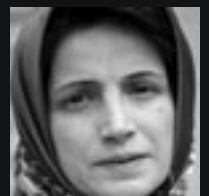


# [ DISPATCHES ]

REPORTS FROM THE  
**FRONT LINE**  
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2012



**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 not for profit organisation 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.



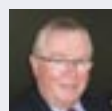
Registered Charity Number CHY 14029

### TRUSTEES



**Denis O'Brien** (Chairman). Denis 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. He is Co-Founder of Front Line Defenders.

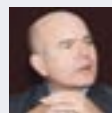
the first all female legal practice in Pakistan and she is also one of the founders of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.



**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. He is UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti.



**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.



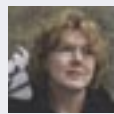
**David Sykes** is Investment Director of Island Capital Ltd and has worked in various banks and stockbrokers including Trinity Bank and Dolmen stockbrokers.



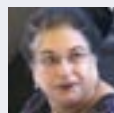
**Maria Mulcahy** was involved with "People in Need" from 1988 – 2000. She was responsible for organising the RTE telethons, which raised €28 million. She was Director of Fundraising for the 2003 Special Olympics World Games.



**James L. Cavallaro** is the Founding Director of the International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic at Stanford Law School, where he is also a professor of law. Prior to joining Stanford, he spent nine years on the faculty at Harvard Law School, where he also served as executive director of the Human Rights Programme.



**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 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 UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on the situation of human rights defenders from 2000 to 2008. She and her sister Asma Jahangir co-founded

### 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. He was previously French Minister for Justice and a member of the French Senate.

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

**The Most Reverend 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.

The extraordinary thing about human rights defenders is the fact that despite the fear, the loneliness, the terrible suffering which they endure – often in isolation – they go on.

They go on despite the threats, the intimidation, the trumped up cases and restrictive laws, the imprisonment, the torture. Some have gazed murder in the face, such as Yolanda Oqueli of Guatemala who was shot on 13th June last year and survived.

Others have been murdered precisely because of this indefatigable spirit. Thapelo Makhutle's throat was cut last May because of his tireless work fighting for the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex people in South Africa. Chut Wutty was shot in his car because he would not cease monitoring illegal logging activity in Cambodia. Their murders, and the murders of so many other human rights defenders continue to demonstrate the despicable actions of governments and non-state actors across the world who seek to extinguish those who stand and demand justice.

And yet, these deaths also demonstrate the insurmountable spirit of human rights defenders working on the front line today. These people rise each day with a special kind of courage to continue the struggle to uphold the rights of others. They manage to generate enough hope to keep going, and the example they set shows us that hope is always stronger than fear.



No matter how hard governments and oppressors try, and what atrocious methods they use, they will never be able to eradicate these people. We have seen for many years in Front Line Defenders that where each one falls, another stands to continue the fight against injustice, tyranny and oppression. What governments cannot comprehend is that they will never quench the spirit of human rights defenders. It is in their blood and in their breathing and it cannot be suppressed.

This year we remember those serving long sentences on trumped up charges following unfair trials. Human rights defenders who are considered such a threat to the power of the state that they cannot be free: Azimjan Askarov, Kyrgyzstan; Liu Xiaobo, China; Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, Bahrain; Roza Tuletaeva, Kazakhstan; Ales Bialiatski, Belarus; Nasrin Sotoudeh, Iran; Dilmurod Sayid, Uzbekistan; Dawit Isaak, Eritrea and most recently David Rabelo Crespo in Colombia.

It is their spirit of resistance which demands that we continue to work to sustain action on imprisoned HRDs. As these human rights defenders - our friends and colleagues - sit in darkness, in cold cells with no light, denied access to books, to music and to visits from their loved ones, we will continue to fight for them, and to honour their struggle. In the words of the Poet John O'Donohue:

*And when your eyes  
freeze behind  
the grey window  
and the ghost of loss  
gets in to you,  
may a flock of colours,  
indigo, red, green,  
and azure blue  
come to awaken in you  
a meadow of delight.*

**Mary Lawlor**  
Executive Director  
Front Line Defenders

## 2012 AT A GLANCE

Front Line Defenders issued 287 **Urgent Appeals** on behalf of 460 individuals at risk in 69 countries.

The **EU Office** took action on 150 cases with a positive response from the EU and Member States in 47% of cases.

The **Front Line Defenders Security Grants Programme** awarded 269 grants, totalling €607,877 to individuals and organisations at risk. 105 human rights defenders were supported on temporary relocation.

The Front Line Defenders Award was won by **Razan Ghazzawi** of Syria.

236 human rights defenders from 28 countries participated in **personal and organisational security trainings**; 111 human rights defenders from 20 countries participated in digital security trainings.

Front Line Defenders carried out 31 **research missions** to 26 countries.

The **Front Line Defenders Handbook for Human Rights Defenders: What protection can**

**United Nations Field Presences provide?** was published in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The **Trial Observation Handbook for Human Rights Defenders** was published in English.

Online campaigns were launched for **Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja** and other Bahraini HRDs, and for Chinese human rights defenders **Chen Guangcheng** and **Liu Xiaobo**. There were also online campaigns for HRDs linked to the Euro 2012 Football Championship and the 2012 Olympics and

Paralympics in London. A radio Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign was broadcast on radio stations throughout Colombia, in partnership with the Colombian organisation **MOVICE**.

Basma Abdelrahman from Egypt, Olga Sadovskaya from the Russian Federation and Farai Maguwu from Zimbabwe took part in **speaking tours** in Ireland.

Martin Sheen hosted **Voices from the Front Line**, a special theatre and musical production celebrating the courage of human rights defenders in music and song.

## AMERICAS



**Brazil:** Killing of human rights defenders Almir Nogueira de Amorim and João Luiz Telles Penetra, leaders of the Association of Seamen which defends the rights of fisher-folk working in Rio de Janeiro.

**Chile:** LGBTI activist Javiera Villareal activist attacked and beaten.

**Colombia:** David Rabelo Crespo sentenced to 18 years in prison after an unfair trial on fabricated charges.

## AFRICA



**Angola:** Harassment of human rights defender and journalist Coque Mukuta.

**Burundi:** Conviction and sentencing of Faustin Ndikumana, President of PARCEM, an association which fights against corruption.

**Gambia:** Acquittal of human rights defenders Dr Isatou Touray and Amie Bojang-Sissoho of The Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (GAMCOTRAP) after protracted criminal trial.

## EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



**Azerbaijan:** Break-in at the offices of the Institute of Peace and Democracy and the Women Crisis Center.

**Belarus:** Judicial harassment of human rights defender Oleg Volchek.

**Kazakhstan:** Refusal to investigate allegations of torture made by jailed HRD Roza Tuletaeva and denial of independent medical expertise.

## ASIA



**Cambodia:** Thirteen Boeung Kak Lake women human rights defenders who had been imprisoned for their role in organising a protest against forced eviction of their communities, received a suspended sentence by the Phnom Penh Appeal Court.

**China:** Seven year prison sentence handed down to Tibetan human rights defender Yonten Gyatso.

## MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



**Algeria:** Ongoing harassment against Yacine Zaid, President of a local section of the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights, who was arrested twice, charged and assaulted by police officers.

**Bahrain:** Medical professionals' convictions upheld, and three-year prison sentence handed down to human rights defender Nabeel Rajab, reduced to 2 years on appeal.



Lucha Castro, Mexico



Biram Abeid, Mauritania



Roza Tuletaeva, Kazakhstan



**Costa Rica:** Break-in and theft at offices of LGBTI human rights organisation Mulabi.

**Guatemala:** Threats against and defamation of human rights defender Claudia Samayoa.

**Honduras:** Persistent threats against Gladys Lanza Ochoa, Coordinator of the Honduran Women's Movement for Peace 'Visitación Padilla', a collective of women human rights defenders from across Honduras who work on issues such as gender violence,

**Kenya:** Acquittal of environmental rights defender Phylis Omidio after lengthy trial.

**Mauritania:** Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid and six of his colleagues at the Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement in Mauritania, an organisation which works for the eradication of slavery, held in pre-trial detention for over four months and denied medical attention despite serious health conditions.

**Nigeria:** Human rights defender working to promote human rights and social justice in the Niger Delta region, Justine Ijeomah, forced to

women's participation in public life and advocacy for democracy and human rights in Honduras.

