



Fight for Justice...

Trends Shaping Feminist Resistance
& Resilience in Africa

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for Urgent Action Fund-Africa

Preface



There is no doubt that the lives and work of women's human rights defenders (WHRDs)¹ have always been compromised and threatened. However, in recent years, there has been a notable rise in the criminalisation of the slightest form of dissent, restriction of fundamental civic freedoms and continuous hostility in the operating environment in which WHRDs and gender non-conforming groups in Africa practice their activism.

Urgent Action Fund Africa (UAF-Africa) has experienced increased demand for support from WHRDs, who are constantly

targeted for their audacity to step outside the norm to challenge the status quo. Indeed, requests for protection grants have steadily increased from 28% in 2012 to almost 40% in 2017. The Fund has observed how emboldened religious, political and cultural fundamentalisms, militarisation, authoritarianism, sustained by gendered and sexualised hierarchies are employed to silence dissent and sustain repression, thereby exacerbating the vulnerabilities of WHRDs across the continent.

The increased reliance on economic austerity policies, which include elements of privatisation of public services and

¹ UAF-Africa uses WHRD as inclusive of all women-identifying people, cisgender and trans activists.

deregulation of trade and finance are equally highly gendered, with access to resources, services and markets being skewed against women and gender non-conforming groups. These growing hostilities uncover the urgent need for heightened support of activists and calls for a critical response in building strong solidarity for WHRDs at risk in Africa.

These trends and many more are some of the considerations shaping the Fund's analysis and understanding of the lived realities of WHRDs in Africa. With the understanding of these dynamics that are evident in the everyday life and work of WHRDs, the Fund is able to provide appropriate feminist response to the ever-increasing challenges facing activists and

contribute to a global movement of support to end repression experienced by WHRDs in Africa.

UAF-Africa hopes that both activists and funders will find the information in this research valuable to their decision-making processes in shaping suitable gendered responses to the structural causes of inequalities in Africa.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ndana Bofu-Tawamba', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ndana Bofu-Tawamba
Executive Director

Acknowledgements



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The Fund is grateful to the WHRDs, feminist organisations and Funds who in the course of this research shared nuanced perspectives that shape their multi-disciplinary work.

UAF-Africa celebrates the invaluable work of her grantee partners who over the years have continued to share their experiences of resistance and courage in the face of grave threat.

The Fund and her constituencies look forward to a vibrant, tolerant continent that is devoid of structural inequalities against women and gender non-forming groups.

Responsibility for the content of this report lies solely with Urgent Action Fund Africa and the authors.

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Executive Summary



This report offers an analysis of the key dynamics social movements are grappling with across Africa. It poses questions about what is happening in Africa and how human rights defenders (HRDs), and gender non-conforming people, are responding to, influenced and impacted by this environment? By doing so, it proceeds from the position that to understand the lived realities of women's human rights defenders (WHRDs) and gender non-conforming people, we need to understand the key dynamics shaping Africa's political economy and craft appropriate responses to the lived realities of these groups in Africa. A feminist analysis of this environment produces a companion framework for ongoing work to transform the structural conditions that sustain inequalities. As a rapid response grant-maker, understanding the terrain within which our partners

work is an essential part of our ability to be agile, responsive and adaptive to socio-political and economic developments in Africa. Increasingly, we are also required to anticipate events. This anticipatory impulse requires that alongside our partners, we observe macro issues and trace their ripple effects on women and gender non-conforming people in the short, medium and long term. Intended as a resource for partners and grant-makers, we hope that this trends analysis enables an understanding of the realities of human rights defenders in Africa as located in a set of interlocking macro issues. At UAF-Africa, we believe that a feminist-led and supported response to the ever-changing African political terrain should have an appreciation of the root causes and symptoms of structural inequalities.

Methodology



This is a qualitative report that is based on an analysis of grey literature, which includes but is not limited to newspapers' articles, reports from a range of NGOs, think tanks and scholarly articles. In addition, twenty-five interviews were conducted with respondents who occupy diverse leadership positions in women's, human rights and funding organisations working in Africa. The purpose of the interviews was to assess whether the trends identified from the grey literature are relevant to the work of their institutions and the constituencies they work with across Africa.

