

Legal and Human Rights Centre



Mlinzi wa HAKI OCTOBER 2024

GREETINGS FROM LHRC

Dear esteemed readers!

With the dedicated efforts of our staff and the generous support of our developmental partners, including the embassies of Sweden, Norway, and Ireland, LHRC is pleased to extend a warm welcome to you for the October 2024 edition of the Mlinzi wa Haki Newsletter.

In October, LHRC prioritized fieldwork activities and commemorated World Day Against the Death Penalty to raise public awareness about the need to abolish it, as it is inhuman, cruel, degrading, unfair, and denies any possibility of rehabilitation.

In October, LHRC commemorated the International Day of the Girl Child with students from Jangwani Secondary School in Dar es Salaam, encouraging them to engage in leadership matters at various levels.

Furthermore, we have witnessed an increasing number of incidents involving children going missing in our communities and deprivation of human rights and freedom of expression. These distressing occurrences have left many families in deep sorrow and the entire community anxious.

We invite you to explore this newsletter to stay updated on LHRC's ongoing initiatives and to gain a deeper understanding of the important work being undertaken within our organization.

Dr. Anna Henga (Advocate) LHRC Executive Director

The death penalty is an irreversible form of torture that protects no one; it should be abolished.

On October 10, 2024, the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) marked the 22nd World Day Against the Death Penalty, a significant global event dedicated to opposing capital punishment. The gathering, held at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Dar es Salaam, brought together a diverse group of stakeholders united in their call to end the death penalty.



At the World Day Against the Death Penalty event in Dar es Salaam, LHRC and stakeholders joined voices, calling for an end to capital punishment in Tanzania. Here, Rose Malle, a former death row inmate, shares her moving story of survival, resilience, and hope for change.

This year's theme, "The Death Penalty Protects No One: Abolish It Now," underscored the urgent need for abolition. The event was officially opened by LHRC's Executive Director, Dr. Anna Henga, who passionately emphasized the fundamental right to life.

The right to life is the cornerstone of human rights, upheld by international law. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 6(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights all underscore this essential right. Tanzania's own Constitution, in Article 14, enshrines the right to life for all citizens.

Despite these protections, however, the death penalty remains a mandatory sentence in Tanzania for crimes such as murder, treason, and certain military offenses. Once guilt is established in court, the sentence of death by hanging is automatically imposed.

The debate over the death penalty continues to stir strong emotions and deeply held beliefs. Yet, many supporters of this punishment overlook its broader implications and the true purpose of the justice system.

Legally and socially, punishment should aim to rehabilitate offenders, allowing them to reform and contribute positively to society. The death penalty, however, cuts short any possibility of rehabilitation. By ending a life, society loses the chance to transform an individual who might have become a powerful advocate for change and crime prevention.

Moreover, the imperfections within our criminal justice system have led to harrowing cases where innocent individuals have faced execution. Appeals and judicial reviews have sometimes revealed wrongful convictions, resulting in acquittals. Tragically, those who lack access to legal resources and support may spend years awaiting an irreversible and unjust end.

The emotional toll of life on death row is profound. At the event, Rose Malle, a former death row inmate, shared her heartbreaking story: "The reality for death row inmates is indescribable," she said.

"Many are elderly, having spent decades not knowing what their future holds. Psychologically, they suffer greatly. Fear hangs over them constantly. Every time someone whispers, 'I might be hanged,' or if there's a knock on the door at night, they think, 'Are they coming for me?'"



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ROSE MALLE A former death row inmate

These voices and experiences reveal the grim reality of the death penalty, highlighting that the time to act is now. Abolishing capital punishment is not only a legal and moral imperative but also a step toward a more just and humane society. As the world commemorates the World Day Against the Death Penalty, the call to protect life and uphold human dignity echoes louder than ever. Let us unite to end this inhumane practice once and for all.

Commemorating International Human Rights Day 2024: LHRC leads the way

Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) proudly announces the official launch of its celebrations for International Human Rights Day, scheduled for December 10, 2024.

This day commemorates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. As a foundational document for human dignity, the UDHR outlines 30 essential rights that affirm the equality and dignity of all individuals, regardless of race, gender, language, religion, or status.

