

# [ DISPATCHES ]



**f** Front Line  
PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

**REPORTS  
FROM THE  
FRONT LINE**

## WHAT DOES FRONT LINE DO?

Front Line 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 aims to address the protection needs identified by defenders themselves.

Front Line seeks to provide rapid and practical support to at-risk human rights defenders, including through:

- international advocacy on behalf of human rights defenders at immediate risk;
- 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;
- rest and respite, including the Front Line Fellowship;
- opportunities for networking and exchange between human rights defenders, including at the biennial Dublin Platform;
- the annual Front Line 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.

In emergency situations, Front Line can facilitate temporary relocation of human rights defenders.

Front Line 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 seeks to promote respect for the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Front Line has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Front Line has Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Front Line received the 2007 King Baudouin International Prize for Development.

### FRONTLINE TRUSTEES



**Denis O'Brien** (Chairman)  
Denis O'Brien is Chairman of the Digital 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 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 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.



**James L. Cavallaro** Executive Director of the Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School James Cavallaro spent several years working with Central American refugees and in Chile challenging abuses by the Pinochet government. In 1994, he opened a joint office for Human Rights Watch and the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) in Rio de Janeiro. In 1999, he founded the Global Justice Center, now a leading Brazilian human rights NGO

### 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.

**Wangari Muta Maathai** Kenyan environmentalist, human rights defender and Nobel Laureate.

**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.





"I think we have no choice. If we want to live a decent life in our own country, we have to continue working with the people, struggling with them. We are struggling to make a change.

We need the support of the international community. We need to feel that there are people behind us. It is a moral support. It is not tangible but it has a deep meaning in the heart. It has something, even when you close your eyes, you see people who you haven't seen, you imagine their shapes, but they are holding your hand continually."

These are the words of Dr Mudawi Ibrahim Adam from Sudan, 2010 winner of the inaugural Front Line award for HRDs. Three days before Christmas, he was imprisoned for a year in Sudan on trumped up financial irregularity charges, without even the pretence of a fair trial. His courage, wisdom and absolute dedication to the people of Sudan humble and inspire us. Dr Mudawi was released in January, 2011 after extensive actions by Front Line and Human Rights First. It was his fourth term of imprisonment.

Today, as I'm writing this we have just heard the news that courageous Nasrin Sotoudeh from Iran has been sentenced to 11 years in prison and banned from working as a lawyer or leaving the country for 20 years.

Nasrin Sotoudeh is just one of many human rights defenders around the world facing persecution because of their legitimate human rights work. To challenge this climate of repression Front Line has launched a new long term campaign, '10 on the 10th', to mobilise sustained action on ten human rights defenders facing severe persecution.

The objectives of this campaign are:

- to bring the perpetrators to justice in those cases where HRDs have been assassinated
- to secure the release of those HRDs who are in prison
- to pressure the government to take action to protect HRDs in countries where there is imminent danger

## 2010: AT A GLANCE

- Front Line issued 253 Urgent Appeals on behalf of 369 individuals (plus 19 organisations) in 65 countries.
- In 2010 the Front Line Security Grants Programme awarded 180 grants, totalling €414,903 to individual human rights defenders and organisations at risk.
- Front Line carried out 15 research missions to 14 countries.
- During 2010, 175 HRDs from 33 countries took part in Front Line's Protection and Security Training.
- 'Strategies for Survival' launched in Colombia, Indonesia, Zimbabwe and Ireland.
- The EU Office took action on 112 different cases of HRDs at risk in 42 countries with a positive response in 35% of cases.
- Front Line Award 2010 presented to Dr Soraya Sobhrang of Afghanistan.
- The Dublin Platform brought together 102 human rights defenders from 77 countries to share experiences and learn from each other.
- In 2010 Front Line delivered 24 digital security workshops for HRDs in 14 countries.
- Front Line initiated a new Digital Security Internship and welcomed interns from 4 countries and organised Training of Trainers (ToT) for 20 new trainers from the Middle East and Asia regions.
- Front Line launched 10 on the 10th – the organisation's first long-term campaign on behalf of HRDs at risk in 10 countries.

The cases highlighted in this campaign have different elements – **Floribert Chebeya** assassinated in DRC after being summoned to a meeting with a senior police inspector – **Natalia Estemirova** kidnapped outside her home in Chechnya and shot dead – **Azimjan Askarov** sentenced to life imprisonment in Kyrgyzstan after a grossly unfair trial – **LGBTI and environmental HRDs** targeted in Honduras for championing gay rights and the protection of the environment – **Ali Salem Tamek**, **Brahim Dahane** and **Ahmed Nasiri** detained since October 2009 and facing an unfair trial for defending the rights of the Sahrawi people in Western Sahara – **Jean Claude Kavumbagu** charged with treason because of writing articles critical of the government of Burundi – **Gao Zhisheng** disappeared in China for defending the legal rights of religious minorities – **David Crespo** facing a jail sentence in Colombia for promoting basic human rights – and **Nasrin Sotoudeh** sentenced to 11 years in prison while having to resort to hunger strikes to protest at the prison conditions.

All human rights defenders have one thing in common, the exceptional courage to stand up and speak out for the poor, the powerless and the disenfranchised. They are being increasingly targeted because they are key agents of social change.

As we start into Front Line's 10th year we set out with hope and enthusiasm. We see over and over again that despite the noble failures human rights defenders build civil and just societies brick by brick and success comes often enough to keep hope alive. □

Mary Lawlor, Executive Director, Front Line

You can join the 10 on the 10th campaign on:  
[www.frontlinedefenders.org](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org)

"COME TO THE EDGE,  
 HE SAID. THEY SAID:  
 WE ARE AFRAID.  
 COME TO THE EDGE,  
 HE SAID. THEY CAME.  
 HE PUSHED THEM  
 AND THEY FLEW."

