

Taking Human Rights to all amidst COVID-19: April Updates

Special points of interest:

- Enhancing Access to Justice.
- Media Advocacy.

Hello reader,

Welcome to our April newsletter. This month has presented an even bigger challenge to our quest for justice as the COVID-19 pandemic bites harder. With a view to curb the spread of the corona virus, the government issued a number of directives, among which

was restriction on movement.

This was a tipping point in the delivery of legal services during the pandemic.

We had to find alternative ways through which we can provide emergency legal support within the parameters of the presidential directives. We purchased bicycles and motor-bikes to ease our lawyers' movement.



Our Executive Director, HRAPF Directors and Legal Officers pose with their new bicycles.



SANDE ROGERS, OUR LEGAL OFFICER WHO RODE ALL THE WAY TO HOIMA TO OFFER LEGAL SERVICES.

Our Legal Team was able to successfully obtain a certificate of urgency and the case is set for hearing on 12th May 2020.



One of our paralegals, Clovice Nyakatura, in Masaka, shortly before engaging officers at Nyendo Police Station on the arrest of sex workers .

Enhancing Access to Justice.

The COVID 19 lockdown measures sparked violation of human rights, especially against sex workers and LGBT persons. Among the cases we worked on during the month was a police raid on a shelter for 23 homeless LGBT youth. They were arrested because of their apparent sexual orienta-

The prison authorities denied HRAPF lawyers access to their clients, which preempted the filing of *Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF) vs. Attorney General and The Commissioner General of Prisons, High Court Miscellaneous Cause No. 81 of 2020*, which challenges the actions of the Commissioner

We also provided legal aid to 18 sex workers in Kampala, Wakiso and Masaka, who were arrested on charges related to violating the presidential directives on COVID-19, where in many of them were

tion and gender identity, but were formally charged with doing 'a negligent act likely to spread infection of disease,' contrary to Section 171 of the Penal Code Act. Due to the restriction on movement, the HRAPF legal team was not able to represent them at the Chief Magistrates Court of Nsangi, where

General of Prisons as being in violation of the non-derogable right to a fair hearing.

This case is set to be heard on 12th May 2020, following the Court's issuance of a certificate of urgency for its hearing and determination.

found in lodges, which were ordered to close, but they continued to live there because they lack homes. We also represented a leader of the sex worker community in Hoima, who

they were charged, before being remanded to Kitalya Prison.



Our Executive Director, Dr. Adrian Jjuuko, and Mr. Francis Tumwesige, at the Civil Division of the High Court, after successfully making oral submissions on the application for a certificate of urgency.

faced threats of arrest, following media reports of her distributing COVID -19 relief food to sex workers.

ADVOCACY ENGAGEMENTS

Declassifying petty offences amid the COVID-19 pandemic:

We held a strategy meeting with the Coalition to Decriminalise and Declassify Petty Offences in Uganda, from which we drafted a letter to the At-

torney General on decongestion of prisons. This was with a view to further contributing to the protection of petty offenders and marginalised persons that are in detention on charges related to contravening COVID-19 directives, from

the fast-spreading corona virus.

Follow link for more: <https://www.hrapf.org/index.php/10-hrapf-news/95-csos-call-for-further-decongestion-of-prisons-as-part-of-the-covid-19-response>

MEDIA ADVOCACY

As part of our COVID-19 response, we had quite a number of media engagements on the observance of human rights in the COVID-19 era:

- We issued a statement in the *Weekly Observer* on the human rights

implications of Uganda's COVID-19 response. See statement here: <https://t.co/c8j1qLmYdd>

- Our Executive Director made two guest appearances on NTV, discussing human rights and COVID-19,

and the need to recognize legal and judicial services as essential amid the COVID-19 lockdown.



Our Executive Director addressing Human Rights and COVID-19 on the NTV Morning Show.

To watch more click the links

<https://web.facebook.com/NTVUganda/videos/3330872103805094/?sfnsn=mo&d=n&vh=e>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWkG5A3NrIY&feature=youtu.be>

The month of April has challenged us to devise new methods of working; due to the limitations paved by the presidential directives. We thus contin-

ue to serve our clientele, despite the prevailing challenges.

We wish you a Productive May!



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Taking Human Rights To all.