Over the years, UDHR principles have been incorporated into international law through key covenants such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1976). These values are also embedded within Tanzania's Constitution, safeguarding citizens' rights and freedoms.



As LHRC launches commemoration for International Human Rights Day 2024, Executive Director Dr. Anna Henga calls on all Tanzanians to unite for a just and equal society. This year's theme, 'Equality: Reducing Inequalities and Advancing Human Rights,' serves as a powerful reminder of our shared responsibility to protect human dignity.

Each year, International Human Rights Day adopts a theme addressing current global challenges. The 2024 theme, "Equality: Reducing Inequalities and Advancing Human Rights," aligns closely with discussions from the recent UN-led Summit of the Future 2024, which focused on strengthening global efforts to protect and promote human rights in light of emerging challenges.

In Tanzania, this year's observance arrives at a critical moment as the country faces increasing human rights challenges, including threats to freedom of expression, abductions, and restrictive laws undermining citizens' rights. In response, LHRC remains dedicated to promoting peace, security, and human rights protection. The organization continues to urge the government and all stakeholders to take decisive steps to restore rights and freedoms for all Tanzanians.

Dr. Anna Henga, LHRC's Executive Director, noted that this year's observance not only honors Human Rights Day but also marks the conclusion of LHRC's 2019-2024 strategic plan. Additionally, LHRC looks forward to launching its new strategic plan for 2025-2030, aiming to further strengthen its commitment to advancing human rights in Tanzania.



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As we reflect on our progress and the challenges that lie ahead, LHRC invites all citizens, partners, and stakeholders to join in this celebration and continue working together toward a more just, equal, and rightsrespecting Tanzania."

DR. ANNA HENGA Executive Director at LHRC

Tanzania pressed to end child marriage and the expulsion of pregnant girls

In 2022, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) delivered a landmark decision against the United Republic of Tanzania, concluding that the country's policies of expelling pregnant girls and married adolescents from school violate their rights under the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Decision No. 002/2022, a powerful call to action, included 14 recommendations urging Tanzania to take immediate steps to protect and uphold the rights of girls.

Following the decision, the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) and the Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR) have worked persistently to push for Tanzania's compliance. Their joint efforts culminated in a recent implementation hearing on October 9, 2024, where the Tanzanian government presented progress on the 14 recommendations. This hearing, closely observed by the ACERWC during its 44th Ordinary Session, marked a critical milestone in holding Tanzania accountable.

During the session, the Committee urged Tanzania to take decisive action, particularly by amending the outdated Law of Marriage Act, which currently allows child marriage. The Special Rapporteur on Health voiced concerns that this law jeopardizes girls' rights to both education and health.

In response, the Tanzanian representative outlined plans to integrate the 14 recommendations into upcoming amendments to the Education Act, CAP 353, including banning mandatory pregnancy testing, ensuring re-entry for pregnant girls and young mothers, and introducing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education in schools.

A notable moment in the session was the contribution of a young Tanzanian representative, who asked the government about budgeting for re-entry initiatives, providing SRH education in rural areas, monitoring policy effectiveness, and addressing the stigma re-entering students often face. The government affirmed its commitment to prioritize girls' rights, highlighting several plans to turn these commitments into reality.



At the 44th Ordinary Session of the ACERWC, Tanzania faces a crucial moment as LHRC and CRR push for accountability on girls' rights. The session reflects the voices of countless girls, with representatives advocating for laws that truly protect their right to education and dignity.

LHRC teams up with Law Reform Commission to drive legal transformation

On October 7, 2024, a significant meeting took place at the Law Reform Commission of Tanzania's offices in Dodoma, where Advocate Hidaya Haonga, the Dodoma Branch Office Coordinator for Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), met with Mr. George Mandepo, the Executive Secretary of the Law Reform Commission, alongside several deputy secretaries.

The meeting served as a platform for both parties to discuss improvements in legal policies and frameworks that directly impact human rights protection in Tanzania. The conversation explored potential collaboration areas, aiming to drive reforms that would strengthen the country's legal landscape.

Both LHRC and the Law Reform Commission recognized the value of joining forces to tackle current legal challenges with effective solutions. They committed to leveraging each organization's expertise to bring about impactful reforms, ensuring a legal system that is fair, inclusive, and responsive to the people's needs.