GUILLAUME  
 APOLLINAIRE



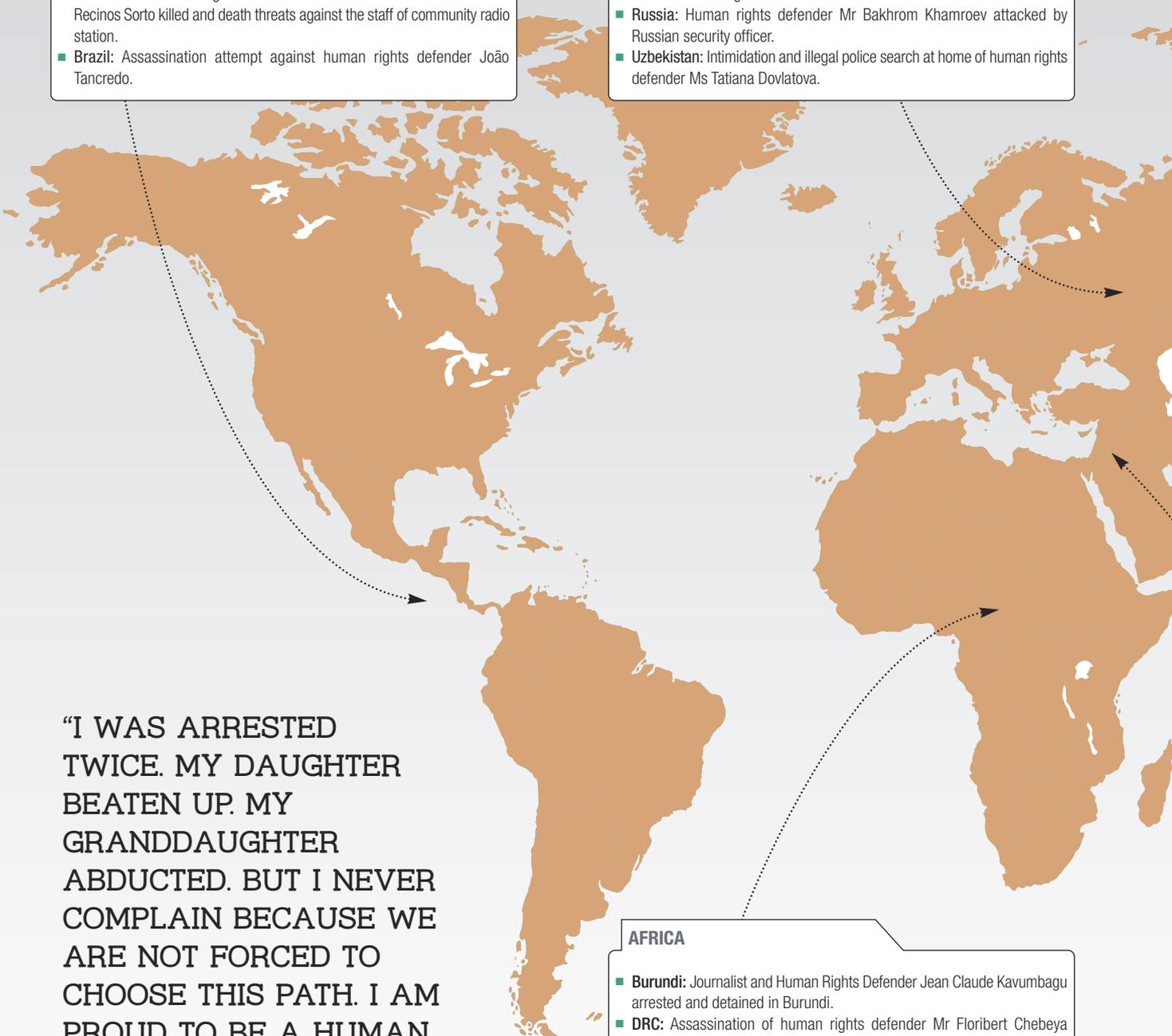
# Front Line focus 2010

## AMERICAS

- **Colombia:** 14 September 2010 human rights defender David Rabelo Crespo arrested in Barrancabermeja.
- **Honduras:** organisations working on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) rights targeted by threats, kidnappings and killings.
- **Mexico:** Human rights defender Ms Bety Cariño tragically killed in violent paramilitary attack in Oaxaca.
- **Guatemala:** Human rights defender Octavio Roblero shot dead.
- **El Salvador:** human rights defenders Mr Ramiro Rivera and Ms Alicia Recinos Sorto killed and death threats against the staff of community radio station.
- **Brazil:** Assassination attempt against human rights defender João Tancredo.

## EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

- **Kyrgyzstan:** Life imprisonment for human rights defender Azimjan Askarov.
- **Russian Federation:** Criminal proceedings against human rights defender Ms Anastasia Denisova.
- **Turkey:** Arrest of human rights defenders Ms Vetha Aydın and Mr Abdullah Gürgen and ongoing detention of Mr Muharrem Erbey.
- **Belarus:** Refusal to register the Assembly of Pro-Democratic Non-Governmental Organisations of Belarus.
- **Russia:** Human rights defender Mr Bakhrom Khamroev attacked by Russian security officer.
- **Uzbekistan:** Intimidation and illegal police search at home of human rights defender Ms Tatiana Dovlatova.



