



HURISA

REPORT

**CAPACITY TRAINING WORKSHOP ON
PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL SECURITY
PROTECTION OF WOMEN HUMAN
RIGHTS DEFENDERS**

SUPPORTED BY



OCT 2022

1 CONTENTS

Acknowledgement.....	3
ACRONYMS.....	4
Pre-Face.....	5
Context	7
Methodology	8
Day 1 of the Training Programme deliberated on the following themes:	9
Day 2 of the Training Programme deliberated on the following themes:	9
2 Capacity Building Workshop For WHRDs Working In Risk Environments.....	10
2. Overview On Human Rights Mechanisms Adopted At National, Regional And International Levels	10
Promoting Protection Of Women Human Rights Defenders.	10
3 Digital And Physical Protection Of WHRDs	12
4. National Strategic Plan On Gender-Based Violence And Femicide (2020-2030).....	13
5. The National Action Plan On Women Peace And Security (2020-2025)	14
6. Documentation & Monitoring of Human Rights Violations	14
7. The Findings.....	15
8. Networking For WHRDs.....	18
9. Recommendations From The Capacity Bulding Training Wokshops.....	18
11. RECOMMENDATIONS DELIBERATED BY PROVINCIAL FOCAL POINTS	22
12. POST AND PRE-EVALUATION	24
13. CONCLUSION	24

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Human Rights Institute of South Africa (HURISA) express the profound gratitude to CIVICUS for the generous support to conduct a 2-Day Capacity Building Training Workshop to 30 Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) on Physical & Digital Security Protection for WHRDs working in risk environments. The capacity building training workshops captured evidence-based data highlighting the security risks facing HRDs particularly WHRDs. It provided guaranteed protections in regional and international instruments for safeguarding HRDs, WHRDs, activist and marginalised groups to conduct human rights work. A platform to assess progress made to advance these mechanisms for protection of HRDs and WHRDs in South Africa was also provided.

HURISA will also like to extend its appreciation to the resource persons for empowering participants with expertise: Lieketseng Motopi-Mohlakoana from Commission for Gender Equality and Dieketseng Diale from Lady of Peace Foundation (LOPECO) as well as the Provincial Focal Points from Northwest Province – Cynthia Chishimba, Mpumalanga – Sonto Mabanga and Gauteng – Noluthando Lebaka for bringing together 30 WHRDs drawn from grassroots communities. Last but not least HURISA wish to extend its appreciation to the speakers Ine Van Severen from CIVICUS, Dr Janet Munakamwe from African Diaspora Workers Network (ADWN), Arnold Netshambidi, from Phambano Technology Development Centre as well as the facilitators Cathy Kodiumoka, Tshepo Legodi and Tom Marishane from HURISA for coordination of the capacity building training programme for WHRDs/ HRDs working in risk environments.

We are also thankful to Corlett Letlojane, HURISA Executive Director for her instrumental role in the overall implementation of this project.

ACRONYMS

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and People's Rights
ARISA	Advancing Rights in Southern Africa
ADWIN	Africa Diaspora Workers Network
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGE	Commission for Gender Equality
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
GBF-F	Gender Based Violence & Femicide
HRD	Human Rights Defenders
HURISA	Human Rights Institute of South Africa
IPID	Independent Police Investigative Directorate
LOPECO	Lady of Peace Community Foundation
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
NDP	National Development Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPOs	Non-Profit Organisation
NSP	National Strategy Plan
SASSA	Social Relief of Distress Grant
SLAPP	Litigation Against Public Participation
SAPS	South African Police Service
UN	United Nations
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
WHRD	Women Human Rights Defenders

Women and girls working on any human rights issues and all people in their gender diversity, working together defending women's rights and gender equality are women human rights defenders. Like many others, women human rights defenders in Africa work daily to defend human rights standards and principles where justice for all is a reality.

WHRDs defend the right to education, development, sexual and reproductive health rights and for recognition of the principles of human dignity, equality and freedom in all spheres of life. They fight against patriarchy which seek to maintain the status of inferiority and subordination of women and its harmful consequences.

WHRDs draw more hostility than their male colleagues because they challenge cultural, religious, or discriminatory social norms and work to increase respect for roles of women in the society.

They face harassment, judicial persecution, reprisals and online harassment, extra judicial killings, attacks of family members, burglaries in work facilities, private homes, theft and confiscation of electronic devices. The hostility and repression they face can take a specifically gendered form, manifested through verbal abuse, smear campaigns, sexual harassment and rape.

However, they remain consistent in their struggles notwithstanding the considerable challenges facing them. The extra judicial execution of a WHRDs, Fikile Ntshangase, environmental activists in 2020 evidenced an increasing phenomenon of targeting of WHRDs in this sector. Her murder followed after she rejected a R350, 000 bribe from the mining corporation to extend a mine in her community. A similar fatal shooting was committed in September 2021 to the Health Department Senior Official, Babita Deokaran outside her home Babita was among key witnesses in the Special Investigation Unit contagious multimillion PPE tender scandal.

