



EAST AFRICA **REPORT**

April 2021

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Abbreviations

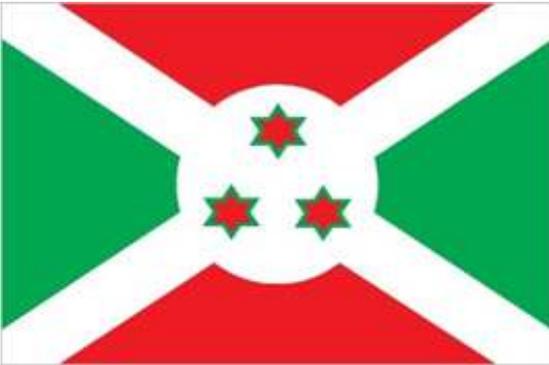
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GHRD	Global Human Rights Defence
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
NDMA	National Drought Management Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
US	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

This report aims at highlighting differentiating human rights-related occurrences as present in the eastern African continent. Its specific focus is on Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, as well as Uganda. It is of crucial importance to highlight the significant human rights progressions and retrogressions of the beforementioned countries and thus, the report covers selected key occasions as were present throughout April 2021. Global Human Rights Defence calls upon the international and national communities, stakeholders as well as governments for constructive policy changes and to support one another in realizing the full enjoyment of human rights of every individual, with a specific focus on those belonging to marginalized and minority groups.

Burundi

Country introduction



The Republic of Burundi is a country located in the Eastern African continent, bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, as well as Tanzania. Its national flag holds a specific meaning for the country; green symbolizes hope and optimism, white symbolizes purity and peace, red symbolizes the blood of those who died in the struggle for independence.

Its three stars symbolize the three main ethnic groups of the country – the Hutu, Twa, and Tutsi – as well as the country's motto: unity, work, progress. According to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the Republic of Burundi – accounting for 27,830 square kilometers – is home to 2,3 million citizens. The country is divided into 18 provinces with Gitega as its political capital and largest city, Bujumbura being its economic capital¹.

The density of its population is mainly found in the country's northern regions, as well as its western regions surrounding Lake Tanganyika. The climate in the country is based on average temperatures, with two differentiating wet seasons as well as two dry seasons. The Republic of Burundi is a presidential republic led by the Head of State, President Evariste Ndayishimiye, who serves the presidential seat as of 2020 for a term of seven years. It gained its independence, from Belgium as its administrating power, on 1 July 1962. The country's legal system remains a mixture of Belgian civil law in conjunction with the country's customary law systems.



To date, both French and English remain the country's official languages, with the former being known to 3 percent of its population and the latter to 1 percent. On the other hand, the Kirundi language accounts for 29,7 percent with an unidentified number of ethnic languages accounting for over 56,9 percent.

1. Burundi – The World Factbook. (2021). CIA Factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/burundi/>

Human Rights Events of April 2021

The Closure of the UN Office in Burundi

The Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Mr. António Guterres, announced in an official statement on 8 April 2021 that the UN Special Envoy Office to Burundi will be closed as of May 31st, 2021 – following the request of the isolated regime of Burundi. In response to Burundi’s deteriorating security and human rights crises, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted resolution 2303 in July 2016.² The Resolution required the UN Secretary-General to report to the UNSC regarding the situation in Burundi every three months. However, the Burundian government has repeatedly demanded that its situation must be removed from the UNSC’s agenda.³ The closing of the UN office reflects a highly political issue, as the presence of the UN in Burundi has been a source of tension for years due to the repetitive contestations from Burundian authorities regarded the need for UNSC observations.

The UN Special Envoys Office was initially established after the nation was plunged into a political crisis in 2015, as then-president Pierre Nkurunziza ran for a disputed third term, sparking violence that killed at least 1,200 people. In May 2020, General Evariste Ndayishimiye was elected as President to succeed



Nkurunziza who passed away in June 2020. However, several UN investigators claimed in September 2020 that severe human rights abuses remain to present under the rule of President Ndayishimiye.⁴

Burundi had previously announced that it would accept assistance on solely socioeconomic development-related issues, following a report by the UN Secretary-General’s Office laying out its strategy for re-engaging with Burundi in 2020. Additionally, Burundi responded by demanding that the UN Special Envoy Office to Burundi would be shut down by December 2020, although a one-year extension was hastily negotiated. Accordingly, the UNSC unanimously adopted in 2020 a declaration in which it called on

2. United Nations Security Council. (2016, 29 July) "Resolution 2303 (2016)" <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2303>

3. Human Rights Watch. (2020, 8 December) "Burundi: UN should ensure regular rights briefings" <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/08/burundi-un-should-ensure-regular-rights-briefings#:~:text=Resolution%202303%2C%20adopted%20in%20July,in%20Burundi%20every%20three%20months.>

4. The East African (2021, 9th April) "UN Burundi office to close May 31" <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/un-burundi-office-to-close-3355148>

Burundi to cooperate with the UN in promoting national reconciliation and the rule of law. The declaration asserts that there is significant work necessary in promoting the rule of law and in regard to establishing an independent and effective judiciary.⁵ Although the UN Special Envoy Office will close, the UN is expected to continue to monitor and report on human rights situations in Burundi by means of its regional meetings.⁶ Specifically, through the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, namely Chinese diplomat Huang Xia.⁷ The UN has a long history of being actively engaged in efforts aimed at bringing peace and stability to Africa's Great Lakes region, including Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Rebuilding Diplomatic Relations

Burundi is rebuilding diplomatic relationships, five years after suffering from political instabilities due to the controversial 2010 re-election of late President Pierre Nkurunziza.⁸ Following this re-election, there have been instances of extra-judicial killings whereby the main opposition of the government was forced out of the country. From 2010 onwards, there has been socio-economic discontent in the country. Current President Evariste Ndayishimiye, elected in June 2020, made state visits to four countries as well as hosting the Ethiopian President and resumed contact with the European Union (EU).

Burundi is keen on resetting diplomatic ties and shaking off years of bad press. President Ndayishimiye visited the Burundian peacekeeping – on 1 April 2021 – which is serving under the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic,⁹ a peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic. Moreover, in the second week of April 2021, two meetings were hosted by



Burundi's Foreign Minister, Mr. Albert Shingiro, with EU representatives regarding the lifting of sanctions imposed by the EU from 2015 onwards. The sanctions placed include penalties towards specific Burundian

5. UNSC. (2020, 4th December) "Statement by the President of the Security Council, 4 Dec 2021" <https://oseb.unmissions.org/en/statement-president-security-council-4-dec-2020#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20Security%20Council%20encourages%20bilateral,of%20financial%20and%20technical%20assistance.>

6. Anderson, L. (2020, 29 December) "UM Security Council ends reporting on Burundi, but human rights monitors remain concerned" <https://globalvoices.org/2020/12/29/un-security-council-ends-reporting-on-burundi-but-human-rights-monitors-remain-concerned/>

7. CGTN Africa (2021, 9th April) "UN Burundi office to shut door on May 31" <https://africa.cgtn.com/2021/04/09/un-burundi-office-to-shut-doors-on-may-31/>

8. The Political and Security Crisis in Burundi. (2020, July 15). Crisis Group. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/burundi/political-and-security-crisis-burundi>

9. AfricaNews. (2021, April 6). After five years of quiet, Burundi is on a diplomatic offensive. <https://www.africanews.com/2021/04/06/after-five-years-of-quiet-burundi-is-on-a-diplomatic-offensive/>

politicians and state officials, leading to the freezing of government finances. More specifically, the EU froze over €432 million of funding from Burundi. Subsequently, Belgium blocked the disbursement of €60 million of foreign aid to Burundi in 2015. However, under the presidency of Ndayishimiye, Burundi's engagement with the United Nations as well as the EU seems to be accelerating – and Burundi is expecting these sanctions to be lifted before the end of 2021.¹⁰

Human Trafficking

Ugandan police forces rescued 29 Burundian girls on 6 April 2021 and simultaneously arrested five suspects involved in a vast human trafficking network, operating in Burundi as such.¹¹ The five suspects were arrested by a joint security team comprising out of crime intelligence services, anti-human trafficking detectives as well as transnational crime investigators.¹²

The spokesperson for the Criminal Investigations and Intelligence Directorate, Mr. Charles Twine, stated

that the girls were in transit to the Gulf countries (Bahrain Kuwait, Iraq, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE). More specifically, the girls were trafficked with the aim of participating in private prostitution services.¹³ The National Observatory for the Fight against Transnational Crime (ONLCT) – an organization fighting against human trafficking – reported at a minimum of 105 women and girls have been a victim of human trafficking in the last three months. The joint



security team was provided with a list of five men allegedly led by Mr. Joseph Garuka, who was later found inside a hotel room in Kampala, Uganda's capital city. Upon his arrest, Mr. Garuka led the security team to a house in Bulenga (Uganda) where 30 other girls were found locked with no means of exit.¹⁴

Practices of human trafficking continue to be a significant problem in Burundi. Oftentimes, perpetrators promise young girls and women access to well-paid jobs in exchange for money resulting in victims being subjected to substantial debts. The latter increases the vulnerable nature of such young girls and women, creating a dependency on the perpetrators for primarily financial means.

