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CAPE TOWN | 5-7 DECEMBER 2019

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AN  
**INTRODUCTION**  
**TO SAFE**  
**HAVENS**  
**2019**

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**MICHAEL SCHMIDT,**  
**SAFE HAVENS**  
**RAPPORTEUR**

The annual summit of the maturing arts rights justice movement, Safe Havens was established in the City of Malmö in southern Sweden, in 2013. Since then it has grown to embrace delegate organisations and individuals from four continents, with a distinct focus on being a “working meeting” of the sector that grapples with looming threats, and that works out best-practice solutions with a global ethic yet tailored to local conditions. At the conclusion of the sixth gathering, Safe Havens 2018 in Malmö, it was collectively decided to take the conference on a “road-show” of the global South as new protective mechanisms were increasingly arising outside of Europe. The first continent chosen was Africa where a range of new initiatives are now operational, and who were invited to present at Safe Havens 2019 in Cape Town, South Africa.

The overarching theme of the Cape Town summit was Safe Havens in the Global South – and we in particular looked at some great innovations emerging from within countries such as Tunisia, Uganda, Benin, Tanzania, and South Africa. The primary aim of the conference was the sparking of a new continental alert and protection ecosystem and indeed this was achieved with the formation of a new multi-partner Creative African Defensive Network (CADENET) which at the time of writing has begun operating in English and French. Additionally, it was recognised that creatives who are girls, women, or queer are significantly more at risk because of their gender and/or orientation, so the primary sub-theme of the conference was Creative Women at Risk – and assessing those risks was a significant thread that was woven through the discussions held by some 120 delegates and guests, most hailing from a wide range of African countries, over 4–6 December 2019.

The venues chosen for Safe Havens 2019 included those of three important local partner organisations, all of which were kindly provided pro bono for our gatherings: the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre which intersects with us on issues of migration and prejudice; the City of Cape Town which was launched as an Ubuntu Hub City refuge for human rights defenders in February 2019; and AFDA: The School for the Creative Economy which provides space for persecuted creatives to engage their publics.



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## OFFICIAL WELCOMES

The arts and culture departments of the City of Cape Town and the City of Malmö have a long tradition of bilateral cultural co-operation, particularly around their museums which collectively cover themes such as slavery and exclusion, displacement and migration, resistance and rebirth. In his welcoming speech, Ian Nielson (City of Cape Town Deputy Mayor), said: Artists are integral to growing healthy communities and bringing people together, transcending differences and shining a light on our most fundamental shared values. Artists have a crucial role to play in promoting social tolerance, encouraging a deeper understanding of the communities around us, and this process has the potential to open up spaces where we can engage with our complicated world and start conversations around some of the most pressing issues that we have today. Art has the power to challenge the way we think about issues such as cultural diversity, equality, human rights, amongst others. The City of Cape Town recognises the importance of participation and engagement in a variety of art-forms, from dance to drama, opera, and classical music to more traditional settings in public art and the performance in the heart our communities.

So that's why we provide funding and support to a number of diverse arts and culture organisations – in particular, grassroots organisations – where our focus is on providing access to resources, and other support that nurtures talent and enables it to grow. The arts force us to challenge how we think and confront that which we sometimes prefer not to think about; this compels us to review what we believe about the world around us, and can often lead us to adjusting these views. Yet such endeavours are not without risk: there will always be those who are intolerant of any perceived threat to their world-view, who will prefer to build walls instead of bridges, and in some instances this intolerance can escalate to the point of attack. While the voices of our artists are very powerful, the individuals themselves are

often vulnerable, with little to protect them against censure and persecution. So that's why initiatives such as this one, which examines how best to create safe havens for artistic and cultural expression, are so important. And I trust that this conference will build on the achievements of the previous years' events and that you will continue to make good progress towards creating spaces of greater safety. Please enjoy your time in Cape Town. Thank you very much.

He was followed by his Swedish counterpart, Frida Trollmyr (City of Malmö Deputy Mayor), who said: I stand here today with a great sense of pleasure and pride: it is a pleasure to witness the unity, the many NGOs, artists and eventers working together towards a common goal for a better future; and a sense of pride for us – a commitment to freedom of speech and artistic freedom that we all share. I stand before you all truly humbled, with a deep admiration for your hard work [and] commitment to the unifying platform, Safe Havens. The Safe Havens conference was initiated in Malmö, Sweden, six years ago. Over the years, it has become the main meeting place for the arts, rights, and justice sector. It has now ventured on a global "tour," spearheaded by the Museum of Movements in Malmö, in close collaboration with a number of local and global partners: I would especially like to mention HART, Hedda Krausz-Sjögren of the Swedish Embassy, and the City of Cape Town, who have all been instrumental in planning and facilitating.

In Malmö, the Museum of Movements takes the perspective of civil society organisations on issues concerning human rights, democracy, and liberation to understand the complexity of these issues. It aims the project with stakeholders and practitioners globally as well as locally. The beautiful City of Cape Town has been one of Malmö's most important twin cities for many years: we have a written agreement on matters concerning environment, democracy, art, and culture; I am pleased to say that this agreement has been put into real practice many times over the years; from where I'm standing, our interaction is vivid and

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our friendship is profound. Honouring the inter-connection and the prep-work of Safe Havens, I can envisage the collaboration leading to and emerging from this conference to be very tangible. I wish, I hope that it would be about finding constructive ways to facilitate the friendship between us, the peaceful artist-professionals, and the friendship between our two cities. Thanks you.

The final inaugural speaker was Cecilia Julin (Swedish Ambassador to Pretoria), who said: I have to say I'm very honoured and proud to be standing here inaugurating the first Safe Havens conference that happens outside of Sweden. And I also have to add, and thank you to the organisers for the fabulous sub-theme, Creative Women at Risk; I'm here representing the world's first feminist government – we have since been followed by Canada – and I don't think we could choose a better sub-theme if we hadn't been in that position, but we have [applause]. It's very special that Cape Town is the city to host the first Safe Havens conference outside of Sweden; South Africa is certainly a country that knows all too well what a shrinking, or maybe even non-existent, democratic space, censorship, persecution of authors and journalists promoting free speech, what that means. And Sweden and South Africa go back a long way united in the fight against apartheid – and that was a struggle where we were united in our firm belief in everyone's equal value, everyone's equal right to vote, and for everyone's right to publicly voice their opinion. And in a very broad way, Swedish support was given to this struggle; it wasn't only politicians, it was all sectors in Swedish society: the churches, consumer organisations, labour unions, schools, choirs, everyone actually joined in the fight. And I'm very glad to say here we stand today and we did win the fight together, so it feels very special to stand here today in South Africa in what was recently elected the world's most popular city to visit, Cape Town – congratulations for that, and welcome to Safe Havens.

As has been mentioned and as we all know,

Safe Havens is a fantastic network of cultural creatives, journalists, academics, and civil society working to protect the free word and its practitioners. And I think it's especially important at a time when we continue to see journalists, writers, dramatists, visual artists, and musicians being censored, persecuted and imprisoned. The Minister of Foreign Affairs just the other day received a report that stated that freedom of speech is at its lowest level in this decade, so the trend is actually very troubling and this trend is shrinking democratic space in many parts of the world – and helped inspire the Swedish government to start a drive for democracy as one of its priorities. And this means that we will work even harder to promote democracy multilaterally as well as in our bilateral relations, and we are trying to build networks of other countries and other parts of society that are interested in working in the same direction. And there's one network called Friends for World Democracy as an example of trying to strengthen a counter-trend to the shrinking space. We will also try to strengthen our work against things that undermine democracy such as corruption... or unjust economic development.

So Sweden strongly believes that democracy – when everyone has the vote and every vote is actually counted – that is the necessity for sustainable development in all parts of the world, and a free press and a vibrant debate in society is a crucial ingredient for democracy to function. So thank you Cape Town for stepping up in this very important work and for bringing your experiences to the table; to all participants, thank you for coming, thank you for your fantastic work and engagements for human rights, democracy, and free speech. And I would like to end by quoting our former Minister of Culture... from last year's Safe Havens conference in Malmö, and she said "Culture is a democratic, challenging, and independent voice based on independence of freedom of expression." So let's continue to work towards that so that we can continue to have a culture of expression. Thank you very much.

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## TO MAKE THIS FREEDOM SHINING FOR EVERYONE

*Meriam Bousselmi (Thespian & Lawyer, Tunisia), keynote speech*

Actually as you can see in the programme, another colleague, from Morocco, Zineb El Rhazoui, a journalist and a writer, was supposed to be here to give the keynote speech and due to problems related to freedom of speech she cannot be with us today, so I take over this responsibility. But at the same time I would like to let you know that it will be an improvised speech; there was no time to prepare a constructive conceptual introduction to our conference – but I am here to think out loud with you and to try to figure out... what is the driving purpose of our conference, and what are the goals or the aims of our coming together. So I ask for your tolerance and for your co-thinking, co-building, co-questioning our business today in Cape Town.

As our friend [Safe Havens master of ceremonies Gérard Rudolf] presented me, I am a Tunisian lawyer and writer and play director based in Berlin. As a Tunisian I am from North Africa, and when I am in Europe or especially in Germany, I always face the sentence, "Ah, you are from Africa!" but unfortunately I never was in South Africa before; this is my first time to be in South Africa which is a little bit sad... This is the first time that the conference is being done in another country – and it is very important for me; I was very happy to be at the other conferences [in Malmö] but this time it was more important for me to be here, even if I feel so guilty to take a flight just to be here for one and a half days, being concerned with climate change...

That's why I would like to start with this point: the point of why this year we make a "mobile" conference; what are the important reasons to bring the Safe Havens conference from Malmö to Cape Town?; and I know that for the next year, the conference will also be in another city. So I would like to think about Pablo Neruda, a poet who

wrote a very interesting book called *The Book of Questions*, and [he] asks if it is death to live without Hell? And I would like to quote from Neruda and start from his questioning from his idea: isn't it bad to start a conference, a coming together, with old and new colleagues in another new context without asking some questions? So please let us start this meeting by our figuring out why we are here, what are the ideas, what are the principles that bring us together – and to which point we would like to come at the end? So maybe for the organisers we can have an input later; also for the workshop motivators to figure out what are their aims to be part of this conference. And for me, something very interesting is this north-south exchange, this exchange also among the African continent: between North Africa and South[ern] Africa, between the different countries [as] I am always concerned about why when you... get in touch between African countries, between African artists, we have to go via the European countries?

And the idea of this question brings me to the idea of context: the conference theme for this year is "Safe Havens in the Global South," sub-theme "Creative Women at Risk," and I ask myself why today we choose in Cape Town – as a female artist, or creative woman at risk – what that means; can we define the statue of creative women at risk? What does that mean, what does that mean in real situations, in fact in our countries in the African continent, with the different contexts of course, different political and economic situations and how this statue is lived by creative women here in our different African contexts; and how as well this representation of these creative women at risk is approached and what are the perspectives from the Western part? As an artist I work in different contexts: I work in Tunisia... at the moment, nine years we are in democratic transition, so I knew the work under total oppressive government or dictatorship – and now I know what are the conditions of creation under democratic transition, and of course difficulties are different, context is different, challenges are

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different. Realities we have to deal with, but as well, as an artist based since 2015 in Berlin, I am also working in an international context and I face other sorts of problems: creative women living in Europe, what are their other challenges, other realities that they have to deal with? So I think there are different perspectives, or different challenges we have when we are based in different contexts.

I would like to share with you a very short story I read somewhere in a book – which can inspire you about this idea of how our knowledge of things, our pre-judgement, our pre-conception of a thing can really narrow our perspective. It's the story of a printer who inherited the print[ing press] of his father, and he didn't have a very easy relationship to his father... a conflictual relationship to the father. And when he took over this print-shop, he was making some new order in the office and he found, amongst the things of his father, a little box with a sticker [that read] "Don't Open." And for a long time, he took this box and he said "OK, this was the wish of my father; I don't have to open it, so I will put it somewhere." But this box that he couldn't open to respect the wish of his father became his nightmare: day-long, night-long, he's thinking about what is in this box; "For sure in this box there are secrets that I don't know, realities that can change my life; what is in this box?" But at the same time he couldn't step over and open this box. And one day he decided to "kill" the father again and to open this box and to see what is in this box – and when he opened this box, he just found an amount of stickers saying "Don't Open." So for ten years, or fifteen years, he was just living with an idea that in this box there is something that maybe can change his life; he had this appreciation or this perspective about what is in this box, [only] to discover it was just stickers with the same announcement. So this idea of, you know we say appearances are deceiving, and in our relationship to others, me as a North African I have more knowledge about North Africa, the Maghreb situation, Middle East situation, even more knowledge

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about Europe... the artists and their work there, the challenges they have, the cultural policies there – but I have less knowledge, I have to confess my ignorance, of South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa.

And when I think about this very interesting point: to bring us from one context [in which] I met new artists who I didn't know, from Norway, Scandinavian artists; also this idea to create a certain sustainability, so we don't come just for one year and then it's finished, no, but the second year we go to another scene within our research [the organisers' proposal is Bogota, Colombia], we meet other people, but we also keep the contact with other colleagues, and in the third year we go to another context [the proposal is Colombo, Sri Lanka] and we see other contexts, we meet with other artists and we change our perspectives; and this is very important. Maybe I invite us all to think about this importance: to leave our contexts in order to go to another context and to open the box and not stay with the secrets... because it's really when I am here now [to] what I read online or in the newspaper, it's nothing about the real context; the fact to be here physically...

And I would like to start with some stories from my first day arriving here... First I met some colleagues and we started to talk about "How your fight for freedom is going?" I don't know if my colleague with whom I met yesterday is here or not – ah you are here! – [said] you don't have enough right or possibility to express yourself. And then we start to talk... waiting for the bus, "What means 'freedom,' for us?" – and what means freedom for me, and freedom for him, and can we test how much we fear or not? And I would like to ask you as well: how is your fight for freedom going on; do you feel that you are making progress in your everyday life, liberating the artist and liberating the work, what are you bringing to the work in order to make this freedom shining for everyone? So it starts with a new country, thinking about freedom and my idea about what is freedom because, "Ah you are working in Berlin; you are more free than you are in Tunisia." No:

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it depends how you see freedom, ja? If I am working in different cultural policies as well that means that the challenges are different. In the Tunisian context I have to play a certain role, but also by definition as an artist in Europe I have to play another role, and so if I am dealing with some events or political policies, how much am I free if I am depending on the context, ja? What I am producing, is it free will or is it a response to some topic, to some label, to some needs of the art market, which is today not at all independent of the political market? So, it started with this input about what is freedom... and how we look at freedom from a certain origin of the word and how we look at freedom here and around [the world].

And then we... started in the bus to talk about our expectations to be at such a conference: I had a discussion with two colleagues... about how our work as artists is going on, and how our expectations all the time to make a change, that this conference can bring a change in our daily work as artists, how we are received, how we are programmed, how we are paid, how we are presented, and it was interesting as well to see that coming from different horizons, but we are, the three of us, very concerned about the idea of inability, the idea of not being totally free in doing what we want to do, the idea of how to create a certain sustainability in our work and to see that our career is going in a progressive [direction]... Then I was talking to [indistinct] and she told me something that I found very interesting, that she is trying to develop a creative audience – creative performances, but also creative audiences – sorry if I am not expressing well your idea – but I found it very interesting because I have heard a lot about strategies about how to get more audiences for more performances, but I didn't speak until now with someone to talk to me about his or her idea how to bring creative audiences, how to make audiences more creative. And then after the performance we saw yesterday [Nomathamsanqa Mhlakaza's A Genocide of Flowers], she took a flower she put it in her hair, and I told her "So, this is your way of being a creative, to react to perfor-

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mance art?" and she said "Yes!" so I took also [a flower] and I said "Let's carry on, art with art." So I think this was another input and I think without this conference and without this coming together, I would not know about this approach.