These types of murders have been on the rise in South Africa without protection by regional and international human rights instruments binding South Africa. In early 2018, a health right WHRD, Nomawethu Kunene ("Papi") from the West Rand of Gauteng Province disappeared from her home and her whereabouts remain unknown. She held confidential information to the life Health Esidimeni scandal that exposed the removal of the mentally ill patients from the well-functioning state health facility to homes of incompetent NGOs. The same trend and modus operate was repeated in the disappearance of a WHRDs or whistle blowers in state owned entities. Thembisile Yende mysteriously went missing at Eskom in May 2017 and her lifeless body was found after 13 days in her office. This was due to the confidential information she held concerning the capture of Eskom.

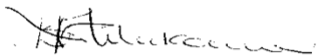
The corporations are silencing environmental defenders with Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation (SLAPP). This is a strategy to frustrate, intimidate, and draining WHRDs of their time and resources. Three environment activists were charged with this nonsensical civil action for educating students and making references against the environmental damage caused by the corporations and their non-compliance with environmental and mining laws.

Very few WHRDs are aware of the national, regional and international legal frameworks and policies promoting their human rights. The lack of knowledge and understanding the roles of WHRDs by the

community-based organisations and individuals makes defending rights very challenging at grassroots level. This is one of the major reasons why documentation of human rights violation is lacking evidential-based data.

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Resolution 273 encourages all HRDs to document challenges such as reprisals, intimidation, harassment and extra judicial killings for defending rights or cooperation with the African system of human rights. The UN Declaration on Responsibilities of Human Rights Defenders recognise all humanity as defenders of rights and impose duty on State Parties to protect and create enabling environment for human rights.

At national level, adoption of the National Strategic Plan on GBV and Femicide, as well as National Action Plan on Women Peace are further protective mechanism for WHRDs participation in prevention of GBV and Femicide. The NSPs seek to integrate all international and regional human rights instruments binding South Africa. This includes, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security.



Lieketseng Mohlakoana-Motopi

CONTEXT

The main focus of Human Rights Institute of South Africa is on the context in which Women Human Rights Defenders work, recognizing that the social, cultural, economic and political environment substantively influences the challenges WHRDs face and can exacerbate their vulnerability. This enables the experience of WHRDs to be understood as more than individual occurrences, but rather as part of a systemic and structural oppression of WHRDs because of their gender and/or the work that they do on gender-related issues.

It is for this reason that HURISA together with strategic partners empowered over 30 WHRDs on a two (2) day physical and digital security protection mechanisms capacity building training workshop. These WHRDs were drawn from the rural communities of Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Northwest Provinces. WHRDs were equipped with skills and expertise to utilise national, regional and international human rights instruments protecting their human rights.

The goal was to raise awareness of WHRDS/HRDs' rights, expose violations and draw attention to areas in need of human rights protection. Furthermore, a simplified booklet with contact information for relevant national, regional, and international treaties was distributed to the 30 WHRDs during the virtual training in order for them to engage, collect data, and determine how effective the tool to reduce the physical and digital security risk faced by WHRDs can be at the grassroots level. The booklet contained fundamental human rights principles that would assist WHRD/HRDs in minimizing attacks on their daily work. It also helps to advocate for an environment that allows WHRDs to carry out their duties freely and without fear of reprisals.

1. Provincial Focal Points

- ❖ WHRDs working in Mpumalanga, Northwest and Gauteng Provinces served as Project Provincial Focal Points and contributed immensely to local coordination and networking in grassroots communities.

2. Participants Criterion

- ❖ Participants selected were WHRDs working on environmental, land, women, LGBTQI+, Persons with Disabilities, Persons with Albinisms, gender, corruption, governance. Participants were equipped with human right protection mechanisms adopted nationally, regionally and internationally to effectively claim their guaranteed rights at local levels.

3. Objectives

- ❖ Equipping 30 WHRDs through Capacity Building Training Workshop with protection tools adopted internationally, regionally to effectively advocate guaranteed rights and processes at the local level (UN Declaration of Human Rights Defenders, CEDAW Optional Protocol, African Commission Reprisals Resolution, Country Rapporteurs, Focal Points, Thematic Working Group Members such as Rapporteur on Reprisals)
- ❖ Providing relevant contact details of human rights institutions, bodies offering protection support, at national, regional, and international levels, requirements and procedures for lodging claims
- ❖ Establish a Network for prevention, knowledge exchange, documenting, reporting human rights situations.
- ❖ Information dissemination, including advocacy campaigns against reprisals, repeal repressive laws and enactment of a model law to increase promotion and protection of WHRDs at local and national levels.

4. Resource Persons

- ❖ Leading experts working on physical and digital security protection were identified for empowering the 30 WHRDs on national, regional and international instruments safeguarding the rights of WHRDs and vulnerable groups. These were drawn from Commission for Gender Equality (Liekesteng Motopi – Mohlakoana) , CIVICUS (Ine ven Severen), Phambano Technology Development Centre (Arnold Netshambidi), Lady of Peace Community Foundation (Dieketseng Diale). HURISA Team was part of the pool of these experts , including programme facilitation (Corlett Letlojane, Cathy Kodiemoka, Tshepo Legodi and Thomas Marishane).

5. Capacity Building Programme

- ❖ Two-Day Training Programme was designed to empower WHRDs with human rights mechanisms protecting their work. The programme was conducted virtually, as the nation work towards recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic

DAY 1 OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME DELIBERATED ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:

- ❖ The role of Commission for Gender Equality in promoting, protecting, and monitoring gender equality through research and public education.
- ❖ An overview on human rights protection mechanisms for women human rights defenders adopted at national, regional and international levels.
- ❖ Presentation on the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (2020-2030).
- ❖ Physical and digital protection, security tools for safe working environment.