This productive exchange marks an important step in LHRC's ongoing work to advocate for legal and human rights reforms across Tanzania. By building strong partnerships with legal bodies, LHRC reinforces its dedication to creating a more just and equitable society for all.



Advocate Hidaya Haonga of LHRC and Mr. George Mandepo of the Law Reform Commission share ideas for legal reforms that protect Tanzanian rights in Dodoma.

Marking International Day of the Girl Child with Jangwani Secondary School

On October 11, 2024, Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) joined hands with students from Jangwani Secondary School in Dar es Salaam to commemorate International Day of the Girl Child. This year's theme, "The Girl Child and Leadership: Involve Her, The Time is Now," provided a powerful platform for young girls to reflect on their potential as leaders and discuss the barriers they face in realizing their ambitions.

During the event, LHRC actively encouraged the students to engage in leadership at all levels, emphasizing that their voices and contributions matter. The students shared candidly about the challenges they often encounter, particularly feeling discouraged, which can lead to a loss of confidence in their abilities. This insight highlighted the need for stronger support systems to empower girls in their educational and leadership journeys.

The students also voiced the importance of eliminating gender discrimination, recognizing that such biases limit their opportunities. They passionately affirmed that when given the chance, girls can excel in any task and make meaningful contributions to society. Central to their message was the call for prioritizing girls' education, as it is the key to unlocking a brighter, more equitable future for all.

This event served as a reminder of the critical role girls play in shaping our communities and the world at large. By fostering an environment that encourages confidence, equality, and leadership, we can create a future where every girl has the opportunity to thrive and lead. LHRC remains committed to advocating for the rights and empowerment of girls, ensuring that they are not only heard but actively involved in shaping their destinies.





Empowering future leaders, LHRC commemorates International Day of the Girl Child with the inspiring students of Jangwani Secondary School.

Strengthening child rights and welfare: LHRC's ongoing mission in Njombe

In its ongoing commitment to safeguarding child rights and welfare, the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) has partnered with key local stakeholders, including the Police Force's Gender Desk in Njombe, the Njombe District Council's Social Welfare Department, and the Njombe Town Council. Together, they are conducting important visits to child rights protection clubs in schools across the Njombe region.

These visits serve two main purposes: to assess the welfare of children in schools and to provide essential education on legal rights, gender issues, and violence prevention. Through this initiative, LHRC aims to deepen awareness around child protection, fostering a future free from violence against children.

Beyond Njombe, LHRC extended its work to Ludewa District Council, where they collaborated with local authorities to visit 12 schools within the district. This outreach reinforces LHRC's message of child protection and welfare across a wider geographical area.

These efforts reflect LHRC's dedication to advancing children's rights and building a just nation where the principles of law, equality, and human rights are respected. By engaging with school communities, LHRC is helping to create an environment where every child can grow up safely and free from violence.

Through continued collaboration with local councils and law enforcement, LHRC remains at the forefront of efforts to protect and promote child rights, paving the way for a safer, brighter future for all.



Building safer communities for every child: LHRC, alongside the Njombe Police Gender Desk and local councils, visits child protection clubs in schools, empowering students with knowledge about their rights and violence prevention.

LHRC drives key contributions to Tanzania's National Action Plan on business and human rights

On October 15, 2024, Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) participated in an important pre-drafting session for Tanzania's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, held in Arusha. The session, organized by the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG), brought together stakeholders from esteemed organizations, including the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

As a member of the technical team, LHRC played a pivotal role in contributing its expertise on business and human rights, ensuring that the voices and concerns of citizens and human rights advocates, gathered through LHRC's various programs, were effectively represented during the early stages of the action plan's development.

This process is crucial, as it lays the foundation for creating policies that will shape Tanzania's future business practices, aligning them with human rights principles. LHRC remains committed to participating fully in subsequent stages, advocating for key priorities that will benefit both citizens and businesses. These priorities include developing robust policy frameworks for companies to undertake human rights due diligence, strengthening legal protections to ensure victims have access to remedies, and improving community rights, particularly regarding land ownership and the responsible use of natural resources.

Gender considerations are also central to LHRC's advocacy within the action plan. The organization is pushing for equitable benefits for all social groups, ensuring that women and marginalized communities are included in the business and human rights framework.