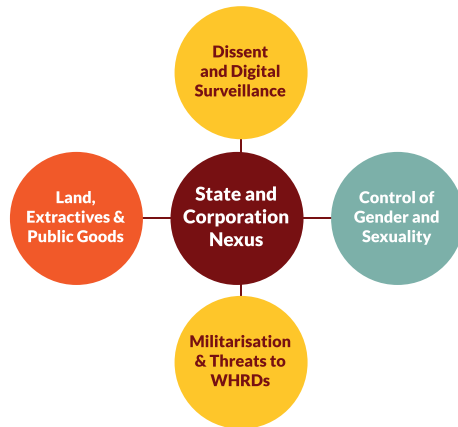
The findings outlined here are, therefore, a culmination of a dialogue between these two sources. We prioritised a meta-analysis of the impact of the trends, on feminist movements in their diversity with less focus on individual activists, themes, organisations and national peculiarities. This report's central contribution is to prioritise an understanding of what the ripple effects are for feminist organising and praxis and offer a set of suggestions on key directions for grant making agencies.

Key Findings



This report shows that there are four major trends that impact the work and lives of women human rights defenders. These four trends are bound up in the state/corporate capture relationship which we observe as also underpinning a range of fundamentalisms across the globe.

In the sections that follow we illustrate the manifestations of these trends across the African countries where they are most prominent. We also highlight the work that movements are undertaking both online and offline to resist and build feminist futures. We conclude this report by re-focussing on the implications of these trends for rapid response grant makers like UAF-Africa and its sister foundations. We see these recommendations as critical to other grant makers and actors in the philanthropy sector who are interested in supporting



structurally transformative work across Africa especially work that centres women and LGBTQ rights defenders.

Mapping The Contours

Ugandan Feminist Activist

State Corporate Capture

The real challenge is having political economies that work to the principles of social justice, pluralism and sustainable development. This is the lens through which rights need to be assessed.



The idea that the private sector is the most efficient provider of public goods and services is a capitalist construct that was entrenched in Africa through the structural adjustment programmes of the 1990s. Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) provide the overarching framework through which privatisation and market driven approaches to the provision and exclusion from public goods and services has occurred. The centrality of public private partnerships is evident in the space they occupied as a means of implementation for the Sustainable Development Goals. Arguments that shore up the private sector as an important actor in generating social, political and economic change are found in a range of development strategies such as the African Development Bank 2013 - 2017 private sector development

strategy that argues that, “a large and formal private sector can also be a strong advocate for policy reform and a force for good governance, establishing a virtuous circle in which an improving business environment brings private sector growth, which, in turn, strengthens governance reforms” (2013: 2). Pro-business accounts of development point to employment and infrastructure they generate which have ripple effects that impact many aspects of citizens’ lives. The impact of privatisation of public goods and services can be traced back to the 1990’s Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP’s) that had a major impact on education and health services, from which most

African countries have not recovered (See Mkandawire & Soludo, 2003). Yet, across Africa, education, health and water continue to be privatised, thereby disadvantaging most of the population due to this market-led approach to public service provisioning. The land, extractives nexus emerges as an important risk area for Women’s Human Rights Defenders in 2017/18.

Ongoing demands for greater accountability from companies who commit grave human rights violations is informed by developments across Africa. The ongoing natural resources including land grabs across Africa is a key area of concern.

“

As more and more corporates seek to engage within social development work, it is critical that this be done within a framework of feminist principles so that women are not further disenfranchised and commercialised in the economy.

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Key Trends

Debt, Land and Extractives



The rush to control natural resources on the continent is picking up indirectly through a relationship to debt acquisition. The Sino-Africa relationship is the most frequently discussed of these “partnerships” since it is the most visible through infrastructure development and debt acquisition. The risk of Zambia forfeiting the Zambian Electricity Supply Company (ZESCO) due to debt raises critical questions about the new power dynamic created by an approach to development partnerships that is based on massive debt acquisition (See Siulapwa, 2018).