DAY 2 OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME DELIBERATED ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:

- ❖ A continuation of an overview on human rights protection mechanisms for women human rights defenders adopted at national, regional and international levels.
- ❖ Presentation of the National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security 2020-2025 entailing 4 pillars fostering participation and emphasise prevention, protection, relief and recovery measures against GBV.
- ❖ Break away sessions were adopted for the Two-Day training programme
- ❖ Pre & Post Evaluation were also techniques used to assess participants understanding of concepts and issues before the start and end of the programme
- ❖ Documentation & Monitoring of Human Rights Violations
- ❖ Networking of WHRDs

This Report highlights the key summaries of presentations from the Two- Day Capacity Building Training Workshop, the documentation and monitoring intervention in Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Northwest communities and Strategies adopted for Way forward

The 30 WHRDs working on environmental, land, women, LGBTQI+, Persons with Disabilities, Persons with Albinisms, gender, governance were equipped with human right protection mechanism adopted internationally, regionally to effectively claim their guaranteed rights at grassroots level.

The programmed enhanced WHRDs working in risk environments with national, regional, and international physical and protection mechanisms. Furthermore, their understanding of the recognition international human rights law accorded to them as human rights defenders. The programme was conducted virtually, as the country recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1. Two-Day Workshop Presentations

1.2. Opening Remarks

Lieketseng Motopi from the Commission for Gender Equality set a good foundation for the training in presenting the opening remarks by deepening understanding of WHRDs about the Constitutional and Legislative obligations of the Commission for Gender Equality as many WHRDs are not familiar with mandates of Chapter 9 Institutions. CGE legislation requires them to collaborate directly with CSOs and WHRDs because they have first-hand information with communities.

The CGE monitors compliance with national policy and legislative frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality and transformation. Furthermore, the CGE oversees compliance with regional and international gender mainstreaming instruments. The CGE has affiliate status with African Commission on Human and People's Rights, and uses its status to present violation of women rights, including gender equality problems facing the country.

The CGE is constitutionally empowered to conduct studies and investigations as well as compile reports containing findings and recommendations for submission to parliament. They have also carried out these activities and compiled reports that identified many of the key barriers to women's economic empowerment in the workplace and in their entrepreneurial activities. They make findings and recommendations to the relevant policy makers in government to address these barriers through appropriate policy responses and interventions.

2. Overview On Human Rights Mechanisms Adopted At National, Regional And International Levels Promoting Protection Of Women Human Rights Defenders.

Corlette Letlojane from Human Rights Institute of South Africa and Dr Janet Munakamwe from African Diaspora Workers Network (ADWN) deepened support and recognition of their work and strengthened protection mechanisms including at national, regional and international levels to WHRDs specific concerns.

2.1. At National Level

The WHRDs were provided a brief overview of the South African Constitution, which is the foundation of democracy. South Africa has legal frameworks that promote and protect the rights of WHRDs or citizen for enjoyment of their rights. It enshrines the rights of all people in the country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom.

The Constitution guarantees the individual's human dignity. It also enshrines gender equality rights that women and men, people with disabilities, and LGBTIQ people should enjoy. Human rights have no borders – they are interrelated, indivisible, interdependent and government is obliged to respect, promote, protect, and fulfil.

2.2. At Regional level

WHRDs were empowered with the African system of human rights and the procedure, with focus on the African Charter on Human and People's Rights Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). Maputo Protocol guarantee women protection to eliminate the prevailing societal stereotypes experienced by women. Article 9 of Maputo Protocol safeguards women participation in decision making processes without discrimination. In Addition, Article 10 safeguards women's rights to peaceful existence and participation in peace building. Furthermore, Article 17 promotes positive cultural context and participation of women in determination of all cultural policies. It is important to advocate for adoption of policies that align with Maputo Protocol for protection of women perform their duties in peace.

WHRDs were taught about the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) as an apex regional human rights mechanism. They were empowered to apply for Observer Status to engage the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and the Focal Point on Reprisals as well as the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa. These Special Mandate Holders promotes documentation information on WHRDs situations and submission of statements at each ordinary Session of the African Commission.

ACHPR recognise the important roles of WHRDs and have passed critical resolutions calling Member States to protect WHRDs performing human rights duties in communities.

- ❖ Resolution 273 (condemns reprisals, abductions, extra judicial killings, arbitrary arrest, intimidation, harassment of HRDs and recommends documentation/ of evidence on the situation of HRDs and present these to ACHPR Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on Reprisals.
- ❖ Resolution 275 promotes protection of sexual orientation and gender identity persons / LGBTQA+ persons against violence, discrimination, extra judicial killings.

2.3 At International level

Article 2 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders place responsibility and duty on Member States: "to take necessary steps [adopt] measures to ensure environments for defending social, economic, political and other fields are conducive. This includes protection of all persons who are able to enjoy all those rights and freedoms in practice within States jurisdiction". UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders recognises activities of WHRDs and individuals working on gender and sexuality, including those working on sexual orientation and gender identity.

WHRDs were encouraged to advocate for adoption of a model law for protection of HRDs / WHRDs operating in risk environments.

