

REPORT

FROM THE SEVENTH DUBLIN PLATFORM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS



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**f FRONT LINE
DEFENDERS**

WHAT DOES FRONT LINE DEFENDERS DO?

Front Line, the International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) established by charitable deed trust. It was founded in Dublin in 2001 with the specific aim of protecting human rights defenders at risk, people who work, non-violently, for any or all of the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Front Line Defenders aims to address the protection needs identified by defenders themselves.

Front Line Defenders provides rapid and practical support to at-risk human rights defenders including:

- grants to pay for the practical security needs of human rights defenders;
- provision of training and development of resource materials on security and protection, including digital security;
- international advocacy on behalf of human rights defenders at immediate risk;
- rest and respite, including the Front Line Defenders Fellowship;
- opportunities for networking and exchange between human rights defenders, including at the biennial Dublin Platform;
- the annual Front Line Defenders Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk;
- an emergency 24 hour phone line for human rights defenders operating in Arabic, English, French, Spanish and Russian;
- temporary relocation of human rights defenders in emergency situations.

Front Line Defenders promotes strengthened international and regional measures to protect human rights defenders including through support for the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders. Front Line Defenders seeks to promote respect for the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Front Line Defenders has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, partnership status with the Council of Europe and observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Front Line Defenders received the 2007 King Baudouin International Prize for Development.

CHY 14029



SEVENTH DUBLIN PLATFORM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Front Line Defenders Trustees



Denis O'Brien (Chairman)
Denis O'Brien is Chairman of the Digicel Group. Mr O'Brien is one of Ireland's leading entrepreneurs with extensive investments across several sectors.

He founded the Communicorp Group which has a portfolio of media and broadcasting-related companies in Ireland and seven other European countries. In 2000 he established The *Iris O'Brien Foundation* to assist disadvantaged communities in Ireland and internationally.



Mary Lawlor (Director)
Mary Lawlor has been constantly inspired by the work of human rights defenders who put their vision of a civil and just world for all ahead of their

own safety. In 2001 she set up Front Line, the International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders to provide round the clock practical support and deliver fast and effective action on behalf of human rights defenders at risk.



Hina Jilani is an internationally known human rights lawyer and advocate for human rights defenders. She was the United Nations Special Representative on the

situation of human rights defenders from 2000 to 2008. She and her sister Asma Jahangir co-founded the first all female legal practice in Pakistan and she is also one of the founders of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

Jim Conway is the founder and Chairman of the Print & Display Group, one of Ireland's largest print companies. He also has a number of other media interests in Ireland and Eastern Europe.



Kieran Mulvey is Chief Executive of the Irish Labour Relations Commission and Consultant with the International Labour Organisation and the European Union.



Michel Forst is Secretary General of the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights. He was Secretary General of the Paris Summit and Director of the French section of Amnesty International.



Noeline Blackwell is Director of FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres), an independent human rights organisation dedicated to the realisation of equal

access to justice for all.



David Sykes is Investment Director of Island Capital Ltd and worked in various banks and stockbrokers including Trinity Bank and Dolmen stockbrokers.



Maria Mulcahy was involved with "People in Need" from 1988 – 2000. She was responsible for organising the RTE telethons, which raised €28 million. She was

Director of Fundraising for the 2003 Special Olympics World Games.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Hanan Ashrawi Founder and Secretary General of the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy.

Robert Badinter President of the OSCE Court of Conciliation and Arbitration and a member of the French Senate. He was previously French Minister for Justice.

Bono Founder member of the Irish rock group U2, and a prominent human rights advocate.

Desmond Tutu Anglican archbishop who rose to worldwide fame during the 1980s as an opponent of apartheid. Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1984.

Adolfo Pérez Equivel Leader of Servicio Paz y Justicia and the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize recipient.

Indai Lourdes Sajor Founder and former Executive Director of the Asian Centre for Women's Human Rights.

His Holiness The Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso Temporal and spiritual leader of the Tibetan people and Nobel Laureate.

Report: Robert Archer, Plain Sense
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Quotations have been edited for brevity and clarity. The insertion of quotations does not reflect the order in which participants spoke.

Front cover: Karla Lara, Honduras, performs at the closing ceremony of the Seventh Dublin Platform

Photography by Kamil Krawczak and Alexey Zarodov

FOREWORD

The Dublin Platform is a unique event bringing together human rights defenders from every part of the world. The Dublin Platform was established in 2002 to create a safe space in which the voices of the human rights defenders themselves could be heard and so that their views and needs could inform the work of Front Line Defenders. This year the 2013 Dublin Platform united 135 human rights defenders from 90 countries and it would be true to say that every issue on the international human rights agenda was represented.

At Front Line Defenders, we have always believed that it is human rights defenders working and mobilising at the local and national level who build civil and just societies, and that is why we have been consistently led by the needs human rights defenders have identified over the years. Human rights defenders have a crucial role to play in guaranteeing human rights on the ground – where they matter most. They are the vital bridge between the theory and the practice of protection – translating into law the international standards to which governments have committed, and bringing about social change.

It is vital that the relationship between international and national and local human rights defenders is clear and unambiguous. The role of international organisations should be to support local HRDs in whatever they say they need:

- to increase their capacity to be safe and for their work to be sustainable;
- to endorse their legitimate right to conduct human rights work;
- and to amplify their voices in order to increase international credibility and recognition to help protect the defender.

In this context it is clear that human rights organisations themselves are not immune from criticism, sometimes competing with local organisations for profile and funding and at other times failing to work with them on a basis of real partnership.

Sadly, the discussion on the threats to human rights defenders produced yet another catalogue of threats, intimidation, torture and killings. In addition the working groups highlighted the risks emanating from right-wing groups, organised crime and the impact of corrupt and exploitative development by private investment companies.

The activities of these entities have had a deadly effect on the work of human rights defenders. The killing of human rights defenders continued across all regions. Since the last Dublin Platform, Front Line Defenders documented the murder of 29 defenders.

Women and LGBTI defenders are particularly at risk as they face double jeopardy, targeted because of who they are as well as what they do.



Denis O'Brien, Front Line Defenders Chairman, Yolanda Oqueli, Guatemala and Mary Lawlor, Front Line Defenders Executive Director

Given the persistence of killings and physical attacks against human rights defenders, it is appalling that only a handful of governments, primarily in Latin America, have created specific protection mechanisms for human rights defenders.

It is high time that the international community moved from the theory of human rights into effective practice, and the standard against which that will be measured is their willingness and ability to take meaningful and effective action to help protect human rights defenders at risk.

**Mary Lawlor,
Executive Director,
Front Line Defenders**

**“This
Platform
is yours”
Mary Lawlor**

"It is my responsibility to describe what is really happening in my country."

HRD, Somalia

"I feel stronger for having been here. I felt we were alone but I realise that everyone here is defending life. The most important thing we share is life."

HRD, Argentina

INTRODUCTION

The Seventh Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) took place in Dublin Castle from 9 to 11 October 2013. 135 defenders from 90 countries attended, making this the largest Platform that Front Line Defenders has held to date. The meeting focused on the security of HRDs, the problems they face, and the steps they can take to reduce risks and be more effective.

Opening presentations were made by Eamon Gilmore TD, Tánaiste of Ireland and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Executive Director of Front Line Defenders, Mary Lawlor. In the next two sessions, representatives of regional and international human rights institutions spoke about their organisations and answered questions. On Wednesday Maina Kiai discussed his work as UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, and Stavros Lambrinidis, EU Special Representative for Human Rights, described the human rights commitments of the EU. On Thursday, Debora Benchoam and Snjezana Bokulic presented the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Mata Coulibaly, Ivory Coast (standing in for Reine Alapini-Gansou) commented on the work of the African Commission in Human and People's Rights (ACHPR).

Separate panels discussed three key areas of protection: *Security and protection for human rights defenders in areas of armed conflict* (Wednesday), *Specific risks faced by women human rights defenders* (Thursday), and *Protecting and expanding an enabling environment for human rights defenders* (Friday).

On both Wednesday and Thursday the participants met in six language-based groups to discuss the threats they faced (Wednesday) and actions they can take to address them effectively (Thursday). The groups spoke Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish; English speakers were divided into HRDs from Asia and HRDs from other areas.

On Wednesday night, Front Line Defenders convened two well-attended public panels at the Gresham Hotel. The first, co-organised with the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCII), discussed the work of women human rights defenders. The second, co-organised by the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN), discussed Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsex and Intersex (LGBTI) rights. Comments from these events have been integrated in the report.

As has become customary at Dublin Platforms, during the three days many defenders gave short individual testimonies about their experience. Two complete sessions were devoted to hearing testimonies on Thursday and on Friday. These moving statements will



Tánaiste of Ireland and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore T.D

be gathered together and printed as a separate document by Front Line Defenders.

The participants were privileged to hear short cultural presentations by Liam Ó'Maonlaí on Wednesday morning and by Keith Donald at the closing ceremony. On Friday, two of the participants also performed: Wang Jianfen played the long Chinese flute, and Karla Lara sang three songs from her albums. The Platform ended as usual on a high note, with a celebratory dinner held this year at the Old Jameson Distillery.



Accomplished Irish musician, Keith Donald

SEVENTH DUBLIN PLATFORM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS 9-11 OCTOBER 2013

Conference Rapporteur – Robert Archer, Plain Sense

This is not a verbatim report of the many discussions that occurred during the Platform. It identifies key points – important, innovative, and widely shared ideas – and tries to capture the event's vibrant spirit. The Platform brought together an extraordinary range and variety of experience – human rights defenders of all ages, from all regions and many different cultures, united by their shared commitment to human rights. It was a moment for thinking and reflection, but above all for being together, sharing and listening.