I think I had my lesson of the day – a lesson about creative women doing their resistance... about what means resistance, out of the academic salons, out of the humanist noise and leftward feminist noise, because as you know now for a couple of years... I think there is a political movement to empower [women] and to denounce the patriarchal. I would like to speak about [all] those relations of domination and not only male domination in art, in culture, in life. The question of égalité, the question of gender and rights, the question of Me Too: all these themes are related to the feminist movement this [past] couple of years, and all the polemics and also the misunderstanding, the abuse and the confusion of concepts and approaches. So for me, the lesson came yesterday from a waitress called Bonne Nouvelle and en Française, Bonne Nouvelle means Good News. And we were talking to my friend and colleague [Mahmoud] Othman, a lawyer from Egypt, who wanted to know about the local dance, he was interested to know what is the local dance, and we approached her to ask this question... And then she said "I am Nouvelle, I am from Burundi. I left my country because of war and because of poverty." I asked her "Are you here because of economic situation, because of the [neighbouring Rwandan] Genocide, what is your biography?"

And then Nouvelle told me she is here... also to improve herself... and she gave us a good lesson because she said "You know, for me, I can look at the world as a bad place to be, I can look at my situation: I lost my parents because of this Genocide, I lost everything, I am orphaned since 12 years old, I even don't remember them well, and I had to make it alone in life. And today since I am 19 I am at least standing in this place, I am 33 years old and I made my school while working every night in this place; I have met my husband, I made my child and I called him L'vrai Amour," which is

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True Love, which I find really interesting as a symbolic narrative of the word, “and now I can’t only see the negative in my life. I am all the time seeing the positive because for me, the most important is how to make a living. If every day I have bread on my table, I can offer bread and empower my sister or my brother to go to school, my child to go to school, my sister not to marry [but] to go to school; then I feel that I am doing something for these people.” And we were so moved because for us it was not the big speeches we are used to, and we are always complicated as lawyers and as intellectuals or as artists; we are all the time so sad, and melancholic and unhappy with the situation of the world; and you want to change everything, and we are not happy, and we feel like we are not doing enough, and we useless to make a change despite all the efforts we are making. And then you have someone who says, really in a very positive way – and without all the pathos that we know with all our intellectual circus and artistic circus that we say all the time “Everything is bad, everything is not working, the world is in the age of Hell” – she was simply very brave and very positive and giving us another input about what it means to be alive, to bring something into life.

And for me this brings before me another question: the question of narrative, and our responsibility to say, to tell, to express the world; what kind of narratives are we giving, are we telling, are we sharing about the world? And these narratives take me to another African writer, the Nigerian Chimamanda Adichie... the strength of her idea of the freedom story and how it is always dangerous to say “our” and to stay in our boxes and to share only this narrative of Africa, “People are dying of hunger, and AIDS – and there are cute animals and you can go for shopping... and there are some beautiful African statues,” and in Europe “Ah, it’s paradise; lucky artists who emigrate, they have everything, and they don’t have any problems, they get all the money to work and do whatever they want; they have absolute freedom” – which is all lies of course. And this single narrative of the world, also barriers, this narrative of

the world which is not bringing us to this point of making this change come true. So, I think also for me, this is one-and-a-half-day, but I also feel for climate change, and really guilty about this but at the same time, look: in not even one day, in half a day, I learned all these stories that I could not do if I was staying in Berlin in my office and working. So let’s please think about this important coming together as a chance to enrichen and to challenge and to shift our look at the world, at our context, where and how and what we are making in our daily lives.

Also, I would like, after narratives, to go a little bit to another topic which is related to narratives and... I would like to finish with something related to language because I think narratives are also related to language: we cannot speak without language, without words; words are our connection, words shape our works... So without language – there is other types of communication of course – but language is a very powerful tool to build policies, to build narratives – but also a very powerful tool of manipulation. So... I would like to come back to the topic we are asked to debate, we are asked to think together, the topic of “Creative Women,” I would like to tell you a little anecdote... about language and here in Africa we have thousands of tongues – and unfortunately, we use three or four official languages [amid] all this richness of language and metaphor. Every language is a whole civilisation, a whole idea, a whole image, a look at the world, so all these images, if we could open all these windows, and bring these windows together, how much our view, our [out] look will be rich and very challenging and very new, ja? In Tunisia, you know, with the democratic translation – translation, ja! [laughs] – with the democratic transition, we had of course a big feminist movement, especially creative women, intellectuals, academia (also this is one of the things we have to think about: the context, the social planet, where is the fight going on, who is taking [possession] of this fight and the changes that happen in a country). And we have sort of a national poet who wrote a poem to encourage and

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to empower women... and when everyone is in the street, when there is a demonstration about women’s rights, about empowering women, we sing the national anthem, but we also claim this poem. And all feminist men and women, they are claiming this poem, and this poem, I will read it in Arabic and then I will try to make a bad translation...: [Arabic original]. The poet is of course Mohamed Sghaier Ouled Ahmed:

*I hoped and thought  
But no letter is enough  
I described and described  
But no adjective is enough  
I say then, I say shortly and fast  
The women of my country  
Are one-and-a-half  
The women of my country  
Are one-and-a-half  
The women of my country  
Are one-and-a-half*

And that became a slogan, all the women singing “The women of my country are one-and-a-half.” And for me, and I mean I like poetry and I like also the work of Ouled Ahmed but this verse made me [think] “What does it mean, ‘one-and-a-half’, a woman-and-a-half?” It’s like this comparison or this binary perspective of the language about what is male/female... because in Islam, the men inherit two parts of the women [ie: inherit twice what women do], so the men in comparison to the women is always in a better position, in a powerful position. For also in poetry, even if he wanted to really empower women, he thought making this very strong perception “She’s not just one woman, but a woman-and-a-half.” Then we have a very clever Muslim sheikh, the chief of the Muslim party, he used [this] directly; he wants to appropriate this expression and say “Oh no, the women of my country are not only one-and-a-half – they are even a man-and-a-half.” So it becomes like it’s not enough to be a woman-and-a-half, but they are a man-and-a-half. And we have another expression in Tunisia, in dialect, in the... tongue

which says if you are a good woman and you are courageous and you are making things that “You are a woman like a thousand men.” So a lot of times, I was working as a lawyer and I go in some difficult cases in the court and you will have some people telling me “Oh, you are like a thousand men.” And always I was laughing at these expressions for to me language is the key to our way of seeing and of telling and of shaping narrative. And I would like to learn more from your perspective, from your language, and to question with you our languages, our words, our ways with things, to learn about, to challenge, to shift our ways we think about things.

And maybe I end with poetry – very important – poetry is the essence of our existence as humans. I would like to end with two things and I thank you for your patience with me. The first thing, about our responsibility as artists and our responsibility of having the public speech and it comes to my mind the great Russian poet Anna Akhmatova imagined during 1936/1938 and the Decade of Terror and the communists... with the whole oppression of the Russian people. Anna Akhmatova had just one son and this son was taken into the prison of Leningrad and every day like other parents, the mothers, husbands, sons, grandmothers, grandfathers, they were all in... winter in the streets, waiting in queues in front of the prison of Leningrad as it was called in this former time and once Akhmatova was waiting with the people around, and one of the women recognised her – she was a very important poet, a very important voice of the Russians and of humanity – and she came very close to her and whispered in her ear... she whispered because in this time you can only whisper, and she told her “This can never be described, this what is happening can never be described,” and Anna Akhmatova said “Yes, I can, yes, I can.” And then she saw a little smile... and this is how Anna Akhmatova starts her poem Requiem for the memory of all the people who suffered from torture, from dictatorship, from war, from all kinds of unimaginable and inhuman behaviours in our world. So this for me, artists

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and intellectuals and being here together, we are taking this responsibility: to name, to figure out, to say, to tell things; so let's be aware about this, first, awareness – it doesn't come like an unexpected visitor – awareness is a lot of work.

Second, and to finish, the first contact I had with Malmö City was for Mary Ann DeVlieg and [she] is one of the very strong collaborators of the conference and she's really a fighter as well for bringing people together and other women... and today she could not be with us because of personal responsibilities for her mother – and as women we are not ourselves only, we are the history of our ancestors, our mothers, of our grandmothers, so we have this responsibility and we share it with the future generation, and with Mary Ann, we always share poetry and before I came to Cape Town, the last poem we shared is a poem by Maya Angelou which is called Still I Rise and I would like to read just a little:

*You may write me down in history  
With your bitter twisted lies...  
You may shoot me with your words  
You may cut me with your eyes...  
You may kill me with your hatefulness  
But still like air I rise, I rise, I rise.  
Thank you very much.*





## SAFE HAVENS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Moderated by Michael Schmidt  
(Hammerl Arts Rights Transfer, South Africa).

Panel: Charles Clint Chimedza (Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network, South Africa) & Olivier Muhizi (Africa Human Rights Network, Rwanda/The Netherlands). With its origins in a global writers' defence of Salman Rushdie after the fatwa issued against him in 1989 for his *Satanic Verses*, the arts rights justice sector has now matured – and new protective initiatives are flowering in the global South – but do they differ from those in the North?

**Michael Schmidt (Hammerl Arts Rights Transfer, South Africa):** The whole concept of the arts rights justice sector has its origins in the International Parliament of Writers founded in 1998 in response to the fatwā issued against Salman Rushdie by Iran in 1989 for *The Satanic Verses*, the intention being that writers of stature support their colleagues around the world whenever they were under threat. That body endured until 2003 before becoming defunct – but many participants wanted to continue its protective work, particularly its Cities of Asylum Network established in 1993 because of concerns over writers under threat in Algeria, and this led to the foundation in 2006 of the International Cities of Refuge Network – ICORN – which started to establish safe residencies in many cities. And on that arose in 2013 the Safe Havens initiative itself; [and the sector] started to mature in 2017 with the creation of the Arts Rights Justice Academy at Hildesheim in Germany.

So we've come quite a long way and the sector's really evolved and developed with time. What was originally quite a European, Eurocentric initiative is starting to spread around the world. This is in particular why we have Safe Havens this year in Cape Town, but there are many initiatives that are springing up around the continent – in places that may be surprising to some of you, particu-

larly, if you have been watching the news about some of these places. It's often a delight to see that in the midst of some quite intense regional troubles, let's say in the Great Lakes region of Africa, that protective mechanisms are springing up and coming to the fore and gaining ground and being established. We'll look later on at a Uganda Case Study and bring together a really fascinating panel of people who are working on different initiatives in Uganda. But there's more than just Uganda: in Cotonou in Benin and in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, we're seeing initiatives springing up, so I will go straight to Olivier to tell us about some of those initiatives because I am dying to hear about them.

**Olivier Muhizi (Africa Human Rights Network, Rwanda/The Netherlands):** Good morning everyone. My name is Olivier Muhizi; I'm the programme co-ordinator at the Africa Human Rights Network Foundation; this is a human rights organisation that was created by human rights defenders who are living in the Netherlands who were poised to be defenders because of their work, and we decided to work together on the protection of human rights defenders... and towards protection, we created two Shelter Cities, one Shelter City in Dar es Salaam and another in Benin, but the one in Benin has just started this year. At the beginning, we didn't think about artists because [our focus was] just people working for human rights organisations – but later on, in 2018, we realised that it was important to also work on artists because they are also human rights defenders. So, I'm going to show you a video on what the artists do when they are relocated... In the region, in Eastern and Central Africa, there are still problems, but at least Tanzania is a stable country and there are some other international NGOs working there. And since 2019, we started in Benin because there were also some other reasons: because we realised there are some limitations on visas with Tanzania, but in Benin when you are an African citizen, the visa is not required so it [enables us] to be quick when we



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want to help human rights defenders or artists.

So the Shelters have been providing at our Shelter Cities... for someone who wants to come to the Shelter that's at-risk human rights defenders and artists, accommodation, we give them medical and social assistance, and we give them an opportunity to action with other artists in Dar es Salaam or in Benin where they can do some activities together or where they can record a song if they are musicians, and so on. We give them a workspace, material, a place where they can work and continue their work because when they come it is just a temporary relocation, it's just always for three months – but they can just extend for another three months, not more – so... just to help them... adopt new strategies and go about and continue their work. We focus on this all the time because the organisation was created by members of the Diaspora in the Netherlands and I heard most of my other colleagues saying maybe as artists, people think that when they go to Europe, they think that it's less [intense], but on the contrary, when they enter, they lose their target: in... other countries you were doing your arts work and you were defending human rights but when you are there it is almost impossible to keep growing... for the community.

So that's why we are focusing on their return and empowering people to go back and continuing their work in their own countries; that's what they like, that's the work they want. So we are working on this – and so far it is working, because so far, we have relocated 97 human rights defenders, only these people [shown on the video] were artists, sorry about that, because we started last year [relocating artists], and we are also planning to relocate another group of 11 artists in January [2020]; there will be only two women artists, but we think in the future we feel we will have many people. So when they are housed, there is also training because most of them are from French-speaking countries for instance; they learn English and Swahili in Tanzania. And we have also computer literacy training for them because sometimes they are trapped, because

they monitor something they post on Facebook and so on – the government always [watches] what they post. We have a writer from Burundi [for example] who was just using a password to fight against corruption, but he was arrested because of that... We had people from Congo who were arrested because they were using their art just to protest [an unconstitutional action]... and because they were artists, when they started protesting, so many people came after them because they were also enjoying what they were doing as artists and then the government arrested them. But they were part of the group who was relocated to Tanzania; you will see what they were doing in Tanzania and it's amazing. [Name indistinct] who just came from jail, the prison, but who is still working, always continuously working in order to help other people; and we have also another artist from Tanzania, there is a collective in Tanzania... he has drawn the president with a big head, but... the president says "How can you do this, how can you draw me with that big head?" but it was just a message the artist was giving to the population; then he disappeared for two days; when he came back, he didn't say anything but he happened to meet other artists from the region [at the Shelter].

So when they are there we also organise public events, because when we organise public events [such as] the Arts & Human Rights Exhibition, we invite the authorities and the international NGOs, the foreign communities like the embassies – and then people also talk about their issues in their countries as the artists also have time to give their testimony. So the presentation won't take a long time, but it will show the activities that we are organising in Tanzania: we have a live performance, and you have this Arts & Human Rights Exhibition – it is an annual event. When they are there they have to just show people that they are not enemies of the government, they are just there to help their communities. So those are the pictures in February this year of the exhibition we had, as you can see we had many people from various NGOs, embassies, the government, so what we are also trying to do is advocacy for human

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rights defenders and artists. As I said, we have relocated just one group of artists who were six, the first group... but now we are thinking to get another group in January of artists from five African countries.

There are still challenges, and one of them is we receive so many applications from artists because now they are activists and they want to make changes in their communities – but there are people, especially from the government, who are opposed [and try to] stop them; I don't know if it is really possible to stop an artist from doing his work. So what we are doing is just to relocate them temporarily and help them to go back and network the other artists in their region and try to work together. But we have limited means, so that is the biggest challenge but I hope together we will do more. The video I will show you is just six minutes, just to show you what we are doing in Tanzania: [shows video]... There are messages from their paintings, their songs, their dances... there was 6,000 [in attendance]. Maybe their community or other people do not like what they are doing but when they come to Tanzania, they saw people came for those public events we are organising for them. Those from Congo, when they were arrested, the international community, the international human rights NGOs were condemning the arrest, but after they were released they wanted to stop [working], but after coming to Tanzania then going back to Goma, they are now organising a big festival in February next year.

**Michael:** That's so fantastic, Olivier! I really think that was a great exposition of exactly what Meriam started out saying: let us inject a new message and achieve a vision of hope here, that we have a lot positive to celebrate and create. And I'm amazed at the scale of the project and that it's come to fruition so rapidly, that it's dealt with so many people so quickly. I want to move on to Charles here to tell us about Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network and their initiatives in four cities, I believe, the first being Kampala, that we will hear more about later on during Safe Havens, but perhaps you can give us an overview

of how this all came together, which cities you are looking at and why?