3 Digital And Physical Protection Of WHRDs

3.1. Digital Protection of WHRDs

Arnold Netshambidi from Phambano Technology Development Centre provided training on digital security protecting WHRDs.

The physical and digital training equipped WHRDs with the knowledge and skills to protect themselves, their teams, and the people whose rights they uphold from external threats including data information. The digital security training was broken down into different elements covering the following topics,

- ❖ Cybersecurity Awareness
- ❖ Understanding social engineering
- ❖ Common types of social engineering attacks
- ❖ How to avoid social engineering
- ❖ What is Ransome
- ❖ How to protect against ransomware
- ❖ Password protection and management
- ❖ Multi factor authentication

3.2. Physical Security Challenges facing WHRDs

- ❖ Cybercrimes such as phishing for information, death threats, cyber fraud, interference with computer data storage mediums or systems

It was suggested that each organisation build a security policy that will respond to their specific work model. When an organisation has no internet security policies there is a high risk of computers being infected by malware and organisations losing important information.

3.3. Physical Security of WHRDs

Ine Van Severen from CIVICUS an organisation that strengthen citizen and CSOs emphasised on the importance of physical security for WHRDs. WHRDs continue working in risk environments advocating for protection of women's rights, FoAA, vulnerable groups, climate justice, natural resource face

reprisals and whistle-blowers of corruption. They have been vocal against discrimination, inequality as well as advancing civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in the framework of prevention, peace and security and sustainable development. Although they fight for dignity, substantive equality and socio-economic rights, they face multiple risks specific to their gender, including extra judicial killings, judicial harassment, family harassment, travel bans, stripping of nationality, extended prison sentences, reputation threats, judicial harassment, psychological harassment, abduction, labelling, reprisals, digital security threats for exposing corruption and injustice happening at local level. They also report on Strategic Litigation against Public Participation (SLAPP) or nuisance suits against CSOs, HRDs, WHRDs, Trade Unionist, Anti-Corruption Activists and Whistle-blowers.

3.4. Challenges facing security of WHRDs

- ❖ Victims of forced accusation – politicians make false accusation against WHRDs working at grassroots level with the aim of restraining their movement.
- ❖ Lack of community and government support – when compared to their male counterparts WHRDs receive less support and earn less.
- ❖ Restrictions and resistance from community members – Communities are afraid of being victimized by the government and politicians if they engage with WHRDs.
- ❖ WHRDs are exposed to beatings, rape with the aim to silence them.
- ❖ Defamation of character - WHRDs face defamation of character from communities and those who feel threatened by them, they name shame them and demotivate them from carrying out their work independently.

3.5. To address the ongoing reprisals facing WHRDs, it's important to implement:

- ❖ The Declaration on the Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society promoting protection of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms through providing a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders and ensuring their protection.

4. National Strategic Plan On Gender-Based Violence And Femicide (2020-2030)

Dieketseng Diale from LOPECO trained WHRDs about the NSP on Gender Based Violence and Femicide, while tackling the issues affecting WHRDs, Women Peace Builders, and the vulnerable groups. South Africa holds a shameful distinction of being one of the most unsafe places in the world to be a woman. Women, girls, WHRDs are being abused, assaulted, and murdered in the country every day at the hands of men and law enforcement. In response to the mounting calls from WHRDs, CSOs, youth and activist at large for urgent actions to address the scourge a Presidential Summit was convened on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in 2018.

The Summit was also instrumental in identifying key interventions to address, not just gender-based violence and femicide, but the wider challenges women and children face with regards to safety and security. It was from this summit that the NSP on GBV-F was prepared which addresses the multi-

sectoral, coherent strategic policy and programming framework to strengthen a coordinated national response to the crisis of GBV-F by the government of South Africa and the country as a whole.

4.1. To achieve this vision, South Africa will centre its efforts on bringing about specific change through 6 Key Pillars over the next 10 years, namely:

- ❖ Accountability and Coordination and Leadership
- ❖ Prevention and rebuilding social cohesion
- ❖ Justice, safety and protection
- ❖ Response, care, support and healing
- ❖ Economic power
- ❖ Research and information management

5. The National Action Plan On Women Peace And Security (2020-2025)

Dieketseng Diale highlighted the importance of women's inclusion in peace processes as a matter of principle. SA NAP on WPS is a 5-year plan (2020-2025) launched in March 2020. It is anchored on the 4 pillars of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, namely, Participation, Protection, Prevention and Relief and Recovery. The SA NAP on WPS is a comprehensive guiding framework for implementation of the WPS agenda in South Africa.

The NAP on WPS provides policymakers and security actors with a new set of tools to plan for largescale, coordinate collaboration to support the strategic priority areas of creating a safe and peaceful South Africa the continent and the world for women, girls, and gender non-conforming persons. It also aims to enable meaningful participation of women in peace processes, and prioritise their needs, experiences and agency in all conflict and non-conflict contexts.” In-depth information was provided to WHRDs under each pillar to enable them they identify roles played by their organisations in addressing ongoing conflicts affecting their communities. The WHRDs were encouraged to join the Women Peace Builders to popularise the NAP on WPS in all settings and incorporate in their programs to cultivate a culture of peace within communities.