The report first summarises the presentations in the order in which they occurred. It then notes some of the issues that arise for defenders working in contexts of armed conflict; and the special needs of women human rights defenders, and also LGBTI defenders. A long section then examines the different themes associated with insecurity and protection that were raised in the working groups and in the third panel on the enabling environment. After a short section on HRDs' expectations of the international community, the report ends by examining what defenders can do to advance their work and protect themselves as they go forward.

The text frequently quotes what participants said, in the workshops, during debate, or in their testimonies. These quotes do not identify the speaker and are not in any order.



Alice Nkom, Cameroon

Opening Session

The Chairman of Front Line Defenders, Denis O'Brien, welcomed the participants to Dublin and introduced Mary Lawlor, Executive Director of Front Line Defenders, and the Tánaiste of Ireland and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore TD.

Declaring that "some of the most valiant people in the world sit in this room today", Mary Lawlor reminded the participants that 'this Platform is yours' - a space to share challenges and successes and learn from each other. She went on to highlight some of the key concerns and risks for human rights defenders (HRDs). HRDs are targeted for denouncing abuses by governments and for exposing corruption; women human rights defenders and LGBTI defenders are targeted for who they are and for challenging discrimination and cultural stereotypes. Across the world, numerous governments were taking steps to stifle civil society, through legislation, restrictions on funding, misrepresenting HRDs and their work, or fomenting public hostility to them.

In all regions, HRDs had been killed for exposing police abuses, protecting land rights, denouncing corruption, reporting on drug cartels and organised crime, and defending economic, social and cultural rights. Front Line Defenders had documented the murder of 48 HRDs since the last Dublin Platform in 2011, and in almost all cases the killers had gone unpunished. In some instances the killings had not even been investigated.

HRDs continue to be attacked and harassed. Mary reported examples from across the world of governments that have harassed and arrested peaceful demonstrators, passed legislation restricting legitimate civil society activity, banned funding from abroad, limited freedom of information on the internet, falsely charged HRDs with security offences and defamation, or imprisoned HRDs after corrupt trials.

Mary paid tribute to Seamus Heaney, poet and Nobel Laureate who was a long-standing supporter of both Amnesty International and Front Line Defenders and had addressed the First and Second Dublin Platforms in 2002 and 2003.

Ending her presentation, Mary paid tribute to the human rights defenders with whom Front Line Defenders works.

"Your steadfast spirit defies injustice and alleviates pain. You have come to terms with fear and have tamed stress. You work with fierce resilience without stopping to bemoan the cruelty and depravity with which you are often faced. I am awed and inspired every day by your courage."

Guatemalan human rights defender Yolanda Oqueli also spoke at the opening session. Yolanda is one of the leaders of community resistance

"The Government called in foreign forces to repress the citizens. Members of my family were tortured and I had to hide for several months. Many people have been tortured and killed. Activists have been called traitors and agents of foreign powers. The torturers seemed to take pleasure in torture. They stopped only to pray. I asked myself: Why do they hate us so much? But I don't have the answer."

HRD, Bahrain

"Our aim is to keep you safe so that you can continue to conduct your legitimate work and empower your communities to claim their rights."

Mary Lawlor, Front Line Defenders

"... We must not waver in our trust in inherited human values... We must credit the rightness of our intuitions and know that we are called to keep faith with every good impulse. We must not forget the call of conscience and must endeavour to keep others awake to it."

Seamus Heaney, who died in 2013



Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association



Stavros Lambrinidis, EU Special Representative on Human Rights and Nkosilathi Emmanuel Moyo, Zimbabwe

"We are pushing for change and change is scary, for society as well as the State..."

Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

against the La Puja mining project. In 2012 she survived an assassination attempt when, as she was leaving an ongoing peaceful protest, two men on a motor bike pulled up alongside her car and shot her. Since then she has continued her work defending the rights of her community despite the ongoing threats.

"The pain that I suffer all the time reminds me that I have to continue the struggle. We are opposing a mining project which is being imposed on us without any consultation whatsoever - and to oppose a multinational company here in Guatemala is very difficult. We are being invaded. They are taking over our space and taking away our right to a decent life. We don't believe in violence, but we do believe that we have to keep speaking out to defend our rights under the law. Unfortunately, here in Guatemala the law is not respected and is used to attack us - not defend us".

In his keynote address, the Tánaiste of Ireland and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore T.D., paid tribute to human rights defenders.

"I am aware that some of you, your families, your loved ones and those associated with you, face loss of employment, denigration, harassment, stigmatisation, physical violence, arrest, torture and even the threat of death on a daily basis... Each of you has often worked alone, for long hours, in environments of hostility, fear and isolation in order to protect the human rights of others... To those present and absent: for your unseen and tireless work; for your refusal to give up; for having hope stronger than fear; we thank you."

Noting that Ireland had itself suffered occupation for 700 years, the Tánaiste emphasised Ireland's commitment to human rights and to human rights defenders.

"We value the freedom, the independence and the democratic freedom we won - and we therefore want to support your efforts to achieve these."

Giving body to this commitment, the Tánaiste reported that in 2013 Ireland, alongside Chile, Japan, Sierra Leone and Tunisia, had secured approval of a resolution at the UN Human Rights Council calling for more space for civil society; a panel will follow up this issue at the March 2014 session of the Council. Ireland actively supported a resolution by Hungary condemning reprisals against individuals and groups who co-operate with the United Nations, and welcomes the appointment of a focal point on this matter. After its election to the Human Rights Council in 2013, Ireland also led the EU in successfully negotiating a new substantive resolution on HRDs. The resolution condemns legislation, policies and practices that hinder the work of human rights defenders,

and calls on states not to impose restrictions on funding, including funding received from abroad.

The Tánaiste promised that Ireland will continue to support full implementation of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, as well as stronger international mechanisms for protection of HRDs. Paying tribute to Front Line Defenders and its protection programme, he emphasised that Ireland will continue to support Front Line Defenders' protection work, both financially and through its missions.

Addressing the participants, the Tánaiste concluded:

"You have not wavered in your trust of the value of human rights and you have made clear that these values are non-negotiable. You have given the world a window through which we see human rights violations committed every day. But you have also given us a window into the best of human endeavours, the highest of values, the most determined of pursuits."

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL MECHANISMS (I)

Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

Under his mandate, Maina Kiai has produced three reports to date: they have addressed good practices, funding, and elections (forthcoming). The report on funding affirms the right to seek, receive and use funds from sources including sources abroad. The report on elections will emphasise that election monitoring needs to be extended and should address equality of access to resources and communications, and the right of voters to participate in public debate and to be informed.

He argued that, though violations are reported more fully in some countries, the overall situation of HRDs has not improved. Because states are nervous about civil society's influence, they have expanded the range of tools they use to control and restrain it. The new laws and new controls on funding are symptoms of this anxiety.

Stigmatisation is now a major threat to HRDs, who find themselves accused of being maoists, terrorists, security threats, or enemies of the country. The danger is that public opinion can be persuaded by such smears.

The struggle will therefore be a long one and, if it is to be sustainable, cannot be achieved swiftly.

Social media, which activists used so successful to promote rights, are now being applied against HRDs, to abuse them, slander their



Oscar Morales, Guatemala (standing),
Dónal Kearney, Front Line Defenders,
Carlos Perez Guartanbel, Ecuador,
Solange Pie, Dominican Republic

reputations, or incite hatred. Some governments have paid individuals to post critical or abusive blogs.

Official hypocrisy is creating a problem because Western governments that say they promote human rights and criticise the Chinese approach to development yet continue to provide large amounts of funding to countries, including Rwanda and Ethiopia, that abuse human rights and have adopted China's model. This is a damaging contradiction. Holding human rights dialogues is not justified unless they generate positive results.

The results-based approach to development is also harmful to human rights, because the approach looks only at what is produced, not how. Human rights organisations are expected to show quick results, whereas human rights reform inevitably takes time. Police reform is a case in point. Kenya's police force is distant from the people because of its colonial roots. A reform process was started in 1992 but the police remain corrupt, protest continues to be suppressed, and deaths continue to occur. Department for International Development (DFID) and other bilateral development agencies cannot explain why they continue to fund such reforms. A human-rights based approach is required.

The effects of the liberal business regime must also be addressed. The interests of private business are avidly accommodated by development agencies, while the voice of civil society struggles to be heard. A particular concern is the sale of non-lethal weapons that are used to

(L to R) Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Michel Forst, Front Line Defenders Trustee & Secretary of the Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme de la République Française, Stavros Lambrinidis, EU Special Representative for Human Rights and Ruth Mumbi, Kenya

suppress peaceful protest. Why are Western countries that proclaim their allegiance to human rights exporting such products? We must speak truth to power and limit the harm that States can do.

Stavros Lambrinidis, EU Special Representative for Human Rights

Stavros Lambrinidis started by setting out 13 principles that underpin human rights in a democracy.

1. Human rights violations are at the root of violent conflicts and their resolution.
2. The power of human rights lies in their universality. They put us all on an equal footing.
3. All human rights must be respected; we cannot pick and choose between them (indivisibility).
4. Citizens monitor government, not the other way round. Citizens decide when violations occur.



Elena Milashina, Russian Federation



Agnes Daroczi, Hungary

“The job of international organisations is to support and assist national NGOs. It must be absolutely clear that local activists must take the lead and do most of the work.”

Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

“The goal is to be effective, not just visible.”