**Mexico:** Campaign to discredit human rights defender Lucha Castro.

**Venezuela:** Attack and death threats against the family of Marianela Sánchez Ortiz, in relation to the Venezuelan Prisons Observatory's work.

go into hiding following physical assault and threats by police.

**South Africa:** Assassination of LGBTI rights defender Thapelo Makhutle.

**South Sudan:** Kidnapping and violent assault of anti-corruption activist Deng Athuai.

**Uganda:** Government threatened to de-register the Uganda Land Alliance due to its campaign against land-grabbing.

**Russian Federation:** Judicial harassment, smear campaign and repeated raids on the office and home of Stanislav Dmitrievsky for providing legal assistance to jailed protesters and documenting human rights abuses in Chechnya.

**Russian Federation:** Threats against human rights defender and environmentalist Alexey Kozlov and his family.

**Ukraine:** Prominent environmental rights defender Volodymyr Honcharenko beaten to death.

**Uzbekistan:** Human rights defender Alisher Karamatov sentenced to nine years on fabricated charges.

**China:** Ni Yulan and husband, Dong Jiqin, sentenced to two years six months and two years respectively.

**India:** HRD and trade union leader Murali Mohan beaten to death by police.

**Malaysia:** Banning of sexuality rights campaign by Seksualiti Merdeka, a coalition of human rights defenders working to promote

the rights of LGBTI individuals and communities.

**Philippines:** Arrest and detention of human rights defender Temogen Tulawie.

**Sri Lanka:** Dr Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, Nimalka Fernando, Sunila Abeysekera and Sunanada Deshapriya subjected to threats and a media smear campaign for participating at the UN Human Rights Council.

**Iran:** Narges Muhammedi unfairly sentenced to 11 years in prison.

**Saudi Arabia:** More than one year pre-trial detention of human rights defender Fadel Mekki al-Manasef.

**Syria:** Physical assaults and incommunicado detention of Saleem Qabbani

**UAE:** Attacks on Ahmed Mansoor and ongoing smear campaign against him.

**Western Sahara:** Police beating of human rights defender Aminatou Haidar.



Temogen Tulawie, the Philippines



David Rabelo Crespo, Colombia



Aminatou Haidar, Western Sahara



# AMERICAS

We sat on the ground to stop the lorries going into the quarry – we thought they were going to drive over us – now I would be prepared to do it again if necessary”. **Christie Gomez, Guatemala**

There was finally something to celebrate in Mexico when on 30 April 2012 the last ordinary session of the Sixteenth Legislature of Congress unanimously passed a draft law establishing a national mechanism for the **protection of human rights defenders and journalists**.

In Guatemala, during a meeting between HRD Yuri Melini, Front Line Defenders Executive Director, Mary Lawlor and Deputy Manuel Barquín, the Congressman indicated that he would be prepared to facilitate a similar bill through the National Assembly of Guatemala. Such initiatives, if implemented in an effective

## GRANTS

■ In **Brazil**, Front Line Defenders issued a grant of €5,185 to three indigenous members of CEDHOR (Center for Human Rights Archbishop Oscar Romero), for the installation of security gates and communication equipment in their homes. They had been facing reprisals for their work against the appropriation of lands by mill owners to plant sugar cane. The human rights defenders reported an increased sense of security, allowing them to remain in their communities.

■ In February we provided a security grant to **Juan Carlos Galvis**, Vice-President of SINALTRAINAL (National Union of Food Industry Workers) and a leading member of CUT, the Colombian Confederation of Workers. Juan Carlos Galvis had been subjected to assassination attempts, death threats and intimidation due to his human rights work. The grant paid for safe transport and communications equipment.

■ Front Line Defenders paid for urgent surgery for nine HRDs in **Guatemala** who had sustained injuries when they were shot at indiscriminately by members of the Guatemalan military and police during a peaceful protest on 4 October against the violent repression of members of their indigenous community.



**Mexican human rights defenders at a conference organised by human rights network Red TDT in Chihuahua in March 2012**

way could become useful models for similar initiatives in other countries.

During 2012 Front Line Defenders liaised closely with the Brazilian authorities and the National Programme for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (PPDDH) on their protection programme for human rights defenders at risk. This and the development of similar legislation in other countries will remain a priority for Front Line Defenders advocacy work in 2013. Through its EU office Front Line Defenders consistently raised the issue of attacks on human rights defenders in the Americas. In February, Front Line Defenders raised the case of the knife attack on Norma Andrade in Mexico. The EU Delegation followed the case closely and two days later the European Commission informed the organisation that they had provided funding for medical treatment and relocation.

When Front Line Defenders raised the issue of repeated attempts to criminalise human rights defenders in **Guatemala** on 22 August the EU Delegation informed the organisation that they had made contact with the Attorney General's Office and the Interior Ministry to follow up on the cases, and that a meeting was scheduled

that same afternoon with HRD Yuri Melini to discuss further steps.

Through its training programmes in personal and organisational security, and digital security Front Line Defenders seeks to enable human rights defenders to improve their security situation. Mexican HRDs Jorge Hernández from Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolome de las Casas (who attended a Front Line Defenders Training of Trainers previously) and Lorena Peralta from Red "Todos los Derechos



**Cacique José Roberto de Azevedo Silva of CEDHOR in Brazil, at his home which had been secured with a Front Line Defenders grant**

**Mexican human rights defender Lucha Castro (above) and Gambino Gomez and other human rights defenders (below) at a remembrance gathering in Chihuahua for murdered human rights defender Marisela Escobedo Ortiz and her daughter Rubi Marisol Frayre**



Para Todos" organised a workshop on personal and organisational security on 6 and 7 December for 17 HRDs at risk in **Mexico**.

The dangers caused by the clash between the economic agenda of governments and the needs of the local communities was borne out during the joint mission in February to **Honduras** with the International Land Coalition. Front Line Defenders visited Bajo Aguán to participate in the International Solidarity Meeting organised by the Observatorio Permanente de Derechos Humanos en el Aguán, together with local organisations

and movements from the region.

In November Front Line Defenders went on mission to **Venezuela** to meet human rights defenders in Caracas, trade unionists, ecologists and journalists in Puerto Ordaz and Committees of the Families of Victims of Violence in Barquisimeto, all of whom reported on the shrinking space in which they operate and the constant stigmatisation of HRDs in the country. Concern was expressed at the Venezuelan Government's decision to withdraw from the American Convention on Human Rights, as well as further restrictions

on the freedom of association and expression and in particular organisations' possibilities to receive foreign funding.

In 2012 Front Line Defenders launched a new campaign in partnership with MOVICE to challenge the climate of impunity in **Colombia**. The campaign was built around a series of radio ads which highlight the danger faced by individual human rights defenders and aims to reshape the public discourse in the country.

See **Campaign Pages** for further details.

## GUATEMALA

In Guatemala many human rights abuses take place in the context of disputes arising from the granting of mining licences, lack of consultation by the companies and the environmental devastation caused by the ruthless exploitation of natural resources.

Front Line Defenders travelled to San Rafael Las Flores to meet members of the local community attacked because of their resistance to mining projects. The dangers of the situation were exemplified by the attempted assassination of Yolanda Oqueli who was shot on her way home from a demonstration. The delay in the provision of any security measures by the Government to help protect Yolanda is another example of the gap between high level political commitments and the reality for human rights defenders on the ground.



Front Line Defenders Executive Director, Mary Lawlor, with Dr Yuri Melini and with Christie Gomez in Peronia, Guatemala, who, with the support of the local priest and members of the local community, managed to get a sand quarry closed down.

"When we started working there was sand everywhere - in the food - in the clothes - in the water - the children were getting sick. Because the men were working we, the woman and children, went to protest. We sat on the ground to stop the lorries going into the quarry - we thought they were going to drive over us - but with Father Elias' help we overcame our fear and that was a turning point for me. Now I would be prepared to do it again if necessary."



Roberto Pivaral and Oscar Morales, members of Comité en defensa de la de San Rafael Las Flores. When the local community got organised to oppose a new mining project the threats started. The day before the meeting with Front Line Defenders, Roberto had received 16 anonymous phone calls in one hour.