Debt acquisition is leading to the mortgaging of national assets and resources when payment conditions are not met, with a key target being natural resources and land. This has specific implications for the work of women human rights defenders. In Latin America specifically Honduras and Guatemala, we observe the role of corporate firms in militarising communities and targeting indigenous women human rights defenders protecting their land. In Africa, we observe the evolution of these trends in the following ways. In Ethiopia, the land seizures that occurred to create space for the development of railway led to the dispossession of predominantly Oromia people (Kaiman, 2017).

“When governments enter these so-called extractive development projects they hardly involve communities, most often communities are unaware of what is happening when these companies take their land and natural resources until it is too late. Instead, they have left substantial environmental degradation, loss of life and disproportionate impact on women’s lives.”

UAF-Africa

WoMin notes how the “mineral and other natural resource extraction occurring due to the rush of corporate actors into Africa affects rural women (2015, 4). The “mineral and oil-based development leads to the misuse of important resources typically undervalued and hence unaccounted for in policy making, including community wealth, food production systems and female labour.” What’s more, the poor labour conditions and environmental degradation that characterise many of these foreign investments allow for questions about whether, against the negative gendered political, economic and socioecological

effects of such industries, there are any actual returns to the communities where the manifestations of this “scramble” unfold.

In Uganda, UAF-Africa grantee partner observes:

- When oil was discovered (in the Albertine Graben region) communities were told that this will be an oil city with large flourishing developments, jobs, social services for all, but this is proving otherwise because the only people that are benefitting are the oil companies and government leaders. The situation is now aggravated by proposed amendments

to the constitution which will further undermine the land rights of rural communities and women specifically. (Kwataniza Women's Farmers Group)

In Southern Africa, struggles over natural resources such as land and minerals continue to occupy centre stage. In South Africa, key questions about equality in access to land and its redistribution remain in South Africa. The 2018 move by the ANC government in South Africa, backing an Economic Freedom Fighters' motion, to hasten land "redistribution without compensation" has reignited debates about land redistribution (See, Merten, 2018).

The thirst for resources in Africa extends beyond the extractive industry to include prime agricultural land. From Tanzania and Uganda, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya there are the inevitable concerns about access to land, water and other resources (see Nordman 2017).

“ [..] In Mozambique women no longer have physical access to resources—water, health care—because they suddenly find that they are living on a coalmine and mines have taken over the land. Fisherwomen in Senegal suddenly find they don't have access to water. Consent is not even a focus in these communities; it means literally within a day you can find yourself living on a mine, and that you are dealing with security brought in that may not even be from your country, or speak your language, and then women have to negotiate for daily life.

WoMin in South Africa

Militarised States and Attacks on WHRDS



The rise of militarism across some African countries such as Nigeria, Guinea, Cote D'Ivoire, Morocco, Zimbabwe, Gambia, Algeria and Eritrea accompanied by proliferation of insurgency groupings in the Sahel region, have legitimised military intervention while simultaneously providing room for the expansion of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in Africa. From 2008 to 2014, military expenditure in Africa has increased by 45 percent compared to 6 percent (SIPRI, 2017).

Increasing militarisation has led to the reproduction of hyper-masculine visions of governance in international relations and nationally. This is seen in the rise of extrajudicial killings by the police in urban spaces in Kenya (IMLU 2016), in Zimbabwe in 2018

in the wake of the national elections and the death of hundreds of Oromo activists in Ethiopia (Allo, 2016), which illustrate that "militarism as an ideology and a practice to deal with social and political problems has gained increasing legitimacy in recent years. State and non-state militarism, state authoritarianism and non-state religious fundamentalism work together to generate systemic exclusion and abuse of women and girls, illustrated by the abduction of the Chibok girls in Nigeria.

The securitisation of elections and mobilisation of counter insurgency in East Africa and the Sahel by government to militarise national security has been witnessed in Cameroon, Uganda, Togo, Kenya, Nigeria and Egypt to name a few. In Egypt,

the state of securitisation has led to extended targeting on WHRD organisations as well as a new set of legislative amendments that weaken fair trial guarantees, arbitrary arrests, indefinite pre-trial detention, enforced disappearances and expanding the ability of the police to arrest people on terrorism charges. These trends can also be observed in Kenya where a raft of amendments to security laws in 2014 that increased police overreach occurs at the same time as the government enforced legislative measures on rape. The impact of these amendments in 2017/18 are as IMLU notes Independent Medico Legal Unit (IMLU) reports 822 people died from police bullets between 2013 and June 2018. Police killings in Mathare and other informal settlements in Nairobi such as Dandora, Kayole, Huruma, Eastleigh, Kibera, and Kariobangi have not been investigated (See, The Elephant, 2018). Mathare Social Justice Centre (2018), reported that between 2016 and 2017, 57 young women and men had died at

the hands of the police.