10. Nimbubona, D. (2021, April 13). Burundi Sees European Union Lifting Sanctions Before End of Year. Bloomberg. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-04-13/burundi-sees-european-union-lifting-sanctions-before-end-of-year>

11. Xinhua News (2021, 6th April) "Uganda rescues 29 Burundian girls, arrests five suspects in human-trafficking racket" http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2021-04/06/c_139862353.htm

12. The Observer News (2021, 7th April) "Five arrested in Kampala over trafficking 30 Burundian women" <https://observer.ug/news/headlines/69245-five-arrested-in-kampala-over-trafficking-30-burundian-women>

13. Elvis Mugisha (2021, 12th April) "Human trafficking: nearly 30 young Burundian women arrested in Uganda" <https://www.iwacu-burundi.org/trafic-humain-pres-de-30-jeunes-femmes-burundaises-arretees-en-ouganda/>

14. "Trafficking of girls is one of the dehumanizing crimes that is associated with sexual and labor exploitation" Charles Twine, police spokesperson for criminal investigations directorate, Xinhua News (2021, 6th April) "Uganda rescues 29 Burundian girls, arrests five suspects in human-trafficking racket" http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2021-04/06/c_139862353.htm

Ethiopia

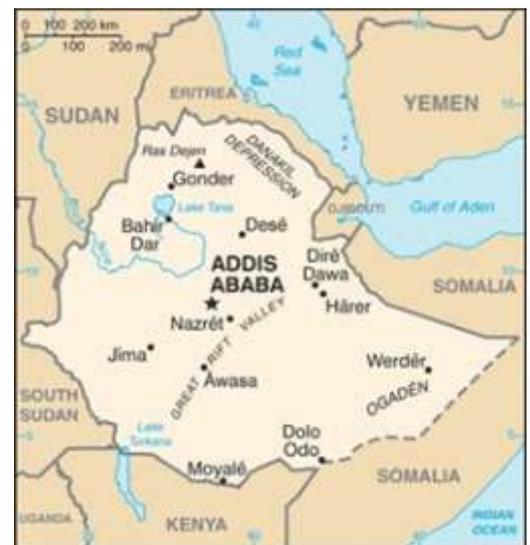
Country introduction



The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Ethiopia) is a landlocked country located in the East African continent, bordering Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, as well as Sudan. Its national flag holds a specific meaning for the country; green symbolizes the hope and fertility of the country, yellow symbolizes justice and harmony, red symbolizes

heroism and the sacrifices in defending the country, with blue symbolizes peace. Its inserted pentagram symbolizes the unity as well as equality of all the nationalities and peoples it is home to .¹⁵

According to the UNFPA, Ethiopia – accounting for 1,104,300 square kilometers – is home to 117,9 million citizens. The country is divided into 9 ethnically based regional states, as well as 2 self-governing administrations with Addis Ababa as its capital and largest city. The density of its population is mainly found in the country's northern highlands regions, as well as the areas surrounding Addis Ababa. The climate in the country climate is based on a tropical monsoon, with variations throughout its large territory. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is a federal parliamentary republic led by the Head of Government, Prime



Minister Abiy Ahmed. Its legal system is based on the civil law school of thought with the Oromo as its official language. However, a wide range of differentiating ethnic languages are recognized as official in the relevant designated regional states.

15. Ethiopia – The World Factbook. (2021). CIA Factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ethiopia/>

Human Rights Events of April 2021

G7 Foreign Ministers Issue a Joint Statement on Tigray



The group of seven (G7) Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (US) in conjunction with the High Representative of the European Union released a joint statement on April 2nd, 2021, regarding the violent situation in the Tigray region, located in northern Ethiopia.¹⁶

The conflict started in November 2020 between the Ethiopian federal army and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Ethiopia's former dominant party in opposition to the current government. Violence erupted following the attack by the TPLF

on a federal army camp, to which the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed responded by deploying government military forces in the region. The attack itself came in response to Tigray's regional leader not recognizing the authority of the country's Prime Minister due to the continuously delayed national elections. Although Prime Minister Ahmed declared victory in a matter of weeks, fighting has continued in the central and southern parts of the Tigray region.

The G7 Foreign Minister Ministers expressed their concern regarding several reports issued by organizations – Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch (HRW), and Doctors Without Borders – accusing Eritrean and Ethiopian troops of human rights abuses in the region.¹⁷ The G7 urged the Ethiopian government to hold perpetrators of human rights crimes accountable and to protect the civilian population as well as ensure unhindered humanitarian aid to those in need. The G7



16. Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. (2021, April 2). G7 Foreign Ministers' statement on the situation in Tigray, Ethiopia, 2 April, 2021.

<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/ethiopia/news/article/g7-foreign-ministers-statement-on-the-situation-in-tigray-ethiopia-2-apr-2021>

17. Deutsche Welle. (2021, April 2). G7 warns of human rights abuses in Ethiopia's Tigray. <https://www.dw.com/en/g7-warns-of-human-rights-abuses-in-ethiopia-tigray/a-57086186> ; Besheer, M. (2021, April 15). UN: Hunger, Rape Rising in Ethiopia's Tigray. Voice of America. <https://www.voanews.com/ethiopia-tigray/un-hunger-rape-rising-ethiopia-tigray>

furthermore welcomed the announcement by Prime Minister Ahmed regarding the withdrawal of Eritrean forces from the Tigray region following the Prime Minister's acknowledgment on March 26th regarding the presence of Eritrean troops in the region and subsequently announced the withdrawal thereof.

Doubts Regarding the Withdrawal of Eritrean Troops in Tigray

Prime Minister Ahmed announced during an official announcement on April 4th, 2021, that Eritrean military troops started the withdrawal process from the conflict-hit Tigray region.¹⁸ However, the United Nations (UN) Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief, Mr. Mark Lowcock, stated on April 15th that neither the United Nations nor any other humanitarian agency had seen sufficient proof of the withdrawal.¹⁹



During a subsequent closed-door meeting of the UN Security Council (UNSC), Mr. Lowcock urged Eritrea to comply with its pledge and recall the troops to execute the promised withdrawal.²⁰ He furthermore continued by expressing his concerns regarding the emerging reports on food insecurity; according to the Ethiopian government, Tigray populates 6 million individuals of which 4,5 million require humanitarian aid and 91 percent need emergency food supplies.²¹

Furthermore, local witnesses likewise bring the departure of the Eritrean forces into question as they allege that the foreign troops remained in the region, as well as reporting several of its military members dressed in the uniforms of the Ethiopian forces.²² Pleas to bring peace to the region further intensified after a video which has been recently circulated by Tigray Media House describes themselves as being a pro-Tigray news channel based in the US. The video depicted men wearing the uniform of Ethiopian Allied Forces, executing civilians suspected of being members of the opposition. Fact-checking websites such as Bellingcat, CNN, and BBC suggest that the video took place near Mahbere Deگو, located in Tigray.²³

18. AfricaNews. (2021, April 4). Ethiopia says Eritrean troops have started to evacuate Tigray. <https://www.africanews.com/2021/04/04/ethiopia-says-eritrean-troops-have-started-to-evacuate-tigray/>

19. Deutsche Welle. (2021, April 16). Tigray crisis worsening with Eritrea still there: UN. <https://www.dw.com/en/tigray-crisis-worsening-with-no-withdrawal-of-eritrean-troops-in-sight-un/a-57220685>

20. Besheer, M. (2021, April 15). UN: Hunger, Rape Rising in Ethiopia's Tigray. Voice of America. <https://www.voanews.com/ethiopia-tigray/un-hunger-rape-rising-ethiopia-tigray>

21. Nichols, M. (2021, April 16). Sexual violence being used as weapon of war in Ethiopia's Tigray, U.N. says. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sexual-violence-being-used-weapon-war-ethiopia-tigray-un-says-2021-04-15/>

22. Associated Press. (2021, 04 03). Ethiopia - Eritrean Troops Pulling Out of Tigray. All Africa. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202104050271.html>

23. All Africa. (2021, 04 02). Ethiopia: Federal Troops Massacred Tigray Captives in Cold Blood - Reports. All Africa. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202104020615.html>

The Need for Humanitarian Aid

A spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, Ms. Stephane Dujarric, stated during an official press briefing on April 6th, 2021, that the humanitarian situation in the Tigray region remains 'dire' despite substantial improvement in humanitarian access.²⁴ The latter is based on emerging reports of active hostilities in the northwestern, central, eastern, southeastern, and southern zones of Tigray between the Ethiopian governmental troops and the TPLF.



Due to the improving access, UN humanitarian forces have been able to go inside the towns of Gijet and Samre, located in the southern and southeastern zones. However, the UN reported on April 20th that the vast majority of the population residing in Gijet and Samre fled from the ongoing violent situation. It furthermore reported that an

estimated group of 2,5 million people in Tigray have, for the last five months, no access to essential services such as hygienic facilities. Resources remain inadequate since there are approximately 4,5 million people in dire need of life-saving assistance in Tigray.²⁵

Newspaper outlet 'The Ethiopian Monitor' reported on April 13th that Belgium donated a sum of €4 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in regard to humanitarian aid for Tigray.²⁶ The Belgium Development Cooperation Minister, Ms. Meryame Kitir, emphasized that Belgium is worried about the ongoing conflict in the Tigray region,



specifically regarding its prolonged nature. Subsequently, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – a US development agency tasked with administering international aid and developmental support – announced on April 2nd that it is providing \$152 million for the Tigray region.²⁷ It will furthermore help more than 3 million in the region who are in need of life-saving aid.²⁸

24. Noon Briefing Highlight. (2017, September 26). United Nations Secretary-General. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/noon-briefing-highlight>

25. Ethiopia: Amidst hostilities in Tigray, humanitarian situation. (2021, April 12). UN News. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1089282>

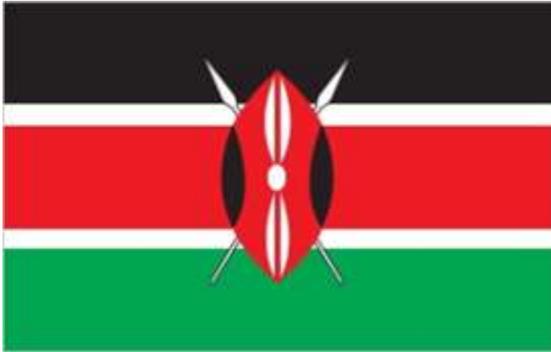
26. Belgium Announces €4m In Humanitarian Aid for Tigray – Ethiopian Monitor. (2021, April 13). Ethiopian Monitor. <https://ethiopianmonitor.com/2021/04/13/belgium-announces-e4m-in-humanitarian-aid-for-tigray/>