**Charles Clint Chimedza (Southern African Human Rights Defenders' Network, South Africa):**

My name is Charles and I work for Southern African Human Rights Defenders' Network which works with Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network which is based in Kampala, but we are based here in Johannesburg. So we have an initiative that we created in the whole of Africa, called Ubuntu Hub Cities Initiative which focuses more on relocating African human rights defenders in Africa, for them to be able to interact with other human rights defenders in countries to which they have been relocated, to learn best practices, and also to allow them to experience the environment that they are working in. So in South Africa, the cities that we have identified are Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg, and the reason why is that because when we are relocating human rights defenders, we want them to be able to interact [with their peers] in places where there are universities, organisations involved with the work that we are doing, not to be idle and just come here and sit. So for East Africans, it's in Kampala, West Africans it's Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and in North Africa it's in Tunis.

So basically what I wanted to say to us people working on creatives and arts is that there are mechanisms out there, but the problem it comes when attempting to accessing them: there's many programmes and organisations like ours but there's a scarcity on the definition of human rights defenders because we usually look at... the many working in NGOs, but many artists of human rights defenders and they are actually human rights defenders who should be able to access these mechanisms. But the problem is most of them actually don't know that they are human rights defenders; they think "I'm just writing a song," or "I'm just painting." So I think there's more need for us as organisations that protect human rights defenders to... make sure that their work in whatever they are doing that they

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[creatives] are also human rights defenders and they can also access these mechanisms. For example, there's a lady who was a writer and she was writing about the massacres that occurred in Zimbabwe, the Gukurahundi [against the Matabele over 1983-1987], but she was now being attacked – but she didn't know that she's a human rights defender, so we managed to relocate her to a safe space somewhere here in South Africa. And recently, we also do a Human Rights Award ceremony which this year we managed to give to a lady who had used satire as a way of... in order to make government accountable. So I think as human rights defender organisations that we should shift towards looking at people in creative arts so that they are able to access these mechanisms.

**Michael:** Yeah, I think that's very crucial; thank you! We're all aware that people often start out as artists – and then they get into trouble because of some artwork that they've put up, or some performance that they've done in a public space; and then they wind up standing up for their artwork, defending their right of freedom of speech, and almost accidentally or by osmosis becoming human rights defenders because by taking that stance in public they wind up speaking in defence of everybody else's right to freedom of speech and freedom of expression. So certainly we are seeing the confluence between these two concepts – and it's very much a theme within Safe Havens, which is how human rights defenders and artists are often one and the same.

My own initiative, I will explain it very briefly, the Hammerl Arts Rights Transfer, or HART, is essentially named after Anton Hammerl who was a South African photojournalist who was killed by Gaddafi's forces while covering the so-called "Arab Spring" in Libya in 2011. We are essentially providing a Fellowship for up to three human rights defenders who work in the arts – so we sit perfectly at that intersection – for either six months or a year; six months, just a brief relocation if somebody needs to get out of the kitchen

for a while because the heat is too hot and they can then go back home once things have cooled down, their controversy has blown over; or a longer period of 12 months if they are looking at perhaps going on into a longer term of exile, or applying for asylum-seeker status, etc. We haven't yet received anybody, but we are almost at the point of being able to do that and we'll probably receive our first Fellow in the New Year.

What's interesting to me, however, is first of all the significant differences between protective mechanisms in the North and in the South: Safe Havens is very aware of the necessity to try, first of all, to protect people within their home countries so that they don't have to relocate, on the one hand – and where that fails, doing precisely what you gentlemen are doing and trying to relocate people to pretty much within their linguistic bloc or within their region so that there's not this massive culture-shock, or sense of dislocation and dissonance for the artists who are relocated. So whereas the protective mechanisms in the North, the safe havens, the residencies, seem to be receiving people from much further abroad, from very different cultures and circumstances, the African initiatives seem to be very much that we are working within our environments, we are working with our neighbours; it's a much closer cultural and associational relationship.

There are limitations to this: we, for instance, just as HART we will not accept people from Zimbabwe and this is because of the dangers of accepting Zimbabweans into South Africa because we've had terrible examples of assassinations being conducted on South African soil of Zimbabweans by agents from the Zimbabwe Central Intelligence Organisation. My very first relocation, when I was working as a journalist before I even got involved in this [Safe Havens] network, was of a young Zimbabwean journalist who had been grievously tortured, and we were relocating him from Johannesburg to Durban – and he disappeared en route and we've never heard of him since; so I never want to go through that again!

So obviously there are very different operating

environments between the North and the South: a lot of the Northern models have been based around a close association with, or integration with – particularly with a model like the International Cities of Refuge Network – with the local authorities, with municipalities, etc; this is often not that possible in the global South where we have xenophobic, often, authorities, we have corrupt local government, or weak or insufficient local government structures. So perhaps you guys can comment a little about how your models are supported in what I presume is largely an absence of support from governance structures?

**Olivier:** For example in Tanzania it was not easy when we started: even the government was thinking that we are going to create diplomatic issues with the other countries because we'd get someone who criticised their government in a neighbouring country, if we have given them refuge for a few months, then they would start asking us to stop the project but we kept explaining to them that the people we are protecting are not political opponents and so on; they are people complementing the work of their government because they are helping their communities and government is there to serve these communities. But that was then the first year, but in 2018 when we organised this Arts & Human Rights event, the exhibition, we saw people from the government who came and gave speeches and who said "Yes, this is a good project," also in their testimonies [saying] that in the beginning they couldn't understand what we were going to do and what kind of people we were going to support. But now we are even organising some activities or events with the municipality of... Dar es Salaam.

**Michael:** So you had to build allies first – and then demonstrate as you did in the film of the nature of the people you were working with, in order to convince the authorities?

**Olivier:** Ja.

**Michael:** OK, Charles?

**Charles:** I think what he's saying is that it's possible, but in some cases it's almost impossible to do that because the level of threat that the human rights defender will be facing does not allow for such types of arrangements to be made. So usually, I would agree with you that it is very dangerous and sometimes you actually have to go beyond just a normal scope in order to protect someone because some of them, you even have to do, it is more like an extraction to try to see how we can keep that person safe, so it goes beyond just the normal [relocation] because some of the issues are very serious to the extent that there is no time for negotiations. So the other thing that do is we also we try to do internal relocations, so that this person, they are in the country but you [the public] actually don't know where they are but there are other mechanisms that keep them safe within the country if it is not possible to leave the country.

**Michael:** OK, so you do internal relocations as well, from one city to another, where the person is not as high-profile and things can calm down a bit. Alright, tell us a little bit more about – I am presuming when you talk about Pretoria, Cape Town, Johannesburg, it's because you know South Africa's a democracy etc – but tell us about the rationale behind (we'll get to Kampala later), Tunis and Abidjan: they sound really interesting.

**Charles:** Ja. With our citizens' initiative, it's more long-time relocation, it's not an emergency relocation, so these ones are more for the relocation of a human rights defender into a society. So you should know that these cities are where most of the institutions are, so that if we relocate you from Mozambique, let's say, and you have to do a short course over a year while you are relocated then you will be able to attend, you can go to the Centre for Human Rights in Pretoria at that time, or we can attach you to an organisation that works on the thematic areas that you were invited for. So

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most organisations, most institutions, and most industries are in Pretoria, Joburg and Cape Town [and the Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative's other cities] so that was mainly the reason why this could be beneficial because most of [our] partners are also there.

**Michael:** OK, so those are your allies, those are your third-party institutional supporters and people who can provide you with a platform for your creatives to demonstrate their works or to engage with their publics to create a new profile – because often there's a lot of lost profile when you go into exile and how to maintain that professional status [is crucial]. Gentlemen, thank you so much; I really appreciate it.





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## MAP OF ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

*Introduced via video by Mary Ann DeVlieg (International Arts Rights Advisors, Italy) & moderated by Danson Kahyana (PEN Uganda). Guides: Khainga O'Okwemba (PEN Kenya), Elisha July (PEN Zimbabwe), Daniel Gad (Arts Rights Justice Academy, Germany), & Catrina Wessels (PEN Afrikaans, South Africa). Based on Safe Havens in Malmö in 2018, we will start mapping the key issues around free artistic expression & strategies to better advocate for the defence & protection of artists; each territory has specific contexts, so we will hear voices from the ground to better support their efforts to meet key challenges to artistic freedom.*

**Mary Ann DeVlieg (International Arts Rights Advisors, Italy, via video):** Good morning! First of all I want to be able to say hello to all the friends and colleagues who I am very much missing – and the new friends and colleagues who I am really missing to be able to meet. And secondly I would like to say thank-you to all the people who organised this conference, both the people in Malmö – you know you are; no names mentioned! – and the people, especially Michael and Mase in South Africa. Now I want to stress that this event is a continuous one: since 2013 we have been meeting very year in Malmö, Sweden, in December, all the people who have an interest in freedom of artistic expression, and supporting artists and their free expression. Now last year, 2018, we shifted the format a little bit: instead of the usual sit and listen to panels, we asked everybody, around 200 people, to sit at round tables and work on three questions.

So these were very mixed groups – lawyers, activists, artists, artists' residencies, NGOs for free speech, policy-makers – and we asked them to think to think of the first question: how do we best support people who are working, sometimes in a very lonely way, in their own territories, on free artistic expression? How can we support them best and most sensitively in their own contexts? The second question was: after relocation – if an artist has to relocate to safety, wherever they are – how

do we best support them? And if they can't go back, if they find it's too dangerous for them to go back, how do we then help to make sure that they continue doing their own work, and how do we address the potential for brain-drain, artistic brain-drain if they can't go back? The third question was: how to influence, train, inform, judges, lawyers, police, the legal system, so that better decisions can be made if an artist has an accusation against them?

Now, this diverse group came up with many ideas, different conclusions, but the main conclusion was something that was also reflected by Karima Bennoune, the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights – a fantastic woman – who also said the same thing, basically: we need to create some sort of global solidarity and advocacy movement. And what we decided was the only way we can do that is listening to each other: people know what's happening on the ground, where they live; they're the experts. So we need to go around the world and listen to people discuss their own issues, their own priorities, and how they think they should be addressed. Then we can start to exchange and share, collaborate, be sensitive to one another's needs, and find out the best way that we can support one another. In that way, we'll build solidarity, we'll build the capacity to be supportive to one another – and eventually we can talk about international advocacy strategies.

Now, we've been talking about this already for some time with some people; we've been thinking about maybe some sort of web-based training or web discussions once a month or once every six months, best exchanging expertise. But who knows? It's really going to be up to you, up to the people in this conference who are talking about this, who are interested in this to start to think of their own ideas that would be useful for you. And I am very happy that we have the panel today. We've been talking about this for a while between one another and I think you're going to have a very good discussion. I told them "Record it and give me a copy!" because I can't be there and I would really like to. So have a great conference; I know you will; and see you around!

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**Danson Kahyana (PEN Uganda):** Two of the speakers could not make it from Nigeria because of visa issues, and Frankie [Asare-Donkoh] from [PEN] Ghana could not make it as well because of visa issues. And so one of the challenges we have to struggle with in Africa as we fight for freedom of expression is the visa issue; it may seem like a very small challenge, but it's quite big, so I was pleased to hear from the last panel that in Benin, any African can walk in without a visa. So as we work hard towards better freedom of expression, let's remember that the visa regimes existing on the continent is one of the many problems that we encounter. I will give the panelists five minutes [each] so that we can take 30 minutes, and then we have the audience to also talk to that; we have [many] countries here... and we can hear from other countries what is happening there, the challenges to freedom of expression, and what you are doing in those countries. The idea is that we can learn from each other so that when we go back home, we do a better and a bigger job as far as fighting for freedom of expression [is concerned]...

I would like the speakers to really emphasise the strategies that they have put in place to fight for better freedom of expression so that we will move away with a full understanding of the challenges we are facing, and also, what the different countries are doing to respond to these challenges. And I think this is in line with what our keynote speaker said: at times we feel helpless as freedom of expression in our countries keeps shrinking and shrinking. I come from Uganda and my president, Yoweri Museveni, has been in power for 33 years; that means that every year, he's worse than he was before. And you can imagine what that means: sometimes you feel powerless in the face of state provocation – but the message I got from the keynote speaker is that we need a new way of looking at the challenges we face so that we can find new ways of doing better ...even in the situations that we face in our countries we should have the courage to continue fighting in the belief that every little thing we do

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can make a difference. So allow me to call Elisha from Zimbabwe who will give the first presentation, then we shall have Khainga from Kenya, Daniel, and finally Catrina.

**Elisha July (PEN Zimbabwe):** Since we came, we have been meeting, greeting each other, so there might be somebody that I've missed in the process: I'll say greetings to you as the rest of the people I've already greeted you before. And so I am going to make a short presentation, particularly looking at the Zimbabwean situation, of course with an understanding that this is basically what is happening around Africa; so our situation in Zimbabwe is not so much different from other situations. We're coming from a background where the freedom of the press in Zimbabwe is restricted, right; we have over time, different Acts of Parliament that have been enacted to try suppress freedom of expression. We have, for instance, in 2001 we had POSA, that's the Public Order & Security Act; in 2002, we had the Access to Information & Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) which requires all journalists and media companies to register and it gives the Information Minister sweeping powers to decide which publications can operate legally and who is able to work as a journalist: unlicensed journalists can face criminal charges and sentences of up to two years in prison. So these different acts of parliament that have been enacted to try to restrict freedom of expression, but over and above all that, we have a Constitution which was passed in 2013 which guarantees this freedom of expression, and apparently, it being the Constitution of the country, it should supersede every other act of Parliament so we are arguing that position where as far as freedom of expression is concerned, there is freedom of expression theoretically, but what is left now is the freedom after expression; we have freedom of expression, but the challenge that we're still having is freedom after expression – and that's the challenge that we are facing and that is what we are trying to work on.

So the [PEN] Centre in Zimbabwe, obviously,

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looking at the circumstances that we are operating in, the level of threat is so high that you can't just do things haphazardly, otherwise you would risk your life, so you would have to come up with a strategy that will bring results in the long term. So basically, our philosophy is: if you want to bring down a wall, and you are using a hammer, you wouldn't expect that with your first punch, the wall will come down; so it's a repeated effort over time [and] you'd expect then, in the long term that you would start to see the wall coming down. So that's our philosophy, that if there's going to be any change within our country, obviously it's not going to be something that happens in a short time. For instance, giving as an example, the new Constitution that we now have: it wasn't something that the government was willing to bring, but because of consistent pressure on them, eventually they had to give in to some of these things. So there are people who fought for this for a long time, so we also believe that if we continue to fight... the government will continue to give in until eventually we get the freedom that we want.

So in the Centre, the whole of last year [2018] and into this year, we've been trying to educate our members on the contents of this; so we've been holding workshops in all the major cities of Zimbabwe. We were in Harare, we went to Bulawayo, we went to Mutare... We had some literature events that happened across the country, so we go there in the guise of promoting literature but during the same time we take the opportunity to educate our members about the need for this freedom of expression project. So we then take them through – apart from supporting literature and creating space for writers – we also educate them on these important aspects of freedom of expression. So our understanding is that if we are able to build a base in all corners of the country, we are then able to launch a national campaign for fighting for the freedom of expression. So this is what we are working on: from that background where we know we cannot just do it over days because if you are not careful before you even get

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started you will be intercepted along the way. We try to be as strategic as we can so we are trying to build a base and launching-pad where we achieve that objective where every corner of Zimbabwe we have a group of people who believe in freedom of expression – then it gives us room and the strength to be able to achieve our end goal. Basically for now, this is what we have been able to do: to try and educate our members on the importance of this before we take the next step – where obviously we are moving towards the point that we expect at some point in time we start to have some activities that are now visible, that the people may see.