Formal and informal associations, people's movements across the continent are "pushing back" against authoritarianism. The rise in citizen-led protests to counter political elite repression of citizens is noted in ACLED data in the marked rise in protests between 1998 – 2018. In 2018, the sites of these protests mirror political and economic contestations in Egypt, Togo, Nigeria, and Cameroun. (See ACLED, 2018). In Togo, DRC, Congo, Angola, Burundi, citizens are challenging the undemocratic extension of political rule, bears witness to the local desire for more just governments across the region, and the grounded innovations that have engendered alternative political spaces. Social media campaigns have emerged driven by citizens' challenging government failures especially in relation to extended third terms for presidents. Some of these social media

campaigns include: #AgeLimitBill, #Kogikuteko in Uganda, #HalteAuTroisiemeMandat #Stopthethirdterm in Burundi and #Togodebout #Fauremustgo in Togo.

The resignation of the Ethiopian prime minister in February 2018, after two years of demonstrations, indicates the power of sustained mobilisations. In this case, these protests principally by Qerroot — Oromo and Amharic youth, paved way for the first Oromo leader of Ethiopia to be appointed (Aljazeera 2018). In April, 2018 the demonstrations against the excesses of former Angolan president Dos Santos and his family, marked a shift in the political landscape. For the first time, protests could proceed without any repression from state authorities—a direct result of citizens' efforts (Shaban, 2018). Similarly, reacting to poor governance and the impacts of austerity measures, the January 2018 protests in Tunisia and the April 2018 protests in Mafikeng,

South Africa (Burke, 2018; Gebrekidan, 2018), illustrate people led mobilisations in the face of the proliferation of repressive political, social, ecological and economic state instruments and practices. A WHRD from Tunisia notes: "holding the ground" is critical and remaining visible and "not giving up the streets" is a necessary tactic to continuously remind ourselves and the people of their power.

Control of Gender and Sexuality²

Growing religious fundamentalisms and other forms of moralistic discourses grounded in religion and culture extend to how policy makers interpret their roles. The reproduction of heteronormative, patriarchal and homophobic discourses have seeped into public policy. In Burundi, President Nkurunziza signed a law that instructed all married couples to legalise

their relationships by 31st December 2017. This was a law that was argued to create a “more moral Burundian society”. A September 2018 government directive in Tanzania to suspend family planning commercials in the country generated concerns about birth control policies due to public comments by the President urging women to abandon family planning measures and reproduce (Ratcliffe, 2018). The directive and remarks came in the wake of the proposal of punitive measures in June 2017 proposed by the same government against teenage girls who got pregnant while in school (Ratcliffe, 2017). The President directed

that it would no longer allow girls to resume education after birth. Organising under the hashtag #StopMagufuli women’s rights campaigners across Africa drew attention to the gender bias in dealing with teenage pregnancy. Magufuli’s approach ignored the responsibility of the male partner where consensual sex may be the case in addition to rape and abuse of power where older men are responsible for teenage girl’s pregnancies. The overwhelming control of women’s bodies and the punishment of women and girls underpins such public policies which view women and girls’ bodies as property in service of the nation.

² The global gag rule prohibits foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) who receive U.S. global health assistance from providing legal abortion services or referrals, while also barring advocacy for abortion law reform, even if it’s done with the NGO’s own, non-U.S. funds. The policy allows for exemptions in cases of rape, incest, or life endangerment. In 2017, President Donald Trump’s Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance policy took the global gag rule further and applied it to all \$8.8 billion of U.S. global health funding, which includes HIV and AIDS funding, health systems strengthening, and even water, sanitation, and hygiene programming. (<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/what-global-gag-rule>)



What is very vicious about the US global gag rule is that you don't only lose the money you need for abortion rights work; you lose money related to other health issues. It is not common to see an organisation working on abortion rights only, you work on HIV&AIDS, sexual health rights, reproductive rights and violence against women... and so what this means is that you become ineligible for any USAID money.