Stavros Lambrinidis, EU Special Representative on Human Rights

5. To fulfil this role, citizens need to enjoy the freedoms of association, expression and opinion.
6. In a democracy, a free and independent press and internet underpin the above three rights.
7. Freedom of assembly must be protected especially when opinions are offensive or contested.
8. The internet is a crucial dimension of expression. Every offline right should be enjoyed online.
9. Restrictions on freedom of expression must be proportionate, necessary and determined by law.
10. Regulatory decisions must be made by an independent judiciary, not the executive or police.
11. Laws are easier to abuse if they are ambiguous or badly drafted.
12. NGOs and HRDs are essential watchdogs.
13. In a democracy, state authorities do not have to agree with the views of HRDs but they have an absolute obligation to ensure HRDs can speak their minds and undertake legitimate activity.

He remarked that a concerted attack has been mounted against the universality of human rights, based on cultural relativism and the claim that human rights are ‘western concepts’.

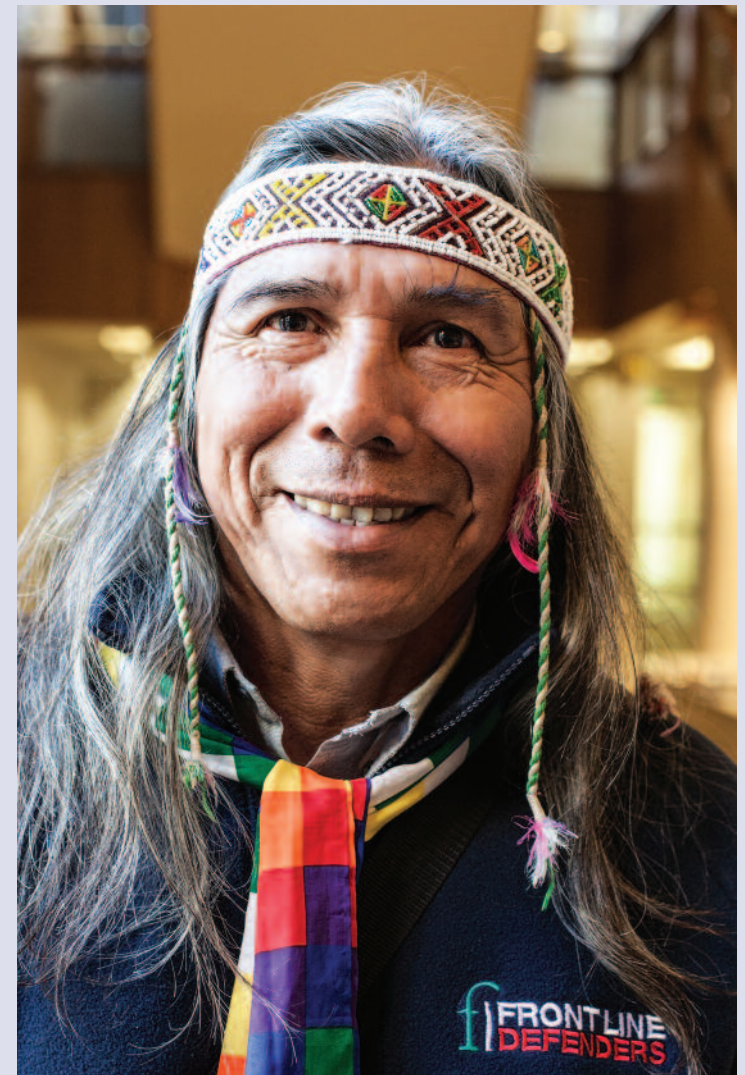
“The struggle for human rights has never been a battle between cultures, religions or ethnicities. It has always been a struggle by the powerless for universality against the relativism of the powerful. You will not see women say their culture permits them to be beaten: it is husbands who justify their behaviour on cultural grounds.”

Mr Lambrinidis closed by emphasizing the EU’s commitment to HRDs and human rights. While recognizing that no institution is perfect, he said the EU is committed to the protection of HRDs, has approved guidelines on religion and belief, the death penalty, and the rights of women and children, and recently approved new human rights guidelines for businesses operating in the oil and gas and IT sectors. In the coming seven years (2014-2020), the EU will spend approximately 300 million Euro on protection of HRDs.

“We face many human rights challenges in Europe, xenophobia and racism for example. But because everyone is imperfect, not all are equally imperfect. I am proud in that sense, that Europeans can speak about human rights without being accused of being a traitor, and can blog without fear of being killed.”

Questions from the floor

- Why has the EU funded projects that discriminate against Roma, despite its non-discrimination rules?
- Why has the EU done so little to protect the people of Western



Félix Díaz, Argentina

Sahara, who are not legally protected because Morocco does not recognise them politically?

- Why do European governments continue to fund Colombia’s corrupt government?
- Why does the EU support Algeria’s civil court system, but give no assistance to Algerian NGOs?
- Why are EU policies and conduct inconsistent, for example towards Bahrain and towards Syria?



(L to R) Snjezana Bokulic, OSCE, Debora Benchoam, IACHR, Mata Coulibaly, Ivory Coast and session chair, Prof. Donncha O'Connell, NUI Galway

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL MECHANISMS (II)

On Thursday morning, it was the turn of Snjezana Bokulic of the Office for Democratic Institutions of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation (OSCE), and Debora Benchoam of the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights (IACHR), to present the work of their organisations. Because the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights at The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Reine Alapini-Gansou, was unable at the last minute to travel to the Platform, Mata Coulibaly (of the Ivory Coast Coalition of Human Rights Defenders) kindly agreed to introduce the work of the

African Commission in a personal capacity.

- Why does the EU fund political parties that do not respect or promote human rights?
- Why are European funds being given to GONGOs (Government-supported NGOs)?
- The Government of Ivory Coast is passing a law that will weaken the protections enjoyed by NGOs. We are not being consulted and need support to help us amend it.

In response, Maina Kiai noted that it is the responsibility of international and regional organisations to support and assist national NGOs. It is for local activists to lead and do most of the work. He agreed that it is vital to end double standards. "If you raise Russia, Venezuela and China with me, I will raise Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Ethiopia."

On the Roma, Stavros Lambrinidis noted that the EU has a strategy with respect to the Roma that needs to be implemented; he agreed that the EU still needs to address certain issues. On the Western Sahara, he said that the EU does not have the status of a government but can exercise influence by appealing to international standards. On EU funding, he recognised the complexity of the funding decisions that DevCo takes but noted that the EU has a procedure for raising human rights concerns and responding to them. On Colombia, he observed that the EU is concerned about violence and raises human rights issues with the Colombian Government. On coherence, he agreed that EU policy and practice should be consistent. On Bahrain, he mentioned that both he and Catherine Ashton (EU Vice-president and High Representative of the European Union for foreign affairs and security policy) had raised human rights issues with the Government.

Snjezana Bokulic, OSCE

The OSCE was formed in the 1970s to be a bridge between 'East' and 'West' in Europe. It adopted a modern conception of security that takes account of military, economic and environmental dimensions as well as human rights, and grants NGOs a key role. The Helsinki organisations were inspired by the OSCE.

Snjezana Bokulic detailed some of the obstacles that impede respect for human rights and the work of HRDs in Europe. They include diminishing state powers, the introduction of restrictive legislation, and failure to fully implement OSCE standards. In some countries, civil society organisations are marginalised and under-resourced, HRDs are harassed or repressed, and impunity remains a problem. Calls to review the content of human rights, and restrict the participation of civil society and HRDs, are preoccupying.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR), the unit that leads on human rights, has developed guidelines on peaceful assembly and is currently developing guidelines on the protection of HRDs, in consultation with international NGOs and HRDs themselves.

In terms of practical support, the ODHIR monitors human rights violations, and particularly respect for peaceful assembly, follows the situation of particular HRDs at risk, and observes trials.



El Ghalia Djimi, Western Sahara



Halil Savda, Turkey

"We can't ask for a guard to protect us because the same guard is likely to kill you..."

HRD, Afghanistan

"You need above all to maintain your reputation because then the people will always protect you."

HRD, Syria

"In reality we do not know who is our enemy. They used to have the decency to warn you. Now they do not warn you."

HRD, Pakistan

"They talk about family, they talk about religion, they never talk about equality."

HRD, Ukraine



Hassan Shire, East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

Debora Benchoam, IACHR

Debora Benchoam is herself an HRD: her brother was murdered after the military coup in Argentina and she herself spent four years in prison for organising human rights activities in her school. The Organization of American States (OAS) created the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 1959 to promote and protect human rights in the American hemisphere, in accordance to the OAS Charter. In 2001 the Commission established a Unit to monitor the situation of HRDs, which in 2011 became the Office of the Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders. The Rapporteur's goal is to give greater visibility to the role defenders play in building a democratic society, and lay out recommendations and standards for their protection.

The Rapporteur has found that murders, extra-judicial executions, and forced disappearances of HRDs have been rising in the region, particularly in countries where democratic breakdowns have occurred (Honduras), where internal conflicts persist (Colombia), or where the State confronts organised crime or powerful economic interests (Mexico).

The Commission has reported that the mechanisms used to hamper, block, or discourage the work of HRDs are increasingly sophisticated. They include: illegal searches, statements by senior officials discrediting and stigmatising the work of HRDs, intelligence gathering, unreasonable restrictions on access to intelligence files, baseless criminal charges against HRDs, and restrictions on financing.

The IACHR has asked Governments in the region to investigate violations against HRDs, to prevent them from recurring in the future, and to strengthen mechanisms of protection.

The IACHR applies several preventive and protection measures. The most useful provisional measures are the preventive measures issued by the Inter-American Court, and the precautionary measures issued by the IACHR. These concentrate on protection of the right to life and personal integrity, and on freedom of association, and require governments to investigate the conditions that give rise to violations as well as take steps to protect the person at risk.

Women and indigenous HRDs, LGBTI activists and legal officials have particularly benefited from precautionary measures. Since 1980, one in four of all precautionary measures has been issued to protect HRDs and currently they represent more than one third of beneficiaries, which is a worrying indicator of the risks that HRDs face.