**“I WAS ARRESTED TWICE. MY DAUGHTER BEATEN UP. MY GRANDDAUGHTER ABDUCTED. BUT I NEVER COMPLAIN BECAUSE WE ARE NOT FORCED TO CHOOSE THIS PATH. I AM PROUD TO BE A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER. BECAUSE I KNOW THEY ARE AFRAID OF ME.”**  
**HRD, AZERBAIJAN.**

## AFRICA

- **Burundi:** Journalist and Human Rights Defender Jean Claude Kavumbagu arrested and detained in Burundi.
- **DRC:** Assassination of human rights defender Mr Floribert Chebeya Bahizire, executive director of “La Voix des Sans-Voix”.
- **Zimbabwe:** ZESN members arrested and charged for holding public outreach workshop.
- **Kenya:** Arbitrary arrest and torture of human rights defender Mr Kenneth Kirimi.
- **The Gambia:** Human rights defender Mr Edwin Nebolisa Nwakaeme sentenced to six months detention with hard labour.
- **Nigeria:** Stigmatisation, arrest and judicial harassment of children’s rights defenders in Akwa Ibom State.
- **Uganda:** HRD Al Amin Kimathi detained on terrorism charges.

THIS MAP ILLUSTRATES ONLY SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FACING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AS THEY RISK EVERYTHING TO DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

ASIA

- **Bangladesh:** Assault and robbery of human rights defender Mr Shahanur Islam and other members of the Bangladesh Institute for Human Rights.
- **Gao Zhisheng:** Currently missing in China.
- **Vietnam:** Arbitrary detention of human rights defender Professor Pham Minh Hoang.
- **Thailand:** Judicial harassment of online activist and human rights defender Ms Chiranuch Premchaiporn.
- **Sri Lanka:** Disappearance of human rights defender Mr Pattani Razeek.
- **West Papua:** Human rights defenders targeted following visit by UN Special Rapporteur.
- **Burma:** Arrest of five members of the 88 Generation Student Group.
- **India:** Killing of Dalit human rights defender, Mr Hari Lal.

“...I WON’T BE THERE WHEN THEY TAKE THEIR FIRST STEPS OR WHEN THEY SAY THEIR FIRST WORDS OR AT THEIR BIRTHDAY PARTIES. FOR MY GRANDCHILDREN, I’M A STRANGER WHO VISITS THEM ONCE A YEAR... I LIVE EXILED IN MY OWN COUNTRY, FIGHTING AGAINST THE GHOST OF HOMESICKNESS.”  
LUCHA CASTRO, HRD, MEXICO



MIDDLE EAST / NORTH AFRICA

- **Western Sahara:** Three Sahrawi activists imprisoned for defending human rights in Western Sahara.
- **Yemen:** Attack against human rights defenders Ms Tawakkol Karman and Ms Lubna Al-Gedsi, and alleged enforced disappearance of Mr Ali Ahmad Al-Saqqaf.
- **Saudi Arabia:** Human rights defender Munir Al-Jassas completes one year in arbitrary detention, without being charged.
- **Syria:** Arrested human rights lawyer Mr Haitham al-Maleh to face national security charges.
- **Israel:** Human rights defender Mr Nuri al-Okbi sentenced to seven months imprisonment.
- **Palestine:** Human rights defender Abdallah Abu Rahma sentenced to one year in prison for organising a peaceful demonstration.
- **Bahrain:** Trial of Ali Abdulemam and 10 other human rights defenders continued amid renewed allegations of torture.

POSITIVE NEWS

- **Kuwait:** Mohammed Al-Jassem released from prison following a successful appeal against his sentencing.
- **Yemen:** January; Human rights defenders Messrs Yasre Al-Wazeer and Ali Ahmad Al-Saqqaf released from prison.
- **Mexico:** Human rights defender Mr Raúl Hernández Abundió freed after full exoneration by the court after two years in prison for a crime he did not commit.
- **Mexico:** Three leaders of a protest in Mexico against high electricity bills, Sara López, Joaquín Aguilar and Guadalupe Borja released from prison in June after 11 months in prison.
- **India:** Police officer suspended for filing false charges against HRD Rehana Adib.
- **Zimbabwe:** charges dropped against Farai Maguwu.
- **China:** HRD Liu Xiaobo wins Nobel Peace Prize.
- **Iraq:** On 29 November 2010 the father and brother of human rights defender Mr Ayad Muayyad Salih released from prison.
- **Burma:** Aung San Suu Kyi released on 13 November after spending most of the last 20 years in detention.



# Regional Reports

FRONT LINE REPRESENTATIVES TOOK PART IN 15 RESEARCH MISSIONS TO 14 COUNTRIES DURING 2010 TO MEET HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT RISK AND IDENTIFY THE KEY ISSUES FACING THEM. TOGETHER WITH ONGOING COMMUNICATION WITH HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS THESE VISITS PROVIDED IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCUSS HOW FRONT LINE COULD MOST EFFECTIVELY PROVIDE PRACTICAL SUPPORT.



Agnes Bolam from GEED Foundation, Cameroon.

## CAMEROON – March

Many of the HRDs Front Line met in March 2010 are able to work fairly freely although there is a generalised fear of becoming a target. Most HRDs have to be very careful about how much they expose themselves. Widespread violence and abuses against ordinary people has created a general climate of fear and impunity is pervasive. This affects some regions more than others but occurs everywhere. **HRDs are conscious that if they go too far, they will in one way or another suffer the consequences.**

In terms of risks, low scale intimidation and warnings are faced virtually everywhere, especially when the HRDs are working on issues of mediation/conflict resolution. In these cases, intimidation often comes from the families/individuals involved. When the case concerns prominent members of the community, warnings and threats often come from the authorities themselves. While warnings or threats may not go any further, if the HRD does not back off, there may well be consequences, mainly in the form of arbitrary arrest and sometimes charges. Physical attacks against (relatively) well-known HRDs are rare, while they do occur against less known HRDs, in particular those who are ordinary members of an association.