UAF-Africa's Board member, Congo DRC

The surveillance of women's bodies and therefore resistance to LBTQ people was mirrored in Kenya in November 2018 through a

ban preventing Marie Stopes from offering abortion care. This move occurred at the same time as public debates on teenage pregnancies placing the burden of chastity on women and girls rather than on the need for comprehensive and appropriate sexuality education in schools occurred. The trend of controlling women's bodies is accompanied by threats to gender nonconforming people. Consequently, strategic litigation against colonial penal codes that criminalise homosexuality through provisions such as anal testing and acts against the nature of order are important. In Kenya, Cameroon and Malawi strategic litigation by LBTQ organisers demonstrates human rights defenders pushing back in the face of state led gender repression. A March 2018 court ruling in Kenya outlawed the forced anal inspections of men suspected to have engaged in gay sex and offers hope that the attempt to strike down the discriminatory penal code provisions will be successful. (Bearak and Ombuor 2018).

In April 2018, the Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) banned a film *Rafiki* arguing that homosexual scenes are against the law, the culture and the moral values of the Kenyan people. A legal petition led to the film being un-banned for seven days to facilitate eligibility for the American Oscar nominations (See Kimuyu and Kiplagat, 2018). While this was an important win it did not shift the legal lacuna that would make policy makers overreach in this way in future.

Continently, the withdrawal of Coalition of African Lesbian's (CAL) observer status in September 2018 at the African Commission on People's and Human Rights after being granted observer status on the same principles of the organisations work as disconnected from "African values" illustrates how the space for radical work that addresses bodily integrity, choice and autonomy are bargained away to what are considered safer areas of work.

Dissent and Digital Surveillance

Social media enables greater transnational solidarity, but it also raises larger questions about surveillance and how governments, citing security concerns, curtail citizen voices and public accountability debates. While social media platforms facilitate broader solidarity action beyond the borders of one country, it is also here where some of the newest developments associated with state repression have emerged. Governments are increasingly blocking internet access and public broadcasting during election periods in Kenya, Uganda, Cameroon, DRC, Ethiopia, Gabon, Burundi, Zimbabwe and Chad and charging citizens for the use of public social media platforms such as YouTube and WhatsApp that have helped to democratise information in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.



Digital infrastructure is a critical area to focus on which allows us to map the patterns of violence we see today. Attention to the digital infrastructure entails building feminist capacities to engage in internet governance debates and to be able to monitor and assess the promises made by corporates to improve the experiences of activists online. For example, Facebook recently announced its plan to hire a Director of Human Rights Policy to coordinate their efforts to address human rights abuses. What recommendations do we have to improving the complex infrastructure of Facebook as one of many important platforms we engage with?

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While government regulators and corporate operations remain uninterrupted “netizens” are hindered (Dahir, 2018). The collusion between states and the corporate sector in such activities is clear. These “shutdowns” are punitive and are intended to diminish the potential of citizens to mobilise in defence of their rights.

Examples of such legislation include Tanzania’s Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations 2017. Some of the provisions of this legislation include the following:

- Everyone in Tanzania will be required to have a password (PIN) for locking their mobile phones, and failure to have this will result in a fine of more than 5 million Tanzanian Shillings (approximately \$2,000) or even 12 months’ imprisonment, or both depending on what the court decides. Online content publishers (blogs, podcasts and videos) will apply for a license at a fee of 100,000

Tanzanian Shillings, pay an initial license fee of 1,000,000 Tanzanian Shillings and an annual license fee of 1,000,000 Tanzanian Shillings.

This means that running a personal blog in Tanzania, would costs an individual an initial cost of approximately \$900 in license fees (See afrikan, 2018).

In Uganda, The Excise Duty (Amendment) Bill passed into law May 30, 2018 has the following provisions:

- Users of over-the-top (OTP) platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in Uganda are required to pay a mandatory daily levy of 200 Ugandan Shillings (about \$0.05 cents) (See, AFEX, 2018).