The IACHR also processes and makes recommendations on individual petitions and cases, in order to achieve justice, make reparations to victims, and prevent recurrence. It can request information from states, call working meetings, publish press releases, issue reports and make field visits.



Mata Coulibaly, Ivory Coast

Mata Coulibaly, on the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)

Mata Coulibaly reported that the Commissioner and Special Rapporteur on African HRDs of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights sends communications, issues press releases, makes country visits, participates in investigative meetings, monitors documents and issues reports. The Rapporteur frequently meets and cooperates with civil society organisations: she receives information from them, attends their meetings, and often meets NGOs and HRDs during her country trips. She seeks civil society advice when she plans her itinerary and programme of visits.

Ms Coulibaly cautioned at the same time that HRDs should not expect too much from the Rapporteur, whose resources are limited. In addition the procedure is slow, whereas HRDs, especially those at risk, need quick action.

Questions from the floor

- In Western Sahara, it has been difficult to use regional mechanisms because Morocco does not recognise the territory and has suspended its membership of the African Commission. None of our many complaints have been investigated. What can be done?
- In Honduras, several HRDs have benefited from precautionary measures but have still been attacked. One lawyer was murdered and the questioner herself had been beaten by police, who took no account of the fact that she was supposed to have protection.
- What measures does the Commission take if a state does not accept the Commission's decisions or its precautionary measures?



- Mexico has laws protecting HRDs but attacks on them are not investigated. Could the Commission evaluate the effectiveness of its mechanisms, because the officials who are meant to implement precautionary measures are often those who are responsible for abuses?
- Can you bring pressure on the ICC to be more proactive?
- Can mechanisms be developed for sanctioning non-State actors who intimidate or attack HRDs?
- Our states connive with mining companies to abuse human rights and intimidate HRDs who wish to protect the environment and the poor. Since the Commission can only recommend and cannot enforce its decisions, and therefore cannot protect us, what can the UN do?
- The OSCE has been present in Transnistria for 20 years but has never looked into the rights of the people. We do not need declarations, we need physical protection.
- We brought two Eritrean cases to the African Commission, and on both it ruled in our favour. However, the state ignored its decision and we cannot take cases to the African Court because Eritrea is not affiliated. What can be done to make states comply with the African Charter?
- How can regional organisations help HRDs and local NGOs that do not belong to networks?

On the effectiveness of protection measures, Deborah Benchoam noted that, when states continue to abuse, the IAHCR can ask for protection via the Inter-American Court. The IAHCR also holds meetings twice a year to follow up precautionary measures, which civil society organisations as well as states can attend. In addition, the IAHCR also makes

(L to R) Elizabeth Chryum, Eritrea, Phyllis Omido, Kenya, Michelle Foley, Front Line Defenders, Ruth Mumbi, Kenya, Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebagala, Uganda

country visits and the reports of such visits always include a chapter on HRD protection. She added that the IAHCR plans to evaluate the effectiveness of its precautionary measures programme, but this work has been delayed due to lack of resources.

On Honduras, the IAHCR plans to hold hearings on the effectiveness of protection measures; similar hearings will be held in other countries.

On gaps in protection, Snjezana Bokulic observed that human rights standards were established by states to protect individuals, and the mandate of international organisations is to assist states to meet the obligations they have promised to fulfil; when states do not wish to do so, there is indeed a gap.

On abuses by non-State actors, Debora Benchoam noted that states have a duty to investigate any abuse by any party, but agreed that in practice many communities are caught in the middle, threatened by state actors and by third parties. The IAHCR has asked states to suspend several mining projects and permit human rights investigations, following violence, and precautionary measures have often been issued in those contexts.

On Transnistria, Snjezana Bokulic said that the OSCE is not able to address issues associated with the status of the territory, because this question falls outside its mandate.

"I am always being told to give up and live the 'normal life' of a woman."

HRD, Chechnya

"The authorities will not arrest me [for protesting for my rights] but will get a thug to harass me. They show sympathy for a woman whose son they have shot but hide the body and do everything they can to prevent her from securing her rights."

HRD, Egypt

"It is important to respect culture, but not at the expense of principles such as freedom."

HRD, Syria

"People must have a perfect reputation. Women HRDs are seen to have a poor reputation – there is no space to be different, to create a personal life, to be different."

HRD, Chechnya

"On the panel yesterday, it was said that we need to respect the culture but in Pakistan if you respect the culture you have to be married, you must not be divorced, which means that sometimes you have to give up your identity if you want to be a woman HRD."

HRD, Pakistan

I am the mother of two small children, and that has been the most difficult thing, to live through the trauma that I have caused my children – who know that people have tried to kill their mother. ... The real fear for most of us is for our children. I am afraid that my children will be kidnapped.”

HRD, Guatemala

“I recently stopped giving interviews that quoted my name. We work like guerrillas, we don’t give information, we don’t protest, we work below the radar.”

HRD, Chechnya

“In my situation, every day there is danger and I have to live every day with the people and this is my protection. If you are esteemed by the people, our enemies will be very cautious about attacking us.”

HRD, Iraq

“In my country, many women are threatened at once. What we have learned is to take the threat seriously. Do not take the danger lightly because there will be retaliation if you rock the boat.”

HRD, Pakistan

“We have to organise on all levels, in parallel. Women need to speak for all people, as women whose rights are violated.”

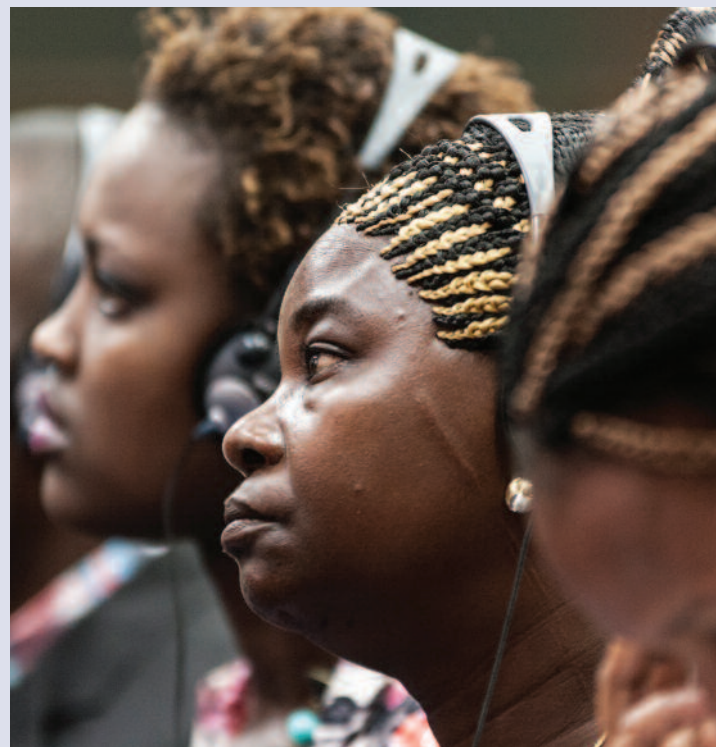
HRD, Egypt

SECURITY AND PROTECTION FOR HRDS WORKING IN AREAS OF ARMED CONFLICT. PANEL 1

Martha Diaz, Colombia, Jean de Dieu Mulikuza, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Razan Ghazzawi, Syria and Wazhma Frogh, Afghanistan led a panel chaired by Hassan Shire, East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, on the challenges that HRDs face when they work in situations of conflict.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the government does not control the territory, and some parts of the country are under the control of armed groups, which consider HRDs to be their enemy. Exacerbating the difficulties, mining companies are active in the same areas. As a result HRDs face threats from different directions – from Government forces, armed groups, economic interests, individuals – and cannot always predict from where danger will come.

In Afghanistan, HRDs are in a similar predicament. Warlords and the Taliban compete for control, and both have gravely violated the rights of civilians. The warlords are responsible for many sexual abuses while the Taliban deny women rights, so women HRDs cannot identify with either. It is a situation in which the state cannot protect the citizen and HRDs are at risk from several directions simultaneously.



To manage this predicament, activists in Bukavu (DRC) protect themselves. They have put in place an alert system and follow agreed security rules: do not go out alone; keep a phone on you; protect the information on your computer; conceal sensitive documents; make your environment as secure as possible. In some cases, Bukavu HRDs also receive protection and support from Monusco (the UN operation in Kivu). Security will only really be achieved, however, by ending the war: this is the overriding objective of HRDs in Kivu.

The situation in Syria is equally complex. The country is in revolution, a condition which creates new realities that HRDs are still trying to understand. Many HRDs have been detained, tortured, sexually abused; many have left, and some of those who left have returned. HRDs have three main issues.

The first is that Syria lacks a human rights culture because the regime suppressed it. People do not feel they have rights even if they know abstractly that they do. This has many consequences. Not the least is that it is difficult to restrain the conduct of armed groups by appealing to shared values. Activists must rediscover or recreate a rights culture in the country.

Second, women have very little space. Virtually no women are currently active in human rights work. This is also an effect of the war, which has given power to men with guns. Men without guns have to justify themselves and the space for women has contracted.

Third, foreign NGOs that promote human rights but do not employ local staff tend to delegitimise human rights in the community. Human rights are made to appear imported or even imposed values.

Syrian activists are familiar with the basic techniques of protection, from long experience under the old regime. New problems arise with the new armed groups and new forms of authority, because the rules and their decisions may be arbitrary. Young women need to take extra care, even if they dress carefully and go about their business discreetly.

It is critical too to behave in a consistently professional manner.

In Afghanistan, which is a tribal society, many of the most useful protection techniques depend on relationships. HRDs obtain information and warnings from officials and tribal leaders. But HRDs have also developed emergency alert arrangements, and have set up ways to get HRDs who are at risk quickly to safety.