6. DOCUMENTATION & MONITORING OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

A framework for documentation and monitoring human violations perpetrated to women and WHRDs was developed. This was to assist WHRDs use expertise gained from the Two – Day Training Programme by monitoring human rights situations in their various communities. The monitoring exercise was for a three-month period (August- October 2022). This tool was pivotal in strengthening WHRDs capacities to monitor and document obstacles impeding civic space in local communities, and the prevailing human rights violations while emphasising on the following key themes:

- ❖ Women participation in public space in terms of Freedom of Association, Assembly and Expression
- ❖ Law enforcement conduct (harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrests etc)
- ❖ GBV-F Status

- ❖ Human right violations facing the vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, albinism, migrants, LGBTQA+, elderly among others)
- ❖ Recommendations

7. THE FINDINGS

Women Participation In Public Spaces, Exercing Freedom Of Association, Assembly And Expression

7.1. Freedom of Association

Section 18 of the South African Constitution guarantees individuals freedom to associate and disassociate with others. This is in line with Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Freedom of association is impeded in Gauteng, Northwest and Mpumalanga Provinces because of deaths of many strong WHRDs and the lack of resource to sustain CSOs operation and functions. Some NPOs are denied access to formalise their operation through registration because they are a threat to the government while other CSOs get de-registered because of complicated reporting processes, especially in rural areas. This impact negatively on the WHRDs ability to engage in public dialogues affecting existence and work of their operations. They are not involved in public debates or reviews of NPO bills and fear that these NPO bills might be passed to their detriment resulting in mandatory registration imposed restricting them solicit foreign funding and being suspected of terrorists acts or involved in money laundering.

In Gauteng province, women with disabilities and albinism were reported to face severe and experience exclusion, discrimination, and unfair labour practice.

In Mpumalanga, migrants and refugees fear to form, and participate in associations of any type and engage independently on human rights issues affecting them because they are undocumented. Whereas in Northwest province, WHRDs face exclusion from capacity building programmes and strategic meetings convened by government and municipalities where important information is shared with CSOs to be compliant and not face de-registration. These organisations are funded by the government and as a result their programme activities are at risk of government interference.

7.2. Freedom of Assembly

The right to assembly is a cornerstone of South Africa Constitutional democracy. Although this right is upheld in the three selected provinces law enforcement agencies such as SAPS and municipalities abuse their powers with impunity to restrict this right.

Regardless of these challenge picketing, demonstrations, church meetings, and social media campaigns are conducted to raise women's concerns about patriarchy and human rights violations committed in public and private spheres.

However, in rural areas the Tribal Authorities and Chiefs administer lives in communities according to traditional and cultural norms that discriminate against public participation of women.

Regulations of Gatherings Act promulgated in 1993 for holding assemblies or gatherings, is implemented unevenly and with double standards, particularly between high profiled politicians, big trade unions and ordinary organisers. It also lacks human rights tenements to enable constitutional facilitation of this right. This is despite a progressive Constitutional judgement the Constitutional Court handed in favour of Constitutional safeguards. This Act require an amendment to give way to this Constitutional Court decision.

7.3. Freedom of Expression

According to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression;

This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers. This right is enjoyed by women in Thokoza, a township in the east rand of Johannesburg, in Gauteng and Nhlazatshe township in Mpumalanga provinces. Women often express their views and advocate against human rights violations such as high crime levels, electricity outages, murder, inaccessibility of disability and basic grants, patriarchy as well as discrimination without fear of reprisals. Whereas women living in hostels in the Gauteng province fear to express themselves about human rights violations facing them.

WHRDs take the risk to express their views in Elukwatini community based in Mpumalanga province regarding government failure to pay disability grants monthly. This is not a common phenomenon for women living in rural areas to express themselves freely and participate in public spaces.

In the Northwest province women can express their concerns by engaging in relevant structures such as Chapter 9 Institutions like Commission for Gender Equality and South African Human Rights Commission, Tribal Authority Offices and other platforms established to deal with human rights issues. But women fear to speak out about domestic violence and inaccessibility of health services

Family members, intimidate WHRDs, women and girls for reporting sexual abuses of children and widows perpetrated by family members. Families would normally recommend holding of family meeting where the rape suspect is often exonerated after settlement of a fine either goat or sheep. Police have been found unhelpful in reporting domestic violence cases.

Women are often discouraged from pressing criminal charges against the perpetrators that are known to police by being told to go back home to fix things with their husbands amicably. In the case of widows, they are often disinherited by their in-laws with little help due to WHRDs fear of threats and intimidation from family members.

As a result of police officers failing to handle GBV-F cases properly, WHRDs hold police accountable and provide necessary support to rape victims. For example, two police officers were arrested for sexual violation of a 20-year-old woman from Lorwaneng rural community in Mafikeng.

The local WHRDs organizations rallied behind the girl and her family and Independent Policing Investigative Directorate opened an investigation who saw arrest of the police officer. It was the resilience of WHRDs organizations by picketing outside the Mafikeng Regional Court that accelerated the case.

Although there are few places for women to express their concerns about human rights violations in their provinces, platforms that have been used to do so include meetings called by senior managers from Lead Departments, as well as the CSO gatherings, government Imbizo, and online platforms.