27. U.S. Agency for International Development. (2021, April 9). USAID. <https://www.usaid.gov/>

28. The U.S. 'Provides \$152m In to the humanitarian response in Tigray' – Ethiopian Monitor. (2021, April 9). Ethiopian Monitor. <https://ethiopianmonitor.com/2021/04/09/u-s-provides-152m-in-to-humanitarian-response-in-tigray/>; Aid situation worsening in Tigray: UN. (2021, April 16). The East African. <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/rest-of-africa/aid-situation-tigray-3364274>

Kenya

Country introduction



The Republic of Kenya is a country located in the East African continent, bordering Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, as well as Uganda. Its national flag holds a specific meaning to the country; black symbolizes the majority population of the country, red symbolizes the country's struggle in being free, green symbolizes its natural wealth, with symbolizes peace. Its

crossed spears and shield symbolize its defense for freedom. According to the UNFPA, the Republic of Kenya – accounting for 580,367 square kilometers – is home to 55 million citizens. The country is divided into 47 counties with Nairobi as its capital and its largest city, followed by Mombasa.²⁹

The density of its population is mainly found in the country's western region surrounding Lake Victoria, the southeast coastal region along the Indian Ocean, as well as the areas surrounding Nairobi. The climate of the country differs from tropical in the coastal areas to arid in the inland regions. The Republic of Kenya is a presidential republic led by the Head of State, President Uhuru Kenyatta, who serves the presidential seat for a second and final term. It gained its independence, from the United Kingdom as its colonizing power, on 12 December 1963. To date, the country's legal system remains a mixture of English common law in conjunction with Islamic law as well as customary law. Both the English and Kiswahili languages are recognized as official, although various ethnic languages are not unfamiliar to the country.



29. Kenya – The World Factbook. (2021). CIA Factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/kenya/>

Human Rights Events of April 2021

Drought and Hunger

Residents of the Mandera, Garissa, Wajir, and Isiolo Counties – situated in the northeastern part of Kenya – as well as Turkana County located in the country's northwestern region, have been experiencing a food crisis and shortages due to persisting drought.³⁰ The Kenyan National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) is a governmental body tasked with the establishment of mechanisms to ensure that drought does not result in emergencies as well as regulating that the impacts of climate change are sufficiently mitigated. In March 2021, the NDMA warned of the deteriorating food crises caused by persisting poor rainfalls in the pastoral counties.³¹



Kenyan Government spokesperson, Mr. Cyrus Oguna, announced during a press conference on April 1st, 2021, that an estimated 1.4 million Kenyans are currently facing severe hunger due to persisting drought.³² The beforementioned countries experience low rainfalls, as necessary for agricultural growth and thus, putting many families at risk due to lack of access to food.³³ Drought represents an impact on human health

including risks of food and water shortages. It likewise poses an increased risk of malnutrition as well as water and food-borne diseases such as Salmonella and the prolonged survival of the E.coli bacteria.³⁴

A survey titled 'Food Situation During the COVID-19 Pandemic' commenced by the National Information Platform for Food Security and Nutrition project team under the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics as well as the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis paints a worrying picture of Kenyans. As the COVID-19 pandemic rages on, most families find themselves with less money. Based on the latter, the survey found that 44 of



30. Silas Apollo (2021, 1st April) "1.4m face hunger as Kenya fights Covid, drought, State says" <https://www.theeastafrikan.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/kenyans-facing-hunger-3345774>

31. Agatha Ngotho (2021, 17th March) "1.4 million Kenyans facing hunger as food crisis worsen" <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2021-03-16-14-million-kenyans-facing-hunger-as-food-crisis-worsens/>

32. Government Spokesman Cyrus Oguna speaks on April 1, 2021 at a national press conference that an estimated 1.4 million Kenyans are currently facing hunger, a figure that is likely to rise in the coming days if a solution is not found <https://www.theeastafrikan.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/kenyans-facing-hunger-3345774>

33. The state says 1.4m Kenyans facing hunger. (2021, April 1). Nation. <https://nation.africa/kenya/news/state-says-1-4m-kenyans-facing-hunger-3344790>

34. ReliefWeb (2021, 18th March) "The Impact of disasters and crises on agriculture and food security: 2021" +

every 100 Kenyans eat fewer meals and smaller portions compared to prior to the pandemic. The most striking revelation emerging from the survey, which was filled out by 30,000 citizens, revealed that 58 percent of the population is consuming less than the recommended nutritional intake. The stagnating economy and droughts across the country resulted in increased food prices, with staples such as onions doubling in price, further amplifying the issue at hand.³⁵



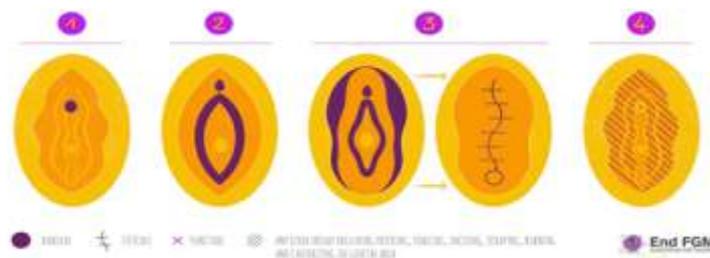
To date, the Mandera and Marsabit Counties – located in northern Kenya – are experiencing some of the worst hunger crises. After a year and a half of suboptimal rainfalls, families in the regions struggle to make ends meet. As many of them rely on agriculture for self-sustenance as well as income, the lack of consistent rain causes irreparable damages. Households are forced to choose between feeding themselves or their

livestock, resulting in the death of vast amounts of farm animals in the region. The issue is further complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic which restricts the abilities of the locals to move between counties to sell their livestock or acquire food elsewhere.³⁶ In order to mitigate the beforementioned, the Kenyan government introduced measures such as food distribution, cash transfer programs as well as drought-resistant crops and fertilizers. It furthermore distributed \$20 million to the families affected to support their livelihoods.³⁷ As it is highly likely that the number of families will increase significantly, the Kenyan government requested development partners UNICEF and the World Bank for their assistance.

Increasing FGM Practices

Anti-FGM Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Loloju, spoke on 1 April 2021 during the Country Gender Sector Working Group (CGSWG) meeting in Maralal, northern Kenya – of a new wave of female genital mutilation (FGM). The CGSWG coordinates gender-related issues as present within the country.³⁸

The practice of FGM must be understood as the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for



35. Saya, M. (2021, 04 20). 44 of 100 Kenyans eat fewer meals in Covid belt-tightening. The Star. <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2021-04-19-44-of-100-kenyans-eat-fewer-meals-in-covid-belt-tightening/>

36. Walter, J., & Otsialo, M. (2021, 04 05). Kenya: Urgent Cry for Help as Thousands Go Hungry. All Africa. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202104060069.html>

37. 1.4m Kenyans facing hunger, state says. (2021, April 2). The East African. <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/kenyans-facing-hunger-3345774>

38. Kenya News Agency. (2021, April 1). Nurses paid to perform FGM put on notice. <https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/nurses-paid-to-perform-fgm-put-on-notice/>

non-medical reasons.³⁹ As further stated by Ms. Loloju, the new wave of FGM includes parents secretly paying qualified nurses to carry out the practice on their children. It is based on the latter that Ms. Loloju firmly stated that nurses, among others who perform FGM practices, will be held responsible before the Court of law.

The news comes despite a decade-long ban on FGM practices in Kenya as Parliament passed in 2011 the 'Prohibition on Female Genital Mutilation Act'. The Act prohibits FGM, bans certified doctors from performing the practice, and imposes a strict punishment. The latter consist of a fine of Ksh 215,5000, an equivalent of \$2,000 in conjunction with a three-year prison sentence.⁴⁰ Yet, despite the adoption of the Act, FGM practices are to date still prevalent in Kenyan communities – where the practice is viewed as necessary for social acceptance as well as increasing the marital prospects of young girls and women. According to the United Nations Population Fund, approximately 21 percent of Kenyan women and girls, ranging between the ages of 15 to 49, have undergone some form of FGM.⁴¹

On 17 March 2021, the High Court of Kenya upheld the ban on FGM by dismissing a petition filed in 2017 by a female doctor, Ms. Tatu Kamau – seeking to legalize FGM for consenting adults.⁴² The right to cultural and religious life is provided for in the Kenyan Constitution and based on the latter, the High Court of Kenya ruled that FGM violates the right to practice one's cultural life, though limitations to its enjoyment may be imposed. More specifically, it explained that "there is no doubt that FGM was central to the culture of some communities in Kenya, including the Kikuyu, to which the petitioner belongs. However, from the medical evidence, we are left in no doubt about the negative short term and long-term effects of FGM on women's health".⁴³ Considering the nature of this harm, the High Court found that constitutional rights can face justifiable limitations in order to prevent the accumulation of violating other core human rights. It furthermore argued that FGM practices bear the high potential to result in violations of the right to health, human dignity – and where deaths are caused – the right to life.⁴⁴

Furthermore, on 5 April 2021, two men in Kacheliba sub-county in West Pokot County, located in western Kenya, were arrested by the police for forcing their wives to undergo FGM. When found, the two women were in a state of crucial pains in conjunction with extensive bleedings. Both were immediately rushed to the Kacheliba sub-county hospital and later transferred to the Amudat District Hospital in neighboring Uganda.⁴⁵ Following the arrest, the two husbands were brought to the Kacheliba police station and will be prosecuted in Court. To date, the police are still looking for the suspects who performed FGM.⁴⁶