There are specific issues however

that prompt high risk. This includes, any attempt to question the role and activities of the President; working on arbitrary actions by local authorities or on issues affecting the economic interests of powerful individuals such as corruption. HRDs raising such issues may face prosecution. A number of journalists are currently facing charges of publishing false information and defamation.

Instances of direct attacks are relatively rare, and no killings have been reported. In detention, however, ill-treatment is common and there have been cases of torture such as that of journalist Simon Hervé Nko'o from the weekly *Bebela* who was detained in Jan/Feb 2010. There have also been instances of excessive use of force by the police in response to peaceful demonstrations.



Robert Ilunga Numbi, Les Amis de Nelson Mandela pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme.

## DRC – September

Front Line visited Lubumbashi and Kinshasa. **In Kinshasa, the killing of Floribert Chebeya in June was a constant topic in our discussions. HRDs all felt vulnerable, since they felt that if Floribert could be killed, anybody else could easily be targeted too.** The perception that HRDs are mainly exposed in eastern DRC no longer holds. In Kinshasa, HRDs are constantly harassed. While we were there, Mtre Nicole Bondo Muaka was arrested because police thought she was filming the presidential guard beating a man who had thrown stones at the presidential convoy. Even when officials could see that there were no pictures in her camera, she was held in detention – just because she is a HRD. This pervasive fear and sense of vulnerability has made HRDs more aware of the need to look carefully at their security.

As expected, the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) is seen as the main perpetrator of attacks on HRDs, followed closely by the police and the authorities generally. There is a lot of stigmatisation of HRDs by public figures, in particular but not only by the Minister for Information. Political opposition is weak which has created the situation that human rights defenders are seen as the most significant critical voice, hence their portrayal as political opponents.

The delegation also met Adolphe Lumanu Mulenda Bwana N'sefu the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, who unfortunately confirmed that government officials see HRDs as political opponents. There is agreement among HRDs that the election, provisionally scheduled for November 2011, may bring an increase in violations.

In Lubumbashi, the level of threat has reduced somewhat since the 2009 arrest and trial of Golden Misabiko when several HRDs were forced to relocate temporarily as a result of a series of death threats. Front Line raised questions about fair process for Golden (who remains free pending appeal) and the lack of investigation into the threats against other HRDs but there was little political will to address these issues. There are continuing reports of threats and intimidation by the authorities in relation to sensitive cases.





Front Line meeting HRDs from Rio State in the office of Justiça Global.

**BRAZIL – June**

Front Line undertook a mission to Brazil in June/July and participated in the “EU-Brazil Human Rights Civil Society Seminar” organised by the European Union and the Secretariat for Human Rights under the Office of the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

The three human rights issues for this seminar were: police accountability, human rights defenders and access to service and public policies for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people (LGBTI).

Front line also travelled to meet HRDs in Recife (Pernambuco), Vitoria (Espiritu Santo) and Rio de Janeiro in partnership with Justiça Global and with the assistance of Rafael Dias.

The main threats reported were:

- the stigmatisation and criminalisation of human rights work,
- death threats
- and the intimidation, torture and killing of human rights defenders.

**Impunity is a key obstacle to the work of HRDs. Law enforcement officials regularly use excessive force and carry out extrajudicial killings and torture without any investigation.**

The areas highlighted by human rights defenders include ESC rights issues such as the rights of: dam-affected peoples, fisherfolk, members of the landless movement, riverside communities, indigenous peoples and the Quilombola community (descendants of the original slave population).

In relation to civil and political rights, in addition to killings, disappearances and the use of torture, other key issues include the denial of basic human rights to the prison population

and the climate of impunity which enables the police to target trade unionists and community leaders in the favelas.

Those who map the activities of death squads, paedophile rings and other violent militia groups are at risk from those groups but also from state actors with apparent links to those criminal gangs.

An already dangerous situation is made worse by the criminalisation and stigmatisation of HRDs. Public opinion is hostile to human rights in Rio de Janeiro where there is a widespread perception that Rio is a very dangerous state and therefore there is a correspondingly higher level of toleration of abuse of power by the police. There is total impunity for state agents who commit human rights violations.

**CAMBODIA – September**

During the mission to Cambodia Front Line took part in:

- A two-day meeting hosted in Phnom Penh by the European Commission in Cambodia on “The Role of Civil Society and Human Rights Defenders.”
- A workshop on the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders – hosted by Front Line.



Community leaders in Cambodia.

- A series of Front Line / HRD meetings in Phnom Penh & the district of Siem Reap.

The issue which dominated the EU meeting and indeed all the meetings Front Line had in Cambodia was that of Economic Land Concessions or “Land Grabs.”

Villagers are being forced off of their land to facilitate development initiatives, in particular to develop the sugar, and rubber industries. In many instances, little or no warning is given about evictions and villagers are frequently moved to lots that will not accommodate their traditional subsistence farming.

Financial compensation is extremely low or nonexistent. People have reportedly been forcibly evicted from their homes without even being allowed to gather their belongings. Most of the people Front Line met during the mission were community leaders in the fight against land-grabbing and forced evictions.

The threats against HRDs come from 2 key sources: i) people with power and ii) local authorities. The judicial system is regularly used against HRDs who are often accused of inciting people to violence and disseminating false information.

While land grabs happen across the country, in the south west there is the added complexity of land grabs happening to make way for hydropower dam development which threatens huge areas of forest. There are 20 such hydrodam projects in development around the country.

**Development is always given as the reason behind any changes in Cambodia but these projects are actually reducing living standards for the people, leading to increasing numbers of evictions and displacements with little or no recourse to justice for the affected communities.**

**RUSSIA – NORTH CAUCASUS**

Human rights defenders in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan face a defamation campaign initiated by state officials. Some senior representatives of the authorities have publicly described human rights defenders as “dangerous accomplices of the terrorists who should be punished as such”

More than 150 decisions of the European Court of Human Rights ➤



# Regional Reports

➤ condemn Russia for crimes committed in Chechnya. None of the recommendations have been fully implemented by the Russian Federation and none of the perpetrators have been brought to justice.