Rebeca Masika, Democratic Republic of the Congo



(L to R) Razan Ghazzawi, Syria, Martha Diaz, Colombia, Hassan Shire, East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, Wazhma Frogh, Afghanistan, Jean de Dieu Mulikuzza, Democratic Republic of the Congo

THE SPECIFIC RISKS FACED BY WOMEN HRDS. PANEL 2

Raisa Borshigova, Russian Federation - Chechnya, Zainab Azmat, Pakistan, Morena Herrera, El Salvador and Ghada Shahbender, Egypt discussed the specific risks that women HRDs face. Noeline Blackwell, Front Line Defenders Trustee, chaired the panel.

The panellists emphasised that women are treated unequally, suffer stigma and reputational criticism, and make an enormous but often unnoticed contribution to human rights and to their societies.

In Chechnya, it is challenging to work on women's rights because they are contested not just by the authorities but much of society. Independent women who defend rights are accused of violating traditional and religious values and may be threatened by their community and their families. Moreover, they have no protection under the law because Russian law no longer applies in Chechnya and the country's ruler is a dictator who opposes women's rights and has even supported honour killings.

In El Salvador, work on family planning and women's health is dangerous because abortion is a criminal offence. Women who abort naturally may be accused of abortion and imprisoned, and abortion is illegal even when giving birth puts the life of the mother at risk. The Church supports these positions. Locally, activists who help a woman who is abused may be attacked by the abuser if the authorities choose not to arrest him. Despite these risks, women HRDs have developed strong networks and find ways to assist and protect many women.

In Egypt the situation is very contradictory, and more so since the recent revolution. Superficially, laws and the officials who implement them protect women but in fact women are treated very unequally, and face serious levels of sexual harassment and violence.

The situation in Pakistan is even more confused. "We have a complex mess. The Government causes us risks. War and terror have polarised the society. External terrorists have settled in the country, creating a parallel power system. We have our own religious extremists who oppose rights for women. The Government nominally sympathises with our demands but actually dislikes us. The army is involved in the threats we face. Our security services also monitor women HRDs closely because they fear our work. We are trouble."

Culture

Because they challenge gender stereotypes, women HRDs are particularly subject to social and reputational pressures, often justified on 'cultural' grounds. Social and religious norms are cited to criticise women HRDs and their activities.

In discussion, it was pointed out that women HRDs are frequently exploited using religion. Older traditions that protected women (from being killed, for example) are losing currency and women are more frequently attacked and arrested.

I used to work as an academic and declined to be involved in human rights advocacy. But then a friend said, 'If you can speak, but you are not speaking, who will ensure the rights of those people who are unable to speak for themselves?' So I became a human rights defender, particularly for women's rights, in an area where there are no laws; where tradition and culture are tight and constricted against women; where religious norms are highly conservative; and where extremists like the Taliban live among us.

HRD, Pakistan

"We are forced to choose between radical islamism or its opposite (secular nationalism) – reflecting a fracture in society and a rise in intolerance on both sides, putting HRDs in a very difficult position."

HRD, Tunisia



Walaa Salah, Sudan

"Governments make alliance with islamists or come under Islamist influence and as a result not only are rights curtailed but HRDs are harassed at the request of islamists."

HRD, Sahel

"In Mexico we have been experiencing a humanitarian crisis... People live in terror of organised crime. No-one can protect you if you have a problem. Organised crime has operated with impunity. Hundreds of people buried in mass graves."

HRD, Mexico

"In areas controlled by armed groups, these consider HRDs to be their enemies and frequently kill them or expel them. Our problems are exacerbated by mining enterprises. So HRDs face many threats and cannot always predict from where they come. Government. Armed groups. Economic interests. Individuals..."

HRD, DRC



(L to R) Ghada Shahbender, Egypt, Morena Herrera, El Salvador, Zainab Azmat, Pakistan, Raisa Borshigova, Russian Federation - Chechnya, Noeline Blackwell, Front Line Defenders Trustee

Threats to family and relatives

Worse than attacks on HRDs' reputations are attacks and threats against their partners, close relatives and children. This deeply stresses many women HRDs.

Women HRDs described the various means they have found to resist, manage and cope with the multi-dimensional and psychological pressures imposed on them.

Some reported that, in order to survive and pursue their work, they have chosen to adopt a low profile. For others, safety depends on developing deep roots in society, recognising that the community will protect them if their work is valued and they are respected.

In many countries, women have responded to the threats made against them by organising. They have set up alert networks, adopted security techniques, recognised the benefits and risks of technology.

Some women HRDs have established reporting registers and encourage women to report abuses. The Meso-American Defenders' Network connects and strengthens regional and national networks, and has created refuges for women HRDs at risk.

Elsewhere, women HRDs have organised themselves to physically oppose violence and sexual assaults. Faced by very violent sexual harassment and gang rapes in Egypt, for example, women and male HRDs have created defence groups to deter attacks and defend themselves (for example, Operation Anti-Sexual Harassment and Tahrir Bodyguard).

Finally, several women HRDs described their experience of working with young women and adolescents. One speaker underlined the central

importance of forming a new generation of activists and women HRDs.

"One thing we find hard to deal with and we have to speak about, is that we women are half the sky. When we talk about indigenous people we are half of them, when we talk of students we are half - we are not a sector, we are half... When we are described as a sector that needs support, our agenda gets discussed in terms of the victimisation of women, but we want it understood that our demands are made as equals. Let's learn to do this from now on: we should speak of the violence that we women suffer in our organisations... We need to change the way our colleagues work with us. They should not victimise us, they should take on our political struggle, not to support us, but as an issue for us both."



Plenary Session, Dublin Castle

DOUBLE JEOPARDY FOR WOMEN AND LGBTI HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Women human rights defenders and LGBTI defenders may face additional discrimination, being targeted because of who they are, as well as what they do.

In partnership with the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network of Ireland (GLEN) and the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi), Front Line Defenders co-hosted two special side events in which panels of LGBTI and women HRDs shared their experiences with the human rights community in Ireland.

The WHRD panel, chaired by Siobhan O'Donoghue of NWCi, with, Morena Herrera (El Salvador), Iryna Khalip (Belarus), Ruth Mumbi (Kenya), Agnes Daroczi (Hungary) and Tep Vany (Cambodia)

emphasised the huge range of issues facing women human rights defenders: access to medical and reproductive rights in El Salvador and Kenya, freedom of expression in Belarus, the rights of the Roma people in Hungary and the key role of women defending the land rights of their community in Cambodia.

The LGBTI panel, chaired by Brian Sheehan of GLEN, with Igor Yassin (Russia), Olena Shevchenko (Ukraine), Olumide Makanjou (Nigeria), Natasha Jimenez Mata (Costa Rica) and Elkhan Baghirov (Azerbaijan) showed how many of the issues faced by women are shared by the LGBTI community: marginalisation and discrimination, exclusion from decision-making and being the target of arbitrary violence.

In Russia, LGBTI activists are subject to new laws that ban demonstrations and inhibit activity for LGBTI rights. Nevertheless, public discussion of

the issue has grown and LGBTI activists have forged stronger relationships with national and regional rights organisations. In Ukraine, the LGBTI question is prominent because it is a central indicator of whether Ukraine will ally itself with the EU or with Russia. However laws are ambiguous, right wing parties are growing in strength, while the church's refusal to recognise LGBTI rights increases the vulnerability of activists.

In Nigeria, several proposals to criminalise homosexuality have failed to win parliamentary approval, but a new bill is now before parliament. At the same time, as in Russia, a public conversation about gender and LGBTI issues is emerging.

In Azerbaijan, while the Eurovision Song Contest focused international attention on the country's human rights record, many male to female transgender people are subject to



Natasha Jiménez Mata, Costa Rica

heavy police harassment, worsened by the fact that many work in the sex industry. Natasha Jimenez Mata, from Costa Rica, talked about being a trans woman in Latin America where trans people face widespread discrimination, which frequently

excludes them from education, access to health services and employment. As a result many work in the sex industry, experience high levels of harassment and violence, and die young.

"I don't feel I was born in the wrong body. I was born in the wrong society." HRD, Costa Rica



Morena Herrera, El Salvador



Igor Yassin, Russian Federation



Olena Shevchenko, Ukraine



Olumide Makanjuola, Nigeria



Elkhan Baghirov, Azerbaijan

"In my country, violence has a name, a colour, a location and a class..."

HRD, Brazil

"HRDs do not know from what direction the threats to them will come. We have a faceless enemy. This increases our vulnerability."

HRD, Afghanistan



Sr. Famita, Philippines



Farida Ouaghlissi, Algeria

INSECURITY AND PROTECTION: THEMES FROM THE WORKING GROUPS

The six Working Groups (meeting in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish) met twice, on the first day to discuss new and emerging threats to HRDs and their work, and on the second to discuss practices and tools that HRDs have developed in response. This section of the report is based on notes prepared by the rapporteurs of each Working Group.

Since many of the issues raised in Working Groups were mentioned in plenary discussion or during the panels, the report does not duplicate themes already covered and does not pretend to be a complete record of every point raised. It highlights new and emerging concerns and issues that several Working Groups considered critical. The section titled "Protecting and expanding an enabling environment for HRDs" integrates some of the responses to threats that Working Groups identified and reports on the third Panel Discussion that took place on Friday morning.

Ongoing threats

It should be said, to start with, that the Working Groups discussions highlighted threats against HRDs that have been recognised repeatedly in the reports of the Special Rapporteur on HRDs and previous Dublin Platforms. The list below is not in any order of importance.