LHRC commends CHRAGG, under the Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, for coordinating this essential process and reaffirms its commitment to advancing business and human rights in Tanzania. As the action plan continues to take shape, LHRC is determined to work alongside its partners to ensure the plan serves the interests of all Tanzanians, paving the way for a more just and responsible business environment.



LHRC joins key stakeholders in Arusha for the pre-drafting session of Tanzania's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

LHRC engages in regional civil society exchange on electoral processes

From October 15 to 17, 2024, the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) joined representatives from across Africa at the 1st Regional Civil Society Organizations Exchange on Engagement with the Electoral Process, held at the Golden Tulip Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya. This significant event gathered civil society leaders from South Sudan, Benin, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sierra Leone, South Africa, Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and The Gambia.

The gathering provided a platform for exchanging experiences and insights on electoral processes within each of the participating countries. Participants discussed the challenges and opportunities faced by civil society organizations in engaging with electoral systems and explored how these efforts could contribute to strengthening democratic practices across the region.

A key outcome of the event was the exploration of the potential for forming a regional coalition dedicated to advancing elections and democracy in Africa. The exchange aimed to build stronger connections among civil society actors, empowering them to work more effectively together in monitoring and advocating for transparent, inclusive, and fair electoral processes.



LHRC joins civil society leaders from across Africa in Nairobi to share insights on strengthening electoral processes.

Organized by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Sudan in collaboration with the European Union (EU), the event underscored both organizations' commitment to fostering democracy and human rights across the African continent.

For LHRC, participating in this regional exchange reflects its continued commitment to promoting democratic values and transparent electoral processes, not only in Tanzania but across the region. The insights gained will enrich LHRC's work, enhancing its advocacy and electoral reform efforts within the broader African context.

Ensuring justice in extractive industries: LHRC hosts key session at African Forum on Business and Human Rights

Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), in collaboration with Rosa Luxemburg South Africa, the International Federation for Human Rights, the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, and the Centre for Applied Legal Studies, hosted an insightful session at the African Forum on Business and Human Rights.

Held at the UN Office in Nairobi, the event gathered experts, advocates, and stakeholders to discuss a critical topic: "Leveraging the Geopolitical Context: The Importance of Binding Human Rights Mechanisms to Ensure Access to Remedies in Extractive Supply Chains."

The session highlighted the urgent need for binding human rights mechanisms to provide real solutions for victims of human rights abuses in extractive industries. From mining to oil extraction, these industries are often linked to severe human rights violations affecting communities worldwide. The discussion emphasized the need for robust policies and accountability measures that empower individuals to seek justice when their rights are violated.



Shaping a just future: LHRC, alongside global partners, hosts a powerful session on ensuring access to remedies for human rights victims in extractive industries.

Participants examined how the dynamics of mining supply chains, which span across continents, can influence the rules and policies governing extractive operations in different countries. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, understanding these geopolitical influences is essential for protecting vulnerable communities.

Several key issues were discussed during the session. The geopolitical factors in extractive supply chains were explored, shedding light on how power imbalances exacerbate human rights abuses. The devastating social and economic impact of mine closures was also addressed, focusing on the consequences for workers and surrounding communities.

Labor rights and the risks faced by workers in the extractive sector were a major focus, underscoring the need for stronger protections and standards. Finally, the session emphasized the fundamental right of affected individuals to access effective remedies and the mechanisms needed to turn this right into reality.

The session at the African Forum on Business and Human Rights brought these complex issues to the forefront, serving as a powerful reminder of the human stories behind resource extraction. It reinforced the shared responsibility of governments, businesses, and civil society to protect human rights and promote justice.

Ensuring media freedom and accountability: LHRC's recommendations for the 2024 Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) Bill

On October 17, 2024, Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) submitted its critical recommendations to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Infrastructure, focusing on the 2024 Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) Bill. This submission represents a significant contribution to the ongoing discussion about media reform in Tanzania, particularly regarding the role of public broadcasting and its alignment with international human rights standards.

LHRC's recommendations emphasize the vital importance of media independence, transparency, and accountability. The Centre expressed concerns that the current draft of the bill may not fully align with regional and international treaties that safeguard freedom of expression and the right to information. Consequently, LHRC proposed amendments to ensure the bill better protects media freedom while enhancing the effectiveness of public service broadcasting.