In **Chechnya**, the Kadyrov administration uses the rhetoric of human rights to speak about human rights violations committed by federal forces during the two Russo-Chechen wars but remains completely oblivious to crimes committed by its own special forces. The assassination of human rights defender Natalya Estemirova in July 2009 demonstrated the danger of investigating human rights violations committed by so-called “Kadyrovtsy”. This murder froze the human rights community in Chechnya creating an atmosphere of unprecedented fear. As a result several Russian human rights organisations developed a new initiative of “Joint Mobile Groups” which deploy HRDs from outside Chechnya for limited periods of time on a rotational basis to minimise the risk to human rights defenders while investigating human rights abuses.

In **Dagestan**, there are a small number of human rights defenders trying to help the victims of the war between the police and armed opposition groups and they in turn suffer from pressure and threats from both sides. In the last year human rights lawyers were often the victims of police brutality.

**The situation for women’s rights has worsened. Society has become less and less tolerant. Extremist religious views are being imposed under the banner of the “moral regeneration of society”** while in Chechnya the imposition of a dress code and the new obligation to wear headscarves is indicative of a new wave of repression for women.

## KAZAKHSTAN – June

The mission to Kazakhstan in June showed the growing importance of the protection of social rights in one of the biggest and richest countries in the region. Growing economic inequality has created different groups trying to defend their interests in this authoritarian state. In Kazakhstan, as distinct from other central Asian countries, state policy towards human rights defenders is more subtle, some would say more insidious, in undermining international standards of human rights protection. Instead of directly persecuting



**Front Line Deputy Director Andrew Anderson visits Azimjan Askarov in Bishek Prison.**

political opponents, critical media, and influential NGOs, the Government puts numerous economic or legislative obstacles in their way.

This year President Nazarbaev signed a new law on internet regulation which treated all websites the same as other forms of mass media, and imposed penalties on those responsible for their content. During the mission, Front Line and the Astana branch of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law, held a training on security and protection for local human rights defenders.

## GEORGIA – November

Front Line carried out a mission to Georgia following the meeting of the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders. This mission highlighted the lack of protection for human rights defenders defending the rights of political prisoners who face hostility from the authorities who see them as representing hostile political interests. Additionally HRDs face police brutality during peaceful demonstrations while LGBTI rights defenders are persecuted by the police and marginalised even within the human rights community.

## KYRGYZSTAN – July and December

The situation of human rights defenders deteriorated to such an extent after the overthrow of the Bakiev Government in April 2010 that Front Line went there twice – in early September and again in December.

The first mission prioritised meetings with human rights defenders working in the South of the country after the June inter-ethnic violence. The Ad-interim Government of Roza Otunbaeva had taken no effective steps to calm the situation, to reconcile the two communities or to carry out independent investigations of the massive human rights violations.

Moreover, the numerous arrests of persons of Uzbek ethnicity, the criminal investigations opened on the basis of alleged participation in the “organisation of mass disorders” and one sided trials held without even minimal respect for fair trial standards, all made reconciliation between the two communities almost impossible.

Human rights defenders of Uzbek origin are systematically beaten and humiliated in court while human rights lawyers who defend Uzbeks are threatened and attacked - even in the courtrooms.

Front Line’s observer attended the hearing of human rights defender Azimjan Askarov ( who is of Uzbek ethnic origin) and witnessed the lynch law atmosphere in the courtroom while Askarov himself appeared in court with the visible signs of a recent beating on his face.

The case of Azimjan Askarov, who was sentenced to life imprisonment, was the primary focus of the second mission in December. Front Line met Kyrgyz officials, diplomats and journalists and visited Azimjan



**Participants in Arabic Training of Trainers in Beirut.**



Askarov in prison where he spoke about the tortures he had suffered. Subsequently, with the support of the local office of the OHCHR, Front Line organised a meeting for HRDs from Osh which discussed the need for increased security measures and developed concrete security plans for their daily work.

**MIDDLE EAST/  
NORTH AFRICA**

In the Middle East region Front Line carried out missions to Bahrain, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. In addition the organisation carried out security trainings in Bahrain, Beirut, Iran and Baghdad.

**BAHRAIN – January**

In Bahrain the key issues raised were the denial of the rights to Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Association.

Since then the situation for human rights defenders deteriorated significantly in the run up to the general election in October. Human rights defender and blogger Ali Abdulemam, the founder of bahrain-online.com and 10 other human rights defenders were arrested in August and charged with participation in a terrorist conspiracy.

Front Line observers attended the hearings in September and November and raised serious concerns about allegations of torture, which to date have not been adequately investigated as well as the denial of due process.

**Syria.** Human rights defenders feel that they are left alone by the international community to face a very brutal regime. It's very difficult to work for human rights in Syria and the cases of imprisoned human rights defenders 79 year old Mr. Haithem Al-Maleh and Anwar A-Bunni (winner of the 2008 Front Line Award) are just two examples of how tough the situation is for defenders inside Syria.

**JORDAN – January**

During this field visit Front Line met representatives of the National Center for Human Rights Studies, non-governmental human rights organisations and HRDs at risk. Despite the multi-party political system, which is highly manipulated and controlled by the King, and the apparent freedoms of expression, assembly and association Jordan is not much different from other countries in the region when it comes to restrictions

on basic freedoms, corruption and violations of human rights. However, the regime has developed its policies and practices to manipulate and control human rights activists and their organisations taking advantage of its political alliance with western governments. The authorities have been effectively using the “stick and carrot” policy to deal with independent HRDs.