39. The End FGM European Network. (n.d.). What is Female Genital Mutilation. Retrieved April 5, 2021, from <https://www.endfgm.eu/female-genital-mutilation/what-is-fgm/>

40. Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act No. 32 of 2011. (2021). National Council for Law Reporting (Kenya Law). http://kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/ProhibitionofFemaleGenitalMutilationAct_No32of2011.pdf

41. United Nations Population Fund. (2021). United Nations Population Fund Female Genital Mutilation Dashboard (FGM) - Kenya. Retrieved April 5, 2021, from <https://www.unfpa.org/data/fgm/KE>

42. Yadav, M. (2021, March 19). Kenya court dismisses petition to allow female genital mutilation for consenting adults. Jurist. <https://www.jurist.org/news/2021/03/kenya-court-dismisses-petition-to-allow-female-genital-mutilation-for-consenting-adults/>

43. Tatu Kamau v. Attorney General & 2 Ors, Equality Now & 9 Ors (Interested Parties), Katiba Institute & another (Amicus Curiae), High Court of Kenya (2021). <http://kenyalaw.org/caselaw/cases/view/209223/>

44. Yusuf, M. (2021, March 17). Kenyan Court Upholds Ban on Female Genital Mutilation. Voice of America. <https://www.voanews.com/africa/kenyan-court-upholds-ban-female-genital-mutilation>

45. Kamama, M. (2021, April 5). Two men arrested for forcing their wives to undergo FGM. The Standard. <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/rift-valley/article/2001408610/two-men-arrested-for-forcing-their-wives-to-undergo-fgm>

46. Opera News. (2021, April 5). Two Men arrested For Allegedly Forcing Their Wives To Undergo FGM. <https://ke.opera.news/ke/en/society/443f24f63b385e5ac10fa99f2efa4512>



Similarly, the 80-years-old woman named Ms. Elizabeth Baliach was arrested on 19 April 2021 in her house while performing FGM on five women in Bomet county – southwest Kenya.⁴⁷ The five women ranged between the age of 25 to 35 years old; they were hospitalized at the Longisa County Referral Hospital and are

currently receiving treatment.⁴⁸ According to Cheboin Chief, Mr. Alfred Orwasa, the police received a tip-off from the general public.⁴⁹ Following a raid, Ms. Elizabeth Baliach was arrested, and her tools were seized.

The Invisibility of Women in the Media Industry

Women active in the Kenyan media industry claimed in an interview taking place on 17 April 2021 with The Star News – a leading news outlet in Kenya – that they remain to be unseen as well as being neglected. According to The Star, merely 8,1 percent of the Kenyan media houses are being run by women. When being represented in the media, women are largely objectified, harassed, and bullied. A well-known journalist for various Kenyan news outlets, Ms. Patricia Andago, interviewed rural women in Kenya and concluded that women lagged in news consumption as women are less likely to read the news. Ms. Andago stated that the latter is due to the gathering structural issues, such as gender-based assigned roles or stories that are considered being ‘soft’ whereas the more ‘hard-nosed’ stories are essentially dominated by men in the media.⁵⁰ Moreover, the workplace for women in journalism presents burdens to their safety, security, and well-being due to threats of sexual harassment.

The Media Council of Kenya reported in November 2020 that a minimum of 73 percent of women active in the Kenyan media industry is more likely to experience sexual harassment. The Kenyan Ministry of Health

47. Ruto, P. (2021, April 19). Five women hospitalized after undergoing FGM, 80yr-old arrested. Citizen Digital. <https://citizentv.co.ke/news/five-women-hospitalized-after-undergoing-fgm-80yr-old-arrested-10263376/>

48. Kolongi, L. (2021, April 20). Five women hospitalized after undergoing FGM. Kenya Peoples Assembly News. <https://kenyapeoplesassembly.com/law-order/five-women-hospitalized-after-undergoing-fgm/>

49. Auma, M. (2021, April 19). 80 Year-old Arrested as Five Women Are Hospitalized After Undergoing FGM in Bomet. KahawaTungu. <https://www.kahawatungu.com/80-year-old-arrested-as-five-women-are-hospitalized-after-undergoing-fgm-in-bomet/>

50. Kiai, M. W. G. (2021, April 17). Women unseen, unheard, unattended and neglected in Kenya's media. The Star. <https://www.the-star.co.ke/siasa/2021-04-17-women-unseen-unheard-unattended-and-neglected-in-kenyas-media/>



furthermore reported at least 5,000 cases of sexual violence against women in 2020, with 65 percent of the cases involving girls below the age of 18. Throughout March and April 2021, approximately 35,8 percent of all reported criminal matters involve sexual offenses. Additionally, 14 percent of women – between the ages of 15 to 49 years – reported having

experienced some form of sexual violence.⁵¹ Based on the beforementioned, Ms. Andago along with the Association of Media Women in Kenya, calls for serious thoughts and interventions across the different struggles concerning women in the media.

51. Muchangi, J. (2021, April 15). Millions of Kenyan women lack power to refuse sex — UNFPA. The Star. <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2021-04-15-millions-of-kenyan-women-lack-power-to-refuse-sex--unfpa/>

Malawi

Country introduction



The Republic of Malawi is a landlocked country located in the East African continent, bordering Mozambique, Tanzania, as well as Zambia. Its national flag holds a specific meaning to the country; black symbolizes the native peoples of the country, red symbolizes the bloodshed in the country's struggle for freedom, green symbolizes its nature. The upcoming sun symbolizes its hope of freedom for the totality

of the African continent. According to the UNPFA, the Republic of Malawi – accounting for 118,484 square kilometers – is home to 19,6 million citizens. The country is divided into 28 districts with Lilongwe as its capital and largest city, followed by Blantyre-Limbe.⁵²

The density of its population is mainly found in the country's southern regions surrounding Lake Nyasa. The climate in the country is sub-tropical, with a rainy season from November to May and a dry season from May to November. The Republic of Malawi is a presidential republic led by the Head of State, President Lazarus Chakwera, who serves the presidential seat since June 2020. It gained its independence, from the United Kingdom as its colonizing power, on 6 July 1964. To date, the country's legal system remains a mixture of English common law in conjunction with customary law. Similarly, its official language is English, with Chewa as its common language. Nevertheless, the Lambya, Lomwe, Ngoni, Nkhonde, Nyakyusa, Nyanja, Sena, Tonga, Tumbuka, and Yoa are not unfamiliar to the country.



52. Malawi – The World Factbook. (2021). CIA Factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/malawi/>

Human Rights Events of April 2021

Dzaleka Refugee Camp

The Dzaleke refugee camp, located in the central region of the Dowa District, is the largest and only refugee camp in Malawi. As of February 2021, Dzaleka is home to 48,547 refugees and asylum seekers while it can merely host 10,000 and is growing by the day. The refugee camp was established in 1994 by the Government of Malawi and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to accommodate people fleeing genocide, violence, and civil wars in Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).⁵⁴



However, during an official press conference on 16 April 2021, the Malawian Homeland Security Minister, Hon Richard Chimwendo Banda, announced that refugees and asylum seekers are subjected to a new policy.⁵⁵ The Malawian government provides refugees and asylum seekers who leave the Dzaleke refugee camp 14 days to return to the camp.

If a return does not take place within those 14 days, forced evictions will be executed.⁵⁶ Minister Chimwendo Bando furthermore continued by explaining that refugees who are currently living amongst the communities outside of the camp, can pose a danger to the country's national security and are intentionally acting against the government's Encampment Policy.⁵⁷ The latter entails a governmental policy that restricts refugees from certain rights, such as access to tertiary education and formal employment. As a result of the Encampment Policy, many refugees, especially Burundians, leave the camp and conduct businesses in other towns and trading centers to make a living. Nevertheless, the Malawian government remains to uphold its 'contested' policy and fiercely stated that the latter group will be evicted and forcedly relocated back to Dzaleka.

53. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) (2021, January 31st) <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/85005>; <https://reliefweb.int/report/malawi/malawi-unhcr-fact-sheet-january-2021>

54. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2021, 1st April) <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2021/April/unodc-and-malawi-launch-new-measures-to-combat-human-trafficking-among-refugees.html>

55. Russell Kondowe (2021, 12th April) "Malawi orders refugees to return to camp" <https://malawi24.com/2021/04/12/malawi-orders-refugees-to-return-to-camp/>

56. Lameck Masina (2021, 17th April) "Malawi Orders All Refugees Back into Camp Within 14 Days" <https://www.voanews.com/africa/malawi-orders-all-refugees-back-camp-within-14-days>

57. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) <https://reporting.unhcr.org/node/10320>

To date, it is estimated that at least 2,000 asylum seekers ‘illegally’ live outside of the Dzaleka refugee camp. One of those refugees is Cloud Kayihira who pleaded before the government to postpone the relocation for a year, leaving more time for the people who have built their lives outside of Dzaleka to find adequate solutions. He continued by explaining that many refugees have built their houses, have farms, or other intangible properties and thus, such extension would enable them to sell these properties. Nevertheless, the Malawian government opined that the 14-days term is sufficiently enough to relocate back to the camp, with no possibility for exceptions.⁵⁹

The Malawi Human Rights Defenders Coalition (HRDC) – an NGO aimed at protecting and defending human rights in Malawi through advocacy and activism – urged the Malawian government on 21 April 2021, to carefully reconsider its policy as it bears the highly likely potential of sparking societal xenophobia against both asylum seekers and refugees.⁶⁰



HRDC’s Chairperson, Gift Trapence added to this that the “government should adhere to the principles of human rights as they are implementing their action. It is important to comply with international refugees’ law. Refugees are one of the most vulnerable groups, as such, the government should make sure that they execute the actions within the laws of this country and international refugee law”.⁶¹ He furthermore expressed that the Malawian government should be aware of people who are in the possession of legal documents, attesting that they are able to do business and often have a residency permit. In this regard, the government is obliged to allow them to stay and halt both forced evictions as well as relocations.