Of course we have also taken the opportunity to be involved in all activities that happen: for example we have currently been able to register with the National Arts Council which is a government parastatal; PEN Zimbabwe has also been adopted as a member in ZIBF which is Zimbabwe International Book Fair which is a parastatal; so we are a member of those organisations. On the 4th – yesterday – I was actually supposed to attend a ZIBF General Council and I assigned somebody to do that on my behalf. So in there we try strategically to influence the policies that apply to freedom of expression. So it's a long-term view that we are having in trying to solve the problem that we are in, given the volatility of the situation that we are in. So for now let me end here.

**Danson:** Four of the panel members are from an organisation called PEN International; PEN stands for poets, playwrights, editors, and novelists. It's a big freedom of expression organisation. We even have our friend and colleague from PEN America, Julie [Trébault]... yes, Julie's in the house... So all of us are PEN Centres are doing what we can to promote freedom of expression. So I come from PEN Uganda, Catrina comes from PEN Afrikaans, Khainga comes from PEN Kenya; Daniel comes from a different organisation.

**Khainga O'Okwemba (PEN Kenya):** I'm going to dramatise a little before I mention a few neces-

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sities I work with: I'm a journalist, I've worked as a print journalist, as a columnist, as a reporter, and I'm also a broadcast journalist, I've worked as a presenter and producer of programmes – and I'm a writer, I'm a poet, I write essays. Now to be in Kenya it is very uncommon to see a journalist being dragged from the people to appear in court in chains; indeed Kenya has a robust press compared to our neighbour Uganda. The impression of free expression in the country, especially when you pick up any of the daily newspapers in Nairobi, The Standard, The Nation, you actually get the impression that this is a country where freedom of expression is expressed and journalists are free to write whatever they want to write. But if you talk to journalists more privately and you try to profile them, you will actually come to learn that indeed it is not what you see on those pages: there are many stories that would have actually been written, but they don't. The journalists will tell you that there are stories that are considered untouchable, stories that you're not supposed to touch on as a journalist.

And so the casual observer will not know that this is one of the challenges we are facing – and this is a big problem. So that is what is happening, so when you are in Nairobi, read those papers but know that there is a lot that is happening in that country that we should be knowing about – but there is no journalist allowed to speak. There are some topics a journalist is not allowed to write on, some subjects that are untouchable, even to the most curious, the most independent, and the most knowledgeable journalists. If a journalist is bold enough to go ahead with such a story, it will be killed by his editors: there are... stories that were alive and kicking at the side of the reporter... only for these stories not to appear in the newspaper in the morning; the story was strangled and killed at night. What happened? Maybe it took the owner of the newspaper just calling a senior journalist and telling them "I know you are about to publish this story" and the editor is maybe given instruction not to publish that story...

So what does that mean? It means that within our own media houses, there are journalists who

also report on other journalists, there are writers who collaborate with the state... and agree on stories that are supposed to be published, and before the stories are published, they are killed. The politician would not [otherwise] have known if not for a journalist from that media house who says "There is this story that I know about you" – and then the party that it affects, the next step, he calls the senior editor there or the owner of the media house and the owner of the media house is told "Don't go ahead with that story." If we had enough time, I would actually give you specific cases, mostly recent cases, not very far away, that happened in Nairobi... Censorship is a big problem. There are so many examples [such as] military purchases; sometimes, the methods or processes of accessing that hardware are not above board – and the journalist can't report on that, they are not allowed to publish about this. There are stories touching on prominent politicians or business companies in Nairobi, stories that are not allowed, stories that would be killed by the affected party talking to the owner or talking to the editor. And you, a hapless journalist, are not allowed [to even write the story]; then they kill it.

Censorship is a big problem in our media houses. Then there is intimidation... there are threats, arbitrary arrests, unfair trials, abductions and forced disappearances – but they don't talk of corruption among journalists in the media... If you carry a pen and that pen does not get anybody then you are not entitled to be called a writer or a journalist, because writers are self-appointed voices in society, in communities that speak for the marginal, for the sick, for the voiceless – and if your pen does not speak for the voiceless, if it does not attract the powerful's [ire] then you are not a journalist and a writer. In fact... [at] a conference entitled The African Writer... the keynote address was given by an Egyptian professor of political science... and what did he say? He said that writing is after all an art of protest, that writing's an act of rebellion, writing is an act of subversion, writing is an act of protest.

As a writer or as PEN, I've worked with writers who have actually been threatened: media and

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organisations like the last panel will actually come to us, saying we hear this journalist is threatened – and is that true?. And they actually appoint me to investigate the story and verify it with these writers and help them get [assistance]. So PEN defends writers who are under threat. To fight for freedom of expression for writers we organise public meetings, public lectures. There are books that have been banned but as PEN we took up the matter and say that if this is a story about Kenya, then Kenyans need to know so put out the publication. I'll give you an example of Michela Wrong who wrote a very scathing book [It's Our Turn to Eat] against the regime of the former President Mwai Kibaki... that book was essentially banned in Kenya, but... PEN organised public readings and availed that book to the public... That is the situation at home.

**Danson:** Thank you. Khainga is a wonderful poet and orator so if you don't stop him, he can take one hour!... If you had time, you'd have talked about [Okiya] Omtatah, one of your colleagues, and what PEN Kenya has done in order to ensure that his fight for freedom continues on even when his life is under threat.

**Daniel Gad (Arts Rights Justice Academy, Germany):** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute here. I'm working at the University of Hildesheim and I'm the managing director of the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy which is something like a think-tank structure around UNESCO, although we are independent from the United Nations system. We are trying to do our best to use our position within free academia to contribute to policy-making, but also here in this case to action, especially within civil society movements. We have to state that freedom of expression is threatened globally, so it's a global phenomenon, unfortunately also growing within Europe, although we have to add at this point that the options to do advocacy work in Europe are very different from the options in many other regions of the world. But it's a global phenome-

non, so it's common, and in a way, I think it was Mary Ann stating that there is a need for shared responsibility – and that's the point where the Arts Rights Justice programme is gathered in. The Arts Rights Justice programme is a programme that has not been formed by the UNESCO Chair; it was [rather formed by] a group of different organisations including Mary Ann DeVlieg, including Todd Lester, who were looking for an academic partner to develop a training and knowledge-exchanging platform, to further approach us in the field of advocacy policy. So finally we came up with a one-week training; actually it was developed parallel to the former Malmö Safe Havens conferences, so we used this network also to feed back, to get in ideas [on] if we want to do training, what does the training have to look like?

Finally we ended up with assembling 30 people of four different professions: so artists – not only artists who had personally experienced being threatened, persecuted, but many of them [who had]; we assembled cultural managers, so those who manage the artists' residencies and safe haven programmes for instance; we assembled lawyers who are in the field of cultural rights, freedom of expression rights; and human rights defenders who are related to the creative sector. And we got the feedback from that group that it makes so much sense to assemble those four very different professions speaking different languages but then seeing where are the common aims?... The people were coming from all regions of the world, so we try to be as diverse as possible. We were happy to have huge funding by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs to pay all tickets from wherever you come for a pilot period; now we try to go on with this... approach of giving access to those who should participate, which is definitely a challenge, but we do our best to try and continue. So to find... where are the common aims, we figured out that people from Mexico had a lot in common with people from Uganda at certain questions; we figured out that the Indian lawyer had so much in common with the Egyptian lawyer; so this kind of individual links were very

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important to observe, to see if we can't go on, if we want to strengthen our approaches.

So basically, the idea behind the Academy, our whole Arts Rights Justice programme, is to create networks, or to deepen networks actually, to make networks vivid, to keep diversity in those networks... in a way following parallel to the approach of the Safe Havens conference of Malmö. So it's an informal structure we all work in and we just need to be aware of where do we have to do our lecture. So it's about sharing strategies, sharing approaches – because there are a lot of fitting approaches already, so if something worked in Guatemala, it might also work in Nepal... But parallel to just sharing is we need to feel part of a group with an aim. Obviously we need a very long breath; this is a work for decades we are working on... I don't need to tell you, but I just want to say we need a long breath. So, a vivid network also needs to give us a feeling of shared action: there are people I can reach out to if I need support. And obviously, civil society is much more important to be able to work, to find smart ways to act because policy structures are like they are – there have been changes here and there, but I believe these policy structures will be like they are, in the best sense case we will have democratic structures and then we can collaborate between civil society and politics, but the world will not be in the best sense as we would like to have it tomorrow...

Final point: in addition to the Academy, OK, you know when you do a training, [you] start creating a DropBox file with important information, and finally we thought, there is a privileged group, once a year, 30 people from [around] the globe, but so many more would like to take part, so we have to share at least the written documents we have. So finally we came up with two approaches: one is writing studies, Arts, Rights, [and] Justice have been the three studies and the fourth one is already finished, by Meriam [Bousselmi], and will be published soon... We are not the only one in this initiative but also others are following in their approach to assemble knowledge-providers globally on certain topics. But even more important,

we developed a structure, using the internet, creating an online library which is global open-access, we try to convince every owner of a text to give free access to the book, to the study, to the report, to the guideline – there are different guidelines, road-maps for action in the field – and we assemble this in one spot. The addition to this network meeting once a year, to the network trying to be visualised by the Artists at Risk Connection, by PEN America, and having this as the Arts Rights Justice Library as a knowledge resource – also as a “safe haven for documents” because there are a lot of documents which are put offline because the policy is outdated, because the government doesn't want this to have this being published. So we try to use our safe servers of the German university system to provide a safe space for documents. Of course our website might be blocked in some countries – I don't know so far – but civil society, it's a play, it's a game how to get access to a website which is blocked, you see that in China... so we have to go on with this. So we are creating vivid networks and sharing knowledge and finally giving a fundament for a long time.

**Danson:** Thank you very much – and I really like the concept you have ended with: a “safe haven for documents.” Sometimes we forget about that; we think about the writers but not about what they have written so I think that concept of a safe haven for documents is really wonderful.

**Catrina Wessels (PEN Afrikaans, South Africa):** It's a great honour and a surprise to be sitting here as part of this esteemed panel, so thank you for giving me the opportunity. As Danson mentioned, I am with PEN Afrikaans which is a Centre of PEN International, a big authors' association that promotes freedom of expression and the interests of authors internationally... I started to think about how PEN Afrikaans has responded to freedom of expression issues in the recent past and I have three points... The first is that in the past year or so, PEN Afrikaans along with other local organisations have had to lobby and advocate for the rights

of a few very courageous investigative journalists who have at huge risk to themselves published works, books exposing widespread state corruption. Two high-profile examples of these books are *The President's Keepers* by Jacques Pauw and *Gangster State* written by Pieter-Louis Myburgh; in both instances, there was a massive uproar following the publication of these books and the authors were subjected to bullying tactics from the state, intimidation, threats of legal action, death threats, you name it, so as an authors' association, PEN Afrikaans joined other organisations and the public in rallying behind these authors. The authors' publishers were also very instrumental in seeing to their physical safety, to their wellbeing, arranging for their security. So we contributed in that, making people aware of this issue. I think in instances like those being part of an international family like PEN is really valuable, so we created international awareness and got huge support from PEN International and other PEN Centres, notably PEN Sweden. So in the recent past, that's some instances of freedom of expression issues we've had. As part of creating awareness, we presented an online panel discussion on freedom of expression and on censorship, asking those who contributed to weigh in on these issues, especially in the Afrikaans literary landscape, so communicating with our members about these issues, and also organising readings and literature events that people attend.

The second point I wanted to make, it's about the interplay of freedom of expression with gender issues on our continent and I was so happy to see that this is the sub-theme of this conference, because I think it is important to acknowledge, think about, and create awareness about gender-based violence, it being a real silencer of women's voices, voices of authors and journalists. The headlines... here in South Africa paint a stark picture. In the recent past we had an incident of a woman journalist, Karima Brown, being subjected to all sorts of horrible threats, mainly on social media following a – it was actually so silly, but anyway it was scary, it was terrible threats that

were aimed at her and she was so vulnerable in that position. And then too there are so many instances of gender-based violence so it's difficult to single a few out but recently there was a very shocking case of a young Afrikaans teacher in a town called Clanwilliam who was brutally murdered by her boyfriend and why I am mentioning this is apparently the first steps he took in what ended up as an awful mutilation was to cut her vocal chords which to me which to me was so telling. This is a big threat to freedom of expression, gender-based violence.

So the second gender-based issue that I thought I'd just mention is a PEN review count that we did just this year [2019]; the review count is something that was introduced at last year's international PEN congress; it is the initiative of an American non-profit organisation that publishes the count every year, and it's about volunteers painstakingly counting how many books by women are reviewed in prominent literary journals and who are the reviewers, are they men or are they women? And through these counts they have drawn attention to patriarchal dominance in the literary system, and we were interested in seeing what the situation is in the Afrikaans literary landscape so we did the same count – to see that even though women, published Afrikaans writers, write by far the majority of Afrikaans books, they are reviewed way less than their male colleagues. So the majority of books being reviewed are written by men, as are the reviews. So we counted reviews in three major Afrikaans publications, a Sunday newspaper, a daily newspaper and an online literary platform. And we will continue doing this just create awareness about after free expression: do women also have the same space or equal space, creative space, are they being reviewed? They are definitely being read – but how are they being received?

And lastly I thought I would mention some socio-economic obstacles in the path of freedom of expression: this isn't unique to Afrikaans authors, but I think it is important to mention things like poverty and inequality and how some-

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times it is important to create space just for writers to go sit and write, so I am very happy to say that here we were able to launch a writers' residency for writers to just go away for a month and just focus on their writing, and this year we sent five writers to our house in Somerset East to write on their creative works. So, ja, I think it is a reality and a local poet, Nathan Trantraal expressed this very well in a poem in which he is standing, there's a scene in the poem where he's standing with a literary award in his hand, he's just won a poetry award, and he's weighing it and he's trying to determine what metal it is, because if it's copper, then he can go pawn it and have food for a few days, but if it's bronze, it doesn't really mean much to him. So I think that we need to look at that discrepancy as well. It's difficult to focus on freedom of expression, especially if people are wondering where their next meal will come from.

**Danson:** Thank you Catrina. I'd like to congratulate you for taking eight minutes when you had asked for two. Catrina thought she had so little to say; she was trying to silence herself; she thought she had so little to say but she has told us so well so much... Thank you. Ok, I will talk very briefly about the Ugandan case since I happen to be part of the panel... I will just focus on three major issues. Number one, in Uganda if you are working on social media, if you are writing on Facebook, on Twitter, the chances of being arrested and prosecuted are very high and many writers have actually been arrested and prosecuted, and one of them, Dr Stella Nyanzi, has actually been convicted and she is serving an 18-month sentence for "offensive communication" against the president. And of course all of us here are aware that the term "offensive communication" is very elastic; it can mean anything. Secondly, our president... goes around the country informing parents not to take their children for literature courses. He tells them that what matters in the world is science, technology, mathematics, and engineering – and that any child who goes for literature is wasting their time. I can imagine what this means: I teach at univer-

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sity and many times I receive calls from my own village asking me if what I am doing is useless: "The president says that literature is useless and we hear you are a professor of literature, so are you wasting your time – or is he mistaken?" When you publish something critical of the government, you receive many calls, even from friends – and I think this is one aspect we rarely talk about, that the pressure is not only from the government; the pressure is also from our own chiefs who are very concerned about our integrity.