Key recommendations from LHRC include the need for the TBC Bill to establish clear safeguards against political interference in the operations of Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation. Ensuring TBC's editorial independence is essential for fostering a media environment that serves the public interest without external pressures.



Fostering a transparent media environment, LHRC's recommendations to the TBC Bill emphasize the need for an independent oversight body and accountability in public broadcasting.

LHRC also proposed measures to enhance the transparency of TBC's operations, including the creation of an independent body to oversee its activities and financial dealings. Accountability is crucial to ensure public resources are used efficiently and in the service of the Tanzanian people.

Furthermore, LHRC reminded the committee that Tanzania is a signatory to several regional and international treaties that protect freedom of expression and the right to access information. The proposed amendments aim to align the TBC Bill with these treaties, ensuring that public media operates within an international framework that upholds human rights.

LHRC's recommendations highlight the importance of balancing state interests with media freedoms. As Tanzania continues to navigate the complexities of media reform, the success of the bill will depend on its ability to ensure that public broadcasting remains both independent and accountable to the people it serves. By adopting LHRC's recommendations, the Tanzanian government can move closer to creating a media landscape that is not only transparent but also strong in its defense of freedom of expression.

EISA delegation visits LHRC to discuss democracy and human rights in Tanzania

On October 17, 2024, a delegation of civil society stakeholders from Sudan, led by the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), paid a significant courtesy visit to Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) in Kijitonyama, Tanzania. This visit offered a valuable opportunity for in-depth discussions on the state of democracy and human rights in Tanzania, while also providing a platform to share insights and experiences.

The delegation, which included representatives from various civil society organizations in Sudan, sought to learn from LHRC's extensive work in promoting human rights and democracy within Tanzania. Their primary objective was to gain an understanding of the current human rights situation, the challenges faced by Tanzanian civil society, and the broader democratic landscape in the country.

The meeting served as an invaluable space for exchanging ideas on the role of civil society in strengthening democracy and advancing human rights. LHRC shared its ongoing initiatives in advocating for justice, equality, and free expression, while also highlighting the challenges it faces in an increasingly complex political environment.



Fostering a transparent media environment, LHRC's recommendations to the TBC Bill emphasize the need for an independent oversight body and accountability in public broadcasting.

Both parties engaged in open dialogue about the evolving human rights situation in Tanzania, with particular focus on freedom of expression, press freedoms, and the role of public institutions in ensuring accountability.

EISA and LHRC also discussed how enhanced cooperation could help amplify the voices of marginalized communities and promote the protection of human rights throughout the region.

The visit underscored the importance of regional solidarity in the pursuit of democratic values and human rights. It also highlighted the shared challenges faced by civil society groups in both Sudan and Tanzania, as well as the opportunities for mutual learning and support in addressing these challenges.

As both nations continue to work toward strengthening their democratic institutions and human rights frameworks, the discussions between EISA and LHRC serve as an important reminder of the power of dialogue and collaboration in advancing justice and democracy.

WCF collaborates with LHRC to promote labor rights and business ethics

On October 22, 2024, the Workers Compensation Fund (WCF) paid a courtesy visit to Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) office in Kijitonyama, marking a significant step in fostering collaboration between key institutions focused on human rights and labor issues in Tanzania.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the recommendations outlined in LHRC's 2023/2024 Human Rights and Business Report, which addresses critical labor rights concerns and proposes strategies for improving the working environment in Tanzania.

During the meeting, LHRC presented its detailed recommendations from the report, which focuses on enhancing labor rights protection and addressing gaps in the current system. These recommendations aim to ensure better safety standards, fair compensation, and greater accountability for businesses in Tanzania.



LHRC and the Workers Compensation Fund (WCF) collaborate to discuss strategies for improving labor rights protection and ensuring fair compensation for Tanzanian workers.

WCF expressed its readiness to work closely with LHRC to implement these recommendations. Recognizing the importance of safeguarding workers' rights, the Fund pledged to collaborate in ensuring that labor laws are effectively enforced and that workers are adequately compensated for workplace injuries and accidents.

Both parties emphasized the crucial role of labor rights in fostering a just and equitable society. By improving compensation schemes and addressing human rights violations within the workplace, they aim to create a more supportive environment for Tanzanian workers, where their rights are respected and their dignity is upheld.