- Assassination, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances.
- Torture, physical attacks.
- Threats, intimidation, destruction of vehicles, equipment, property.
- Attacks on, threats against, and defamation of HRDs' relatives and family.
- Unjustified accusations (such as charging HRDs with terrorism offences); prosecutions.
- Imprisonment on false charges or without due process.
- Defamation by government officials or non-state parties; public stigmatisation; other forms of reputational attack.
- Attacks on the reputation of indigenous and LGBTI activists that have the tacit or explicit endorsement of the community or public.
- Militarisation, causing the compression of civil society space.



Spanish Language Working Group (L to R) Carlos Perez Guartanbel, Ecuador, Solange Pie, Dominican Republic, Alma García, Mexico and Nataniel Hernández Núñez, Mexico



Abdiaziz Ibrahim, Somalia



Hedme Fatima Castro Vargas, Honduras

- Administrative harassment, including onerous registration requirements, refusal to authorise funding from overseas, repeated tax investigations, etc.
- House searches, interference with communications, theft of documents and information.

The Spanish Working Group also identified categories of HRD who are particularly exposed to attack:

- HRDs and social activists who protest against economic investments (in mines, hydroelectric and wind energy projects, etc.).
- HRDs who denounce impunity.
- LGBTI and women HRDs (especially likely to face assault and defamation).

Working Groups discussed certain emerging or urgent threats in more detail.

Religious intolerance

The rise of Islamist movements and other fundamentalist religious movements is a particular threat in some regions. Such groups often oppose particular human rights (frequently women's and LGBTI rights) and may condemn the activities of HRDs or attack and kill them. In addition, some governments are influenced by religious fundamentalist organisations and their ideas, and may collude in intimidating or attacking those who hold different, more open-minded views. In other cases, HRDs are caught in the middle, between intolerant secular governments and intolerant religious movements.

Right wing movements

In some societies, perhaps notably in the Russian Federation and parts of Europe, the rise of right wing parties poses a similar threat. Neo-fascist groups are responsible for attacks against LGBTIs and minorities in a number of countries, in some cases with the apparent collusion of state authorities or politicians. In these situations, HRDs may be intimidated or attacked, and left unprotected by the law or security forces.

Organised crime

HRDs have always been concerned about the threats posed by militias and armed groups. More recently, the dangers presented by organised crime, and to an extent by private security companies, have become an issue.

The threat that organised crime poses in Mexico is widely recognised, but it was also a concern mentioned by HRDs from the DRC, Colombia, and Moldova, for example.

The conduct of private security agencies will increasingly need to be

"All tyrannies are terrified of light."

HRD, Kazakhstan

"Recently, the company sold some land to the local mafia who are also against our community. Now more groups are against our community. Last year, two women from the community were shot dead by the local mafia. The firearms used were assault rifles traced to the local police station."

HRD, Thailand



Shahed Kayes, Bangladesh, Ashrafun Nahar Misti, Bangladesh and Finn Plekkenpol, Front Line Defenders volunteer

“People with disabilities are the largest minority in the world.”

HRD, Tunisia



Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebagala, Clare Byrarugaba and Gerald Kankya, all from Uganda

monitored as corporations and governments employ them more frequently in place of national or municipal police, to complement policing, protect the property of private companies, provide security in shopping malls, etc.

Multiple sources of attack

In a number of countries, HRDs face a toxic combination of simultaneous threats from officials, fundamental religious movements, armed groups, police, militia, organised crime, and private economic interests. It is particularly difficult for HRDs to defend themselves in such complex and dangerous environments, because they cannot be certain at any given moment from which direction threats to their safety or the safety of their families will come.

Threats associated with private investment

The activities of private companies that invest in mining, water or power operations, infrastructure, or industrial or agricultural projects, frequently generate violence and human rights violations, putting at risk many HRDs who campaign for the rights of indigenous people, displaced communities or economic, social and cultural rights. The Spanish Working Group emphasised that corporate investments are associated with most of the different threats to which HRDs are exposed – from assassination and administrative harassment to prosecution and defamation. Other Working Groups identified the same trend. The French Working Group noted the degree to which largely unregulated foreign investment complicates the environment in which they work.

Such foreign investments are frequently supported by Government, which assumes the lead in suppressing opposition to them. This often has a double effect. Government repression forces people off their land, sometimes causing deaths and injury, and violates their economic and social rights. In parallel, affected communities may be silenced – prevented from exercising their basic democratic rights to organise,



Iryna Khalip, Belarus

express their opinion of such investments, or protest against them.

Where militias and armed groups are active in the same space, the situation is complicated still further. Militias, criminal organisations and armed groups may be predators, forcing companies to militarise their operations, or may benefit from the resources that private investments bring. In the second situation, they may become the formal or de facto allies of companies.

Exploitative and corrupt development

Protests against private corporate investments are closely linked to the development model in many societies. Numerous testimonies described the impact of infrastructure investments, forced relocation, and forced land acquisition on the well-being and rights of communities, and the violence that resistance to them generated. During the Platform, HRD testimonies described economic, social and cultural rights

violations in Argentina, Brazil, China, Ecuador, Gabon, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Thailand, Philippines, South Korea and Vietnam. In many of these cases, HRDs linked the expropriations in question to official corruption.

"Our challenge is to restore real human rights because in our region the development model is implemented by companies and supported by our Government. The principle of prior informed consent is not considered. Mines, hydro-electric projects, ports and agro-industrial projects harm the interests of the population but the people are not consulted or informed. Government does the decision-making."

HRD, Brazil

"The mining companies have come in. Government has not separated mining zones from agricultural zones. It has a mandate to develop the economy, and a mandate to protect our natural resources, which causes a conflict of interest and violations of rights because the ancestral domains of indigenous are violated."

HRD, Philippines

Forced displacement is a particular problem, whether it is led by private investors, state authorities on behalf of private investors, or state authorities alone.

"Five years ago, I owned my own house. The Government demolished my house and took the land without proper compensation. First they cut the utilities, then smashed the windows, destroyed the property. Over 20 times, I called the police but no one responded; over 100 times I went to different levels of court to file my case, but to no avail. In short, the judicial and law enforcement officers in the country are protectors of the illegal acts by the state. Because of my human rights activities, I was beaten by the police, arrested and thrown into a "black jail", an underground prison run by the local government. There are many petitioners against such forced eviction. Many of them have met the same fate as I."

HRD, China

Psychological violence: indirect and "soft" violence

Physical violence and threats of physical violence remain a consistent danger in all regions, as numerous testimonies and Front Line Defenders' own research confirm. At the same time, for large numbers of HRDs in many situations, "soft" violence is increasingly an issue. Attacks on reputation, defamation, isolation in the community, threats against family or associates are forms of intimidation that undermine HRDs psychologically. There is some evidence that international advocacy on behalf of HRDs is causing governments to avoid using

"Is it development when you have money in your pocket but have poisoned the environment, and water catchments are damaged, rivers polluted and corals destroyed? We have to put in power politicians who really love the environment and will help the poor people."

HRD, Philippines

"There is no distinction between development and human rights. You cannot achieve one without the other. They are two sides of the same coin. So for international organisations which are eager to continue to be on the good side of the Government and refuse to raise cases of human rights against the Government – development for whom? Development for what? If human rights are not addressed, no one can enjoy the fruits of development."

HRD, Laos

"To disappear someone is to torture a whole family."

HRD, Algeria

"The optimistic way of looking at repression is as a kind of feedback. It is evidence that HRDs' work is effective."

Andrew Anderson, Front Line Defenders



crude physical violence and to adopt soft forms of intimidation that are more difficult for monitors to report and denounce.

Of course, physical abductions and killings themselves cause psychological stress for relatives and associates.

A number of testimonies underlined the state of anxiety in which HRDs live because they fear that their children, their relatives, or their colleagues may be harmed because of their human rights activity. As noted earlier, threats to harm close family and friends are a potent form of "soft" violence.

"The police started to harass and threaten me. Then they brought pressure on my mother. By that time I was married and so they attacked my husband – who said I should stop or he would leave me. So I lost my husband and my two children also suffered because people do not want to know people who are politically 'dangerous'. I went back to live with my mother in the slums, and my house was burned down and we lost everything... In Kenya a HRD is seen as a traitor, an enemy of the State."

HRD, Kenya

Érina Gomes, Brazil, Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebaggala, Uganda, Yevgeniy Zhovtis, Kazakhstan

"Faced by what we experience, we are at risk of losing our humanity... The most important thing is to help us preserve our humanity."

HRD, Palestine

Administrative harassment

Many different forms of administrative harassment have been documented. Imposing complicated or onerous registration procedures on human rights organisations, and denying access to funds from abroad are evident forms of interference, but HRDs may be subjected to many forms of harassment - tax investigations, legal compliance inquiries, health and safety checks, failure to connect telephone or other public services, etc. Several speakers noted that officials in their countries have become more creative over time and now use increasingly sophisticated forms of obstruction. These too should be understood as "soft" and indirect intimidation.



Rafiq Hajat, Malawi

"NGOs were allowed to operate ten years ago but now they are perceived as a threat. They are being audited and checked against administrative rules. When NGOs fall short, they are sanctioned; their licenses are withdrawn, etc. They are forced into illegality or timidity."

HRD, Uganda

"All my colleagues are subject to repressive measures because our association was banned and became illegal. The authorities have refused three times to re-register us. They use our unregistered status to discredit us. Our premises were seized five times. They took our equipment. They searched our private homes. Then they arrested our Director."

HRD, Belarus

"All organisations are penetrated, all telephones are monitored, power is almost hereditary. This makes the work of HRDs very difficult."

HRD, Togo

The effect of administrative obstruction and sophisticated surveillance is to squeeze the space in which HRDs operate, depriving them of air, exhausting their ability to move about and communicate. This can have as freezing an effect on human rights activity as the threat of physical violence. In addition, where officials apply such forms of repression subtly, they are hard to prove and denounce.