So... in December 2016, President Museveni bombed a kingdom in western Uganda – my kingdom; that's where I happen to come from – because the king was openly pro-opposition. So in order to make an example to the other kings in the country, that they must care about kingdoms, he bombed the palace and more than 200 people died. And I set about working on this; I wrote to many writers to respond artistically to this tragic event; a lot of writers did not want to participate because they said they did not want to die and one of the writers told me his wife has told him that if he participates in the project, his wish is to leave her as a widow because she fears that he will be killed and the six children they have will have to be brought up single-handedly by her. I think this shows you the pressure that we receive from our family members about the work we are doing. And people kept calling me when the book came out, "Are you safe; are you sure you will not be killed?" And I received three calls, one from my former student who works for the government telling me that I should not launch the book because if I launch the book "something terrible will happen" – and indeed the book has never been launched up until now... The book was reviewed for the government's paper, *New Vision*, and the reviewer was told the article would appear within three days; it never appeared... up till now. What I know I'm saying about stories being killed actually happened.

OK, briefly, at Uganda PEN, what are we doing about these situations? The first one is really a very cheeky one: we are evaluating the value of

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literature; we are telling accounting how important literature is. And we are doing it in a very interesting way: when the president says that literature is useless, we go to the same government and we ask for permission to do creative writing workshops in some of the most sensitive places one can hold a workshop in and that is a prison. So we began giving workshops in prison and we published a book called *As I Stood There Before the Wall* as part of this work we are doing. And the most amazing thing about this project is we have fought off censorship: [even though] every poem written, every story written must be read by the authorities, we have found ways of working with the authorities and going away with a poem that has been written – and other ones that have been written without the prison register. Challenges: when the book was published, I spent about US\$8,000 on publishing the book, and the head of the prison, he is called a commissioner of prisons, asked that he would like to read the book word by word. And... the head of the ward there... called me panicking, and she told me she thinks her job would be gone because she gave us permission to publish the book and even wrote the afterword to the book without reading the book... And so on the day that her boss was to meet us, she was practically shaking... and when the boss said "I think this is a very good collection of work and it shows our inmates are capable of doing amazing things if they are helped to do them," the woman, she breathed... this sigh of relief because she was so scared. And we discovered in that moment the power of literature; it was a very funny way of discovering something like that! We discovered how important literature was.

The second strategy is working out what is happening to writers. Dr Stella Nyanzi, as Catrina is my witness, whatever we do as PEN members, we always talk about her. PEN has a very beautiful tradition, what they call the "empty chair": before any meeting starts, there is a chair that is put there to represent all those writers who have been imprisoned, all those writers who have been killed, and we have held very many empty chairs

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for Stella Nyanzi. Recently I received a letter from the High Commissioner of Uganda asking me why I am fighting the government; I said "I am not fighting the government; what are you talking about?" and he forwarded to me a letter I had sent to him about the case of Dr Stella Nyanzi asking the government to release her because there was nothing offensive in the poem that she wrote. So this shows you what a small gesture like writing a letter to the authorities [means]. Sometimes you will feel that the letter never reached [its intended] and sometimes you feel powerless in the face of oppression, but in fact the letter does [have] reach... You know there's something called a "night-dancer," people who dance around graves; I don't know if it's true or if it's myth, part of folklore, and those night-dancers never want to be seen doing that, their doings in the middle of the night, like 3am. And [those] running for government in Africa are like night-dancers: when they do terrible things, they never want anybody to know about those terrible things, so when you point out some of the terrible things that they are doing, they get embarrassed because they want to show themselves as wonderful leaders, as democratic leaders, as progressive leaders and so on. And when you voice out what is happening in those countries, they get annoyed – and that shows you how well you are working; if you are going to annoy them, it shows you are really working.

Then, working with different organisations: I'm glad that Michael invited us to be a part of Safe Havens; I'd never heard about it and in fact he's the one who wrote me an email asking me to be a part of this and it's so beautiful because when I asked how he had heard about me, he said that he had read something about what we are doing as PEN Uganda. And again this takes me to the keynote address speaker... sometimes we think that our work is not important but every action counts, however small it may be. If you ask me to tell you what Uganda PEN has done, I always say "Very little," but maybe that very little is what is needed, the blow that Elisha was talking about, if you are bringing down a wall, you can't do it alone; and



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these governments have huge armies that can 200 people in one day, and so every action helps out. And finally, what will the media, which is a part of the voices we are talking about, ensure that everything that happens to a writer is reported in the media because as I said, our African governments don't want to be seen doing terrible things like the night-dancers who dance on people's graves. Thank you so much.

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## CREATIVE WOMEN AT RISK

*Moderated by Parvin Ardalan (Journalist and activist, Iran/Sweden). Panel: Gloria Mutyaba (Activist, Freedom And Roam Uganda), & Nomathamsanqa "Thami" Mhlakaza (Interdisciplinary artist, South Africa). Risk to creatives is significantly skewed against women & girls, so here we will compare experiences in the global South and North, with a view to finding solutions in solidarity.*

**Parvin Ardalan (Journalist and activist, Iran/Sweden):** Hello everybody. My name is Parvin Ardalan; for your information, I am a feminist activist and journalist from Iran but living in Malmö, Sweden, about nine years... First of all, before I start the panel, I should explain that as an outsider and an insider, I have to explain something: I was supposed to be on the panel, not as a moderator, but now it's changed... so it's difficult to be a moderator from another continent and to talk about Africa, so first of all I apologise for that; but then the second part is that I am somehow connected to the field because as an activist I have worked in my country then in a social interactive and intersectional model and then I continued with that in exile in Malmö within the arts, with other groups... and the City of Malmö; so I come connected with this [Safe Havens] project, but I just wanted to mention that from the beginning.

And it's a great honour for me to be on the panel with two great artists and activists and I would like to just leave the panel to them. And first of all, thank you [addressing Thami about her work, A Genocide of Flowers] so much for yesterday because it was a very inspiring work, very interdisciplinary work that was created by Oupa and also Thami, because for me it was like a feminist intervention, and it showed how intersectional activity and interdisciplinary art we need for this kind of area, a safe area that we are going to create. And I am so happy that it was first to start because it's a brilliant work that Thami and Oupa made. And now I would like to talk back to the question of the theme of the panel... First of

all we would like to listen to Thami and Gloria about their experience first: what do they do and then gradually we can talk about the risks and challenges that we have.

**Gloria Mutyaba (Activist, Freedom And Roam Uganda):** So my name is Gloria Mutyaba; I'm a queer feminist, I'm based in Uganda; I'm a journalist but have never practiced but I'm an activist and I activate around LGBT rights so I am currently deputy director of an organisation called Freedom And Roam Uganda which is an LBQ human rights organisation, but also the first organisation in Uganda that organised around human rights and sexual identity. And as part of the work that we do, we use a lot of creative expression to just engage the public about discrimination and violence that the LGBT community experiences. And though I am not practising, I love inspiring people, so some of the things we do with art... I am a very good storyteller, so I meet women and tell their stories for social change. In this era of social media we use a lot of visual art and writing to just share stories of discrimination but also figure out ways to hold people accountable for violations of LGBT people. Maybe something also important for me to mention is I sit on the board of a network called the Coalition of African Lesbians, which is like a pan-African network or organisations that are organising around LBQ women's rights, and I got onto the board last year but the intensity of the journey that I am on right now is very important to me because it has given me a space to be able to engage at a level that is different to the community and the country and more on a global level. Thank you; I will hand over.

**Nomathamsanqa "Thami" Mhlakaza (Interdisciplinary artist, South Africa):** My name is Thami and I am an artist, a qualified artist from Johannesburg, so unlike Gloria over here, who seems to be doing so very many things, I basically use my work to speak out against issues that have been affecting young women that I have been

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exposed to and I have the pleasure of working with daily in my community – I was born and raised in Soweto, that’s in Johannesburg. And... I was also part of those parallel forces but then I moved into the arts and then I used my work to speak out against social ills as opposed to being involved in marches. So, ja, that’s what I do: my work speaks for itself.

**Parvin:** When it comes to gender-based violence, and you have been connected to [such] issues in Africa but then also we have different experiences in other countries; but I would like to know more [about] on which topic you are more based... what are the challenges that women have first, and then as an artist and an activist, how you are dealing with that?

**Gloria:** So, speaking for Uganda, the context in which I organise, a lot of violence against women still happens – and a lot of it comes from the fact that religion and culture plays a big role so it’s an ordinary thing for women to be violated. But also speaking as a queer woman, my experience of violence is quite different because for me I face multiple forms of violence first because I am a woman and worse because I’m a queer woman. And the irony is that some of the violence even comes from women because they feel I am not woman enough, or I do not fit into the expectation of what they raise them to identify a woman as. And our media, for instance, in my country, a lot of what happens or a lot of [mis]information back home is spread by the media and it has been very disempowering, it has been a disadvantage for us as LGBT people in Uganda because now the media is just used to instigate and promote a lot of hate: we are facing things like the outing of LGBT people in the media; pictures are put in, their addresses, their workplaces. Sometimes mainstream media like television stations and radio stations are used to spread lies by Christian fundamentalists, or by politicians to use LGBT people as political capital, to win favours from their supporters or to expand the impact of their church;

they are just spreading hate. And so it’s usually one-sided because one of the struggles we have is that if it is media that is used to promote hate, how are we also going to be able to utilise the same media? – and that impacts us hard, really, really hard.

Just to be clear about what is happening right now: from October until now, there has been a pattern, a series of TV interviews and articles from politicians because they are trying to stir a panic up, so they are trying to secure votes for the same office. And so they will say things like “If you vote me again into power, or If you support me, I will... bring a law that criminalises homosexuality.” So, we have an Ethics Minister... his predecessor has taken leave from Parliament to draft a new law – there was a law [the notorious Anti-Homosexuality Act] that was nullified [by the Constitutional Court in 2014] – a new law, so he was calling upon the general public to support him. And because of the impact of what he’s saying on media, when he says it, other people picked it up, so bloggers were blogging all this, the media was spreading it, and at home when they hear this kind of thing, it’s attack, attack, attack. So the period that followed from that time, all the public was going around [and] there were very many attacks against LGBT people, an LGBT shelter was raided by civilians who put it on fire, so the police were called to help that situation – and the police arrested the people in that house, and they are taken and forced to undergo an examination because our country is shitty.

The period from October up till now, there’s a lot of violations that happen, there’s a lot of arrests. As I speak now, about two weeks ago a popular gay spot was raided and around 125 people were arrested because they were drinking and partying, and when they were arrested there the police claimed they had narcotics – many of them young people don’t even have narcotics. So they were detained and after 48 hours they were taken to prison and they had to undergo trial and when we went to court on Monday, they had changed the charge to public nuisance – but they were

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arrested in a private, closed space. We are trying to verify right now, but when you have experience of what has happened to those people who were detained, it’s very hard how they are treated, they are not treated right, we found that how they are treated, not even in trial, in prison: their hair has been cut off; ... [the] body-search before they put you in [the cells], even how they do it is very dehumanising; some of them have been beaten; some of them have been sexually violated. For trans people it’s worse because they are not sure what cell to put you in – and even when you go to prison, they don’t know which prison to put you in, so they will look at you and just judge you based on what they think you look like and just put you in that cell, so many trans women are in male cells and many trans men are in women’s cells; ... trans women are being violated in male cells and trans women are being violated in women’s cells.

And the police is – I won’t say ignorant because they know what they are doing is wrong – but they feel it is proper for them to tell other inmates that “These people have no rights, so you can bully them and do what you want to them.” And when journalists, when people that... have a point, have an audience, have a chance to write about this, they report differently; no-one is willing to come up and write clearly and put out the idea that this is what is happening. When we as organisations try... to organise, we do feel sometimes that we need to find better ways of spreading information... If there are supposed to be standards of how, production-wise, those bodies that license things to be researchers or films be taken quite professionally, someone must license you. So you end up with this field [journalism] that you cannot even utilise, so you wind up using it in your community but that is not even the reason why you started that.

Websites, I think I will say something: our social media has been hacked; they keep reporting us all the time – but I am just very appreciative to Facebook for how they react... because for instance, our Facebook page gets reported I think every three months, our Twitter is already off;

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they will report and they will say “This needs to go; our country does not allow homosexuality or even to promote homosexuality.” You respond to them and they write back, so it’s just a constant war of fighting and fighting – but we are there, and we are not finding that fighting is the only way: we know how to survive and we do it at home.

**Parvin:** So, it means that some institutional supporters like media, like police, like the legal situation, everything instead of being supportive, they are going against LGBTI communities. So it means that how can one organisation, a small organisation like you that just circulates information through the community, physically survive in a situation that doesn’t let you to show the face? And unfortunately we are talking about media and social media and everything that could support are using [their power] to make them silent. So is there any kind of activities to work on this, to change this situation, or to report?

**Gloria:** Ja, we tend to: one of the things we have done to try to counter the negativity of our publicity is beginning our own publishing... that magazine just shares struggles, like real life lived experiences of LGBT people and we distribute [laughs], we distribute the magazine gangster-style because if they find you distributing it, they will detain you. And how we do so is one of the things that we always look forward to because something happened in 2018 that was powerful. We have allies, but even the allies we have, sometimes [we don’t understand each other] because their hands are tied. We have an ally in Parliament that we worked with to, for the first time, get those magazines into Parliament, so we sneaked in in the middle of the night and just put them into all the boxes of the Members of Parliament – and the next thing, the Minister of Ethics called and [said] “You must come and collect your magazines” and he summonsed all the Members of Parliament to bring back the magazines; many of them did but – I think we gave out about 282 if I remember cor-

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rectly – 80 of those magazines did not come back, meaning there are Members of Parliament who kept the magazines and read them behind closed doors or maybe under sheets to see what was in those magazines.

But also what impact that has had for the community, because now we have parents writing to us about their children, we have schools writing to us about stories they have read, we have LGBT people reaching out to us: some have been suicidal and because they read the magazine they see there's support, but also it has made the work we do at home way more visible. We also have people that are artists in Uganda that are partnering with us, like photography, film, collective events – there's an event called Nyege Nyege, I don't know what the word means, I think it means expression, but that is powerful because it's an artists' festival but the organising committee has engaged with us and made it a space where no-one is allowed to discriminate against anyone, and so for the first time, this is an event, well, when you walk in at the gate you will see “No Sexism; No Homophobia; No Racism” – all those things but for me homophobia is very important because there is not anywhere like that; they have shrunk the space so badly for us...

My organisation runs a clinic but even when you have a clinic where people come to you to ask for medical care, police will refuse [them access to] an appointment, it's that bad. And this event, because it's a mainstream event, it's not exactly LGBT and it has sponsorship of some companies that [the authorities] don't want to mess with, we just go there and celebrate; I carried a rainbow flag at that event and nobody could touch me because there are so many people at that event and police didn't want to embarrass themselves. So it is beautiful that such a space allows us to just express ourselves; you can exhibit your art freely, you can express yourself creatively freely, you can dance, it's just a beautiful space. I am laughing but I feel that it is very powerful and something that other people should adopt [within] communities that are seen as being against the morals of the country,

to create a space for them to creatively express themselves.

**Thami:** The whole time I was listening to her, I kept thinking, the slogan that kept running through my mind was “Stop the War on Women's Bodies, Stop the War on Women's Bodies” which has been going on: I feel that men are waging a war against women. In South Africa right now, there's a high rise of femicide: women and girls are being killed every single day, they are being raped every single day, women are losing their lives at the hands of their husbands and boyfriends, even strangers, so, ugh, no-one is safe. And closer to what I know, women in the arts, in my world, women have been raped, female artists have been raped in the spaces that we consider safe, that they think that they're safe [but] women have been sexually harassed. I mean, it's difficult for female directors, female writers to get their works commissioned – as a female, just on the basis that you are female. So it sometimes relates to funding [and it's tough] to steer your way to the funds.