Commenting on the Encampment Policy, Raphael Ndabaga, a refugee originating from the DRC and director for the Volunteer Social Workers Organization (VSWO) at Dzaleka, expressed that the refugees have no possibility to object against governmental decisions nor policies. He is furthermore worried about the overcrowding nature of the already-congested camp as congestion affects the water and sanitation, general well-being as well as livelihood opportunities for the refugees in the camp.⁶²

58. Please Wait. . . | Cloudflare. (2021). Human Rights Connected. <https://humanrightsconnected.org/organizations/malawi-human-rights-defenders-coalition/>

59. Malawi Homeland Minister Chimwendo Banda in deaf ear to refugees, asylum seekers’ plea to postpone relocation date. (2021). The Malawi Post. <https://www.maravipost.com/malawi-homeland-minister-chimwendo-banda-in-deaf-ear-to-refugees-asylum-seekers-plea-to-postpone-relocation-date/>

60. Reporter, N. T. (2021, April 21). HRDC warns Malawi Govt on the relocation of refugees to avoid sparking xenophobia. Malawi Nyasa Times-News from Malawi about Malawi.

61. Rights Watchdog Warns Govt On Relocation of Refugees to Avoid Sparking Xenophobia. (2021, April 21). AllAfrica.Com. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202104210802.html>

62. Russell Kondowe (2021, 12th April) “Malawi orders refugees to return to camp” <https://malawi24.com/2021/04/12/malawi-orders-refugees-to-return-to-camp/>; The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) <https://reporting.unhcr.org/node/10320>

Improving Medical Childbirth and Eradicating Gender-based Violence

The Nkhaza Toto Movement, women activist groups seeking to eradicate gender-based violence (GBV) in Malawi, expressed their discontent with the work of health officials and the police during a meeting supported by the Centre for Alternatives for Victimized Women and Children (CAVWOC) – as taken place on April 19th in the Phalombe district of southern Malawi.⁵¹



The women of the Nkhaza Toto Movement voiced their concerns regarding the unprofessional treatments of women expecting delivery in health facilities, including the cases concerning women delivering children on their own – with the absence of assistance provided by medical personnel. A nurse at Chiringa Health Centre in

Phalombe, Ms. Dorris Chithumba, acknowledged the beforementioned claims and explained that the shortage of trained medical personnel is the biggest challenge in health facilities. She continued by promising that the medical personnel will address the problems as voiced by the women to improve childbirth. The Movement furthermore revealed their dissatisfaction regarding the responsiveness of Malawi's police forces to GBV, with a specific focus on the custody release of perpetrators without sufficient justifiable reasons. Community Policing Coordinator, Mr. Miltons Moyo, stated that victims of GBV are, in the vast majority of cases, the ones asking the police to close their cases.

63. Magalasi, C. (2021, April 19). Police, Health authorities taken to task in Phalombe. AfroPages. <https://en.afropages.fr/157-aan/malawi24/980369-police-health-authorities-taken-to-task-in-phalombe>



Be that as it may, it must not be forgotten that men can likewise fall victim to GBV. Based on the latter, Chief Nyezelera of the Traditional Authority (TA) Kaduya, Phalombe district, encouraged men to report perpetrators of GBV to the relevant authorities. Speaking at a GBV awareness meeting, Chief Nyezelera

argued that many men choose not to report instances of GBV to which they are subjected. Consequently, many men continue to suffer in silence due to the fear of being labeled as 'weak'. He continued by urging men not to feel ashamed nor weak and to report GBV cases to the respective authorities.⁶⁴

Cultural Practices Increase Literacy Rates

Cultural practices in the Chikwawa district, located in southern Malawi, contributes exacerbates the illiteracy rate of 42 percent among girls in the district. The Chikwawa District Youth Officer, Mr. Macnell Shire, emphasized the alarming increase of illiteracy during his visit, on 14 April 2021, at the district's Masanduko Primary School. Especially in Chikwawa, the vast majority of parents perceive the education of girls as being 'a loss' since girls will eventually get married and fall 'be under' their husbands' responsibility.⁶⁵ Consequently, girls are not sent to schools as it is not prioritized, justifying the high illiteracy in the district as such.

30. Silas Apollo (2021, 1st April) "1.4m face hunger as Kenya fights Covid, drought, State says" <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/kenyans-facing-hunger-3345774>

31. Agatha Ngotho (2021, 17th March) "1.4 million Kenyans facing hunger as food crisis worsen" <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2021-03-16-14-million-kenyans-facing-hunger-as-food-crisis-worsens/>

32. Government Spokesman Cyrus Oguna speaks on April 1, 2021 at a national press conference that an estimated 1.4 million Kenyans are currently facing hunger, a figure that is likely to rise in the coming days if a solution is not found <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/kenyans-facing-hunger-3345774>

33. The state says 1.4m Kenyans facing hunger. (2021, April 1). Nation. <https://nation.africa/kenya/news/state-says-1-4m-kenyans-facing-hunger-3344790>

34. ReliefWeb (2021, 18th March) "The Impact of disasters and crises on agriculture and food security: 2021" +

During July 2020, a surge in the number of child marriages in Malawi has been a cause of concern.⁶⁶ Adolescent Girls Literacy Plus (AGLIT+), an NGO in the district, offers literacy skills training to adolescent girls who dropped out of schools to enter into early marriages. In April 2021, AGLIT+



offered literacy skills training to 150 girls from Chikwawa, leading to 137 graduates. The girls are subjected to nine intensive months of literacy training, including maternal and nutrition practices, to manage their households. It leaves girls adequately equipped to contribute positively to their communities, be an agent of change and actively help girls in similar positions. The chairperson for Civil Society Organizations, Mr. Josephy Chamambala, urges NGOs in the district to intensify their efforts in reducing illiteracy, especially amongst girls.

Misusing COVID-19 Funds

In Malawi, widespread allegations regarding the misuse and abuse of the K6.2 billion destined for the COVID-19 national response plan, led Malawian President, Lazarus Chakwera, to order the governmental office of the Auditor General to investigate how the funds were being used.⁶⁷ After thorough investigation, the audit report revealed gross abuses of the funds destined to be used in several national recovery schemes as a response to the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶⁸

66. Nebe, C. (2020, July 1). Fears grow of surge in child marriages in Malawi. Deutsche Welle. <https://www.dw.com/en/fears-grow-of-a-surge-in-child-marriages-in-malawi/a-54009682>

67. Mtawali, W. (2021, April 12). Malga echoes concerns over K6.2bn Covid funds audit report: Delay affecting local councils. Nyasa Times. <https://www.nyasatimes.com/malga-echoes-concerns-over-k6-2bn-covid-funds-audit-report-delay-affecting-local-councils/>

68. Chiuta, W. (2021, April 19). Chakwera fires Minister Kandodo for Covid-19 funds abuse: Malawi leader refuses to have 'traitors' in cabinet. Nyasa Times. <https://www.nyasatimes.com/chakwera-fires-minister-kandodo-for-covid-19-funds-abuse-malawi-leader-refuses-to-have-traitors-in-cabinet/>

On April 16th, 2021, the Human Rights Defenders Coalition (HRDC) – a non-governmental organization aimed to protect and defend human rights in Malawi through advocacy and activism – provided the Malawian government a seven-day ultimatum to arrest anyone implicated in the misuse of the funds. The primary pursuit of the HRDC is to push the government to arrest and interdict people suspected of having misused and abused the funds. HRDC Chairperson, Gift Trapence, addressed several journalists on April 16th, 2021, and firmly stated that the misused funds must be recovered and those responsible for its disappearance must be held accountable. He furthermore continued by stating that in case the Malawian government fails to do so, the human rights group would mobilize the Malawian population to go to the streets and protest as such.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, President Chakwera, during an official statement released on April 18th, announced that its Minister of Labor, Ken Kandodo, had been fired after the audit report. He confirmed that he is responsible for the misuse of K1.4 million from the funds. The President furthermore emphasized that any other officials in connection with the case will be fired, as corruption will not be tolerated in his cabinet.⁷⁰

Merely a few days later, on April 22nd, an additional group of 15 officials were arrested in relation to the embezzlement of funds, bringing the total number of arrests to 61. The Malawi Police Service (MPS), who dubbed the case as ‘Covidgate’, stated that the 15 officials are charged with theft as a public servant as well as fraudulent accounting, among other unnamed crimes.⁷¹

69. Khamula, O. (2021a, April 17). Malawi govt says HRDC ultimatum over K6.2bn abused Covid-19 money ‘misplaced.’ Nyasa Times. <https://www.nyasatimes.com/malawi-govt-says-hrdc-ultimatum-over-k6-2bn-abused-covid-19-money-misplaced/>; Khamula, O. (2021b, April 17). HRDC calls for Malawi civil service overhaul. Nyasa Times. <https://www.nyasatimes.com/hrdc-calls-for-malawi-civil-service-overhaul/>

70. Masina, L. (2021, 04 19). Malawi President Fires Cabinet Minister Over COVID Funds. VOA news. <https://www.voanews.com/africa/malawi-president-fires-cabinet-minister-over-covid-funds>

71. Kondowe, R. (2021, 04 22). Covidgate: 15 more govt officials arrested. Malawi 24. <https://malawi24.com/2021/04/22/covidgate-15-more-govt-officials-arrested/>

Rwanda

Country introduction



The Republic of Rwanda is a landlocked country located in the East African continent, bordering Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, as well as Uganda. Its national flag holds a specific meaning to the country; blue symbolizes happiness and peace, yellow symbolizes the economic developments and mineral

wealth of the country, green symbolizes the country's hope of prosperity and its natural resources. Its sun stands for unity, enlightenment as well as transparency from ignorance. According to the UNPFA, the Republic of Rwanda – accounting for 26,338 square kilometers – is home to 13,3 million citizens. The country is divided into 4 provinces and 1 city with Kigali as its capital and largest city.⁷²

The Republic of Rwanda is one of the most densely populated countries to be found in the African continent. Large, concentrated populations are to be found in the country's central regions as well as the western areas surrounding Lake Kivu. The climate throughout the country is moderate – with two rainy seasons – to mild in its higher mountain areas, with the possibility of frost and snowfall. The Republic of Rwanda is a presidential republic led by the Head of State, President Paul Kagame, who serves the presidential seat for a third term. It gained its independence, from Belgium as its administrating power, on 1 July 1962. To date, the



country's legal system remains a mixture of German and Belgian civil law models in conjunction with customary law. The country is home to four official languages, Kinyarwanda, French, English, and Kiswahili. However, the country is not unfamiliar with a wide variety of ethnic languages.