Gustavo Pernilla Cachin of Fundación Guillermo Toriello and CCTV equipment installed with a Front Line Defenders security grant

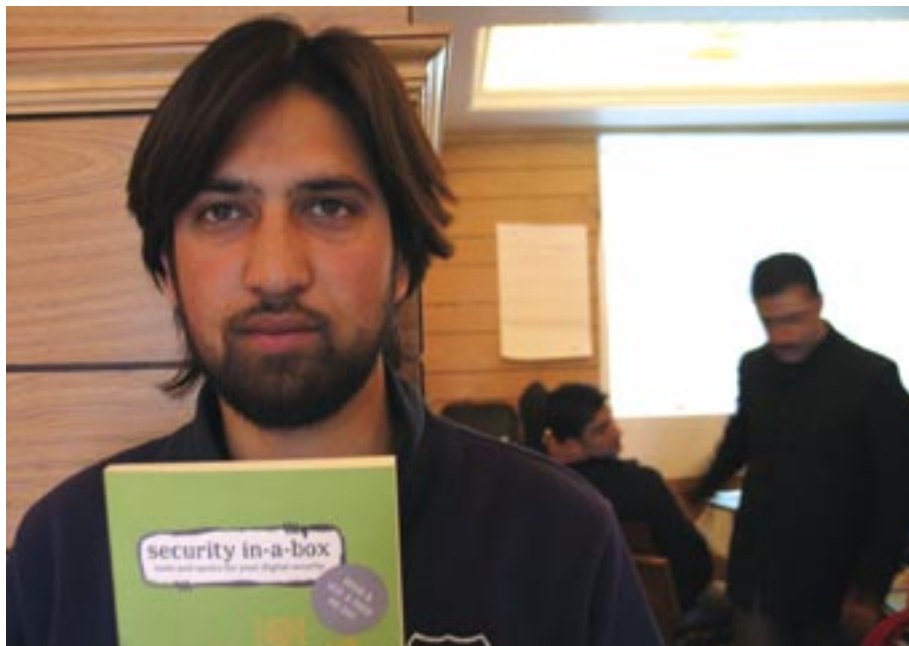


"Front Line Defenders – Keep up the good work. Your support gives HRDs like me additional motivation to strengthen our commitment for others."

In Asia, human rights defenders remain at serious risk because of political tensions in conflict and post-conflict situations and, in some cases, because governments refuse to acknowledge the legitimacy of the work being done by human rights defenders. In many countries in the region HRDs are treated as the enemy within and targeted through the use of draconian state security laws in the name of national security.

In September, Front Line Defenders visited north and central **Vietnam**. The situation of Vietnamese HRDs has steadily worsened in the past year. In 2012, Front Line Defenders recorded at least 17 HRDs who are currently in pre-trial detention or have been sentenced to long prison sentences.

Front Line Defenders held meetings with family members of HRDs who had been arbitrarily detained and imprisoned for their human rights work. The research mission took place just before the conviction of four Catholic human rights defenders from Vinh province who received sentences of between one and three years imprisonment for distributing pro-democracy leaflets. Front Line Defenders observed that HRDs who work on issues related to democracy face the most scrutiny by the authorities. Human rights lawyers who take up sensitive cases in defence of religious minorities and communities facing convictions have been disbarred or faced physical abuse by unknown assailants.



**Despite the heavy surveillance that HRDs have to endure**, there is a growing network of HRDs in the country. HRDs make use of social media to forge alliances although the internet is heavily monitored. Unlike HRDs in other countries in Asia, Vietnamese defenders are not so familiar with international NGOs and international human rights mechanisms since many human rights defenders are barred from travelling abroad.

**Touseef Raina from the Global Youth Foundation at a digital security training in India**

The Front Line Defenders mission to a northern state of **India** in November 2012 coincided with the holding of a digital security training. Despite what human rights defenders characterise as an improving political situation they continue to be under heavy surveillance by state authorities, military, and paramilitary groups. Front Line Defenders met family members of victims of torture and disappearance, as well as journalists and grassroots human rights defenders.

A developing trend is the arbitrary detention of individuals suspected of being a threat to public safety for up to two years under draconian laws such as the Public Safety Act.

HRDs shared testimonies of how their houses were raided at night and family members threatened or physically abused by security forces to pressure them to stop working. One torture victim, now HRD told Front Line Defenders that his wife had received repeated anonymous phone threats telling her that she would be made a widow if she did not tell him to stop doing his human rights work.

Recently HRDs engaged in sensitive campaigns, such as calling for an investigation into the alleged rape and murder of two women, have had their passports revoked or denied by the Passport Office. There have been incidents in which journalists wearing their badges and cameras have been brutally attacked and dragged out of demonstrations although they repeatedly informed the police that they were journalists.

Front Line Defenders has tried to build on the energy of human rights defenders across Asia and support their work by providing **training**

## SRI LANKA

Whilst the war in Sri Lanka may be over the conditions that HRDs face in their work have deteriorated.

"The space for activists and civil society has continued to shrink since the end of the war", one HRD said to Front Line Defenders staff. "NGO offices now have to operate in secret and some have opted not to reveal their organisations' names publicly for fear of attacks and harassment by the authorities".

HRDs and organisations who expose human rights violations locally and internationally are branded as sympathisers and members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Front Line Defenders met with one human rights defender who narrowly escaped an armed mob after they knew of his participation in the UN Human Rights Council. Many HRDs are targeted to the extent that they have to flee the country to seek short or long term relocation.



Attacks against HRDs often go unreported in the belief that publicity could worsen the situation.





**Patrick La Ring and other human rights defenders at a workshop in Burma**

## GRANTS

■ Front Line Defenders sent a grant to Rural Missionaries of **the Philippines** (RMP), an organisation working with marginalised communities, including farmers, fisher-folk and indigenous people. The grant paid for medication for imprisoned HRD Dario Tomada Dario, rent of a safe house for his family and transportation and food expenses during their visits to Dario in prison.

■ In **India** a security grant of €1,349 was issued for legal fees and relocation costs for an LGBT HRD and his partner, who were forced to flee as a result of threats from their local community.

■ A grant was given to Herman Kumara, Secretary General of the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP) and the head of the National Fisheries Solidarity Movement of **Sri Lanka**. The grant paid for the construction of a barbed wire fence and gate at the entrance to his garden, CCTV cameras and a constant accompanying presence for a period of six months. The grant ensured that Kumara was accompanied at all times and that meant that all staff began to feel they could continue their activism. Herman's family also felt more secure and happy: "my family is confident about the security about me and at home. With the new set up of CCTV, fence and gate they feel more secure and confident to say to people that there is a concerned group of people who are involved in human rights defending."

on personal and organisation security and digital security and through its advocacy work.

In May, a Training of Trainers on personal and organisation security for twelve Asian HRDs took place in Bangkok. Following on from this workshop, six of the participants carried out seven workshops for HRDs in their own countries. Excellent feedback was received including:

*"Front Line Defenders - Keep up the good work. Your support gives HRDs like me additional motivation to strengthen our commitment for others."*

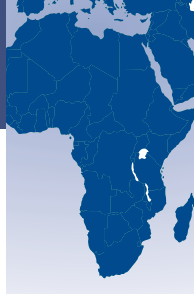
*"It was very good training for our future work's sustainability & safety. And I learned many different trainer methodologies and skills from the three trainers and the other participants."*

The experience of human rights defenders is communicated to international organisations like the UN and, through the work of the Front Line Defenders EU Office in Brussels, to the EU and its Member States. The disruption by

local authorities of civil society events held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in the run-up to November's ASEAN Summit was raised with the EU Delegation. EU representatives attended some events, and an EU diplomat spoke at the final relocation site of the ASEAN People's Forum 2012. In addition, the Head of EU Delegation called high-level government contacts to express concern. Harassment against the human rights defenders decreased the following day. The issue of threats against indigenous human rights defender Erita Capion Dialang after the killing of relatives in an army attack in **the Philippines** was also raised with the EU Delegation and the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The EU Liaison Officer replied that the case had been discussed with other EU Missions. A meeting between local organisations and the EU Delegation was later organised in Manila.