And it's sort of like a known secret, so we know it happens, but it's like no-one wants to speak about it because everyone denies it, especially the men, or if you speak about it then no-one wants to work with you because you are problematic, that you don't know your place as a woman, you also need to know your place, which is to keep quiet, keep writing, keep quiet... and then the money will keep flowing... Which is quite sad because about two years ago, there was... a Twitter war, so now these women were speaking out against this director who used to rape women in his hotel room... and then they'd get the job, and then nobody wanted to speak out against that and when women finally did, most of those women had to be anonymous because of this thing that other directors would know that they'd speak out, so there was this belief that their bread would be taken out from their table. So, it's just been like that for female artists; it's these things that nobody wants to speak about, being raped... it's quite scary.

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For a long time my mom didn't want me to be an artist because she said “I don't want to end up being another woman” – and by that she meant “I don't want you to be another woman that gets raped or that ends up feeling that they need to sleep with the director in order to get a job.” I didn't work for about a year and when I finally got a job it was with this director who was emotionally abusive... he made these sexist remarks... All three of us women, there were three female [on stage] and two male directors, so we knew what he was doing was wrong but nobody wanted to speak out because it was a thing of, OK, nobody wants to lose this gig so everyone's going to keep quiet and act as if nothing is happening, you know? And it's an on-going thing, it keeps happening. And when I spoke out against it and I exposed him on Facebook and then I phoned the people and [they said] “Oh, yes, we know he's done this, he's says this, he says that.” And then he would think, oh, I'm just a bitter woman because now I'm a wife and I'm a mother – so nobody wants to work with me.

**Parvin:** Why?

**Thami:** Because I'm a mother;

**Parvin:** Why?

**Thami:** I don't know; [laughs] apparently it stops people performing. I have no idea; I am still trying to understand as well [this lack of acknowledgement by] male artists that have not had a child. It's 'cause we are operating in a very patriarchal system. You would think that artists are very easy-going, you would think that even the men in our world are very open-minded but most of them are actually closeted patriarchal males, you know, they still operate under the system, they practice it with importance in these spaces. Now, even women are given powerful positions in theatre and these spaces – but as soon as a woman speaks out then they're fired. Recently, Ma Mamelela Nyamza was fired from the State Theatre after

only a year or a few months of being in that position so we are not even given a chance to actually fulfil that role because we are operating under this tight patriarchal system influenced by toxic masculinity – and nobody wants to say it out loud because everybody wants to work. Artists don't have jobs; if you sit there and speak out against these things, nobody wants to hire you, so those are the risks that artists face, not having a job. Either it demands you want to be touched the wrong way – or you do not want to do what your core male actor says you must do, or you speak out against certain things that you feel uncomfortable about within that space. So those are realities in our world...

**Parvin:** And when this thing happened to Mamelela, when she was fired, was there any reaction, or any collective protest or something for supporting her, either artists' or women's movements for example?

**Thami:** This is what I am talking about: we all say “Oh my god, it's so sad what happened to her, it's wrong what happened to her” and we want to stand by her, but everybody's doing it behind closed doors. Everybody is talking to her, talking about her, in the inboxes, in the little corner chats – but nobody actually wants to say it out loud, where we can make a lot of noise because people are afraid of the repercussions of that, what will happen. Unlike Uganda, it's not the media that oppresses us – it's the key stakeholders in the arts that oppress us, the people with the money, the decision-makers, that's what oppresses us.

**Parvin:** So one of the most important questions that now we are asking at a place like Safe Havens, is how we can think about Safe Havens for women at risk and its condition. For example, there is one form of the movements that existed in some of the countries like... my country [where] there has been under oppression and here there are women under pressure, and some other artistic interventions like for example [that which] you did... And

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I am just thinking about how do you think that we can create some kind of safe space, safe haven for women, and if something that you mentioned is not exactly – one of our friends said that there are many things in common in other countries, but every context has a specific own question and own solution maybe. But sometimes the important thing is how we can think about safe havens – and why we are here, why we think it is important to raise these kind of questions, and what is your opinion about that solution maybe?

**Thami:** I honestly think that we artists need safe spaces, we lack safe spaces, and by that I mean spaces that will allow women from different creative performances to come together... because us artists can't operate on their own, they need a community to influence them and link them and speak back to, it's sort of like a platform, something where we give back. So we need spaces where artists, activists, communities come together, and if women are in that space, a safe space for women to actually engage in dialogue, women of different parts of the world, women from different walks of life. You always think about your mother because women like that have never been able to engage, women who've never been to school, but can we begin that state? Because we find that we're all different, we all come from different walks of life, but we've experienced similar things – and being in a space where we are able to engage in such dialogue, a space that provides for us, is appealing. I believe that art is very personal: for me, when I create, I create from a space of knowing and experiencing, so I need to have experienced grief, I need to experience pain – and I can create from that, so I use dark forces to heal. And I do believe in those safe spaces as well, it will be about providing a platform for feeling as well, using art, poetry or painting; different artworks speak to different people...

**Parvin:** What do you think? You have spoken about a safe space that has been created in your

place for your women and I just wanted to know what you think about this “safe haven for women”?

**Gloria:** Let me just add something small: we have a tendency of working in silos where everyone does their thing, you know “These are artists and those are activists” – and having experienced the role that art can play in social transformation, I think we need to really build up and grow [together]... I shared this with you at breakfast, maybe I should share it again: we have a very vibrant feminist movement in Uganda and there's an event that happens almost every three years that's called the Uganda Feminist Forum that just brings together women from different spaces in one space to just have conversations about different challenges we are facing, how can we support each other, and I remember that I went to the Feminist Forum [but] because people did not even think of me because they thought being gay... if they share a table with me they will need to get [indistinct], it was that bad. I remember at lunchtime we were just seated in this hall, it was just the two gay people, everyone was sitting very far away from us. Even, we noticed at the hotel, they put us, our rooms were the furthest, so that we are not near the other people that we are going to make feel so uncomfortable – but that didn't stop us, because we know we are women, we know that's our space and we have to take it...

We also have to change the narrative about art being something just commercial, but also the role that artists play in a lot of things like policy change, public education. So we have been pushing, we have been going to the Feminist Forum over and over again; we ended up making friends and for the first time this year, I headed a panel on the silence around sexual orientation and gender. And it was beautiful because it was a time of reflecting on the growth that has happened for so many women and what has changed over the time and how their mind-sets have changed. But they also, there was a section on... healthcare that was organised by feminist activists, so it was this

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space where there was beautiful art and beautiful clothes, and if you needed to do some yoga, if you needed to do some exercise you would just go in there. And very many people at the end of the Forum gave feedback about how it felt for them to be in that space, how they now appreciate art in a different way, how some of them ended up buying art... they were thinking “Maybe I should have this art and put it in my house, and with this art in my house someone will come and ask what is this art about and I will be able to explain to them that this is about violence against women,” so women will have a conversation about women.

My organisation, we have members that are artists that draw their pain, that draw discrimination; people bought that art; one of them, a very good friend of mine, is a pastor and she bought a very beautiful art-piece about... corrective rape, somebody whose family had arranged a rape for them... and she bought it because someone explained to her what the story is about and now it changed her mind-set because before her idea of rape did not allow her to understand that even as queer women we are affected by rape the same way that cisgender women would be affected. So basically what I am trying to say is that we should stop working in silos, we should stop you know like “This is my thing; this is their thing” and just be able to work together. Bring your art to your office: you will see artists who are too polite; maybe they are a doctor, they are an artist [too], and when they are in hospital they are too shy to show their work; over the weekend they do art. So how do we bring the art, the culture to our status in our real lives; wherever it is, make sure that people appreciate it and understand that it can be [a force for] change.

**Parvin:** Thank you so much for that information. When it comes to solidarity, we have many common problems and we have many different types of strategies, different types of challenges, but when it comes to solidarity with women in other work, other countries, do you think of how we will be able to find these feminist forums like you

mentioned? For example, most of the time solidarity is manipulated a lot: you just sign a petition online, or you have a charity to give help to people or women and children. But what is the important role of solidarity to keep it as political action... that will make a connection between artists in Africa [and] in other countries and continents that make us more powerful and strong in our line of work?

**Gloria:** The role of solidarity: so I think solidarity inspires people to be creative – and that is what we aspire [to] when I think about the creative side, and it is something so many communities [need]. When we stand with – I am going to give you an example of Dr Stella Nyanzi, a writer, a poet, a professor, and she just used her poetry to talk about different issues: she has spoken against the government, she has spoken about discrimination against LGBT [people], so many things; and the last article she wrote that was published and got her into trouble, she tends to use deep, vulgar language to show the ugliness of a situation. And I've read her poems and just how she describes something instils a lot of disgust in you that makes you really think. So in that article she wrote she called the president a pair of buttocks... so she ended up in jail... But I have just been following what has that come out for us as young activists and as young women, and she's in jail now – but that article and everything that ended up happening as a result of that article has just groomed a breed of young feminist writers that are doing what they want to do but [who] now maybe pay more attention to safety and security; how do you write articles but stay anonymous online? But just how that's inspired people: many people have wound up supporting human rights... so it just inspired the community of creatives. When we stand with other people we can speak for them though they cannot speak for themselves.

**Thami:** Ja, I'm going to say it again: just creating a safety net for women who need to come together for moral support, activists, actresses and oth-

ers... and creating a safety net for all these different sorts of women – and for our girls more than anything because I think they’ve been neglected... This is one of the problems that I have with the term “feminist activism”: that we end up focusing on feminist activism and we neglect to think about our young boys, because for me, the problem stems from us neglecting our boys; we don’t just try to change the mind-set of adults, you don’t just inspire adults to change for the better and to see you as a woman and to see women as people, as human beings; it starts from when they are small, it starts from when they are young boys. So how do we now engage all these young boys, what happens to them? Because if we don’t start grooming our young boys, if we don’t start bringing them in to these spaces with us and our young girls, they always turn out to be these men that are the oppressors in women’s communities, that are very patriarchal, that are doing all these violent acts against women and not providing safe spaces for women. So for me, it really does go back to bringing in our young girls and our young boys and not just focusing on us actors, and us activists, and us coming together. Why don’t we go into our communities and bring in these people? Because if you’re active in something, then they understand you better – as opposed to artists being in the forefront and “OK, this is what I am going to show you, this is a banner saying ‘Stop the War on Women’s Bodies,’” then we are artists against them, or everyone in the end. So I think for me that is important solidarity and we need to stop this us-and-them.

**Parvin:** A very important point. Unfortunately, when it comes to feminism, when you talk about collaboration, so it comes to the women; [the] collaboration of us coming together is not enough maybe to make this connection that you mentioned; it’s a disconnection that you mentioned... this is something that is maybe very important.





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## JOURNALISM SAFETY IN AFRICA

*Moderated by Ancillar Nombewu (Rallinca Media, Zimbabwe). Panel: Sikonathi Mantshantsha (Daily Maverick, South Africa), Ayesha Ismail (Daily Maverick, South Africa), & Janet Heard (Daily Maverick, South Africa). For journalists operating in Africa, with its many weak or authoritarian systems of governance, proliferation of armed groups, & complex ethnic rivalries, presents significant challenges which are here explored by our veteran correspondents.*

**Ancillar Nombewu (Rallinca Media, Zimbabwe):** Understand that being a journalist is hard; as the youngest journalist on this panel, I remember that when I decided to be a journalist I thought that I was going to be a war reporter – but I chickened out because of everything that was happening, and the fear that comes with journalism. I mean ask the likes of Itai Dzamara, the Zimbabwean journalist who was abducted in 2015 [and is missing ever since] because of standing up and trying to fight against [President] Robert Mugabe, ask my friend Kenny who I met in a refugee camp in Malawi who ran from Congo because he spoke up and spoke out against the government. So being a journalist can be really, really tough and this panel's going to take us through what it means to be a journalist in the 21st Century, and touch on a few ideas of how they can protect themselves, and be protected by the NGOs and the other organisations that we have. So thank you for joining me, panel. A few years ago [2014], the world was shook by the public execution of [James Foley], I don't know if you remember that, he was in Syria and... he was publicly executed, and over the years we've been seeing more and more journalists get arrested, but right not it's not even about war reporting; even if you report against corruption, etc, your life is threatened. Do you think it's getting worse in terms of safety, being a journalist, or because of the NGOs and the help that we have now that we can all be safer?

Janet Heard (Daily Maverick, South Africa): It's a very tricky one to answer really because on the one hand there's a lot more publicity and more movement around the world, there's more transparency in a way in terms of what's happening, so sometimes that can lead to a feeling of [greater accountability] – but I would say, and in South Africa in particular, I've been around far too long, and coming from the late '80s where there was incredible harrassment and things were really very dangerous, so now in South Africa, things are not as dangerous for a journalist, though that's localised. But on the whole, for me, journalists have always been targeted; I think the craft of journalism whether it was 50 years ago or 100 years ago, you were always under threat – and it will be located in specific areas, but definitely if we're looking at Africa, there's a lot of major concerns about what is going on. If I look at Tanzania, the deterioration of press freedom there is quite shocking, since 2015 – it's so short a period of time in which we're watching things decline. And in a way I think we need to take cognisance of [the fact] that the nature of harrassment and threat has obviously changed with online, so now besides the threat of being actually killed – which does happen still – we've got this sort of everyday harrassment of journalists, so journalists generally are facing almost every day harrassment. So I think that would be the shift, whereas every day journalists are facing harrassment whereas those sinister threats have always been around I think the everyday threats have increased a lot.

Sikonathi Mtshantsha (Daily Maverick, South Africa): Look, absolutely: in South Africa we are quite lucky [compared to] the rest other than social media where particularly female reporters get threatened by the mob on Twitter with all sorts of violence starting with rape. But there's at this point fortunately no evidence that any of those threats have been delivered on on any of our journalists in South Africa, so we are quite lucky in that sense. The state of course, [apart from] the arrest of Mzilikazi wa Afrika, what was it, 10 years ago by the police, we have not seen

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direct participation by the state in the physical intimidation of journalists; yes there will be an incident here and there where we will write about people and they are just not impressed with your story and they shake you up a bit by just words or so. But largely, let's say this again: in South Africa we are particularly lucky, but the things we see in Zimbabwe, you've mentioned the case of Itai, I know a colleague Chris Muronzi who also reports from Zimbabwe; back in 2007, he was severely beaten up by the police and disappeared for a week; I was with Media24 at the time and we had to scramble and find him; when we did finally find him, he couldn't sit... he had to be hospitalised, we had to bring him to South Africa; and that has not stopped in Zimbabwe particularly as you are talking about the case of Itai. So across the continent you see what's happening in all countries, you just mentioned Tanzania, Sudan is not the best of places where to practice as a journalist, so the threats to journalists and journalism have not gone away. Here apropos our condition in the south, we are quite lucky, we have not been exposed to that much violence [as experienced] in the rest of Africa.

**Ancillar:** And before you add onto that question, Sikonathi mentioned the idle threats that come, maybe when you are answering touch on what impact those have on the industry because now they are being faced so publicly there should be some sort of impact, we are seeing new entrants into the industry, or what people really think about the industry.

**Aisha Ismail (Daily Maverick, South Africa):** I think that as the two previous speakers have said, we in South Africa are very lucky because since 1994 [SA's first democratic elections], we've seen a free press and the violence and the threats that have been instigated against journalists do not necessarily come from government; it comes from organisations. And just recently, in the last two months, we've had television crews in the townships being attacked and having their gear

stolen from them, and being threatened at knife-point and also at gun-point. So we don't have the problems that people have in other African countries where the violence and the threats are coming from governments...

But it's not uncommon: when you enter the journalism profession, you have to be prepared for the whole thing of "shooting the messenger" because when you're dealing with people, people see us in a position of power, and so when people are angry, when people feel aggrieved, when people are oppressed and they feel helpless – they can't attack with a gun – so who are they going to attack? The messenger. And so when we become journalists we kind of accept that and the best way I guess to deal with that would be to be as fair and accurate as possible. And even today in South Africa when we do get complaints from people the first thing we say is "So what is wrong with the story, what's actually wrong?" and very often people are unable to tell you; they say "You didn't tell the right story, you said this," so "What was factually incorrect?" and the'll be [silent].