In addition to legislative surveillance, there are punitive measures that include arrests of bloggers and the monitoring of

digital spaces by authoritarian regimes in Africa. (AHRE 2018; Moseti 2016). In 2016, the Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE) documented the arrest of over 60 bloggers (Moseti, 2016).

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the government routinely shuts down internet and Short Messaging System (SMS) facilities to prevent anti-government rhetoric and demonstrations (Dahir, 2018). As elsewhere, these practices in the DRC are defended as part of promotion of national security, in accordance with a law passed in 2002 to control access to the internet.

The interpretation of cybercrime laws enables governments to criminalise those found guilty of 'defaming' presidents (as in the case of Tanzania in 2016) and there have been proposals by legislators in Nigeria to charge those who make "abusive" social media statements, as well as calls to block social media during elections in Ghana (Dahir 2018). This increasing evidence of the

erosion of the rights of citizens to engage in public discourse, indicates the narrowing of a space, which WHRDs have always considered to be marginal at best. These forms of surveillance contribute to the targeting of women human rights defenders leading to frequency of arrests, murder and harassment.

Gender & Data Protection

The March 2018 Cambridge Analytica expose on election interference through Facebook data mining and micro-targeting in the USA, Nigerian and Kenyan elections and the Google Data Breach in October 2018 illustrate how personal data on social media sites, are easily mined by companies and sold to the highest bidder (See Cadwalladr, 2018 and Wong and Solon, 2018). The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of 2018 is intended to control the use of personal

information by organisations, businesses or the government and has been adopted across most jurisdictions in Africa.

It includes stronger legal protection for more sensitive information, on race, ethnic background, political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, genetics, biometrics (where used for identification), health and sex life and/or orientation. Under the GDPR 2018, an individual has the right to find out what information the government and other organisations have about them.

Data protection concerns are critical for women human rights defenders due to the double standards associated with issues that are considered harmful to women and men. The protection of public use of private information in relation to gender, sexual history, sexual orientation is important given the frequency

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UAF-Africa supported the translation of the Feminist Principles of the Internet into Arabic to make this important source to Arabic speakers. The Principles aim to reclaim the internet as an important space to advocate for women's rights by providing a framework for women's movements to articulate issues related to technology and offering a gender lens to analyse internet rights, especially at a time when the space is hijacked through bullying and silencing online activism by women especially young ones.

with which personal videos and photographs are “leaked” with the intention of harming individuals while ignoring the issues under discussion. The harm inflicted is gendered and is reliant on societal perceptions about the place of women in society. The provisions to protect private data offer an important weapon to fight gender-based public shaming tactics that are used to push women back into the private domain.

The grey areas in data management and protection create room for state and non-state operatives to use personal and professional data with fatal results not only for those involved but also those in their personal and professional networks. Data protection and security goes beyond individual human rights defenders to movements particularly when institutions are raided by state and non-state actors, vast amounts of data become vulnerable to abuse. Core support to social justice movements

today is not only about securing human beings and physical infrastructure but also about securing virtual infrastructure.



CALAM organised a four-day training programme for women and girls on how to use basic tools to film the challenges they face in the El Kef in Tunisia. The workshop was part of a regional festival called FCKEF (Festival du Court au KEF). CALAM intends to create a community of feminist activists in the region with regular work to promote women's issues in El Kef.

Feminist Digital Transnational Organising

The internet and social media have provided an alternative activism site for feminist human rights defenders who have come under increasing attack by state and non-state actors. There is increased violence, bullying and other forms of gender-hate behaviour directed at feminists online. In Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Uganda, bloggers, public radio programmes and “social media influencers” use their platforms to incessantly shame women who occupy public spaces and platforms to advance their causes. These women have been demeaned and their active participation on these platforms reduced. (See, Wanner, 2017). However, feminists speak back using the same channels.