**Below left: Boung Kak Lake Reps protesting at CDCC, Cambodia, whilst, below right: the police look on**





"I especially would not have made it without Front Line Defenders, both the local and the Dublin office, who were the first to respond when we were arrested." **Phyllis Omido, Kenya**

During missions to the region, which included trips to Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan and Uganda, human rights defenders reported killings, death threats, physical attacks, abductions, arbitrary detention, harassment and the use of restrictive NGO legislation as means to silence them.

In **Uganda** harassment of HRDs by government agents has been on the rise with accusations that some defenders have hidden political agendas, work to sabotage government programmes and policies or promote immoral practices. A draft NGO Act if adopted, could substantially restrict the work of many HRDs, particularly those focusing on sensitive issues. HRDs in rural areas are at a disadvantage due to less coverage of their issues by independent media, poor understanding of the role of civil society at the local level and impunity. LGBTI human rights defenders are a particular targets of homophobic propaganda manipulated by the Government.

In **The Democratic Republic of Congo** Front Line Defenders visited HRDs based in the town of Uvira to strengthen existing collaboration with HRDs and to gather ideas on how to streamline Front Line Defenders contributions to Eastern DRC. The HRDs emphasised that the major issue is the persisting insecurity exacerbated by rebel activities particularly in remote rural areas such as Fizi.



In a field mission carried out in early September in Juba, the capital of **South Sudan**, Front Line Defenders spent some time with members of a newly-created human rights defenders network. HRDs reported that they face a number of challenges exacerbated by the fact that it is a new nation undergoing a difficult political transition: state authority is weak, parts of the country are still suffering armed conflict, impunity is rampant, and it is hard for defenders to predict where threats or attacks against them may come from. Groups most at risk are those working on civil and political rights and corruption issues, as well as individual journalists who raise human rights and accountability issues.

**Aloys Habimana, Front Line Defenders, with Gégé Katana, winner of the 2007 Front Line Defenders Award, and members of her organisation SOFAD (Solidarity Movement of Women Human Rights Activists) in DRC**

Through its advocacy work and the provision of personal and organisation security and digital security training Front Line Defenders attempted to address the specific security needs of human rights defenders in the region. The mission to **Burundi** assessed the implementation of digital security training at a number of human rights organisations that handle sensitive information. A follow-up mission was also organised to provide training to consolidate each organisation's digital security strategies.

While on mission in northern **Tanzania** in late September, 2012, Front Line Defenders strengthened its links with key groups and individuals working on pastoralist issues in the Arusha area. Despite the risk of intimidation from both government security services and private actors, human rights groups focusing their work on pastoralist issues have intensified their advocacy initiatives, conducting fact-finding missions on reported violations of pastoralists rights, challenging decisions of unlawful evictions, and organising civic education programs and media campaigns.

Front Line Defenders organised a personal protection and security training for West African human rights defenders in **Côte D'Ivoire** in October 2012. The session brought together fifteen participants from seven different countries.

Front Line Defenders conducted the last phase of a **long-term security course for Francophone African human rights defenders at risk**. The session took place in December 2012 in Dakar, Senegal. The

## KENYA

Front Line Defenders carried out three trial monitoring missions in coastal Kenya in support of human rights defender **Ms. Phyllis Omido** (pictured). Phyllis and her colleagues at the Center for Justice, Governance and Environmental Action had been at the forefront of a campaign for environmental justice in the Mombasa area. In April 2012, Phyllis was arrested following a demonstration she had co-organised against a local lead processing plant suspected of causing substantial lead

poisoning in the village. She and sixteen residents of the same village were released on bail but went on to face a lengthy trial for unlawful assembly and incitement to violence. They were eventually acquitted on 9 November after a magistrate at the Mombasa Law Courts determined that they did not have a case to answer.

Shortly after her acquittal, Phyllis Omido said "...It has been a long and tedious journey seeking justice since I was arrested alongside sixteen others. I especially would not have made it without Front Line Defenders, both the local and the Dublin office, who were the first to respond when we were arrested and facilitated our release by sending us funding to pay for an advocate to release us from custody and organising for our security needs, they sent observers to the courts constantly, thus putting pressure for justice to be done."







**Gilbert Mugisha, journalist at Freedom Radio, Uganda**

previous phases of the course were conducted by correspondence from June 2012. The Dakar session brought together 16 participants from eight different countries.

At the 52nd session of the **The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights** in Côte d'Ivoire, Front Line Defenders took part in the NGO forum which convened more than 200 human rights defenders from across the continent.

At the EU level there were some positive outcomes to celebrate. Following threats against human rights defender Ehounou kan Laurent Manlan in Côte d'Ivoire the Front Line Defenders EU Office contacted the EU

Delegation and the Belgian Embassy. The Delegation was in touch with the HRD and his lawyer at the EU Delegation premises. The EU Delegation then met with the ONUCI HR division to exchange information and discuss protection measures. Thanks to these efforts, Ehounou kan Laurent Manlan was able to continue his work in a safer environment.

Following the detention without charge of three human rights defenders in Sudan, the case was raised on 2 August with the EU. Three days later, the EU Delegation informed us that the case had been raised with authorities, that it was in contact with the defendants' lawyer and had sought

permission to visit these and other detainees. It was the first time the lawyer was in contact with EU Missions. All three HRDs were released between 11 and 16 August.

## GRANTS

■ Front Line Defenders gave a grant of €1,484 for safe transport and communication costs for 90 days for a LGBTI HRD in Uganda.

■ A security grant of €4,785 was provided to GAMCOTRAP, an organisation committed to the promotion of the rights of women and girls in the Gambia. The grant paid for securing their office with fencing, gates, locks and CCTV cameras. Prior to the grant being awarded, two senior members of GAMCOTRAP had been targeted. They reported, "With the CCTV cameras and the physical security boosted, now the team mainly focuses on their work because the external environment is much safer as compared to before. This had a great impact on the efficiency of staff in putting all energy on the work without too much cause for worry."

■ 39 grants were provided to human rights defenders in DRC in 2012. A number of these grants were to women human rights defenders working on the promotion and protection of the rights of women and children in rural areas who had been victims of gender based violence. The security grants paid for them to travel to urban areas to access medical care.



**Roleplay by West African HRDs on holding a safe demonstration at a Front Line Defenders workshop**





"They want me to die here. They want me to sign a request for amnesty, but I am not guilty" **Azimjan Askarov in prison**

In **Russia**, several new laws were introduced; one extending the definition of treason to include "financial, technical, advisory or other assistance to a foreign state or international organisation (...) directed at harming Russia's security," and another obliging all NGOs that receive foreign funding and engage in political activities to register as "foreign agents."

**Ludmila Alekseyeva**, head of the oldest Russian human rights organisation, the Moscow Helsinki Group, said: "I have been

doing human rights work for 50 years since the beginning of the human rights movement in Russia, and this is the first time that we, human rights defenders, people who work for the full respect of legislation, cannot comply with a law. Because to register as 'foreign agent' would mean giving false information about ourselves, which is not only amoral but also an unlawful act".



**Committee Against Torture (CAT), Russian Federation**

and other human rights defenders in the south of Kyrgyzstan are intimidated and restricted in their work especially if it concerns the minority Uzbek population.

Front Line Defenders also visited human rights defender **Azimjan Askarov** who is serving a life sentence in prison number N47 in Bishkek. He was tortured whilst in detention, then jailed following an unfair trial.

When the authorities in Kyrgyzstan initiated a smear campaign and threats against human rights defender **Tolekan Ismailova** in relation to her organisation's annual Human Rights Film Festival, Front Line Defenders called on the EU Delegation to attend an appeal hearing on 31 October. On 31 October, the EU Delegation – one of the main funders of the Film Festival – attended the hearing.

During the Front Line Defenders mission to **Moldova** and **Transnistria**, meetings were

## GRANTS

■ A security grant was issued to **Doveriye**, a Chechen-based NGO which provides assistance to single women, widows and persons with disabilities. The grant paid for the temporary relocation of **Gistam Sakaeva**, a brave WHRD based in **Chechnya** who has been targeted by the authorities as a result of her human rights work. Gistam reported on the impact of the grant:

*"The Chechen Government is running a systematic campaign of oppression, targeting human rights and women's rights organisations. But grant funds enabled our organisation to respond to the Government threats and guarantee that our organisation continues its activities. It was very important for our organisation to fight against injustice and let them know that we intend not to accept their threats."*

■ In May, Front Line Defenders gave a grant to **Roza Tuletaeva**, a WHRD in **Kazakhstan**. Roza lost her job and was arrested as a result of her prominence in a strike, in which workers protested the reduction of their salaries by the **OzenMunaiGaz** oil company and argued for better social conditions. She was tortured and then brought to trial for two separate criminal cases relating to her work as a leader of the oil workers' strike committee. In June, the court sentenced her to seven years' imprisonment. The grant provided her children with financial support.