**SAUDI ARABIA – March**

During this mission in March, Front Line had meetings with EU delegations, non-governmental human rights groups, and HRDs at risk. The main topics of the discussions were: the current difficult situation of HRDs, possible ways to overcome the tight restrictions on the work of human rights groups, ways to protect human defenders who are subjected to harassment and detention, the role of Front Line and the need for training and protection.

**KUWAIT – October**

During this mission Front Line had meetings with human rights organisations, the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, law professionals and journalists at risk. While freedom of the press in Kuwait is relatively high there are red-lines relating to the ruling family and religion. Many cases of HRDs at risk are of journalists who write in the press or the internet regarding corruption or mismanagement by members of the ruling family.

This includes the case, taken up by Front Line and which is still pending, of lawyer and writer Mohammed Al-Jassem, who was detained and had 20 cases lodged against him

because of his writings and public criticism of high level officials. Front Line sent an observer to his trial. The Prime Minister has also filed a similar case against Khalid Al-Fadhaleh, a political activist while in Egypt a case was taken against Kuwaiti HRD and journalist Mohammed Al-Weshaihi because of articles he had written in an Egyptian newspaper. The main concerns in these cases are the prolonged detention imposed and the influence of the ruling family on the judiciary.

**Other Visits and Seminars:**

- Istanbul: 27-30 January: International experts meeting on the role of civil society in Syria.
- Kuwait: 4-7 October: Field visit. Meetings human rights organisations, parliamentary human rights committee, law professionals and journalists at risk.
- Beirut: 1-2 December: Experts meeting organised by the United Nations – ESCWA to discuss the role of civil societies in Lebanon, Yemen, Palestine and Jordan.
- London: 6 December, addressing a symposium on arbitrary detention in Saudi Arabia.
- Bahrain: 21-25 February: Sub-regional training on protection and digital security – GCC countries.
- Iraq/ Baghdad: 7-9 July: training on international protection mechanisms for HRDs across Iraq.
- Iraq/Sulaymanieh: 17-19 October: A workshop on protection and networking. □



Front Line training course in Baghdad.



# Dublin Platform



Michel Forst, Front Line; Fr John Jonga, Papua; Navanethem Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; Mary Lawlor, Front Line; Sam Mohochi, Kenya.

## The Fifth Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders brought together 102 human rights defenders from 77 countries.

It took place in Dublin Castle, from the 10th – 12th February, 2010. The Dublin Platform provides a unique opportunity for human rights defenders at risk, from every corner of the world, to come together to share experiences, learn from one another, discuss relevant issues and engage with decision makers from governmental and intergovernmental bodies.

It is also a space where human rights defenders can speak openly and freely without fear and is a chance for them to escape from the relentless pressures under which they work in their everyday lives.

The formal sessions were facilitated by simultaneous interpretation in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish with whispered interpretation provided in more than five other languages.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Navanethem Pillay and Mr Micheál Martin TD, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, gave keynote speeches on the first morning of the Dublin Platform, and the meeting was



Top: Naji Ali Hasan Faleel, Bahrain; left to right: Suraya Pakzad, Afghanistan; Khanim Rahim Latif, Iraq.

also addressed by Ms Margaret Sekaggya, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.

The focus of the Platform discussions was on strengthening security and protection – the risks that human rights defenders face as they do their work, and the precautions they can take to protect themselves. Many of the human rights defenders in attendance gave moving testimonies about their struggle to improve the human rights situation in their society, and the persecution they have experienced.

There was also a panel discussion on the specific risks facing women human rights defenders, with contributions from experienced WHRDs from Mexico, Iran, DRC and the WHRD International Coalition.

Front Line and partner organisation Tactical Technology presented the updated version of 'Security in a Box', a package of guidance materials and software resources relating to digital security for human rights defenders.

There was also feedback on Front Line's research project looking at best practice in terms of security and protection which drew on field studies with human rights defenders in Colombia, Indonesia and Zimbabwe.

The participants enjoyed a rich cultural programme with music from an array of musical talents, including the Moran >



Yaena Salamae from Thailand.



Dr Saravanamutti.



Micheál Martin, TD, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs addressing the conference.



HRDs on the march at the 5th Dublin Platform.

► family, the O’Ceannabháin family, Vincent McGrath (HRD Ireland) and Dom-an Manegdeg (HRD the Philippines), and the vibrant spirit emerging from the coming together of so many exceptional human rights defenders was vividly captured in the collective Irish dancing and wonderfully chaotic conga line at the finale event in the Old Jameson Distillery. □

## IN MEMORIAM

Sadly, since the Dublin Platform in February 2010, three of our friends and fellow human rights defenders, Georges Kanuma from Burundi, Bety Cariño from Mexico and David Kato from Uganda have died. Georges died from complications caused by malaria due to the lack of adequate medical facilities. Bety was killed during an armed attack by paramilitaries on an aid convoy in Oaxaca. David Kato was murdered in his home during a violent homophobic attack.

We remember them, and all the human rights defenders who have been killed defending the human rights of others.



Bety Cariño, Mexico.



David Kato, Uganda.



Georges Kanuma, Burundi.

## 5TH PLATFORM TRAINING

The Dublin Platform is an ideal opportunity for human rights defenders at risk to share skills, knowledge and expertise in areas such as the particular risks faced by women HRDs and the increased danger for all human rights defenders in the form of threats to their digital security.

After the Platform, Front Line organised a special 3 day security training workshop for women HRDs which brought together women human rights defenders from Algeria, Georgia, India, Kazakhstan, the Philippines and Zimbabwe. Women human rights defenders are doubly discriminated against: they are targeted because of who they are as well as for what they do.