In South Africa, the hashtag #MenAreTrash emerged in response to high levels of violence directed at young black women in public and on social media. It served as a framework to analyse systemic inequalities that are based on gender, race and class and how these manifests in the daily lives of females, black and poor people. The death of the anti-apartheid struggle icon Winnie Madikizela Mandela, resulted in the hashtags #IamWinnieMandela, #AllBlackwithaDoek and #SheMultiplied, which served as an online archive of resistance predominantly in South Africa but also across Africa, against right wing international media that sought to erase the contributions of Winnie Madikizela Mandela, to the anti-apartheid struggle (See, Msimang, 2018). In Uganda, the 7th April 2017 arrest of academic Stella Nyanzi for using social media to insult the president of Uganda shows the convergence of social media,

state surveillance and freedom of speech. Dr. Nyanzi was charged with “cyber harassment”. She was released on bail on 10th May 2017 and re-arrested for the same offence for “cyber harassment” on 22nd November 2018.

Incidentally, the charges were brought about by her public calls for government accountability to Ugandans. Specifically, she crowd-sourced sanitary towels for school going girls through a campaign named #Pads4GirlsUG, after the government had failed to deliver sanitary pads for girls that it had promised during its campaign. In focusing on reproductive health questions for young girls, she was speaking directly to the structural factors that contribute to the systematic exclusion of girls and women from active participation in society (See Barefoot Lawyers Uganda, 2017).

In June 2018 #Women'sMarchUG was launched as an online and offline campaign by feminist activists under the umbrella of the



XOESE is a new Women's Fund established to provide sustainable support to women's rights movements and activists in French speaking African countries. UAF-Africa supported XOESE to create a comprehensive database of organizations working to promote rights of women, young women and girls in Africa's Francophone countries, indicating their areas of focus and contribution to the women's movement.

Women's Protest Working Group, to protest the disappearances and murder of women in Uganda. The group, one of UAF-Africa's grantees, mobilised hundreds of women and men who took to the streets with banners on which the message "Women's Lives Matter" was written, to protest the rampant cases of kidnapping of women and children.

These social media campaigns show how the very tools that are used to punish women and gender non- conforming people who speak against the grain can be mobilised to challenge the gatekeepers. However, this comes at a price, one that places feminist activists who use social media in constant reactive mode. This has mental health and safety concerns that social media companies are beginning to take seriously, particularly the gendered ways in which this abuse occurs.

Social media has also demonstrated how gender surveillance



In Sudan, online activism and social media are one of the few spheres left for campaigning, due to severe restrictions on civil and political rights in the country and censorship. Protecting and promoting the space for women's rights online is a valuable opportunity to promote long-term strategic objectives for change.

KACE, UAF-Africa's Grantee Partner

occurs and, in this instance, politics, capitalism and patriarchy collude through social media influencers who use media platforms to sustain gender-related hate and gain notoriety due to their following. These influencers use the

same platforms to sustain gender related hate. There is state sanctioned gender surveillance to push back against any form of accountability. UAF African grantee partner Al Khatim Adlan Centre for Enlightenment (KACE) in Sudan, documents several ways in which state authorities have used the cyber-crimes law to control feminist activists online. WHRDs are subjected to sexual harassment, threats, and bullying online and offline by family members and faceless publics.

This has also taken the form of physical threats and sharing of women's personal information in public thus expanding public access to personal information to different networks. A WHRD from Egypt, notes that online threats and violence are not considered by civil society actors, to be "real" violence. This perception indicates how technology has created the perception that online violence does not translate into offline violence.



The controversial Pornography Act in Uganda presents grave challenges for women particularly those within the creative and media industries. With the establishment of the Anti- Pornography Committee, the government is set on implementing the Act. UAF Africa supported actions to help creatives strategise around the creative freedoms at risk and how to avoid exposing women to harassment and arrest.

Feminist Futures



Feminist work has always demanded urgent responsive work in contexts that are historically hostile to radical structural shifts. This is evident today in the ways in which feminism is a term taken up politically by various governments and institutions but is used to serve as a place holder for micro, project-based support to thematic concerns. Funding available to support visioning and radical change work remains limited, yet the urgency to imagine and build feminist futures remains. The Nest Collective, a UAF-Africa grantee partner, uses an applied-research holistic methodology to create cultural bodies of work with film, fashion, literature and other media. They believe that it is important for art to reflect

holistically on black African women themselves, in the context of the rapidly shifting societies they live in and the even more rapidly shifting definitions of their humanities and those of others affected by their changing status. Supported Feminist Futures by UAF-Africa, the NEST Collective is creating a series of 12 comic narratives, with each story focussing on a different everyday narrative of human interaction. The objective is to highlight feminist practice or explore the lack of it. The comic narrative dubbed “Luna” highlights, strengthens and dissects Kenyan women’s experiences, reflections and dreams using fairytale, fictional utopias and factual retellings.