This meeting signals a positive step forward in strengthening Tanzania's labor rights framework. The collaboration between WCF and LHRC underscores the shared commitment to creating a safer and more equitable working environment for all Tanzanians.

As both organizations work together to implement these recommendations, the hope is to make meaningful progress in the protection of workers' rights and ensure that businesses operate by international human rights standards. The outcome of this collaboration will be crucial in advancing social justice and improving the lives of workers across the country.

LHRC Board of Directors visits Dr. Helen Kijo Bisimba House in Arusha

On October 29, 2024, Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) Board of Directors visited the Dr. Helen Kijo Bisimba House at the LHRC Arusha Office. This visit offered board members the opportunity to connect directly with the heart of LHRC's operations in the region and gain a deeper understanding of the vital work being done on the ground.

The visit began with a guided tour of the office, allowing board members to see firsthand how LHRC's staff is fulfilling its mission to promote human rights, justice, and accountability in Tanzania. The tour included discussions on the daily activities of the office as well as an overview of key projects and initiatives currently underway. Board members received an in-depth look at how LHRC's Arusha office is addressing human rights concerns in the region, engaging with local communities, and ensuring access to justice for all. The staff shared valuable insights into the challenges and successes of their efforts to raise awareness about human rights and empower vulnerable groups.

The visit also provided an opportunity for the board to engage directly with the staff, learning more about the day-to-day operations and the resources needed to carry out LHRC's diverse programs.



LHRC Board of Directors connects with the Arusha office team to better understand the challenges and successes of their tireless efforts to promote justice and accountability.

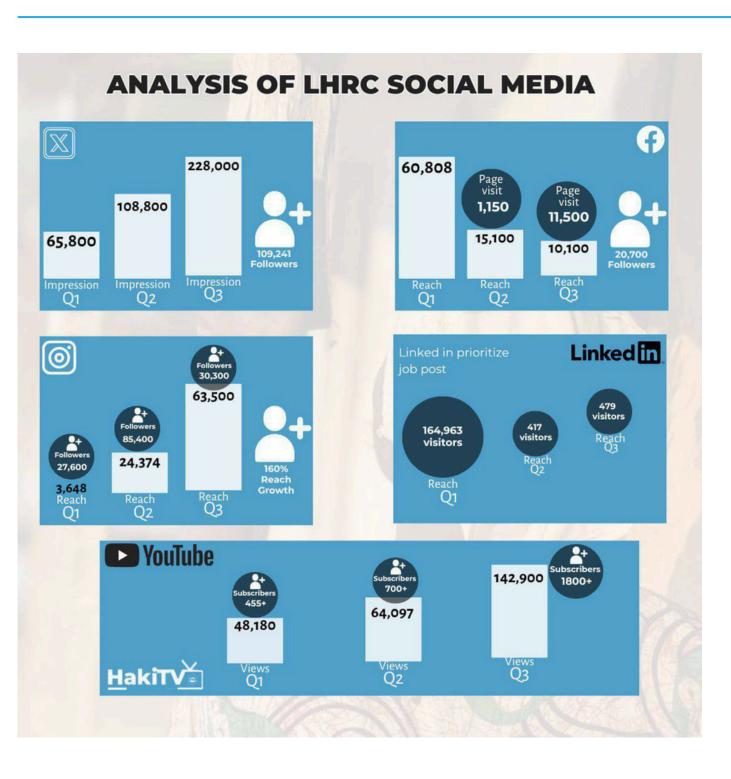
The board expressed its appreciation for the dedication and commitment of the team members working tirelessly to uphold human rights in the region.

This face-to-face interaction between the board and the Arusha office team reinforced the importance of internal collaboration and communication in advancing LHRC's goals. It also offered a chance to discuss strategies for improving efficiency and impact as the Centre continues to grow and evolve.

The visit was a valuable moment of reflection and renewal for the LHRC Board, reaffirming the Centre's commitment to its mission and the people it serves. The board left the Arusha office inspired by the dedication of the team, with a renewed focus on advocating for human rights and justice across Tanzania.

As LHRC moves forward, the connection between the board and the staff in Arusha strengthens the Centre's collective efforts to promote and protect human rights for all Tanzanians.

Analysis of LHRC's social media performance for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarters of 2024.



















Our development partners.









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