■ Front Line Defenders provided a security grant to **Insight**, a human rights organisation in **Ukraine** which works to improve the quality of life of LGBTI people. They reported: "During the last four months we were informed about an attack on our office. Insight is quite a visible LGBT organisation and quite active on political and social levels, so many ultra-right groups were trying to violate our events and especially to find and attack our office. That's why we changed our office and secured it. So thanks to this help we secured our new office and information on our website, so our clients from LGBT community can feel themselves safe now."

In **Kazakhstan** the focus this year was on the ongoing trials of those arrested during the clampdown on striking oil workers in **Zhanaozen** during which 16 people were killed and 64 injured. **Roza Tuletaeva** was one of those arrested, imprisoned and tortured. When she received in prison the "Euro2012" campaign T-shirt produced by Front Line Defenders, Roza said that she felt a person again and her spirit started to come back to her. Meanwhile the government is working to shut down opposition media.

**"The government shrinks the space for human rights defenders and for the civilised opposition. What will happen if the civilised forces will go out, who then will come to replace them?"**

**Evgeny Zhovtis, Director of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law**

Front Line Defenders organised a workshop on digital security for twelve IT specialists who work with NGOs in Kazakhstan. The goal was to deepen the knowledge of security tools by IT activists who work with HRDs, to reinforce their capacity to solve security problems and to build new links between IT specialists and HRDs in the region. The workshop was co-organised with the NGO '**Kadyr Kassiet**' (Dignity).

In September, Front Line Defenders travelled to **Kyrgyzstan**. Although human rights defenders face fewer restrictions than in previous years, lawyers

**Martin Sheen discusses the case of Azimjan Askarov during the Voices from the Front Line concert in Vicar Street, Dublin, last year**



held with lawyers, journalists and LGBTI activists who highlighted the very difficult situation for human rights defenders in the country. HRDs were worried about smear campaigns, harassment and surveillance - both physical and through **electronic devices**.

"Moldova is one of the countries against which the European Court of Human Rights issues most negative verdicts. We leave the office in groups, as we fear attacks from the local community. We had incidents in the past, and we applied security measures both in the office and to try to keep safe in the street. The recent law against discrimination simply ignored the issue of LGBTI rights," stated an LGBTI activist in Moldova.

Journalists who report corruption are targeted by the influential people they expose. Human rights defenders in Transnistria are faced with intimidation, the absence of the rule of law and extensive use of torture.

HRDs were worried about Stepan Popovskiy, a human rights defender who challenges the illegal appropriation of farmers' lands in Transnistria. "We are concerned for his security, as he brings an issue which contradicts interests of powerful businessmen and the administration."

During the mission to **Hungary**, Front Line Defenders met HRDs working on the plight of Roma peoples, LGBTI, journalists, and HRDs supporting homeless people. The main threat



**Dutch Ambassador Peter Van Leeuwen with Anara Ibrayeva and other HRDs at a workshop in Kazakhstan which Front Line Defenders supported**

to HRDs in the country comes from extreme right-wing groups, which target human rights defenders by publishing their names, photos, phone numbers and other personal information on extreme right-wing websites, inciting readers to target them. HRDs working in smaller towns and rural areas are vulnerable, especially members of the Roma community.

Front Line Defenders EU Office raised the issue of the beating of Idrak Abbasov and attacks on other independent journalists in **Azerbaijan** with the EU Liaison Officer for HRDs who had previously attended the Front Line Defenders workshop on the EU Guidelines for HRDs in December 2011. A local statement was issued on 23 April just after the attack, and EU representatives visited him in hospital.

## TURKEY

The Front Line Defenders mission to Turkey in November met with HRDs working in human rights organisations, women's rights groups, journalists, trade unionists and LGBTI rights defenders and others in Diyarbakir, Ankara and Istanbul. Most of the HRDs have had legal proceedings initiated against them on allegations related to the Kurdish issue. Invariably, the accusations they face are of belonging to a terrorist organisation. The situation has deteriorated since 2009, when periodic waves of arrest in connection with anti-KCK (KCK is the Union of Communities in Kurdistan) police operations began. HRDs, academics, journalists, trade unionists, lawyers and intellectuals have been arrested.

Front Line Defenders attended the trial of four human rights lawyers, all affiliated with the Human Rights Association (IHD): **Filiz Kalayci**, **Halil Ibrahim Vargün**, **Hasan Anlar**, and **Murat Vargün**. The prosecution file is entirely based on accusations of participating

in demonstrations, making calls to their clients, or possessing materials about the Kurdish issue, which are all legitimate activities for HRDs.

Front Line Defenders met the family of imprisoned human rights defender and lawyer **Muharrem Erbey**, held in detention for three years though no sentence has been pronounced against him. His wife shared her hopes for her husband's case and spoke of the high price his family is paying. When his son was asked if he wanted to

become a lawyer like his father he said, "If I become a lawyer, I would go to jail like dad, and I don't want to go to jail!".



**Far left: Staff at Kaos-GL**  
**Above left: Andrea Rocca, Front Line Defenders with Lami Ozgen and Evrim Yaban of KESK (Confederation of Public Workers' Unions)**  
**Left: Zübeyde Teker, Tuhad-Fed**







The Middle East and North Africa remains a region in transition, and the challenge to human rights defenders is navigating a shifting landscape which in some countries offers new opportunities, while in others space is shrinking. A common theme is that in all countries in the region, HRDs are at the forefront – be it campaigning for the enshrinement of rights in new constitutional orders, or struggling every day to resist the further erosion of rights by governments seeking to maintain their grip on power.

A core element of Front Line Defenders advocacy work is the promotion of the EU Guidelines on human rights defenders. In June Front Line Defenders organised a workshop in Algiers to train HRDs on protection related mechanisms and international obligations for HRDs. The workshop also introduced HRDs to EU diplomats and EU Delegation staff. At the end of the workshop, one HRD thanked Front Line Defenders “for the unique opportunity to meet EU diplomats in such an open, trustful way.” Consequently, since the workshop, the EU Delegation has been

monitoring several trials of HRDs and sent observers, which previously had rarely happened.

In relation to the cases of **Kherba Abdelkader** and **Yacine Zaid** who were brought to trial after peaceful protests in Algeria, the EU Liaison Officer for HRDs attended the trials. This gave increased visibility to those cases and both HRDs were released a short while later.

Front Line Defenders held a training on digital security for **Syrian** human rights defenders, journalists, researchers and bloggers.

Front Line Defenders visited **Qatar** in March to assess the situation for human rights defenders in the country, which has largely avoided the media spotlight even though human rights NGOs are not allowed to operate and there are no NGOs registered for the purpose of



Yacine Zaid from Algeria at the Dublin Platform

## GRANTS

■ Front Line Defenders provided the Lebanese Center for Human Rights in **Beirut** with a security grant for a CCTV system for its offices. A note sent to Front Line Defenders said “without the grant we would still be at risk of someone stealing equipment or confidential documents and information, or unknown persons entering our offices at night or during the vacation.” In the medium and long term they said CLDH staff “are working in a secured environment and confidential information and documentation are secured.”

■ In February, a grant to the Women’s Group for Human Rights paid for the safe transportation of eighteen women human rights defenders in northern Sinai, **Egypt**. These women were civil society activists from the provinces and were attending a public conference. Travel in the region is dangerous, particularly for women human rights defenders, who are subjected to threats from Islamic fundamentalist groups. In June, a grant was given to the same organisation for the installation of iron gates, 2 mobile phones with GPS for communication between their security team and the field team and a contribution towards vehicle hire for field staff. The organisation had reported that three members had received direct threats by telephone and that Islamic slogans and pictures had been written/posted on the headquarters, accusing the activists of blasphemy. The organisation contacted Front Line Defenders following a risk assessment that it conducted in order to look at the security of its staff.