The media

HRDs noted the dual role of the media. They are often tools of government, which use tame media to spread accusations against HRDs or criticisms of human rights. At the same time, the media play a crucial role in publicising violations and drawing attention to HRDs at risk.

In general, access to information is of fundamental importance to human rights work and a critical issue for authoritarian regimes which deeply fear others knowing what they do.

The community

As noted, support from the community can protect HRDs. For many HRDs it is an essential source of strength. If public trust in HRDs is destroyed, however, or HRDs advocate for rights that are not popular, HRDs may also be isolated or threatened by their communities. HRDs described situations in which officials or other parties had misrepresented them or their work, and in some instances a community had shunned or harassed the HRD concerned as a result. Many LGBTI activists have found themselves in this position. In other situations, HRDs have been advised, supported and defended by their communities because the community holds them in esteem and values the work they do.

"You are portrayed as an enemy of the people. It can even get to the point where people are unwilling to say hello to you."

HRD, Gabon

As mentioned in the section on women human rights defenders, intolerance based on interpretations of culture is growing in some societies. This also has the effect of shrinking the space in which HRDs can operate and increasing the risks they face.

"Traditions that protected women are undermined and traditions that limit women's freedom are promoted."

HRD, Yemen

Weakened institutions

HRDs noted the emergence of a political desert in badly governed states whose institutions are gradually eroding or are hollowed out.

"Our phones are monitored and registered. It is easy to track where we are and attack us and our families. We face a dire situation and do not see a means to protect ourselves."

HRD, Pakistan

"We had 30 per cent of parliamentarians in political opposition parties, now we have virtually none, and no independent media. For peaceful gatherings, each city has only one or two places where people can gather. NGOs have to be registered, meetings in private houses are subject to police restraint. The judiciary is corrupt, the media use Soviet methods, the state administration is corrupt..."

HRD, Kazakhstan

"The space is shrinking. International standards are being undermined. Impunity is growing."

HRD, Nigeria



Tep Vanny, Cambodia

The corruption of political institutions is a central problem in some states.

"We are seeing growing levels of impunity. Our institutions are losing independence and credibility, because the regime appoints cadres of the ruling party to lead them, and head the judiciary, and appoints their children to lower positions, creating a corrupted elite without the rule of law. For this reason, the Government fears its citizens, fears they will rise up to overthrow them."

HRD, Uganda

"There is corruption, unemployment, deep poverty. HRDs are not respected, precautionary measures are not respected, our resources are seized."

HRD, Honduras

HRDs also described states whose institutional activity is essentially fictitious.

"The Government is ceaselessly creating commissions, laws, programmes – none of which are implemented: policies and institutions that are fictitious."

HRD, Gabon

GONGOs and Co-option

Several HRDs highlighted the impact on their work of government-sponsored NGOs (GONGOs). These drown out the voices of real NGOs, mop up much of the funding that is available, and advocate positions inside the country and abroad that are favourable to the government's interests.

Weak state authority and risk

A number of speakers emphasised finally that HRDs face especially complex problems in countries where government services have collapsed, where conflict has all but destroyed protection under the law, and people can no longer sustain themselves economically. In such situations, HRDs are caught in a vicious spiral of insecurity. They are less able to provide protection to people whose rights are violated, and they are themselves simultaneously at risk from many directions, without effective protection from the law.

"[In Kivu, DRC] economic activity has fallen and the Government has raised taxes and tariffs, while Northern NGOs have reduced their assistance... [In Burundi] we experience a similar fall in economic activity. Also Trans-national Corporations are coming in, taking land, investing in mines. Chinese companies in Katanga and North Kivu, also Canadian and German and American. Lands are taken without compensation. And the war continues, leading to a permanent state of insecurity for the people. A cycle has established itself..."

HRDs from DRC and Burundi

What HRDs expect from the international community

Many HRDs referred to the responsibility of United Nations organisations, regional bodies, governments abroad, and also international NGOs.

When HRDs discussed the degree to which foreign governments and international agencies could be relied on to provide protection, a number criticised the inconsistent behaviour of governments that claimed to believe in human rights but failed in practice to stand by their words.

"Many governments talk about good governance and human rights, and at the same time spend huge amounts of resources on curtailing and repressing human rights activities."
HRD, Kazakhstan

"When the chips are down, we are on our own and can only rely on ourselves."
HRD, Malawi

The bureaucratic demands of international organisations are also unhelpful.

"International institutions and funders impose a huge amount of paperwork, which threatens not only the effectiveness of our work but on occasions our security."
HRD, Haiti

Lack of transparency was a concern.

"In our countries you can never know whether an Ambassador is going to take up your case. Same for the UN. You are left in the dark.... We simply can't assume the UN or Western Embassies will act consistently."
HRD, Gabon

Their hunger for publicity was questioned as well.

"Foreign donors always ask for their logos to be used everywhere, but this is not always appropriate. HRDs begin to be thought of as spies. We should ask for this demand to be dropped, donors should look for results, not for publicity."
HRD, Anonymous

Some HRDs said that Western governments were hypocritical. Others felt that governments and UN agencies were timorous – unwilling to take risks to defend human rights or principles.

"Most people are afraid to speak out. This is understandable. But it is not understandable that the United Nations and the international community remain silent."
HRD, Laos

"Everybody wants to be part of our war but no-one wants to get hurt."
HRD, Nigeria

There was particular criticism of the international community's weak enforcement capacity. This was reflected in questions raised with regional organisations, but also emerged in the Working Groups. HRDs felt that international human rights organisations have failed to put in



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place adequate safeguards for HRDs or strong sanctions to deter those who oppress them.

At the same time, a number of HRDs reported that national and international advocacy on their behalf had protected them very effectively. For example, one HRD from Burundi reported that, after his arrest and disappearance, the national HRD network and national media had taken up his case, then international human rights NGOs and media and foreign governments had done so, followed by the EU and the Belgian and European Parliaments. He had quickly been 'found' and his case dealt with through a court process.

International NGOs did not escape some criticism. It was the experience of some HRDs that international NGOs were hegemonic in their approach, taking credit for work they had done which depended essentially on the contributions of local HRDs. Some foreign NGOs also advocated for human rights without really engaging with local society or employing local staff, so undermining the work of local HRDs, because communities assumed human rights values were foreign imports.

"We should make sure that international sanctions carry teeth."
HRD, Laos

"I am an indigenous person. I don't have education or a job. I live from a small piece of land, which was taken away from me because of my fight. We have to believe in one another."
HRD, Argentina



Said Yousif AlMuhafdah, Bahrain

"INGOs are not helpful in our country. They compete with local organisations for resources, including human resources, and they tend to work with the Government more than the local NGOs."

HRD, Malawi

"In Pakistan there are lots and lots of INGOs and donors. The staff of these entities are highly protected. They ride in bulletproof vehicles, work only in restricted areas and take many other security provisions - while I, a local woman human rights defender, go everywhere without any security. Why is there such disparity? Such discrimination? Why are we not protected as women human rights defenders in our country?"

HRD, Pakistan

Again, alongside these remarks, many of the participants emphasised that the solidarity and interventions of NGO colleagues and international NGOs had been timely, effective and deeply appreciated.

PROTECTING AND EXPANDING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT. PANEL 3

"The fact that space is shrinking does not mean that we do not have hope, that we do not believe we will win. Where are the successes, the evidence for hope? Emphasis on the shrinking space will not help. Analysis is helpful - but we also need to think positively. What good lessons can HRDs take back to their countries?"

HRD, Nigeria

This section pulls together some of the ideas that the participants put forward about what HRDs can do to strengthen their security and their work. It draws from Panel Three, which looked at "Protecting and expanding an enabling environment for HRDs" as well as discussions in plenary and the Working Groups. The speakers in Panel Three were Yevgeniy Zhovtis, Kazakhstan, Érina Gomes, Brazil and Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebagala, Uganda and the session was chaired by Andrew Anderson, Deputy Director of Front Line Defenders.

What good lessons can HRDs take back to their countries?

Stay safe

Personal security has been a central element of Front Line Defenders' programme, and a consistent theme of Dublin Platforms. This Platform was no different. HRDs noted many ways in which they and their colleagues can reduce the risks they face and take steps to make their environment as safe as possible. They stressed that it is an individual and collective responsibility to look after personal security and the

security of colleagues. It is irresponsible not to do so.

"We need to take our security seriously, because we work for many others - and they need us to be there."

HRD, Pakistan

In the Working Groups, HRDs recommended many steps that had helped them to be more secure;

- Set up alert systems to ensure that HRDs always know where colleagues are.
- Never be alone.
- Always carry a phone.
- Be precise about when and where you travel.
- Live in a safe location.
- Keep sensitive papers in a safe place.
- Make sensitive files on your computer secure.
- Join or build a network of national NGOs; join an international network if possible.
- Get to know diplomats, international officials and other potential diplomatic allies.
- Establish links with government officials who may warn of risks or protect you.
- Get to know journalists and potential media allies.
- Publicise your activities.
- Be visible nationally and internationally.
- Obtain and use the Front Line Defenders HRD card.
- If you need security and it is expensive, pay for it anyway.
- If you are at immediate risk, arrange an emergency escape route in advance.

"Our organisation works under a pseudonym, when we meet we take cautionary measures, our office is located in a residential building, we use a minimum of paperwork, computers etc., when we meet we never bring our phones into the room."

HRD, Uzbekistan

Some of the above steps need additional discussion because they are not appropriate in every circumstance.

Choosing a profile

For some HRDs, having a high profile provides protection. A government may hesitate to threaten or arrest a public figure, or harass a HRD whose case will be reported in the media or who is well known to governments, parliamentarians or human rights NGOs abroad. For such HRDs it is appropriate to give public media interviews, travel widely, and meet publicly with politicians and human rights advocates abroad. By drawing attention to human rights issues and legitimising them, prominent HRDs can also help to extend some protection to less well known HRDs.