7.4. Law enforcement conduct

It was noted that law enforcement agencies have double standards in responding to crime depending on areas that human rights violations occur. In cities, SAPS, and IPID appear to be responsive due to the high participation of knowledgeable WHRDs. Whereas in rural villages, high levels of intimidation, harassment persist, and the law enforcement is slow in responding to human rights violations and resolve cases speedily.

7.5. Gender Based Violence

GBV-F, child rape, beatings, assault and abuse of vulnerable groups have been found to be common in all provinces. Victims live in fear and do not want their names to be published and it has been noted that families from impoverished homes do not want to open cases against human rights violations. This is due to the perpetrators taking advantage of the poverty status of the victims' family by imposing compensation arrangements.

It's been noted that there is a lack of shelters in rural areas to accommodate victims of GBV-F. In areas where they are available they are often situated in far away distances. This cause backlogs for women, girls, and vulnerable groups to access health centres, clinics and hospitals.

In Northwest province, a group of women and men including victims of GBV were mobilised by WHRDs organisations in Mmakau Village near Brits to embark on a campaign to advocate for harsher sentences for perpetrators of GBV.

In A Ikgaleng village near Zeerust, a perpetrator was convicted for killing his 25-year-old girlfriend, Tshanwelo Seleka. The vibrant activism of WHRDs led to the prosecution of the suspect. Another perpetrator in Klerksdorp was also prosecuted for killing his girlfriend, Sylvia Mwelawa.

WHRDs launched a campaign where pressure was exerted for prosecution of the suspect. A number of WHRDs in the Northwest Province is increasing and there is a need for more organisations to be involved. Although organisations fear to address human rights issues because of intimidation and harassment.

7.6. Any Violations Experienced By Vulnerable Groups

Despite the constitutional protection, rights of the vulnerable and marginalised groups in South Africa are still far from being realised. Hence, the structural violation of their rights persists. The following issues have been recorded to be prevalent in Mpumalanga, Northwest and Gauteng provinces.

- ❖ Person with Albinism living in rural areas are denied access to quality health services, they are not supported to access facial cream to reduce skin cancer. They also face stigmatisation and taboos perpetrated by typical traditional and cultural practicing communities.

- ❖ LGBTIQ+ face stigmatisation and violence because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. This is prevalent in villages because of the deep rooted harmful cultural practices.
- ❖ Migrants and refugees are not integrated in community activities. In big cities, they are exposed to violence and blamed for the high crime rates because of their foreign nationality. They are also victims of ongoing xenophobic attacks.
- ❖ Women have often been denied access to land, while the widows are harassed and intimidated because of their inheritance from their late husband. They also face domestic violence, sexual harassment in the workplace, unequal pay and exclusion from economic and political opportunities.
- ❖ Girls are subjected to incestuous crimes, rape, unintended pregnancies, lack of sanitary health products, equal educational opportunities, access to sexual reproductive health education, including family planning. They face child labour, particularly on farms, sexual exploitation, and intimate murders.
- ❖ Basic and disability grants are not renewed by SASSA especially in Mpumalanga province.
- ❖ Women, particularly living in rural areas face discrimination in accessing job opportunities, places of learning and skills development.

8. NETWORKING FOR WHRDs

For collaboration and further networking among WHRDs a WhatsApp group was created with 30 WHRDs from Mpumalanga, Northwest and Gauteng province for information sharing, documentation, monitor and raising voices from the ground against human rights violations affecting women, WHRDs and girls. WHRDs networked in the CSOs UPR processes organised by HURISA, CIVICUS meeting with diplomats. They also advocated at UPR in HURISA and SAHRC event for strong recommendations to be passed on South Africa upcoming 41st UPR Session in November 2022.

In this regard, the focal points remain confident to work with HURISA, CIVICUS, Chapter 9 Institutions, the government, traditional and community leaders and other stakeholders in the implementation of these recommendations. They are striving for women to live free from domestic and human rights violence.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING WOKSHOPS

9.1. Physical Security of WHRDs

- ❖ Communities should be educated on the roles played by WHRDs in the country, region and globe.
- ❖ Adopted law and policies should be implemented to protect WHRDs from rape, beating and discriminations.

- ❖ There is a need for regular capacity building training workshops so that WHRDs can be continually equipped.
- ❖ WHRDs should remain connected to other social movements in order to improve WHRDs protection.
- ❖ WHRDs must meet with politicians and liaise with them to avoid being victimised

9.2. Digital Security of WHRDs

- ❖ Education interventions on the different digital tools should increase for WHRDs and familiarise with laws guiding the digital spaces operating in the new COVID-19 norm in which many in the world have shifted into.
- ❖ WHRDs should collaborate with digital security organizations to be alert about online threats.
- ❖ There is need for more education interventions on various digital tools for WHRDs so that they are familiar with the laws governing digital spaces operating under the new COVID-19 norm that many the world have shifted into.
- ❖ WHRDs should be involved in processes that strengthens the law on digital security and popularisation.
- ❖ WHRDs must avoid downloading and visiting unnecessary sites to avoid downloading documents with virus.

9.3. National Strategic Plan on Gender Based Violence -Femicide (2020-2030)

Pillar 1: Accountability, Coordination and Leadership

- ❖ To popularise the NSP on GBV in local communities and various existing platforms
- ❖ Find and dismantle the root causes of GBV in all institutions
- ❖ The justice system should be more responsive and collaborative with communities.