## WESTERN SAHARA

Courtesy of the RFK Center



Plain clothes security beating women human rights defenders, Western Sahara

In September, Front Line Defenders Executive Director Mary Lawlor joined a high-level delegation to Western Sahara led by Kerry Kennedy of the Robert F Kennedy Center, to assess the human rights situation on the ground in both occupied Western Sahara and in the Sahrawi refugee camps in Algeria.

The members of the delegation witnessed police brutality against a Sahrawi woman human rights defender, Soukainajed Ahlou, President of the Forum for Sahrawi women, and followed up by submitting photo-

graphic evidence to the Moroccan authorities. Additionally, the delegation observed the overwhelming presence of security forces and violations of the rights to life, liberty, personal integrity, freedom of expression, assembly, and association. In the climate of impunity human rights defenders are a particular target. Throughout their time in Western Sahara, the delegation was followed by secret police, verbally abused, and subjected to a widely disseminated disinformation campaign aimed at undermining the credibility of the delegation.





**Left: Irish campaigners protest the ongoing detention of Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja outside the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Dublin**

human rights work. Only charities working on issues approved by the authorities are allowed to operate.

A mission to **Oman** in July expressed solidarity with Omani HRDs as they struggled for the protection and promotion of human rights in difficult circumstances.

Freedom of association and expression are severely limited while NGOs suffer heavy restrictions stipulated by the law on associations. Those involved in human rights activism are limited in number and are well-known to the authorities. Several are currently facing trial due to their human rights work.

A human rights defender described his detention following a peaceful protest in June to challenge the arrests of bloggers, writers, and activists whose whereabouts hadn't been disclosed for a week after their arrest:

*"In the Sama'il Central Prison, we were accommodated with hackers, illegal immigrants, and violators of the laws of work and residency in the country, while the arrested women were placed in the central women's wing. Our mobile phones and personal pocket belongings were confiscated. Filled with*

*Kafkaesque cockroaches, our designated jail was unclean, to put it euphemistically. We, hence, refused to stay in the jail and eventually were moved to another one. Most of us spent 16 days in detention. Others were taken to secret prisons belonging to the Department of Internal Security. Some of those were kept in solitary confinement."*

On 2 November 2012, Front Line Defenders joined members of the Iran Group and concerned members of the public at the *We Are All Nasrin Sotoudeh Vigil* outside the Embassy of Iran, in Dublin, Ireland, to call for freedom for Iranian lawyer and human rights defender **Nasrin Sotoudeh**. Arrested in 2010, Nasrin was given a prison sentence of eleven years (reduced to six years on appeal) and banned from working as a lawyer or leaving the country for twenty years. On 17 October 2012, she began a hunger strike which lasted 49 days, to protest the ongoing and escalating harassment by the judicial authorities faced by her family, which included her 12-year-old daughter being summoned by authorities and informed that she was banned from travelling outside the country.

Nasrin Sotoudeh was awarded the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2012.



**Mural of Nasrin Sotoudeh in Dublin**

## BAHRAIN

The deteriorating situation for human rights defenders in Bahrain continued to be a main focus for Front Line Defenders work in 2012. Former Front Line Defenders Protection Coordinator **Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja** remains in prison after his life sentence on fabricated charges was upheld in September by the High Court of Appeals after a process which did not comply with



international fair trial standards and which again failed to investigate evidence of torture as detailed in the official Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry report. Abdulhadi went on a hunger strike in February which he sustained until May despite the serious deterioration in his health. Front Line Defenders Executive Director Mary Lawlor travelled to Bahrain in April to meet with Abdulhadi's family and press for his release on humanitarian grounds.

Front Line Defenders has also continued to work on the cases of other human rights defenders in **Bahrain** including that of Nabeel Rajab, President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights who was sentenced to three years in prison following an unfair trial. Zainab Al-Khawaja,

**Mary Lawlor, Front Line Defenders, with Nabeel Rajab and Yousif Al-Muhafdhah in Bahrain**

Mohammed Al-Maskati and Sayed Yousif Al-Muhafdhah have also all faced harassment, threats and detention during the year.

In June, Front Line Defenders hosted Mohammed Al-Maskati in Brussels for advocacy meetings with the EU Institutions, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Danish Representation and NGOs. The cases of Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja and Nabeel Rajab were also raised during the meetings.

In October, six medical professionals and human rights defenders were arrested during early morning raids of their homes following the decision of the Bahrain Court of Cassation in Manama to uphold the sentences imposed upon them in spite of unfair trials and the use of torture. The whereabouts of blogger and human rights defender Ali Abdulemam sentenced to 15 years in prison in absentia, remain unknown.

# Front Line Defenders Award

THE 2012 FRONT LINE AWARD for Human Rights Defenders at Risk was awarded by Aryeh Neier, President of the Open Society Foundations to Razan Ghazzawi, a Syrian human rights defender, blogger and campaigner who works for the Syrian Centre for Media & Freedom of Expression (SMC) advocating for journalists and bloggers under threat.

Unfortunately Ms Ghazzawi was unable to collect the award in person due to a travel ban and ongoing military trial. Dlashad Othman, a former colleague at the SMC, accepted the Award on her behalf, and read out a letter she had written for the ceremony.

*"Dear friends, colleagues and comrades,*

*I find myself honoured to be the person chosen for such appreciation. I see the award as an award for Bassel, for Mazhar Tayyara, for Ghiath Matar, for Rami Assayed and for all the citizen journalists who died trying to tell the world what's happening in Syria, when the traditional media have failed to do so....*

*I have not put myself at serious risk, I wasn't tortured to death like activist Ammar Mousa Hassan or photojournalist Ferzan Jerbran. I wasn't hit by a sniper on my way to a field hospital to donate blood like citizen Abdalla Hussein Hoswah. I am here in my home*



Dlashad Othman accepted the award on behalf of Razan Ghazzawi from Aryeh Neier, President of the Open Society Foundations

*behind my screen writing these words to you.*

*"This award is for the beautiful people of Syria, for the unprivileged revolutionary, for the unknown activist, for the thousands of families of martyrs, injured and detainees..."*

When he presented the Award, Mr Neier said:

*"Everyone who cares about*

*human rights is indebted to the brave defenders who keep us informed about attacks on rights. What we know about Syria today is largely due to a few persons like Razan Ghazzawi who endure severe reprisals for giving the world a window through which to see the terrible crimes committed every day."*

Front Line Defenders received 107 nominations for the Award, a

significant increase for 2011. The other shortlisted nominees for the Award were:

■ **Rafiq Hazat** of Malawi; accused of being an enemy of the state and forced to go into hiding for his work as a human rights lawyer.

■ **Ivonne Mallezo Galano** of the Ladies in White (Damas de Blanca) in Cuba; repeatedly detained and subjected to cruel and degrading treatment in prison for promoting human rights and democracy.

■ **Cu Huy Ha Vu** of Vietnam; sentenced to 7 years in prison in April 2011 after an unfair trial on charges of "propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam" because of his involvement in a number of high profile legal cases.

■ **Mona Seif** of Egypt, targeted for founding the 'No Military Trials' movement which challenged the widespread use of military trials of civilians and exposed the crimes of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces of Egypt (known as SCAF).



Director, Mary Lawlor, with the 2012 Award jury members (from left to right) Pat Breen T.D., Minister Ruairi Quinn T.D., Minister Simon Coveney T.D. and Noeline Blackwell, Front Line Defenders Board





**Left: Dr Basma Abdelrahman of the El Nadeem Centre for the Management and Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence in Cairo**



**Olga Sadovskaya and Farai Maguwu on the 'Cycle for Protection'**

## Speakers Tours

Dr Basma Abdelrahman of the El Nadeem Centre for the Management and Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence in Cairo, Egypt, came to Ireland in March to address public audiences in Dublin, Cork and Galway about the Centre's work providing psychological support and rehabilitation to victims of torture and campaigning against the practice of torture of Egypt.

In October, Farai Maguwu, Director of the Zimbabwe Center for Research and Development in Zimbabwe and Olga Sadovskaya, Deputy Chair of The

Nizhny Novgorod Committee Against Torture (CAT) in the Russian Federation came to Ireland for the 'Cycle for Protection', a promotional speaking and cycle event to raise awareness of the practical support given by Front Line Defenders to human rights defenders at risk around the world.

