacity and enhance knowledge of Police officers on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) to implementation of laws/law enforcement.

The first workshop was held on 28th and 29th May 2024 at Police Training School at Kabalye (Masindi district). It brought together eighty (80) Police Officers

The second workshop for Police officers was organized and conducted on 12th and 13th June 2024 at Counter Terrorism Police Training School, Olilim in Katakwi District. It was attended by eighty (80) Police officers



Photo| Group photo of police officers during the training at Kabalye Police Training School



Mr. Kamadi Byonabye, from the Uganda Human Rights Commission taking police officers through the HRBA principles at Olilim Police Training School, Katakwi district.

DIGITAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Throughout the quarter under review, HRCU continued to leverage its social media and digital media presence, engaging extensively with its audience. HRCU embarked on two major campaigns, **#GovtCsoDialogue2024** and **#NorthernUGRightsRestore**, to disseminate and amplify its advocacy and training interventions across various activities.

The **#GovtCsoDialogue2024** campaign focused on the dialogue meeting between the CSO sector and the Minister of Internal Affairs. This campaign aimed to foster better relations and understanding between civil society organizations and the government. Through strategic social media efforts, the campaign successfully generated substantial engagement of retweets 217 and 20,988,981 impressions on X (formerly Twitter).

The **#NorthernUGRightsRestore** campaign was dedicated to reducing on cases of human rights abuses and violations in Kampala, Pader, Lira and Moroto. This campaign aimed to bring attention to the challenges faced by communities in the region and advocate for effective solutions. Through targeted social media posts and digital content, HRCU managed to increase awareness of the human rights situation in Northern Uganda.

HRCU's strategic use of social media and digital platforms remains crucial in amplifying its message and engaging with a diverse audience. The successful implementation of these campaigns not only increased visibility for HRCU's work but also strengthened its position as a key player in advocating for human rights and facilitating constructive dialogue between the CSO sector and the government.



LEGAL AID

Between April and June, HRCU's legal aid docket demonstrated its relentless commitment to providing strategic legal aid and referral services to HRDs and other clients. Our legal aid team worked diligently to offer comprehensive legal support tailored to the specific needs of HRDs and clients.

Cases Handled from April to June by HRCU Legal Team



Case Registered	Cases Handled	Cases Concluded	Cases Referred
32(26F,6M)	32(26F,6M)	2(1M,1F)	30(25F,5M)

3(1F,2M) were walk-in clients while 29(25F, 4M) were registered from the communities of Pader, Moroto and Kitgum



UPCOMING EVENTS

Government- CSO dialogue on taxation issues.



The Human Rights Centre Uganda
Defending Human Rights Defenders