Pillar 2: Prevention and Rebuilding the Social Cohesion

- ❖ Educate men at tavern, patrons, particularly men about GBV-F through capacity building workshops to increase women are safety to conduct their work in conducive environments without fear of reprisal.
- ❖ Monitor institutions like police stations meant to promote and protect women and girls by ensuring that they are equipped to avoid second victimisation and have resourced to conduct their work efficiently.

- ❖ Write a letters to the Department of Health to report violations of women experience pain due to artificial nails that nurses wear while e assisting women giving birth. This artificial nailscan injure the newborn babies.
- ❖ Chapter 9 Institutions like the CGE should be visible and accessible at grassroots level as many women are unfamiliar with the work that Charpter 9 Institutions conducts in monitoring the compliance of laws to hold the government and institutions accountable as well as promote the protection of women and WHRDs at grassroots level.

9.4. Pillar 3 (c) Justice, Safety and Protection

- ❖ South Africa peace and security is not strived for, victims victims of violence need legal representatives who are well experienced with violation of women and WHRDs.
- ❖ There is a need for a bottom-up approach to educate children on gender equality.
- ❖ The Constitutions must be used for protection of WHRDs fight against the government. The police and judges should be educated to handle cases of GBV-F and create training materials that relates to communities.
- ❖ Perpetrators should not be granted bail and receive harsher sentences without possibility of parole depending on the type of crimescommitted on women and WHRDs.
- ❖ Traditional leaders should be capacitated and trained on Chapter 9 Institutions obligations with a view of transformation of their highly patriachal conducted as well as traditional courts exacerbating the vulnerability of women and WHRDs.
- ❖ Ensure people with sight impairment access justice as most of them do not recognise their perpertartors.
- ❖ The NSP should be translated in local languages to strengthen inclusivity and implementation of the NSP on GBV-F in communities.

9.5. Pillar 4 Response, Care, Support and Healing

- ❖ Rape victim's experiences secondary victimisation by police officers and there's also no privacy.
- ❖ These factors hinder women and WHRDs from reporting GBV-F cases.
- ❖ There should be adequate psychosocial support provided for GBV-F victims.
- ❖ The immediate need of women should be provided such as sanitary pads etc to preserve the victim's dignity.
- ❖ WHRDs should be a person of integrity who will be acknowledged for providing assistance to GBV-F victims.

9.6. Pillar 5 Economic Power

- ❖ In the case of farms abandoned by their owners, there is a need to work with the government to provide skill development to communities that care for abandoned farms in order to improve sustainability and financial distribution by communities.
- ❖ There is need for skills development in terms of buying our own mineral resources instead of buying from foreign countries to prevent exploitation by being sold back at high price.
- ❖ There is a need for forestry farming and understanding of transforming current employment opportunities into real business that will grow our own economy.

9.7. Pillar 6 Information and research

- ❖ The prevalence of GBV is under reported due to lack of awareness raising and education.
- ❖ There should be awareness raising on valid data collections to enable efficient engagement and find responsive mechanisms for GBV-F cases.
- ❖ There is need for data to be well stored to enable victims and relevant stakeholders to strengthen the justice system and prevent perpetrators from tampering with evidence.

10. THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON WOMEN PEACE & SECURITY (2020-2025)

10.1. Participation

- ❖ Women should have access to information to eradicate poverty and create economically just and democratic societies.
- ❖ Capacity building training workshops should be conducted in local languages to enable effective interaction.
- ❖ Eliminate discriminatory gender norms and harmful practices that deny girls access to school and equality learning.

10.2. Prevention

- ❖ Legal representation should be provided to WHRDs and women in the same way that it is provided to their perpetrators when opening cases of GBV-F because legal services are expensive and backlog is experienced in accessing the justice systems. Furthermore, CSOs should advocate victims have access to a legal representative, as WHRDs do not have equal access to justice compared to their male counterparts.
- ❖ Provision of Shelters for women should be reviewed to increase duration from six months, and protect them from their perpetrators granted bail. The period of stay provided in shelters should be reviewed for increase from six months to protect them from perpetrators who are often out on bail.

- ❖ Allocate funding to implement the 21 specific strategic objectives under the NAP on WPS.
- ❖ Provide Youth with social behavior change programmes for their rehabilitation from drug addiction and alcoholism.
- ❖ Provide early warning platforms for the communities to assist in institutionalising and building safe society for women, girls and non-conforming persons.

10.3 Protection

- ❖ The police should review all categories of GBV-F at station level and provide statistics of cases that have been addressed and prosecuted to identify gaps.
- ❖ The SAPS must work in partnership with CSOs and social workers to ensure that cases of GBV-F are addressed and perpetrators are prosecuted.
- ❖ There should be more early warning mechanism in monitoring and alerting communities on conflicts.
- ❖ There should be social services available to protect non-conforming persons such as LGBTIQ persons.

10.4 Relief and recovery

- ❖ The government should hire more healthcare professionals to care for the elderly and children so that they do not have to wait in long queues.
- ❖ CSOs should collaborate to ensure that children in rural areas do not go hungry in schools and that women and children learn how to farm in order to ensure an inclusive economic recovery.
- ❖ Conduct more capacity building training workshops to educate people on human rights in Ekurhuleni.
- ❖ The government should provide sanitary pads in public places in the same way that condoms are.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS DELIBERATED BY PROVINCIAL FOCAL POINTS

11.1. Mpumalanga Province;

- ❖ SASSA should ensure that the basic and disability grant is accessible to vulnerable groups.
- ❖ Municipality should provide basic water and sanitation to communities
- ❖ Stakeholders should work together to find the root causes of GBV-F for its complete elimination.