72. Rwanda – The World Factbook. (2021). CIA Factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/rwanda/>

Human Rights Events of April 2021

Commemorating the Rwanda Genocide

On Wednesday, April 7th, 2021, Rwanda began Kwibuka, a 100-day morning period marking the 27th anniversary of the country's well-known 1994 genocide. Accordingly, Rwandan President Paul Kagame



and First Lady Jeannette Kagame took part in the ceremony commemorating the 27th anniversary of the genocide. Approximately 1 million people, mostly of the Tutsi community and moderate Hutus, were killed in the genocide as committed by Hutu extremists between April 7 to July 15, 1994. The massacred by Hutu extremists was triggered on April 6, 1994, after a plane carrying

the former Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and former Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira was downed by a rocket attack.

France Opens Its Archives

A day after the commemoration ceremony, on April 7th, France opened important state archives of its former President François Mitterrand and his then Prime Minister, Edouard Balladur, regarding the actions of France in Rwanda between 1990 to 1994 to the general public. From the beginning of the 1990s onwards, France actively supported the Hutu-led government of the Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana and provided for arms as well as military training to Habyarimana's youth militias. The documents demonstrate how François Mitterrand, together with diplomats and military officials of France supported Habyarimana with weapons and military training in hopes of retaining French influence over Rwanda.

On March 26th, 2021, prior to the opening of the archives, French historian Vincent Duclert released a report, concluding the responsibility of the French authorities in the Rwandan genocide through their support of Habyarimana's passive approach during the genocide and slow intervention following the mass killings.⁷⁶ Current French President Emmanuel Macron commissioned the report and admitted to France's past wrongdoings.⁷⁷ During the commemorative ceremony,⁷⁷ Rwandan President Paul Kagame commented

73. Gretchen Baldwin (2021, 7th April) "Rwanda's government now uses the annual genocide remembrance as a political tool" <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/04/07/rwandas-government-now-uses-annual-genocide-remembrance-political-tool/>

74. Dieng, I. (2021, April 7). Rwanda : Commémoration de la 27e anniversaire du génocide. Senenews - Actualité au Sénégal, Politique, Économie, Sport. https://www.senenews.com/actualites/societe/rwanda-commemoration-de-la-27e-anniversaire-du-genocide_353518.html

75. France 24. (2021, April 7). France opens its archives on Rwandan genocide to the public. <https://www.france24.com/en/france/20210407-france-opens-its-archives-on-rwanda-genocide-to-the-public>

76. Duclert, V. (2021, April 7). La France, le Rwanda et le génocide des Tutsi (1990-1994) - Rapport remis au Président de la République. Vie publique. <https://www.vie-publique.fr/rapport/279186-rapport-duclert-la-france-le-rwanda-et-le-genocide-des-tutsi-1990-1994>

77. Picard, F., Xenos, A., & Laurain, J. (2021, April 7). Time to apologise? France grapples with its role in Rwandan genocide. France 24. <https://www.france24.com/en/tv-shows/the-debate/20210407-time-to-apologise-france-grapples-with-its-role-in-rwanda-genocide>

on the report, welcoming it as a crucial step towards a good understanding of the events surrounding the Rwandan genocide.⁷⁸

Prosecute Genocide Perpetrators

Although it is 27 years after the 1994 Rwandan genocide took place, many perpetrators remain unpunished.⁷⁹ More specifically, the Rwanda Genocide Fugitives Tracking Unit (GFTU) – a special team created in 2007 aimed at prosecuting those responsible for the 1994 genocide – revealed on April 6th,



2021, that more than 1,100 suspects have taken refuge in various countries, including the US, France, Canada, and the Netherlands.⁸⁰ The GFTU furthermore asserts that countries have been, or arguably unwilling, to prosecute the suspects or to hand them over to the Rwandan government due to lack of

political will. According to the GFTU data, out of the currently known 1,100 fugitives, 408 of them are residing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 277 in Uganda, 63 in Malawi, 15 in Burundi, 52 in Tanzania, 46 in France, 42 in Congo Brazzaville, and 40 in Belgium. The suspects are posing as nationals of the respective countries of refuge. The Rwandan Prosecution Office worked with Africa's Prosecutors Association to track down the known fugitives. However, Rwanda signed extradition treaties with 10 countries out of the 30 where the suspects are believed to be in hiding.

78. Dieng, I. (2021, April 7). Rwanda : Commémoration de la 27e anniversaire du génocide. Senenews - Actualité au Sénégal, Politique, Économie, Sport. https://www.senenews.com/actualites/societe/rwanda-commemoration-de-la-27e-anniversaire-du-genocide_353518.html

79. James Tasamba (2021, 6th April) "Rwanda: 27 years later genocide perpetrators still at large" <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/rwanda-27-years-later-genocide-perpetrators-still-at-large/2199378>

80. James Tasamba (2021, 7th April) "Rwanda marks 27 years since genocide" <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/rwanda-marks-27-years-since-genocide/2201479>

Judicial Reforms

In April 2021, the judiciary finalized the list of 917 case files involving minors and any pending criminal cases that would warrant a sentence of fewer than 2 years in total involving adults and provided all of them with court dates before the end of the year.⁸¹ This step is part of the Rwandan governmental efforts in reducing the number of prisoners awaiting trial, and, at the same time, prioritizing rehabilitation instead of

lengthy prison sentences.

The initiative started in late February of 2019 when concerns were raised by the National Human Rights Commission – a local government body tasked with surveying human rights in Rwanda – regarding the lengthy prison stays which individuals endured prior to their trials being scheduled.



In response to this, Minister of Justice, Mr. Johnston Busingye, vowed that the government of Rwanda would focus its efforts on giving Rwandans who are on the wrong side of the law a second chance.⁸² The latter justifies why local judicial officials promised to decongest prisons as part of their commitment to reforming the judicial systems as such. The Minister furthermore confirmed that to achieve this, the Rwanda Correctional Services (RCS) – a government body overseeing prisons across the country – was asked to prioritize rehabilitation and reintegration within all its correctional facilities. At the same time, Busingye explained that existing facilities will be upgraded and extended to accommodate prisoners in a better way.

In November 2020, Chief Justice, Dr. Faustin Ntezilyayo, confirmed that a special committee was established to conduct adequate research on the matter, specifically by compiling a list of detainees who are still awaiting trial and noting how long they wait before a hearing is scheduled. Based on the report detailing the findings and suggestions of the committee, the Government hoped to establish a comprehensive plan of action to decongest prisons across Rwanda.⁸³ The ultimate goals of the reforms are to move away from extended prison sentences and implement rehabilitation at the forefront of the justice system. That is why – after the committee was established – Court Inspector, Jean Claude Nsengiyumva, stated that prisons were tasked with compiling a list of cases involving minors or adults with minor offenses awaiting their sentencing. To date, with the list of court cases is to be finalized and appearances are scheduled, it seems that the Government of Rwanda is on track with its promises made in 2019.

81. Bishumba, N. (2021, 04 20). Over 900 cases involving minors head to court. The New Times. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/over-900-cases-involving-minors-head-court>

82. Bishumba, N. (2019, 02 24). Govt moves to decongest correctional facilities. The New Times. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/govt-moves-decongest-correctional-facilities>

83. Bishumba, N. (2020, 11 23). Probe team to investigate lengthy pre-trial detentions. The New Times. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/probe-team-investigate-lengthy-pre-trial-detentions>

Strengthening Education Through ICT Integration

The Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB), a branch of Rwanda's Ministry of Education assigned to monitor all primary schooling issues, has started giving laptops to all public-school teachers nationwide.⁸⁴ Under the 'One Laptop per Teacher' initiative, the distribution was launched on 16 April 2021 for five secondary public schools in the Gatsibo district in the eastern province of Rwanda. The laptop initiative aligns with the government's target to strengthen education through ICT integration in teaching and learning. The deployment of the laptops is targeted to start with 120 secondary schools from all districts countrywide, with the goal to provide for all public-school teachers in Rwanda. The laptops will impact the schools that have no laboratories and enough libraries and books the most, as online learning encompasses endless possibilities. The laptops will therefore replace traditional libraries which acquire more space. The laptops that will be provided will have programs and content pre-installed for primary school grade one to senior six secondary schools. Headteachers of every school are authorized to collect laptops from



the REB headquarters. The Kigali city, in the center of the country, and northern province schools will collect their laptops on 20 April, the Southern province will collect theirs on 21 April, while the eastern and western provinces will collect theirs on the 22nd and 23rd of April. Teachers countrywide welcome this initiative,

saying that this will improve their performances as teachers, because they have more access to resources, along with the performances and learning capacities of students. The Rwandan government, since 2018, is set to equip schools with laptops and access to the internet, having faith in the transformation of the country's education system through ICT integration.⁸⁵

84. Nkurunziza, B. M. (2021, April 17). All public school teachers in Rwanda to get laptops. The New Times | Rwanda. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/all-public-school-teachers-rwanda-get-laptops>

85. Iliza, B. A. (2020, February 6). Improved smart classroom excites high school students. The New Times | Rwanda. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/improved-smart-classroom-excites-high-school-students>

Family Reintegration for Children with Disabilities

The National Council of Person with Disabilities (NCPD) announced on 1 April 2021 its strategy to reintegrate over 3,000 children with disabilities from differentiating care homes into families.⁸⁶ The NCPD is a national agency with the objective of coordinating the social and economic development of persons with disabilities in Rwanda. According to it, the reintegration of the children into families is currently part of the national effort to give every child a chance of being brought up in a family establishment, which is a catalyst for better child welfare.