But coming back to safety, I worked in Zimbabwe, in Uganda, in Kenya, in Madagascar, also in Pakistan, and in India, and I think that one of the things that we as foreign correspondents [do] when you're going into an area – but also in South Africa, I think we just assume that because we're South Africans we are familiar with each others' cultures and that we are familiar with each others' religions and people's beliefs – an so if you're going to go into an area that you're not familiar with, familiarise yourself with the area, greet people, be polite, introduce yourself, respect people's cultures. And particularly, I speak from a South African point of view where we are so diverse in South Africa and 25 years after democracy some of us still don't know about each others' cultures, and so people get angry when there is a funeral, for instance, and when you just go in there with your cameras and you barge into the funeral house – and that's when people get angry with journalists because they see that as being disrespectful. And so the main thing is to be – yes of

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course we have to tell the story, and as journalists we often use this term "It's in the public interest" and sometimes it's in our interest, it's in our individual publication's interest to get the story, it's not in the public interest because the public will understand certain sensitivities when you are dealing with cases of funerals, of weddings... And I would say that in order to play it safe when you are travelling abroad or travelling in your own country, the main thing is to familiarise yourself with your surroundings, be polite, and inform people that you're there: I mean how often do we travel and we don't inform others that we're in the country; for people travelling to another country, go and inform the embassy or the consulate for instance: "I'm from South Africa, I'm on an assignment here" and introduce yourself so maybe if something happens they are aware of your presence in the country.

Ancillar: Definitely we also have a role to play in ensuring that we're safe. I just want to read a quote here from Scott Anderson who was a New York Times writer; he says that, basically he was talking about the execution of journalists and he says: "What this demonstrates is that the business of reporting on war has changed fundamentally. The powers that be in a conflict zone no longer regard the media as a neutral observer but rather as a strategic component, something to be manipulated or co-opted or simply gotten rid of." Do you think, Janet, in some parts of the continent, this is true, do you think he was right to say those words?

Janet: I think yes, I am thinking now of the case of Azory [Gwanda], the journalist in Tanzania who has disappeared literally two years ago; he was covering political killings in the rural areas of Tanzania and to this date, he's not been found. So those kinds of instances are close to home, to us, and we realise there are incidents in other countries in Southern Africa, and I think that obviously as a journalist you're out in the field, you are often taking risks, you often... do all of the security checks that Aisha is calling for, often you are freelancing, I mean freelance journalists go in and they get into trouble. And now we're going to get

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into the conversation about resources and the commitment of journalist companies to actually protect journalists – and let's be honest, they're not doing nearly enough. So journalists get thrown into quite unsafe environments often without the required backup of often what is corporate media, and I think that's something... we really have to look at; it's actually a company's responsibility to try and safeguard their journalists. And I think we here ought to offer these interns safety awareness training, people going into areas without knowing, you know, don't display your phone, you don't file on your story in a volatile situation on your phone, rather get away – but people are havin to do fast news, and then they have to file, they have to do social media, they have to do everything, so they put their lives at risk...

So journalists have always been in precarious situations but it does seem that because of the online threat and because of the nature of some of the hostilities that – I'm at SANEF [the South African National Editors' Forum], I'm always trying to recruit people... – but every day, SANEF is confronted by a threat to journalists, almost every day, well not every day but there are constant reports of threats to journalist or threats of harrasment, and who's keeping tabs on all these threats? That's why groupings like SANEF, the CPJ – the Committee to Protect Journalists – and groups like that are so important to try and keep track and put pressure on government. The CPJ in August wrote a letter of appeal to the SADC [Southern African Development Community] countries to say "You need to actually make your government accountable for journalists' safety, you need to be careful, you need to look at what politicians are doing, you need much more accountability in protecting journalists." I don't know if they took that seriously, but the point is that up until the end of 2020, half of the SADC countries are having elections, so it's an incredibly important time now for journalists' safety in our region... And I think because journalists are maybe almost by nature risk-takers, they some-

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times need the backup to kind of steer them, some kind of network to help them if things go wrong.

**Ancillar:** That's very true; we are serious risk-takers; as you were talking about the risk I remember saying "I'll get into my car and call my editor when I'm at the border. Like, oh, this is happening in Zimbabwe right now, so cool, I'm already at the border." So sometimes as journalists we do that and we really need to become accountable for our actions... Sikonathi, when Janet was talking, she mentioned resources, and the lack of resources that makes it difficult, so in situations where there's a lot of risk and a lot of potential threats that happen, particularly in conflict areas, we've seen a lot of press coverage sort of pull back from reporting on those countries or those areas. What impact do you think that is having on the way in which we report on Africa?

**Sikonathi:** Look, obviously the protection of journalists does require a lot of resources. I will talk about Bloomberg; I work for Bloomberg News and they have dedicated security courses; you will not go to a volatile area if you have not received riot training. And let's be frank here: that course is designed to lower the insurance costs of the employer, so if they sent a journalist to [the volatile mining area of] Marikana for example – which I couldn't go [to] until I said they can fire me if they like; I went before I got the training; had I been killed there, the insurance company would have declined to pay. So Bloomberg has got the resources to take you on that training and to organise armed escorts; now we all know that Bloomberg does not depend on news for its profit ... news is just a marketing tool, so they do have the ability for that.

In the rest of the media... here in South Africa... the media have been victim to another form of violence from the government, particularly from "General" Zuma's time: remember when they took away all advertising, all tenders from the newspapers and said they would start their own portal? That dealt a major blow to newspapers, such that 10 years ago there were 10,000 active and

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employed journalists in this country; there's 5,000 now. You can go and start there at that particular instance of violence perpetrated by the government [though] it's more sophisticated... in the South African context where we have a significant private sector that has always come on board and advertised to the extent that it could; in countries like Nigeria, if you pissed off this one advertiser, that's it, the newspaper is gone!... But you are asking me about the impact of withdrawing reportage from the countries where there's violence... because you don't have resources, that leaves those countries, those people, even more vulnerable to more violence, even more violent forms perpetrated against them. And I don't know what could be done about that; you're talking about us taking risks – perhaps we need to take a lot more risks, personally, as individuals.

Ancillar: So we were talking earlier about the censorship that can come from government, we've seen a lot especially around election season where the governments of Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe shut down the internet. So because of the internet, it becomes easier for us to spread ideas and tell our stories and do journalism, but this kind of censorship puts another dent in the work that we do. Have you seen it in your individual careers, has it had an effect in the countries that you work in?

Aisha: I think particularly in Zimbabwe because I work as a foreign correspondent for France 24 as well, so I do the English and my colleague does the French, and we're always mindful when we're standing there doing our live crossings, you know, she'll always say to me "Just be careful what you say" because a lot of people in Zimbabwe in the government, they watch France 24 because they understand English and if you're going to be saying anything against them, they will either revoke your work visa or they won't allow you to come in again. And of course with that in mind while you're standing there reporting, there's this tendency to self-censor – which makes no sense because you are there to cover the story and to tell the rest of the world what's going on

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because they're not there, and you're actually doing a disservice to the people of Zimbabwe if you are going to self-censor yourself. So it is actually putting us journalists in a very difficult position when we do go into these countries and we are not able to report the full state of the story because we fear getting kicked out of the country, or not being able to return again.

**Sikonathi:** I must admit to not having travelled as extensively as my colleague, so I'm rather a domesticated South African [laughs]. Look again, in countries like Zimbabwe, like Nigeria where the military will just drive into the newsroom, arrest journalists and close down the newspaper, we have not seen that level of intimidation or censorship in South Africa except that one major incident in Parliament [in 2015] when the phones were jammed; of course it helped that... [President] Jacob Zuma's people chose Parliament to do that because [after the Constitutional Court rules such signal-jamming illegal] they were never able to do it anywhere else again. Yes, they will be against individual journalists and you know that famous story [in 2010] of "that bloody agent" from the BBC [where BBC journalist Jonah Fisher was expelled from an ANC Youth League press conference, accused of being a "bloody agent," after exposing League leader Julius Malema's hypocrisy in criticising Zimbabwe's opposition]. So you will have these isolated incidents... If our colleagues from the rest of the countries here in Africa can get an opportunity, they will tell us stories of real intimidation.

Our diverse media in South Africa and generally the freedom of the airwaves in terms of the internet, has been our best protection. As much as... people fear us for [reporting] what they have done or said, even when they have threatened [us] privately or in a contained environment, the organisations get compelled to act. My last famous incident at [troubled state power utility] ESKOM two years ago with a lawyer who threatened to deal with me and he said it was "the African way" and I'm African and I didn't know which way that was; within 24 hours he had lost his job;

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again he had chosen stupidly a very high-profile environment and I pointed him at a camera-person standing behind us and said "That guy's recording you," he told me to "Go to hell," and 24 hours later he didn't have a job. So... once you let people know what's going on, South Africa quickly comes down on that rogue behaviour.

**Janet:** The signal-jamming – and luckily I wasn't as domesticated in my coverage, but I was actually in Parliament in the press gallery for that signal-jamming incident, and the thing about it, there were two things: it was such a shock because we have been fairly free in South Africa... we never felt threatened in that way and that was such a moment in journalism... in the press gallery, we were dumbfounded, we couldn't believe it, that this would actually happen; and the... effect of that was... you suddenly realised... it's a slippery slope to what can happen if the state apparatus starts clamping down again and starts controlling, so it was almost like a tipping-point. And everyone immediately started standing up and protesting, journalists, holding up their cell-phones, and the rebellion was immediate, it was quite incredible and I haven't seen that in a long time in reporting, because I think there was an immediate awareness that this is just unbelievable, how can they even stoop to this level? The MPs down on the floor were also doing the same thing. But I think we were on that trajectory of complete state [interference], I think we were heading that way under Zuma, where that's where we would go – and I think we are still climbing back from some weird things that still happen, like, I stand to be corrected... but they put out accreditation requests for the State of the Nation address now for February... and State Security got involved earlier than they normally do, so there are little things that kind of creep where the apparatuses of intelligence are operating on different levels and we have to just be vigilant the whole time because things slip – and then you've just got to constantly correct, point out [abuses] and make sure it doesn't happen.



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## SAFE HAVENS IN AFRICA (UGANDA CASE STUDY)

*Moderated by Michael Schmidt (Hammerl Arts Rights Transfer, South Africa), Panel: Kara Blackmore (The Politics of Return, Uganda), Charles Clint Chimedza (Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network's Ubuntu Hub City Initiative), Danson Kahyana (Make Space for Displaced Writers, Uganda PEN), Gloria Mutyaba (Freedom And Roam Uganda). Uganda has recently emerged as a significant incubator in protecting persecuted creatives, establishing Kampala as an arts rights justice lighthouse on the African continent via several diverse initiatives.*

Michael Schmidt (Hammerl Arts Rights Transfer, South Africa): Alright, we've been eagerly looking forward to this one, and we've subtitled it a Uganda Case Study because it might seem counter-intuitive because of the troubles that we've already heard [about] from several panelists around the longevity of Yoweri Museveni in Uganda and the strictures of his regime. There's quite a mixed message coming through in some respects: on the one hand, there've been some very interesting and positive and creative and welcoming engagements between society in Kampala and new refugees coming in from the former Somalia and Burundi – and yet at the same time, we know there's this really deeply anti-human attitude towards the LGBTI community as well. So a very mixed picture but we've got some fascinating initiatives springing up in Uganda, all centred on the city of Kampala and without losing too much time I'd like to go from my right on downwards through our panelists and first of all ask them to describe their particular projects. We'll start with you and your Ubuntu Safety Hub programme; we mentioned it earlier in the beginning of the day, but get an idea of how it works in practice in Kampala and then move on to the other initiatives in the room, really turning Kampala into quite a unique center for arts protection, arts rights justice in the continent. So thank you so much.

**Charles Clint Chimedza (Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network's Ubuntu Hub City Initiative):** Good afternoon. I'm with the Southern African Human Rights Defenders Network and as I said earlier on, the initiative that we're collaborating [with the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network on] on is the Ubuntu Hub City Initiative towards creating Hub Cities, which creates safe cities around the whole of Africa. So the one in East Africa is based in Kampala, so what we do is relocate, this is where there's a lot of relocations of people from Somalia, Kenya also, and Tanzania, but I think I can speak more later on about that. [Note: the Southern African Ubuntu Hub Cities of Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Cape Town, South Africa, as well as the North African Ubuntu Hub City of Tunis, Tunisia, were launched in February 2019, followed by the West African Ubuntu Hub City of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in March 2019. The Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network noted: "The Ubuntu Hub Cities initiative enables African HRDs who have been subject to threats, violence and extreme pressure, as a consequence of their human rights work, to temporarily relocate and continue their work in a safe working environment, while enriching their experience through professional or educational opportunities."]

**Danson Kahyana (Make Space for Displaced Writers, PEN Uganda):** Thank you so much Michael for this Ugandan case study and thank you friends for coming for this session. Uganda is a very bad scenario: a professor called it a hybrid regime in that it has elements of democracy like regular elections; at the same time it has elements of tyranny like clamping down on the opposition, political voices. If you have watched Ugandan news you will see that almost every day the opposition people are beaten up. And it's in this context of a hybrid regime that some of the best creative initiatives take place, like PEN Uganda's work in prison, publishing a book some of whose words are very critical of the government...

And now Uganda, as some of you may be aware, has the world's largest number of displaced people, Uganda hosts 1.5-million people – that's a lot of people being hosted – and as Ugandans we are proud of this; you don't hear of cases where they're being attacked, you don't hear of cases of widespread xenophobia – there are isolated cases of course, but you don't hear of terrible cases of xenophobia and so on. And this is helping Museveni's regime with very cunning ammo, these are helping Museveni's regime in at least two ways: in the first way, it has eased pressure on Europe and the US – most of the displaced people in Africa end up in Europe and the US – but by hosting 1.5-million people that means Museveni has eased pressure on Europe and the US; but secondly, and shockingly, it has given Museveni some life-blood in terms of finances because the hosting of displaced people comes with financial rewards, if you like I am putting it a bit cynically, but the bodies that harbour displaced people they actually bring in money, support and so on, and this might have been very supportive of Museveni's regime... it has actually helped him along with his regime because the West sees him as a favourite, yes, but also as a freedom of expression [violation].

And so in the case of Uganda the thing is that many writers... who are living in refugee camps and those who are living on their own, so most of those displaced writers who are living on their own are staying in places where writing is not possible, they are staying in the slums around Kampala and in places without power sometimes, electricity, in places without internet and so on. So we came up with a project called the Make Space project; we rented out a house in one of the Kampala suburbs... about two kilometres from the city centre, and in this place we have internet connectivity, we have seats and people come and work from there. And we do not have any sign-boards because as soon as you have a sign-board – we don't want to attract attention towards us – so through... the Arterial Network, the writers inform other writers about this space and then they come and work there.

So we are in the process of establishing a library, English PEN has promised us 100 books, so when the writers come they can read, and that goes for all of you, if you have a book that you have read and is lying on your shelf idly, please give it to us so these writers when they come to this place to work, they can read; we'd like them to read as much as possible so that they can really see this space as a space of enriching their ideas. We are also compiling an anthology, so when writers come we ask them to give workshops to one another so they are giving workshops on translation, they are giving workshops on creative writing, and so on, and the idea is that by the end of next year [2020], we'd like to have an anthology from their own work, displaced writers who are working there, there are some five pieces that we have [already] received. And those who would like, we are going to work out permission from the Prime Minister's office which is the office in charge of refugee camps, we would like to move with them through refugee camps, so we can have creative writing workshops with the writers in the refugee camps. So we will come up with an anthology of those who are in Kampala who are living on their own and the work of those who are living in refugee camps. But for this space to be good we need books, we need a coffee machine, all the things that you would like to have in an artistic space, and it's not easy of course, we have a little money, we don't have many books and we appeal to you for support. I think in one of the sessions we said we should fund our own initiatives, we don't have to look to the West all the time; I think giving us one book, how many people are here, 150, that's 150 books, that's a library of your books. Thank you.