Tánaiste of Ireland and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore T.D. faces the media: "If you are visible, you exist. If you exist, you have rights." HRD, Macedonia

Where a government feels no sense of accountability to the public, to the media or to foreign opinion and enjoys effective impunity, however, high profile activity is certain to be repressed. In such cases, individuals who adopt a high profile may not only be arrested and rendered inactive, but may make it more difficult for colleagues to continue their work. It may simply be good politics to adopt a low or invisible profile in such situations.

"Visibility is a challenge: it makes you more prone to stigmatisation and retaliation from police, and attacks against family while you are travelling abroad. Activists therefore arrange to have a low profile."

HRD, Swaziland

Choosing an organisational profile

An organisation with a horizontal structure, rather than one that is top-down, may be harder to repress because it depends less on leaders. Governments often target the heads of organisations, not only because they inspire support but because communication and decision-making in their organisations depend on them. Because an organisation's form can provide protection against specific forms of repression, HRDs may benefit by asking themselves which form of organisation will provide the best protection.

Building relationships

During Panel Three, Yevgeniy Zhovtis emphasised that civil society is not strong in systems that are state-run. HRDs therefore need to invest and develop respect, trust and faith in and between people. Other HRDs also noted that relationships are critical – with colleagues, but also in the community.

At the same time, some HRDs warned: Be careful who you trust. In situations where monitoring and spying are endemic, it is difficult to know who is informing and who is in the pay of the state or third parties.



Shawan Jabarin, Palestine, in interview with Newstalk FM

"Thank you for making me cry during these three days and for refreshing my motivation and courage."

HRD, Tunisia

"You cannot mobilise the society if most people are struggling to survive. They will not engage in activities if they do not know whether they will eat tomorrow."

HRD, Uganda

In practice, trust is scarcer in some societies, and this governs how people build and sustain relationships, especially when they are work in dangerous and controversial fields such as human rights. The problem of trust can only be solved in context; but its absence or corruption make security and effective human rights work extremely difficult to achieve.

Establishing a reputation

Several HRDs stressed the importance of reputation. When individuals are esteemed and trusted by their communities, the community is likely to protect them. Where opponents of human rights can turn public opinion against HRDs or the work they do, their position and often their effectiveness become vulnerable.

"You need above all to maintain your reputation because then the people will protect you."

HRD, Syria

"The legitimacy of what we do is eventually what saves us when we are arrested or face repression."

HRD, Anonymous

Being professional

Professional behaviour is a dimension of reputation. HRDs that demonstrate professionalism and immaculate ethical conduct earn public respect, and their reputation cannot easily be undermined or slandered. For women this sometimes requires them to show respect for certain social as well as professional standards. A consistently professional approach also reduces the risk of making errors or misjudgements, which can render HRDs vulnerable to criticism or attack.

Building relationships with allies

Building relationships with allies is a key dimension of HRDs' security, and also their effectiveness.

As noted in the section on the international community, UN officials, diplomats, the international media and even international NGOs are not always in a position to act effectively to protect HRDs, and may not be willing to do so. However, they are often vital components of a protection strategy. Both the security and influence of HRDs is likely to be improved if international organisations and NGOs know and trust them and the work they do. While international solidarity cannot replace the efforts that HRDs must make to protect themselves, they can be an extremely effectively complement – and in countries where government is unaccountable or ineffective, they may play an irreplaceable role in protecting HRDs at risk.

"International human rights organisations have branches in our country. These organisations are well connected and contact and link with each other. They inform activists of their rights, including strategies to claim these rights such as strategies to organise and exercise our freedom of assembly. They ensure a network of exchange of information, including disseminating information to the media about human rights violations against defenders, that provides us protection."

HRD, Turkey

When international agencies are unwilling officially to take up human rights issues, some HRDs find they can work effectively through individuals.

"Lots of international organisations have been working in Aceh, particularly on humanitarian assistance during the conflict and the tsunami. But many do not support LGBTI groups. In light of the enforcement of sharia laws in the province, they deem it too controversial to do so. Since some of them personally support sexual rights' advocacy, our strategy is to appeal to them as individuals and seek their personal not institutional support."

HRD, Indonesia

Solidarity and cooperation with national NGOs is equally important, and is not always by any means straightforward (as the short section on GONGOs underlines).

Building relations with the community

The report has alluded to the fact that the community can provide vital protection to HRDs; but may also become a threat if it opposes their work.

In a separate point, Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebaggala emphasised that HRDs will not be able to command active public support for long term goals or advocacy if the communities in which they work are very poor. However important their eventual benefits may be, to win active support in a poor community, reform campaigns and advocacy need to bring some immediate gains.

Another HRD made a similar point about working in the community.

"Societies come together to protect defenders they perceive support causes that affect their own lives."

HRD, Anonymous

Working with the media

The report alluded earlier to the complex role of the media. The media can make a crucial contribution to protection, and play a vital role in



In the absence of an independent media or where it is impossible to meet publicly, social media can be an effective tool.

disseminating and drawing attention to information about human rights violations and other issues critical to the protection and promotion of human rights. They can also create space for human rights work. Reporters and editors are therefore vital allies. Many are themselves HRDs, and HRDs at risk.

At the same time, the media are a tool of government in many countries, used to defame HRDs and distort the work they do. An independent media may not exist; or may itself need protection. It is evident, therefore, that relations with the media need to be pursued with judgement.

Working with government

This is even more true of relations with government. In her presentation in Panel Three, Érina Batista Gomes observed that HRDs in Brazil have more space to operate than in many other countries. There are opportunities for dialogue with government and she argued that it is important to make use of them. The testimonies of HRDs from numerous other countries described less favourable relations. In many countries HRDs deeply mistrust government and government officials, and often they have good reason to do so.

Yet few governments are monolithic. In most cases, some officials are willing to support the work of HRDs (at least those they know and at least covertly), and certain departments and ministries may be more favourable to human rights than others. Where possibilities of dialogue and cooperation exist, it is important to explore and develop them, not only because this can help to protect HRDs and their work, but for the

more strategic reason that in the end human rights reforms cannot be implemented successfully without the engagement and support of government.

Imprisonment

It is obvious, at the same time, that certain governments are tyrannical and consistently repress independent voices. Several HRDs at the Platform spoke about their imprisonment, and the imprisonment of colleagues.

Several participants observed that imprisonment not only symbolises the struggle of HRDs for rights, but can advance that struggle in practice. Those who are imprisoned face an extreme constriction of their space; in the words of Yevgeniy Zhovtis, “prisons are interesting places where time dies”. But the example that political prisoners set can amplify dramatically the impact of human rights advocacy.

During Panel Three, Yevgeniy Zhovtis, himself a former prisoner, asked HRDs to remember prisoners.

- Visit prisoners because visits can make a huge difference to their lives and may cause officials to treat them with more respect;
- Cherish the memory of those who have died by taking care of their families;
- Support prisoners after their release.

At the start of Panel Three, the Platform stood to observe a minute of silence in memory of all those who have died defending human rights.

“Online activism makes it possible to create a community and shape public opinion indirectly, through writing blogs and articles. It is especially valuable in [countries like] Saudi Arabia where freedom of association is virtually non-existent.”

HRD Saudi Arabia

“I have been tortured twice. I know what it is like to be married and to have to hide on the night of your honeymoon. I have experienced arbitrary detention. I know what it is like to be in prison when your baby is born.”

HRD, Palestine

“I am in the right place for a human rights defender in my country.”

Ales Bialiatski, HRD in prison in Belarus

“Prison is the best possible school for learning resistance and if I have to go to prison to defend our water and our rights, I will do it a thousand times.”

HRD, Ecuador

“Human rights are international and this means that international solidarity between us is essential because the regimes that do not respect human rights act like an international mafia – they work together.”

HRD, Cuba

“We are at war, sometimes in a hot war, and the only way to win is to be united.”

HRD, Kazakhstan



Some of the fantastic Platform volunteers who dedicated their time to making the visiting HRDs feel welcome

CLOSING REMARKS

As the participants reflected on their experiences in the final two sessions of the Platform, three affirmations stood out.

Solidarity and unity

The first is that HRDs must stand together, trust each other, co-operate around their shared purpose.

Repression is a form of recognition

The second is that repression is widespread and in places worsening across all regions, but human rights defenders are also continually increasing the range and effectiveness of their activity.

We will not surrender

The third is that HRDs will go on, will not be intimidated, will hold on to their values whatever happens.

“Violence, injustice and torture do not intimidate us. They are the cowards.”

HRD, Sudan

“I want to hope that one day human rights will come to our countries, and when that day comes we should remember the hardships without any bitterness or wish for revenge. But to get there we will have to work very hard.”

HRD, Belarus

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Bahrain: Said Yousif Al-Muhafdah - Bahrain Centre for Human Rights
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Egypt: Ghada Shahbender - Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights
Egypt: Massaad Abu Fajr - Sinai Diwan for Development Studies
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Iraq: Hanaa Edwar - Iraqi Al Amal Association (IAA)
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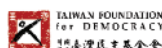
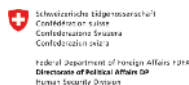
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The next Dublin Platform will take place in 2015. Front Line Defenders would welcome any input for the agenda.

Reports from the working groups that took place in this year's Seventh Dublin Platform are now available on the Front Line Defenders website.

www.frontlinedefenders.org



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"I want to hope that one day human rights will come to our countries, and when that day comes we should remember the hardships without any bitterness or wish for revenge."

REPORT FROM THE SEVENTH DUBLIN PLATFORM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

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