Commenting on the effort of providing disabled children with better child welfare, the NCDP's Executive Secretary, Mr. Emmanuel Ndayisaba, emphasized that the Rwandan government is already running a pilot project since March 2021 in two children disability centers located in the Gatsibo and Kicukiro districts. The pilot



projects are tasked with the reintegration of disabled children into family establishments. He furthermore highlighted that when children with disabilities are raised in family establishments where they receive adequate care and love, will result in improving the lives of the children, including their thinking, mental health, and intellectual capacity.

86. Michael Nkuruziza (2021, 1st April) "3,000 children with disabilities need reintegration into families" <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/3000-children-disabilities-need-reintegration-families>

Tanzania

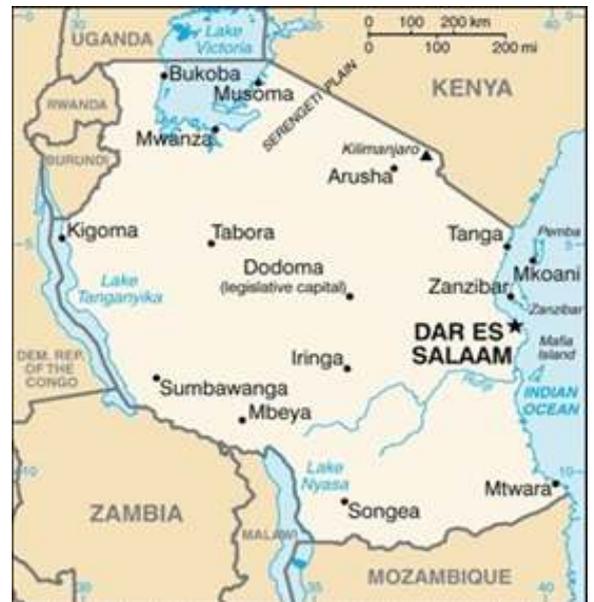
Country introduction



The United Republic of Tanzania is a country located in the East African continent, bordering Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, as well as Zambia. Its national flag holds a specific meaning to the country; green symbolizes the natural vegetation of the country, gold symbolizes its rich

mineral deposits, black symbolizes the native Swahili people of the country, blue symbolizes the rivers and lakes of the country, including the Indian Ocean. According to the UNPFA, the United Republic of Tanzania – accounting for 947,300 square kilometers – is home to 61,5 million citizens. The country is divided into 31 regions with Dar es Salaam as its administrative capital and Dodoma as its legislative capital. Its three largest cities are Dodoma, Dar es Salaam as well as Mwanza.⁸⁷

The density of its population is mainly found in the country's northern and eastern regions, though populated clusters can be found throughout its territory. The climate in the country varies from tropical along the coastal regions to moderate in its highlands. The United Republic of Tanzania is a presidential republic led by the Head of State, President Samia Suluhu, who serves the presidential seat for a first term – after the passing away of late president John Magafuli – and is the country's first female president. It gained its independence, from the United Kingdom as its colonizing power, on 10 December 1963. To date, the country's legal system remains



to be based on the English common law system. The country recognized both English and Kiswahili as its official languages. However, Arabic is widely spoken throughout the country, as well as a wide variety of ethnic languages.

87. Burundi – The World Factbook. (2021). CIA Factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/burundi/>

Human Rights Events of April 2021

The Sufferings of Burundian Refugees

Following the deadly clashes regarding the 2015 presidential election, hundreds of thousands of people fled Burundi, of which approximately 150,000 sought their refuge in neighboring Tanzania and living in temporary camps.⁸⁸



The refugees have accused the Tanzanian police forces of allegedly torturing them as well as forcing them to return to Burundi by signing a 'voluntary return' form. The refugees likewise allege to have been questioned, during instances of arbitrary arrests, on whether they are affiliated with armed groups and were subsequently forced to pay money in exchange for their

release. Accordingly, on April 13th, 2021, a group of 12 local experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council (HCR) demanded the protection of the rights of Burundian refugees residing in Tanzania. More specifically, the experts conclusively allege that Burundian refugees have been subjected to arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, murder as well as being forcibly returned back to Burundi. The experts furthermore note that members of the Burundian Intelligence Services infiltrated the refugee camps in order to locate high-profile refugees, such as members of the Burundian political opposition. Those identified are arrested by Tanzanian forces later on.⁸⁹

Yet, merely a few days after the expert conclusion, on April 19th, Tanzanian officials urged the Burundian refugees to peacefully return to their home country. The Director of the Department of Refugee Services at the Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs, Mr. Sudi Mwakibasi, stated during a speech at the Nduta refugee camp – located in northwest Tanzania – that the Burundians should have no fear in returning home, assuring that the country is safe and stable enough.⁹⁰

88. Burundi refugees in Tanzania living in fear: UN rights experts. (2021, April 15). UN News. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1089632>

89. UN News. (2021, 04 13). Burundi refugees in Tanzania living in fear: UN rights experts. UN News. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1089632>

90. Tesha, H. (2021, April 19). Tanzanian government encourages Burundi refugees to go back home. The Citizen. <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/tanzanian-government-encourages-burundi-refugees-to-go-back-home--3367764>

Pregnant Girls and The Right to Education

On April 4th 2021, the Minister for Education and Vocational Training in Zanzibar, Mr. Simai Mohamed Said, urged directors, and heads of units in the Ministry to ensure the return of pregnant girls to school after giving birth in conjunction with spreading communal awareness regarding the matter, during a one-day session in Unguja.⁹¹ During the session, the Education Officer at the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Ms. Mshauri Abdulla Khamis, presented the Evaluation Report of Re-entry to School Policy. The report as such demonstrated that many pregnant schoolgirls cease their education and do not return to school due to communal stigmatizations, including from their parents.⁹²



Following report deliberation, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar in conjunction with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) agreed to reinforce their partnership and help pregnant girls who dropped out of school to continue their studies and safeguard the completion of the seven grades of compulsory primary education.⁹³ Furthermore, Mr. Simai Said

firmly asked parents not to push young girls into marriage. He continued by pleading before communities to stop stigmatizing pregnant schoolgirls, urging them to ensure that girls return to education instead.⁹⁴ Additionally, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in Zanzibar, Mr. Ali Khamis Ali, emphasized the importance of finding solutions to decrease the teenage pregnancy rates.

The international humanitarian organization for marginalized children, Save the Children, released on April 19th, 2021, a statement congratulating Mr. Simai Said for his great achievement in ensuring the educational rights of (pregnant) girls.⁹⁵ Country Director of Save the Children to Tanzania, Mr. Peter Walsh, praised Zanzibar for taking the lead in ensuring the return of pregnant girls to school and expressed his hopes that mainland Tanzania will follow Zanzibar's strong example.

91. Tanzania Standard Newspapers Ltd. (2021, April 5). UNESCO bring smiles to pregnant Zanzibar girls. Daily News. <https://dailynews.co.tz/news/2021-04-05606b475511e70>

92. Daily News. (2021, April 5). Tanzania: Smz, Unesco Bring Smiles to Pregnant Zanzibar Girls. AllAfrica. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202104060128.html>

93. The Citizen. (2021, April 5). Tanzania: Zanzibar Pushes for Girls' School Re-Entry After Giving Birth. AllAfrica. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202104050138.html>

94. Mtumwa, H. (2021, April 4). Zanzibar pushes for girls' school re-entry after giving birth. The Citizen. <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/zanzibar-pushes-for-girls-school-re-entry-after-giving-birth-3348796>

95. Save the Children Tanzania. (2021, April 19). Save the Children Reactive statement on Zanzibar's government announcement for girls' school re-entry after giving birth. <https://tanzania.savethechildren.net/news/save-children-reactive-statement-zanzibar%E2%80%99s-government-announcement-girls%E2%80%99-school-re-entry>

Uganda

Country introduction



The Republic of Uganda is a landlocked country located in the East African continent, bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, as well as Tanzania. Its national flag holds a specific meaning to the country; black symbolizes the people of Africa, yellow symbolizes sunshine and vitality, red symbolizes the

brotherhood among all Africans. The crane was the military badge of Ugandan soldiers under the rule of the United Kingdom. According to the UNPFA, the Republic of Uganda – accounting for 241,038 square kilometers – is home to 47,1 million citizens. The country is divided into 134 districts and 1 capital city with Kampala as its capital and largest city.⁹⁶

The density of its population is high in comparison to other African countries and is mainly found in the central and southern regions of the country, as well as the areas surrounding Lake Victoria and Lake Albert. Its northeast regions are the least populated ones. The climate throughout the country is tropical with two dry seasons to semi-arid in the northeastern regions. The Republic of Uganda is a presidential republic led by the Head of State, President Yoweri Museveni, who serves the presidential seat from 1986 with a disputed sixth term as of 16 January 2021. It gained its independence, from the United Kingdom as its colonizing



power, on 9 October 1962. To date, the country's legal system remains a mixture of English common law in conjunction with customary law. It recognized both English and Swahili as its official languages. However, Ganda, Niger-Congo languages, Nilo-Saharan languages, and Arabic are frequently used throughout the country.