The risks the participants faced included: being sacked from their job; their family members being denied education and employment opportunities; vilification (by authorities and communities – such as being accused of being in the pay of westerners, being traitors, being bad mothers/wives, being sex workers), threats by text messages, visits by masked men, kidnap, imprisonment, assault, torture, rape and assassination.

In addition to looking at the challenges the participants shared some of the different strategies they had adopted to respond to those challenges:

**“We have a security committee which gathers information from communities about the risks – they will advise us - ‘today don’t go to...[this place]’ ”**

**“My strategy is to become more intelligent, more skilled, write better, document violations better, read more, meet other defenders more – be inspired by them!”**

Knowledge of digital security is vital to enable human rights defenders to communicate quickly, effectively and safely.

During the Dublin Platform digital security clinics were offered to the human rights defenders. These were short, 30 minute meetings with HRDs to discuss their digital security problems and direct them towards solutions.

After the Platform, Front Line also hosted a 3 day digital security training for 25 HRDs in 5 languages workshops, (English, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic) to provide a more in depth focus on key aspects of digital security and to provide information on security measures which could be easily implemented by HRDs on their return home to their respective organisations. □

# Front Line Award for HRDs at Risk

The annual Front Line Award was established in 2005 to honour the work of an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the protection of human rights in the face of considerable personal risk. It is intended that the Front Line Award and the profile gained by the nominees and winners will contribute to their security and protection. It is also an opportunity to highlight the important and courageous work of human rights defenders around the world.

The Front Line Award includes a €10,000 donation to the work of the human rights defender as well as a €5,000 personal honorarium.

Previous winners are:

2005: Mudawi Ibrahim

Adam, Sudan

2006: Ahmadjan Madmarov,  
Uzbekistan

2007: Gégé Katana, DRC

2008: Anwar Al Bunni, Syria

2009: Dr Yuri Melini,  
Guatemala

The winner of the 2010 Front Line Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk was Dr Soraya Rahim Sobhrang of Afghanistan who is a commissioner of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) with particular responsibility for women's rights. The Award was presented at a ceremony in Dublin's City Hall by Andrea Corr.



Andrea Corr and Dr Soraya Rahim Sobhrang of Afghanistan.

In her work with the AIHRC Dr Soraya Rahim Sobhrang is responsible for the monitoring, protection and promotion of women's rights throughout Afghanistan.

Dr. Sobhrang, like many prominent women human rights defenders in Afghanistan, has faced constant harassment, defamation and death threats since taking up her post. Women human rights defenders in Afghanistan have been regularly threatened and some have been killed.

Despite the dangers she faces Dr Sobhrang continues her courageous struggle to defend the rights of women in Afghanistan.

Speaking at the Front Line Award ceremony in Dublin's City Hall, Dr Sobhrang said "We may have the law but we have no implementation. We live in a country where women can be targeted and killed, and where there is no possibility of achieving a legal remedy."

"Your support to human rights defenders in Afghanistan will make a very big difference to defenders who feel alone. Receiving this Front Line Award will give me and all the other human rights defenders much encouragement to continue the struggle for human rights. With this award we know that we are not alone – that we have a good friend at the international level who will work with us."

Mary Lawlor, Executive Director of Front Line spoke of how "despite the clear commitments made in the new Afghan constitution to uphold and protect the rights of women – as the security situation has deteriorated – so has respect for women's rights also deteriorated."

The other shortlisted nominees for the 2010 Front Line Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk were:

**India:** Ajeet Singh, President of Guria, a human rights organisation fighting against the sexual exploitation of women and girls.

**Western Sahara:** Aminatou Haidar a Sahrawi woman human rights defender and a member of the Collective of Sahrawi Human Rights Defenders (CODESA).

**Mexico:** Lucha Castro a human rights lawyer from the Centro de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres, Chihuahua City.

**Zimbabwe:** Pelagia Mary Semakwali Razemba, a senior figure in the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association. □



Left to right: Ruairi Quinn, TD; Mary Lawlor Front Line; Tom Kitt, TD, and Jan O'Sullivan, TD.



# Rest and Respite and Fellowships



Özlem Dalkiran, Turkey.

One of the biggest threats to the sustainability of the work of human rights defenders is burn-out caused by the relentless pressure on themselves and their families.

To help human rights defenders manage this pressure Front Line has developed its Fellowship and Rest & Respite Programmes to enable human rights defenders to take some time out and recharge their batteries in a safe environment while at the same time enhancing their skills so that they can work more effectively when they return home.

## Some of the Front Line Fellowships awarded in 2010

**Özlem Dalkiran** from Turkey spent 3 months with Front Line and helped to edit video archive.

**Fatima Nateson Burnad** from India is Founder and President of the Society for Rural Education and Development (SRED), and the Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Movement in Tamil Nadu. She spent time with the US Human Rights Network, based in Atlanta, Georgia to learn about the implementation of CERD.

**Riza Fanilag** from The Philippines works with the NGO, Suhay Kanayunan, in the struggle for land and justice for the farmers in Tarlac. Riza has faced threats and harassment from the military.

Riza undertook a speakers tour in the USA to network with Filipinos and church people.

Dearest Tara,

Thanks a lot for this help for our family; it was very important for us.

We had a possibility not only to see each other, but also to hear each member of our family. Children have understood that human rights, independence and individuality are very important for people. Therefore it was the turning-point in our life and we are grateful that there was a possibility to all of us be together. And the most important thing we have slept and had a rest.

Because of the extreme pressure under which she had been working during the recent inter-ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan **Tolekan Izmailova** undertook a Front Line Fellowship in Stockholm where she was hosted by Civil Rights Defenders; and later travelled to Turkey with her family on rest and respite.