**Gloria Mutyaba (Freedom And Roam Uganda):** I think I will tell you a bit about my own organisation... we provide a safe space for LGB women to just express themselves. We used to provide a safe space, now we are struggling, so we have moved from providing to continuing to attempt to provide a safe space, but we have an office and we

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have a social... which happens every last Friday of the month and what happens there is we just provide this space where LGB people just come... where LGB women come and just use art as a form of healing, telling their stories, so we transition between very many different forms of expression including body-painting or telling physical stories or reciting poems or acting, they are structured differently. And we realised that though our [state] policies are bad, the violence itself happens at the grassroots, the people that violate us physically mostly are people that we live with every day, the neighbour next door, where you buy your things... and some of those people don't even speak English at all or do not even have the chance to engage with [state] policy, so how do we engage with them at a level where they speak our language, so those are some of the ways in which we try to speak a language they understand. If I sing a song in my local language about discrimination it's easy for that person to understand that song than for me to say to them [don't discriminate]. If I act, if I dance, if I wear this nice shirt that says "I'm Queer & I'm Here" maybe someone will ask "What is queer?" and we will start that conversation. So we just provide that space where people have a chance to just express themselves as human beings – but also as a way to try and educate communities.

**Kara Blackmore (The Politics of Return, Uganda):** Thank you Gloria. It's such an honour to be here and be able to share some of the lessons and some of the things we've been talking about and how they manifest in practice. So, I've been curating on a research project around cycles of forced displacement and migration between South Sudan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Uganda, and so there's been academic research and practitioner research, and then I work with artists to try and translate and express that, so you will see I've brought some copies of the catalogue that are circulating around [When We Return: Art Exile and the Remaking of Home in Uganda, South Sudan,

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Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo] so please have a look; unfortunately I didn't have enough for everyone to take home but I think it will give you a sense of the layers of the work, of what we're trying to do. And in this project we invited three artists to come into residence and to work with the research – and to do their own research, and these artists have their own migration biographies of being internally displaced, let's say from eastern DRC to Kinshasa, or one of the artists' families left [Uganda] because of Idi Amin and went into exile, another one of the artists is half Rwandan and half Congolese and has sort of explored some of his own identity through the research, through the artwork.

We also did, and what Meriam was referencing earlier, was invite creative people to make responses to creative work, so that meant that writers, creative writers, engage with visual artworks – film-makers, photographers were invited to continue to have a conversation. And we built up the exhibition not through just the residency but a series of dialogues, one of them was called "The Trauma of Images," so trying to think about what are the representational terrains that we explore when we're digging deep into forced migration issues, and how do the legacies of media and misrepresentation impact the terrains on which we can work? And this is especially important when you're in a context whereby the funding is coming from the outside, it's usually white Europeans, Americans, funding projects and expecting trauma to look a particular way, and expecting displacement to follow on to representational tropes of what black suffering is and what it should look like. So what we really tried to do is ... you'll see one piece of work in there that is called "Kanyo Love" and Kanyo... means to endure and love is the repertoire that the artist used to work with women who had been forced into being wives of the Lord's Resistance Army and had returned, and she did a project with them that's ongoing to look at how they experienced love, and what does love when you return mean and how does that understanding of love and that

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compassion work to invert that. So these are some of the things, and we can talk more over dinner, more in terms of the detail of how we bring together the research, the arts residency space, the conversation, the public festival and the technicalities of that.

But there's two points that I wanted to bring forward that I think are transferable, and one is about how Uganda can be, as we've heard from Gloria, for people of the country, a restricting space when it comes to freedom of expression – but for people who are fleeing from other destinations, like the DRC, like South Sudan, it can be a liberating space. So when thinking about Safe Havens, it is important to understand the dynamics of oppression, not just as a state-based issue that impacts the citizens, but what does that mean for people who are not from that place? And how do funding streams that are based around national and diplomatic references focus only on the national, or essentialise people as migrants and as refugees and therefore expect certain representational realities to come to the fore? And then the second thing is about transition and time, and what dealing with these difficult issues and these complex realities mean in terms of time and how sometimes they pop up and they are temporary and they are spontaneous, and the... sort of hyper-local space is the most appropriate space, so we don't necessarily need to be having permanent, sustainable, long-term forms in dealing with these things; we can also have small-scale, intimate, very local kinds of realities. And that is often where the safety comes in and where people can feel, and there's an ownership over the exhibition or the space of expression.

**Michael:** OK, this intersection between forced migration and the arts, on the one hand what's intriguing me here is this tone coming out of the artist-in-exile as not the victim, displaced yes, at-risk yes, vulnerable yes, but very much the actor in their own story with contributions to make of their own through the exercise of their art, using art itself to create a safe space, to pro-

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vide themselves with a safe space, but also to use those artworks as interpretations of their own experiences that is maybe counter to what the big funding agencies or friends in Europe etc project onto the African experience. So I find that quite interesting. These are all essentially home-grown initiatives and the orientation is that these people have agency, they are not victims; yes they have been displaced, they are vulnerable, but they are very definitely active role-players and they are generators of a shared reality that is enabling and that is embracing more than even just their experience, that enables their host country. So, let's talk about origins: could you maybe talk about how your projects originated, where the ideas come from, why did it take the form that it did, where did you get the money?

**Charles:** In regards to where the project originated, it speaks for itself in that we say the Ubuntu Hubs [Ubuntu means compassion for our mutual humanity] which means to show that although this initiative was not there in practice, it was there through the notion that African people were always there to support each other through hard times and this can be seen through the liberation struggles and stuff like that, that we're there to protect each other in times of need. So it's important for us to say there's a human rights defender who's facing threats in his country, he can easily be relocated to another African country where he can be integrated and also be able to learn and exchange ideas with other human rights defenders working in the same thematic areas. So in essence we are saying it's a mechanism that is there to protect Africans within Africa. So someone said something about culture-shock, say there's a person who is working in my area and we're under threat and we have to move to Norway where there's ice and snow, it's a difficult situation for you to even reintegrate, so what we thought is it's essential for human rights defenders to be within their context and also to depend on solidarity and support from their fellow Africans.

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**Danson:** Thank you very much. I think our project has three aspects that speak to its origin. The first aspect is that two Eritrean friends who were members of PEN International, and whenever they would meet in different spaces in Uganda they would claim that Uganda was a better space to meet that where they are – and one of them is in Norway – and of course I would dispute that and I would say “Why do you say ‘I was happier living in Uganda where I stayed for three years as I was working out an asylum status with the country where I am now’.” And I said “Why don’t you go back?” and he said “No, I cannot go back; if I struggle to get asylum-seeker status in this country, I cannot go back to Uganda; when I speak to all of my friends who are fleeing Eritrea they all want to come to Norway and I tell them to go to Uganda.” So sometimes we never appreciate – we live in a very repressive society as Gloria has been telling you – and sometimes we never appreciate the fact that there are spaces of freedom and those spaces of freedom are taken for granted. So my interaction with these two Eritrean people who had stayed in Uganda for three years but are now living, one in Canada and one in Norway, made me revisit Uganda as a host country. I began asking myself what makes Uganda a better place than Norway – which Ugandans can’t imagine anyway? In our colonial education, I know you are aware that [most] African people were colonised for about 70 years and that African people think that European things are better without necessarily thinking it through, psychologically this is a colonial problem. An African girl = not all of them – will cover her beautiful hair with a wig she has bought in a shop... and she will think the wig is more beautiful than her hair. And so that colonial problem, we are still struggling with it, we are still struggling to decolonize, and these two friends helped me to see that there was something that we could build on, and that something was the kind of safe space that these people found in Uganda.

The second thing was our prison project: we’d been holding reading and writing workshops in

prisons and the inmates were writing articles very critical of the government, and they would perform these works when the warder assigned to oversee what is happening is also sitting there, so sometimes after the performance we would engage the warder in discussion, worried that our permission would be revoked any time, and the warder would say “I agree with them, but my bosses must never know.” And we discovered then that even a tyrant, even the worst tyrant can never have complete control over the country, because he’s a human being, although he sees himself as God, they have two eyes, they only see ahead of them, they can’t see behind, they sleep, they are not gods that are only awake, the sleep. So we discovered that even in a tyrannical state, you can manipulate it in some ways and you can have a safe space to read. And then finally, our relationship with PEN International: when we discussed with them this idea, they said “Oh, that’s a brilliant idea and we think we can support you with that.” So they said they would give us money, but the deadline [passed and] the next time they asked us about progress we said we have been in this project three months and they were shocked to hear that. They asked us “How did you raise the money?” and we said “Well, we used our personal money to start the project,” and that’s when they said “Oh, we’re coming on board.”

So that’s how I can say it started, and working under Museveni’s rule, it becomes very touchy when it comes to his losing power but if other things like writing don’t have to do with him losing power, well, he’ll be OK about it, but when it comes to him losing power, like you going on national radio and saying things about him, he will [crack down]. So you find ways of dealing with the monsters; like if you know there is a snake in your house, you sleep with one eye open, in case the snake comes, you have a machete in one hand, so when you sleep the one eye sleeps, the other eye is looking out for the snake, and that’s how Ugandan people [live]. Or you have a beautiful pot and you do not want to break the pot

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when the snake has entered there: you have to find a way of keeping this pot but also of making sure the snake won’t bite you, and that’s how Uganda is. And for me, with that in mind, what comforts me is that a dictator will never have complete control over his house and that gives me the courage to say that even one small thing [counts]. Even the one small thing that I have is already a success story: these writers who are coming to this place – there are not so many yet, there are about six or seven of them – on the Day of the Imprisoned Writer, 10th November, we held a panel discussion there and it was published in *The East African*, and those are very minor achievements for those who are used to very big achievements, but to us at the Centre those are very significant achievements. Thank you.

**Gloria:** How did our project come about? It started more as a social project because for us a lot of women in our communities [needed it] and very many LGBT people were scared; there is a lot you know is going on, we’ve had to think of a way of how do we enable people to say what they want to say without actually coming to say it – I don’t know if that makes sense? So we looked at alternative ways in which different people can express themselves and art was the best way in which we could all agree and achieve unity, but also, I mentioned it earlier: everyone is artistic, it’s so funny how it works, no-one needs to be taught, each and everyone can express themselves in a way that is so unique, that can bring out what they want to say.

So the first thing we did was we started with something called “Letters to My Friends” and that happened because we were receiving a lot of calls from people – it came at that time of the [2014] Anti-Homosexuality Act and there was a lot of fighting because we fought from 2009 until 2013, it was six years of fighting and by that time many of us were exhausted, like we got to a point where we just couldn’t fight anymore because we were exhausted. And... on one day we received five letters from five different LGBT people who were

sharing their stories and trying to encourage us, [saying] “We want to fight but we can’t fight because maybe we don’t have the privilege that you do, or we have a lot to lose, or we are just plain scared – but these are the realities that we face that you probably do not face or that you don’t know about but that you need to talk about when you have the space to.” So from that came “Letters to My Friends” and people just wrote their stories, stories of encouragement, stories of pain, stories to the government, stories to their church leaders – and then along the way some people who are not able to write began drawing, others began singing, and so the project grew over and over again.

Who funded it? Nobody actually did because it was more an organisational project. So, for it to be a safe space, different people would meet in different spheres because if we have it in our office, people will not come because they’re afraid. There are people who I talk to who I have never met because they cannot be seen with me because I am out and just being seen with me is assumed to be out – and even for me being out has been a struggle, and even coming out was not something that [I chose]; I just woke up one day and it was in the media. And looking at everything that I lost when I came out [sighs], I felt that this [anonymous space] was powerful because it gives people a chance to be seen without exactly being seen. And a lot has grown out of it, from the stories we have recently published from when first we started on the realities of LBQ women, we just accumulated these different stories of people’s experiences – and some of these stories are very sad – to help people understand that these are the recommendations... this is how you can support us.

**Kara:** Thank you; wow! So how did these things start? So I am currently at the London School of Economics and I’m there doing a PhD as a reflection of my curatorial practice, to try to understand what it means to do that work in these spaces, and I’m actually in an international development

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department for the funding and different things that I've spoken about – so being in the belly of the beast is what is important for me although I'm very out there as a curator. So that's a short interlude to the fact that we wrote a grant proposal for the four-country research, and within that grant proposal was a thing called "The Pathways to Influence" and it's though that that the funding for the creative work is being done, and this is Arts & Humanities Research Council funding under an umbrella called the GCRF, the Global Challenges Research Fund. And if anyone's interested in knowing more, we can talk about this, but what I think is important about that funding is that it's UK government funding that mostly goes into more hard security-, crime-, terrorism-, international relations-related issues and they are seeing the value of creative processes.

So to build this project it was very important for us not to just include art and do what many NGOs and scholars do which is invite artists to mirror what you're trying to say, to sort of illustrate your activist point, but actually to think about, to have the time and the space and the resources – which is really important – to see what the possibilities are, and to invite artists to also be researchers and to understand that the making process is an investigation... So these are the kind of disruptions and emergences that we're trying to do through the process, but that comes from many years of doing curatorial work, being an equal, also engaging in spaces like South Africa where there is so much of this important work happening, and being willing to surrender that authority and narrative that we [academics] hold onto so tightly. So I think this is a way of actual free expression, to it overcomes barriers to that freedom, empowering freedom or building capacity... and trying to facilitate as many intersections as possible. And we couldn't have done it without 32<sup>o</sup> East [Ugandan Arts Trust] which is an artist residency space in Kampala that has been there for us, and also a home to many creatives and people trying to figure out how to express themselves in the city.

## OUTCOMES OF SAFE HAVENS 2019 CAPE TOWN

The stated objective of Safe Havens 2019 in Cape Town was "To Formalise an African Defensive Network for Creatives" – and this objective was indeed successfully achieved at the conference by the collective agreement in the concluding session that such a network would be formed with the participation of the Artists at Risk Connection (ARC) in New York City (point person Julie Trébault, USA), the PEN Chapters of Africa (point person Danson Kahyana, Uganda), the continental Arterial Network (point person Daves Guzha, Zimbabwe), and the residencies on the continent: the Ubuntu Hub Cities in Tunisia, Côte d'Ivoire, Uganda, and South Africa (point person Charles Chimedza, South Africa), the Shelter Cities in Benin and Tanzania (point person Olivier Muhizi, Rwanda), and the Hammerl Arts Rights Transfer in South Africa (point person Michael Schmidt, South Africa). It was decided that ARC in the USA would, via its website, provide the "doorway" for at-risk creatives in Africa wanting to access protections under the aegis of the new Network, while

advocacy would be co-ordinated by the new initiative launched at Safe Havens 2019 by Freemuse (point person Paige Collings, United Kingdom), the Global Action Network (GAN), while actual interventions would be effected by PEN, Arterial, and the Ubuntu, Shelter Cities, and HART residencies and their partners, preferably including the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN).

The new network initiative, bearing the name Amani: Africa Creative Defence Network held its first virtual meeting on 11 February 2020 and its aims were confirmed and basic operating spheres confirmed as: continental situational monitoring, emergency/challenges alerts, creative application for assistance, interventions (legal assistance, advocacy, internal relocations), and finally, transnational relocations.

The organisers of Safe Havens 2019 Cape Town would like to thank its supporters, its partners, its venues, and its volunteers for having made the conference the success it was.

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Safe Havens 2019 is organised by



with crucial programming input on our Steering Committee from PEN America, International Arts Rights Advisors, Artists at Risk Connection (USA), and the Artistic Freedom Initiative (USA)

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