- ❖ Learning and educational institutions including Schools should be monitored to ensure students are not carrying alcohol and drugs in school premises.
- ❖ Strengthen basic economic and social service delivery, including cleaning community environments.

11.2 Northwest Province

- ❖ Advocacy Interventions for human rights training of law enforcement officials should increase for addressing women's issues and friendly rooms be provided in police stations.
- ❖ Fundraising programmes should be strengthened for wide reach.
- ❖ Advocate for funding women's organisations to strengthen the work they conduct at grassroots level.
- ❖ Campaigning for supporting established Provincial WHRDs networks.
- ❖ Promote provincial collaborations to strengthen WHRDs campaign and leverage on each other's skills.
- ❖ Increasing information dissemination to WHRDs across provinces and through social media platforms
- ❖ Increase capacity building training workshops in communities for monitoring and holding the responsible state agencies failing to deliver basic services accountable.
- ❖ Support and strengthen # campaigns launched by other WHRDs.
- ❖ Support advocacy for increasing victim support and expansion of shelters, psychosocial support for GBV survivors and families.

11.3 Gauteng Province

- ❖ More capacity-building workshops should be provided on human rights instruments for WHRDs in local communities
- ❖ More social cohesion workshops targeting vulnerable communities should be considered for combating GBV-F, xenophobia, related intolerance, hate crimes and tribalism in communities.
- ❖ Law enforcement should be provided human rights training, laws promoting enabling environment for human rights and protection of the vulnerable groups, including women, children, elderly migrants.
- ❖ Advocate for implementation of peace-building projects and funding of WHRDs
- ❖ Strengthen existing policies to put an end to human rights violations.

12. POST AND PRE-EVALUATION

The pre and post evaluation assisted in addressing the gaps and measuring the effect of evaluation interventions. It provided insight into future areas that will need to be addressed to enhance the skills and knowledge of WHRDs working in risk environments. During the pre-evaluation exercise, majority of WHRDs had limited knowledge about the national, regional and international laws protecting women and WHRDs. Throughout the capacity building training workshops, WHRDs were able to participate in various breakaway groups where they gained better understanding of human rights instruments protecting them.

In terms of the post-evaluation exercise, the majority of WHRDs admitted to having learned a lot. They could gather information. They gained skills to develop recommendations to hold the government accountable for failing to implement national, regional and international human rights instruments. Furthermore, the evaluation process provided HURISA with suggestions to take appropriate changes in future capacity building training workshops. This process has enhanced our approaches to this type of training to have substantive results for WHRDS working in risk environments.

13. CONCLUSION

WHRDs were actively involved in the 2-Day Capacity Building Training Workshops, and this provided them with knowledge and core tools to use for improving their understanding of the roles of WHRDs. To also deepen their understanding on the national and international frameworks safeguarded by South Africa. The importance of WHRDs' roles in reducing the risks they face physically and digitally while carrying out their tasks has been emphasized, along with those of the Chapter 9 Institutions and other organizations that offer protection to HRDs and WHDRs. The pre and post evaluation form was designed and circulated before the training programme for purpose of assessing participants understanding of protection mechanism at national, regional and international levels.

The breakaway sessions enabled in-depth understanding of human rights tools for WHRDs to relate to their priority areas and provide own input to issues they felt related to their lived realities. As there are still gaps in implementing the national and international frameworks at grass roots level there's need for more capacity building training workshops to be conducted. This should be for massive wide reach and in order to achieve behavioural change to a violent free South Africa, especially acceptance of WHRDs and gender non-conforming person.

At national, regional and international levels; there is need to exchange information and experiences in defending women's rights. Popularisation of the ACHPR Study Report on the situation of Women Human Rights Defenders in Africa and for use by WHRDs to defend human rights in accordance with the UN Declaration of HRDs and other human rights mechanisms adopted at AU level.

In addition, there is need for mobilisation of resources for Chapter 9 Institutions to monitor implementation of women's rights as well as the NAP on WPS which safeguards the peace and security of women and vulnerable groups.

- ❖ Strengthen the use of all available mechanisms within the ACHPR, including the Communications procedure of the ACHPR for securing remedies from States failure to protect rights and WHRDs.
- ❖ It is also important to emphasise translation of the NSP on GBV-F and NAP on WPS in local languages to enable inclusivity and enhancement of protection of women, girls, the vulnerable and WHRDs.
- ❖ Advocate for human rights approaches in crafting of NPO Bills founded on African Commission Freedom of Association and Assembly which discourage mandatory registration, prevention of foreign funding and encourages tax benefits for NPOs.
- ❖ Campaign for amendment of Regulations of Gatherings Act to align with progressive Constitutional Court judgment promoting conducting of peaceful assemblies.
- ❖ Advocacy for development of a model law to protect WHRDs in their diversity should continue to reach local communities.
- ❖ Advocacy to the ACHPR to establish evaluation indicators for monitoring of implementation outcome of the Report Study to ensure the protection of WHRDs on the basis of these guideline.