96. Uganda – The World Factbook. (2021). CIA Factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/uganda/>

Human Rights Events of April 2021

The Urgent Need for Abortion Facilities

Many women in Uganda face a lack of available abortion facilities. A young Ugandan female bravely shared the story of a young girl named Joan (not her real name) with news outlet AllAfrica on April 7th, 2021, who resided in her village and got pregnant at a very young age.⁹⁷ She explained that Joan was afraid to seek the necessary help from her family as she thought that it would disgrace their good 'family name'. Consequently, Joan sought help from a midwife who rejected her, while stating that abortion is against the Ugandan law and that she lacked equipment as needed to perform the abortion. Joan locked herself in her room and took her own life as she was convinced that she didn't have any other choice. Her family found her the next day dead on the floor.



In every level of societal Uganda, a shame is brought to the subject of abortion – resulting in the absence of discussing the matter, even on a governmental level. Omitting any discussion regarding the matter bears the highly likely potential of severe irreversible consequences, such as sexual and reproductive health issues or in the worst-case scenario the loss of life of both mother

and child, as demonstrated in the situation of Joan. It is pertaining to witness that Ugandans are taught that any abortion will result in a fatality and that therefore, the practice of it remains illegal. Yet, societal education regarding the advantages of abortion in conjunction with providing access to safe abortion availabilities remains absent as such. Thus, pregnant women and girls cannot enjoy the right to decide over their bodies, resulting in unsafe abortions. The Guttmacher Institute – a research organization focusing on sexual and reproductive rights – reported that in 2013 approximately 314,300 abortions took place in the country of which 93,000 women and girls required medical treatments due to the complications of unsafe abortions.

Uganda: Let's Save Ugandan Lives with Abortion Law Clarity. (2021c, April 7). AllAfrica.Com. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202104071127.html> ; Unclear Abortion Laws in Uganda Leave Women Who Are Raped Unsure of Options. (2020, October 20). Global Press Journal. <https://globalpressjournal.com/africa/uganda/ugandas-unclear-abortion-laws-leave-women-unsure-options-reprohealth/>

To date, any act of abortion in the country is solely permissible provided that the life of the mother is at significant risk resulting in a legal authorization, approving the abortion as such. Be that as it may, the law regulating abortions leaves no room for additional interpretations nor modifications. In 2017, the National Policy Guidelines and Service Standards for Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights pressed for an expansion in allowing abortions in case of rape, incest, severe fetal conditions, or in case the mother is infected with HIV. Yet, the Ugandan government rejected the proposition and to date, maintains a narrow scope in regulating the allowance of abortions in the country.

The Recognition of the Maragoli People

The Maragoli people originate from Saudi Arabia and migrated in the 18th century to Eastern Africa, residing in differentiating countries.⁹⁹ To date, the Maragoli people of Uganda remain to be a minority group



situated in the Kiryandongo District, located in midwestern Uganda. Though living peacefully for several centuries in the country, the 1955 Ugandan Constitution, to date, isn't recognizing the Maragoli as such.¹⁰⁰ The Maragoli people have been living in the shadows since the 1990s and have, throughout

the years, been seeking legal inclusions through several petitions before the Ugandan Parliament and President Museveni. Though its population is not well documented, it is estimated that the Maragoli consists of an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 individuals.

The Maragoli started facing severe difficulties in 2015 as the Ugandan government introduced a mass national registration of all its citizens, resulting in the issuance of identification cards. The mandatory registration imposed a significant risk of statelessness on the Maragoli based on governmental withholdings of identification cards as the Maragoli are not a legally recognized tribe in the Ugandan Constitution.¹⁰¹ Without an identification card, the Maragoli cannot receive medical treatments in governmental hospitals, nor apply for a passport or a driver's permit. The Maragoli are likewise affected, as they cannot partake in the country's free educational services.

98. "Let's Save Ugandan Lives with Abortion Law Clarity." (2021b, April 8). AllAfrica.Com. <https://allafrica.com/view/group/main/main/id/00077452.html>

99. A Quest for Citizenship- The Maragoli in Uganda | . (2019, January 15). Voice Global. <https://voice.global/blog/a-quest-for-citizenship-the-maragoli-in-uganda/>

100. The Constitution of Uganda, 1955, third schedule https://statehouse.go.ug/sites/default/files/attachments/Constitution_1995.pdf

101. Minority Rights Group. (2021, February 6). Maragoli. <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/maragoli/>

Be that as it may, the Maragoli people will soon be recognized among the 65 communities in the country through a proposed amendment of the 1955 Ugandan Constitution, tabled in the Ugandan Parliament since August 2020.¹⁰² The country's parliament aims at finalizing the ongoing establishment of the Constitutional Review Commission – a governmental body tasked to review the proposed amendment – in May 2021.¹⁰³ Such recognition results in the Maragoli being able to acquire Ugandan citizenship, receive medical treatments as well as their children being able to enjoy free educational services, among others.

Access to Healthcare Coverage

On April 1, 2021, the Ugandan Parliament passed the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) Bill which provides universal health coverage to all Ugandan residents.¹⁰⁴ Under the provisions of the NHIS Bill, all residents of Uganda above 18 years of age will be obliged to contribute to the National Health Insurance Fund in order to gain access to medical services. The Bill furthermore stipulates a 4 percent salary deduction for formal sector employees, 1 percent for formal sector employers, and a fixed annual payment of 100,000 Ugandan shillings (UGX) for the informal sector workers. The government of Uganda will use the beforementioned payments to cover the healthcare expenditures. The NHIS Bill will oblige the healthcare providers to receive accreditation from the Ugandan government to guarantee the quality and liability of medical institutions. Furthermore, the Bill makes the Ugandan government responsible for subsidizing people with low incomes and who are thus unable to make the required contributions themselves.¹⁰⁵

Many contradictory opinions have been voiced during the debates over the NHIS Bill.¹⁰⁶ The latter was critiqued by the State Minister of Health for General Duties, Robinah Nabbanja, who proposed a motion on March 31st, 2021, to withdraw the Bill, arguing that more revisions need to be done prior to its approval, such as extensive consultations with key stakeholders in the private sector. Member of the ruling National Resistance Movement Party, Agnes Kunihira, voiced her concern over the amount of the NHIS contributions, arguing that they pose difficulties for the excessively taxed Ugandan workers.

On the other hand, Otuke County representative, Mr. Julius Acon, welcomed the Bill by emphasizing that it will help in upgrading Ugandan healthcare by replenishing the medical budget. Overall, the majority of the Members of Parliament supported the Bill and its assurance of long-term healthcare provision to the Ugandan residents. To date, the NHIS Bill is merely awaiting a presidential signature for it to come into effect.

102. Maragoli minority group to be recognised soon. (2021, April 11). Daily Monitor. <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/maragoli-minority-group-to-be-recognised-soon-3358160>

103. Musinguzi, B. (2021, April 10). Maragoli minority group to be recognised soon. Daily Monitor. <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/special-reports/maragoli-minority-group-to-be-recognised-soon-3357614>

104. Kamurungi, E., & Atukunda, N. (2021, April 1). Parliament passes Health Insurance Bill. Daily Monitor. <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/parliament-passes-health-insurance-bill-3344440>

105. Parliament of the Republic of Uganda. (2021, April 1). Affordable medical care in offing as health insurance Bill passes. <https://www.parliament.go.ug/news/5054/affordable-medical-care-offing-health-insurance-bill-passes>

106. The Independent Uganda. (2021, April 1). Bill seeking sh100,000 from Ugandans for health insurance passed by parliament. <https://www.independent.co.ug/bill-seeking-sh100000-from-every-ugandan-for-health-insurance-passed-by-parliament/>

Ugandans Attacked Near the Border of South Sudan

A convoy of trucks returning from South Sudan to Uganda were attacked on the 2nd of April 2021 on the Juba-Nimule Road in the southern region of South Sudan. The first truck successfully escaped the confrontation, and its passengers only suffered minor injuries. Unfortunately, the second and third trucks were set on fire, ending the life of five civilian passengers. Military spokesperson, Colonel Santo Domic, opined that the attack was orchestrated by the National Salvation Group, a local rebel organization that has been associated with similar tactics in the past – although the attacks have not been claimed by any group publicly. Colonel Domic postulates that these attacks serve as a signal of the group's presence in the area. Additionally, it is not the first time that the National Salvation Group breached hostility agreements with its government.¹⁰⁷



On 6th of April, the leadership of traders operating in South Sudan pleaded before the Ugandan government to impose restrictions on civilians traveling to the neighboring country as it can no longer be considered safe – considering the recent attacks. Rashida Manifa, the association's chairperson, stated that the government has not heard their demands so far. In response, the acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Arthur

Kafeero, firmly stated that Ugandan officials are in talks with the South Sudanese government to remedy the issue. Until further notice, the Ugandan government has issued a travel advisory warning to its citizens – yet not forbidding them – from entering South Sudan in light of the recent attacks¹⁰⁸

107. VOA. (2021, 04 2). 5 burned to death as S.Sudanese gunmen attack returning Ugandan trucks. The Observer. <https://www.observer.ug/news/headlines/69166-5-burned-to-death-after-s-sudanese-gunmen-attack-returning-ugandan-trucks>

108. Mukhaye, D. (2021, 04 06). Govt urged to stop travel of citizens to South Sudan. Daily Monitor. <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/govt-urged-to-stop-travel-of-citizens-to-south-sudan-3350932>

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