In this report, we emphasized that in mapping current trends that impact feminist social justice work, we must recognise that these trends must be understood as part of structural socioeconomic and political currents. In concluding, we offer

a set of recommendations directed primarily towards feminist funds and philanthropy actors like us who are interested in intervening in this environment by supporting WHRDs.



In imagining new worlds where women not only have agency but self-rule, we consider the possibilities of developing civilizations that address the issues of inequality that have plagued the world for centuries. Using several different narrative paths, we stir discussions on why a feminist utopia is necessary to begin with, the technological, physical and emotional work required to achieve it, the very real circumstances and frustrations that women encounter daily concerning their independence and interrogate society's violent and inconsiderate reaction to their plan that mirrors how issues of women's rights are handled now.

The NEST Collective, Kenya

Recommendations

Feminist Philanthropy

- a. When we examine the nature of mobilisation that has occurred around extending Presidential terms in Uganda and Burundi, we see unprecedented collaboration across movements. These movements require us to think about how we measure success. This question is critical given the increasing preference for market-led approaches to understanding the impact of development and change processes. The preference for technical solutions to structural problems is a factor of the power dynamics that determine the flow of resources that support social justice movements in Africa. Funding long term change processes cannot always be adequately and comprehensively

measured by key performance indicators (KPIs) that focus on outputs such as laws and policies that, while important, are part of continuous processes involving many actors to shift norms, attitudes and practices. Measuring progress is key but clarity about what progress and change means when fighting global and national systems of power and oppression is as important and determines the nature of performance indicators developed.

- b. Feminist philanthropic models focus on structural change, movement-led work, the importance of building and sustaining strong and critical institutions at the heart of change processes and supporting core funding rather than project funding. Women's Funds are key actors in

the funding eco-system to ensure that resources get to the movements that need them, at the right time and in response to the contexts in which they operate.

Natural and National Resources

In the wake of expanded militarism and accompanying securitisation across Africa and the globe, there have been useful analysis (See, Jones, 2013) that have made connections between the amount of resources invested in militarism and unnecessary wars and what similar investments would do to transform gender inequalities. Given that military expenditure in Africa is predominantly derived from bilateral support from countries in the Global North and China, one cannot examine military spending without acknowledging the global political environment that sustains the war industry (See SIPRI). The natural resource scramble in Africa raises similar questions

about how much of the benefits derived from national resources return to the immediate communities as well as their holistic redeployment within the national budget. For the latter, where are these resources allocated? An accompanying conversation is the amount of resources leaving the continent in the form of illicit financial flows in collusion with African government leaders and what those resources could do for gender justice (See Okech, 2018). There are three strategies here:

- a. Strengthening the work on economic justice and alternative models for just economies;
- b. Prioritising work on national and regional level accountability for mining resources drawing on instruments such as the African Mining Vision;
- c. Sustaining the historical work by feminist organisations

around land and territory as the basis for understanding the ongoing resource grab in Africa.

Collective Protection and Security

With feminist human rights defenders increasingly becoming a target of repression by state and non-state actors, it is important to:

- a. Increase resources available for movements to build effective, sustainable collective and holistic protection and well-being strategies that form part of their movement strategies and social justice work.
- b. Increase the level of resources available to women's funds, particularly rapid response grant-makers, to support collective protection and well-being for feminist human rights defenders at risk.
- c. Build and sustain security hubs for human rights defenders under threat in Africa, to strengthen transnational solidarity on these issues and to counter the need to seek safer havens in the Global North. The growth of right-wing fundamentalism and nationalism in the Global North has reduced the efficacy of this option.
- d. Recognise the importance of legislative work to challenge oppressive regimes as part of the process of building collective protection and security mechanisms. Even when this work does not produce immediate results the process is as important as the outcome. It facilitates broad-based conversations about freedom, safety, security, accountability, checks and balances across sectors.

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