Over the course of 6 days, Mary Lawlor, Farai, Olga and a team of 20 cyclists travelled 800+ km from Dublin to Kilkenny, Carlow, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Athlone and back to Dublin.

Lucha Castro (Mexico), Yuri Melini (Guatemala), Alexandre Anderson de Souza (Brazil), Farai Maguwu (Zimbabwe), Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera (Uganda), Liu Xiaobo (China), Azimjan Askarov (Kyrgyzstan), Roza Tuletaeva (Kazakhstan), Nasrin Sotoudeh (Iran), Mona Seif (Egypt) and Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja (Bahrain). Lending their time and talent on the night were actors Martin Sheen, Andrea Corr, Robert Sheehan and Amy Huberman. There was live musical performance from Paul Brady, Hazel O'Connor, Cara O'Sullivan, Liam Ó'Maonlaí, Finbar Furey, Frances Black.

One of the featured HRDs, Alexandre Anderson from Brazil, wrote to us about the production: "Dear grand friends from Front Line,

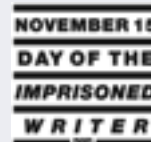
*I have no words to express our thanks and to say how important you are for me, my family and thousands of other fishermen and fisherwomen that depend on our work in defence of Guanabara Bay and of the*

*people who live there and get from there their livelihood. I'm thrilled writing this email, even more to know that there are good people in the world who care about the lives and welfare of others, even without knowing you in person. I hope to have life and strength to one day personally greet you all and say how much you are important to us!"*

## Day of the Imprisoned Writer

On 15 November, Front Line Defenders and Irish PEN joined with writer Brian Keenan, poet Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and journalist Justine McCarthy to celebrate the Day of the Imprisoned Writer. Each of our guest writers read from the works of writers and human rights defenders who have been targeted because they have had

the courage to speak out.



## Voices from the Front Line

On 9 December, Front Line Defenders hosted an evening of stories and song called Voices from the Front Line at Vicar Street Theatre in Dublin. The event celebrated the inspirational courage of the following human rights defenders:

**Voices from the Front Line – a night to remember! Left: Martin Sheen and Mary Lawlor; below left: Amy Huberman; Below: Andrea Corr, and below right: Declan O'Rourke, Frances Black and Robert Sheehan**





## Campaigns in 2012



Juan David Diaz with a poster of his father

Front Line Defenders launched several campaigns in 2012. The campaign for **Chen Guangcheng** ([www.lighthonestyhrd.org](http://www.lighthonestyhrd.org)) was launched just before Christmas 2011 and continued through the New Year, in an effort to press authorities in China to release the blind lawyer from house detention. Working with Irish artist Trish McAdam, Front Line Defenders developed an animation video promoted through the website and social media. Visitors were asked to email, call or write to the Chinese embassy in their country through a mechanism designed for the website.

In late April 2012 Chen made an improbable escape from house arrest and used the cover of nightfall to evade the guards stationed outside his home in Shandong province. With the help of fellow human rights defenders he travelled to Beijing and entered the US Embassy where he remained for a number of days before receiving hospital treatment in Beijing and permission to travel to the US with his family to study law at New York University.

The site for Bahraini HRDs ([www.bahrainhrd.org](http://www.bahrainhrd.org)) became a hub of Front Line Defenders efforts to draw attention to Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja's hunger strike leading up to the 2012 Formula 1 race in Bahrain, as well as maintaining ongoing updates on the situation of human rights defenders in the country. It also focused on the Bahraini medical professionals and other HRDs who had been arrested and charged throughout the year. Content created for the campaigning efforts has been used by *The New York Times* Lede Blog and as the featured video (interview with Zaynab Al-Khawaja) for the launch of the new Human Rights Channel developed by Witness and Storyful.

In September, Front Line Defenders launched a Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign on radio stations throughout Colombia, in partnership with the Colombian organisation MOVICE. The campaign featured six PSAs focused on six HRDs, with each PSA broadcasting for two weeks.

The bilingual website [www.radiohrd.org](http://www.radiohrd.org) features the broadcasts and more information



Liu Xiaobo, China

about each HRD, including video profiles and context. Finally, visitors were asked to sign petitions for each HRD. The PSAs have been picked up for rebroadcast in El Salvador and on a radio station in Spain. Phase 2 of the campaign, moving to television broadcasts, will be launched with a press conference and delivery of the petitions from Phase 1 in early 2013.

In December, Front Line Defenders launched a campaign for imprisoned Chinese HRD and Nobel Peace laureate, **Liu Xiaobo**, which includes video submissions from writers (through collaboration with International PEN) around the world reading a poem by Liu Xiaobo. The videos and other campaigning actions are featured at [www.lighthonestyhrd.org](http://www.lighthonestyhrd.org).

Two other campaigns were designed to capitalise on international sports events – the Euro 2012 Football Championship and the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics in London. To coincide with Euro 2012, [www.sportshrd.org](http://www.sportshrd.org) featured eleven HRDs from UEFA-participating countries. Animations featuring the HRD team playing football were created as intros to the site, each 'player' had a dedicated page, and a graphic football kit designed featuring the Front Line Defenders logo and their name. Each day during Euro 2012 a different HRD was featured on our social media outreach. Visitors to the site were encouraged to send messages that Front Line Defenders later put on postcards featuring the eleven HRDs and mailed to the defenders.

The campaign connected to the Olympics on the same page ([www.sportshrd.org](http://www.sportshrd.org)) featured three HRDs from each of the five regions. Visitors could sign a letter of concern to a local official, engage on Twitter or Facebook with the HRD, or visit the Front Line Defenders website for more information about the defender. Videos about each HRD were embedded on each page and new animations featuring the HRD engaging in a nightmarish sporting event were created.



Frame from the animation "No Enemies," based on the speech Liu Xiaobo was prevented from making at the last hearing of his trial; animation by Irish filmmaker Trish McAdam



The animation for Chen Guangcheng took images from the iconic Willow Pattern scene and re-imagined them for the nightmare that Chen and his family endured in home detention; animation by Irish filmmaker Trish McAdam

As Front Line Defenders expands its campaigning efforts to raise the visibility of human rights defenders and promote their legitimacy and recognition, it is important to appreciate how much the protection and safety of human rights defenders is related to the support from their communities. Through these types of campaigns, Front Line Defenders is working to promote greater community awareness – locally, regionally and internationally – about the work of HRDs and the risks they face.

Above right: The site [www.sportshrd.org](http://www.sportshrd.org) hosted two campaigns organised around major sports events in 2012 – the Euro 2012 Football Championships and the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics – and focused attention on 25 human rights defenders from 23 countries

Below: Colleagues of Muharem Erbey in Turkey in Front Line Defenders ‘team’ shirts

Below right: Colombia campaign website [www.radiohrd.org](http://www.radiohrd.org)







### Workbook on Security: Practical Steps for Human Rights Defenders at Risk

The Workbook on Security is designed to raise awareness about security issues and to help human rights defenders consider how to mitigate threats. The workbook takes human rights defenders through the steps to producing a security plan – for individuals and for organisations. It follows a systematic approach for assessing their security situation and developing risk and vulnerability reduction strategies and tactics.

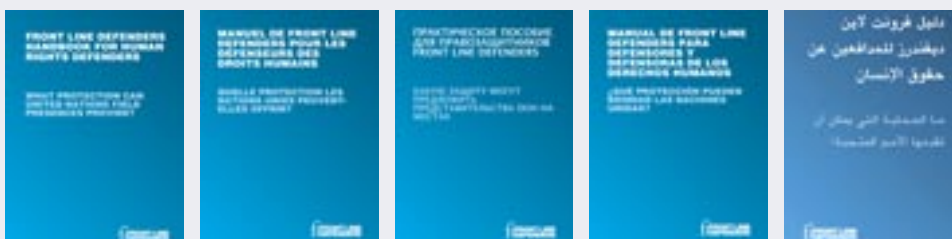
Available in **Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.**



### Protection Handbook for Human Rights Defenders

The Protection handbook is intended as a quick reference tool for human rights defenders, in which to find helpful and practical suggestions on how to deal with threats, intimidation and attacks in order to improve their personal and organisational security.

Available in **Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish**



**(NEW IN 2012!)**

### Front Line Defenders Handbook for Human Rights Defenders: What protection can United Nations Field Presences provide?

The handbook gives a summary of the type of support and protection UN agencies can provide locally to human rights defenders. It is intended to give practical and helpful suggestions to human rights defenders on how to engage constructively with the UN. It is also meant to encourage UN agencies and UN officials to implement their commitments to human rights and human rights defenders.

Available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish on our website at [www.frontlinedefenders.org/resources](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/resources)

### Front Line Defenders Security and Protection Training Programme

Front Line Defenders Security and Protection Training Programme for HRDs, through its workshops, seminars and training resources aims to facilitate a sharing of skills, knowledge and expertise to help provide HRDs with additional knowledge and tools that may be useful to them in addressing their personal security and protection issues.

Workshops for human rights defenders at risk cover risk assessment, threat analysis, reaction to security incidents, digital security (basic level), dealing with stress, the production of practical security plans geared towards each HRD's unique situation, and how to produce organisational security plans.





### Security in a Box – tools and tactics for your digital security

Security in a Box is a toolkit of peer-reviewed free and open source software and guides for improving the security and privacy of stored information and communication. The aim of the toolkit is to simplify this complicated area, provide an understanding of the risks involved in electronic communication and provide a practical step by step guide towards the implementation of practical solutions.

The toolkit is written for the non-technical user and describes:

- how to improve the physical security of information,
- ways to protect the computer from malware, spyware and hackers;
- procedures for the protection and encryption of sensitive information;
- how to keep your communication private and remain anonymous when posting or reading the information.

Available in Amharic, Arabic, Bahasa, Burmese, English, Farsi, French, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish and Vietnamese at <https://securityinabox.org/>

### Front Line Defenders Digital Security Programme

Front Line Defenders Digital Security Programme aims to help human rights defenders maximise their effective and secure use of e-communications, social media and information storage. Front Line Defenders conducts trainings for human rights defenders in digital security and cooperates with trainers around the world to provide human rights defenders with the skills to manage their online security. Front Line Defenders also offers intensive one-to-three month personalised digital security internships to assist in the development of IT and training skills for trainers from highly sensitive countries.



### Trial Observation Manual for Human Rights Defenders

(NEW IN 2012!)

The Trial Observation Handbook for Human Rights Defenders is designed as a resource to enable trial observers to accurately report on trial proceedings and to contribute to the protection of HRDs facing prosecution by highlighting injustice and the lack of due process. The presence of trial observers sends out a clear message that the right to a fair trial in which all the evidence can be heard and examined without prejudice is a fundamental human right. It is largely based on the excellent work by the International Commission of Jurists in its Trial Observation Manual for Criminal Proceedings and is an attempt to summarise and adapt it in a more compact form.

Available in **English** on our website at [www.frontlinedefenders.org/resources](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/resources)



### Guidebook on the Application Process for a Schengen Visa

The Guidebook on the Application Process for a Schengen Visa is a useful tool for human rights defenders to better understand the Schengen visa application process. This document provides useful tips based on past experiences by human rights defenders and international human rights organisations, with a view to help speed up the visa delivery process.

Available in **English, French** and **Spanish**.

All of these resources are available on our website at [www.frontlinedefenders.org/resources](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/resources)

To order a copy of any of our publications please send an email to [info@frontlinedefenders](mailto:info@frontlinedefenders) specifying the publication and language requested.



# Rest and Respite 2012

WORKING IN A HIGHLY STRESSFUL environment takes a huge personal toll on individual HRDs, while burnout can often undermine the work of even the best managed NGOs. The Front Line Defenders Rest and Respite Programme offers some respite from the relentless pressure. In 2012, Front Line Defenders supported 13 human rights defenders from nine countries on the Fellowship programme and on rest and respite. These are just some of the human rights defenders who were supported this year.

**Stanislav Dmitrievsky**, head of the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society, a human rights organisation registered in Finland and based in Nizhny Novgorod, faced several threats in 2012. Stanislav travelled to France with his daughter from 29 September to 10 October. They spent time in Strasbourg and Paris and took part in a conference on the issue of freedom of expression in Russia.



**Stanislav Dmitrievsky and his daughter in France**

*"The constant threat because of my human rights and social activity results in chronic fatigue and professional burnout. What is more, I can say the same about my daughter, who is not only worried about me, but is also under stress from night attacks on our apartment. A sort of pause and rest under different circumstances was evidently indispensable for us."*

It was immeasurably important for my daughter to participate in conferences in the Council of Europe and meetings with human right defenders from other countries. This showed her that the profession her father devotes his life to is significant, valued and respected, for in Russia, unfortunately, it looks like tilting at windmills and this even makes her envy the friends and classmates whose parents have more 'peaceful' professions." **Stanislav Dmitrievsky**

The offices of the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society in Nizhny Novgorod were later raided in November and Stanislav faced an administrative lawsuit which requested that a monograph – 'International Tribunal for Chechnya' that Stanislav had co-authored and edited – be recognised as an extremist publication.

**Tilder Kumichi**, Programme Coordinator of GEED (Global Education and Environment Development) Foundation in Cameroon, spent two weeks rest and respite on the coast in

September. She reported:

*"The impact of this support to my security is quite big. For the range of 1 -5, I will say it has impacted 3.5 on my security because by the end of the period, my stress level was reduced and I was feeling much more relaxed than I was before the rest. My blood pressure which was declared raised by my doctor was declared dropped after the rest."*

*This period also helped me to reflect on new ways to ensure my security, especially as I had had several threats and anonymous phone calls some days before observing the rest period. I used the rest period to reassure myself that my work is important and my security is also very important."*

**Ibrahim Muamar**, Chairman of the National Society for Democracy and Law in Gaza and a founding member of the Network of Civil Society Institutions for the Enhancement of the Rule of Law and Protection of Human Rights, came to Dublin to study English on the Front Line Defenders Fellowship in 2012.

He attended English classes for three months and at the end of his stay he said he felt rested and more confident in his spoken English.



**Claudia Samayoa of UDEFEGUA, Guatemala**

**Claudia Samayoa** is Coordinator of UDEFEGUA, the Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit in Guatemala. She has faced serious risks due to her human rights work in Guatemala for several years. Most recently, she received warnings of an attack being prepared against her.

In addition to death threats and her car being tampered with, her family have also been threatened. Her daughter has been followed and threatened and has been experiencing extreme anxiety and fear as a result. In March, Front Line Defenders contributed to the cost of the family's travel to the Netherlands for rest and respite.



**Ibrahim Muamar, Palestine and Ozlem Dalkiran, Turkey with Front Line Defenders staff**



# Thank You

## FRONT LINE DEFENDERS IS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING DONORS

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Special thanks to the Board of Front Line Defenders and our Chair and Co-Founder Denis O'Brien, whose support and commitment to human rights defenders has been unwavering since Front Line Defenders was founded.

My child, in the life ahead of you, keep your capacity for faith and belief, but let your judgment watch what you believe. Keep your love of life, but throw away your fear of death. Life must be loved or it is lost... Keep your wonder at great and noble things, like sunlight and thunder, the rain and the stars, and the greatness of heroes. Keep your heart hungry for new knowledge. Keep your hatred of a lie, and keep your power of indignation...

I am ashamed to leave you in an uncomfortable world, but someday it will be better. And when that day comes, you will thank God for the greatest blessing man can receive: living in peace.

Letter from a Yugoslav soldier in World War II to his unborn child (the man was later executed).



# REPORTS FROM THE FRONT LINE

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2012

## The White Rose

Cultivo una rosa blanca,  
En julio como en enero,  
Para el amigo sincero  
Que me da su mano franca.

Y para el cruel que me arranca  
El corazón con que vivo,  
Cardo ni ortiga' cultivo:  
Cultivo la rosa blanca.

José Martí

I have a white rose to tend  
In July as in January;  
I give it to the true friend  
Who offers his frank hand to me.

And for the cruel one whose blows  
Break the heart by which I live,  
Thistle nor thorn do I give:  
For him, too, I have a white rose.



The ideas, opinions and comments in this publication are entirely the responsibility of Front Line Defenders and do not necessarily represent or reflect Irish Aid Policy.



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IRIS O'BRIEN FOUNDATION

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