**Maryam Hosseinkhah** is a member of the One Million Signatures Campaign, Iran.

Front Line's R&R programme covered the cost of her accommodation during her English and human rights studies at Galway University.

**Khalil Shaheen** from the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights visited Dublin for 6

## OTHER PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY FRONT LINE INCLUDE:

### Stress management

14 individual hrds and 2 organisations were given support for a short break for counseling and stress management, medical checks and related treatment.

### Trial observation

Front Line sent observers to monitor the following trials of human rights defenders at risk:

- Mr Haithem Al Maleh in Syria
- Mohammed Al-Jassem, a Kuwaiti lawyer
- Judge Suliman Al-Reshoudi, Saudi Arabia
- Azimjan Askarov, Kyrgyz Republic
- 7 Sahrawi HRDs, Western Sahara
- 11 Bahraini HRDs.

### Women HRDs International Coalition

In line with its commitment to prioritise work on behalf of WHRDs Front Line participated in meetings of the Coalition in Geneva and Manila and attended a meeting of women human rights defenders in Central America in Oaxaca, Mexico, April 2010. □

weeks R&R during which time he helped to launch "Defending Hope in Gaza" a photographic exhibition documenting the impact of "Operation Cast Lead" on the civilian population.

**Abdulkarim AlKaiwani**, Editor-in-chief and Journalist at Alshoora and Alnida's weekly newspapers in Yemen since 2006, has been imprisoned and banned from travelling as a result of his peaceful human rights activities. During the period of R&R he studied English in Dublin.

**Ella Kesaeva** and her sister Emma are members of Voice of Beslan, an organisation representing the victims of the Beslan hostage crisis in 2004. As a result Voice of Beslan has been banned and had charges brought against it. Emma's two sons were killed and Ella's daughter Zarina was a hostage in the siege.

Ella, Emma and Zarina came to Dublin to escape extremely difficult conditions. □



Fatima Burnad with school children in North Carolina.



# Security & Protection Training

**During 2010, 175 human rights defenders from 33 countries took part in Front Line Security and Protection Training.**

Front Line's Security and Protection Training Programme for HRDs, through its workshops and seminars, aims to facilitate a sharing of skills and experience to help provide human rights defenders with additional knowledge and tools that may be useful to improve their understanding of security and protection.

HRDs reported that the workshops enabled them to minimise risk, continue their work in greater security and pass those skills on to other human rights defenders.

Below is a sample of some of the security training activities in which HRDs from around the world took part:

**1. Security & Protection** which looked at the areas of:

- risk analysis
- threat assessment
- identification of capacities and vulnerabilities
- dealing with stress
- digital security
- security planning for specific scenarios
- production of individual security plans
- how to produce organisational security plans.

**2. Training of Trainers** which covered the same topics but with additional focus on:

- what makes a good trainer
- training techniques
- practising training others on security and protection.

## Reports from the field

**April – Security Training in Zimbabwe:** Front Line was joined in Harare by 16 HRDs, all from Zimbabwe, who had experienced a variety of threats, including abduction, imprisonment, attacks on their offices and homes, threats, character assassination and isolation.

One WHRD explained how her activities in a well-known human rights organisation led to her neighbours and former friends avoiding her, and her Pastor asking her to stop attending the church.

There was a lively discussion about relationships with members of the security forces. Some HRDs believed that having relatives, old schoolmates

and neighbours in the security forces could be counted as a resource. For others, there were fears that being seen talking to security force personnel could jeopardise reputations. **There was overall agreement that it was wise to develop relationships with top officials, who could provide information if, for example, a HRD was abducted or detained.**

## June – Arabic Training of Trainers in Beirut

Participants came from ten countries: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, UAE, Yemen

As well as facing the risks that many other HRDs face in other parts of the world (stigmatisation, harassment – including sexual harassment, bans on organisations, arrest, imprisonment, assault, torture, abduction, assassination), HRDs from the Middle East faced bans on travelling and bans on writing. This group also emphasised the pernicious impact on WHRD if they were imprisoned (the damage to their reputations could lead to their being ostracised from families), and the fact that many HRD, particularly WHRD, faced threats from conservative

religious elements, including relatives.

## Stigmatisation is the key issue for HRDs – ‘in our culture reputation is wealth’

- One HRD, who worked on women's rights, had been accused of being a trafficker
- One WHRD was vilified on a website which stated that she was the 3rd wife of a government official
- One knew of a WHRD who was grabbed and locked in a room without her clothes – she was then accused of being a sex worker
- Some HRDs had been threatened as supporters of the West, or collaborators with neighbouring states.

## August – Russian Training of Trainers in Istanbul

The workshop brought together 12 participants from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

They were working on a range of issues: the prevention of hate crimes, corruption and trafficking. One WHRD was herself the survivor of a failed attempt to traffic her, and four



**Dom AN, the Philippines, Security Training role play.**



of the participants were working in particularly dangerous situations in the North Caucasus, where abduction and assassination were ever-present risks.

In light of the increasing trend in Russia to bring fabricated legal cases against HRDs, an extra session on legal issues was held on responses to threats such as – what to do if you are questioned or arrested, or if your premises are searched.

### October – Security Training in Jakarta

In October in Indonesia (Jakarta) there were 18 participants (7 women) from around Indonesia. HRDs felt that, although their working space had expanded in recent years, there were still threats. The main threat was the climate of impunity (symbolised by the failure to convict the mastermind of the assassination of celebrated HRD Munir in 2004).

Those most at risk were:

- HRDs working in regions where there were independence movements, who faced risk from both the authorities who labelled them “subversives” and from armed groups fighting for independence
- those challenging powerful interests, such as anti-corruption activists including journalists, and environmental activists
- WHRDs and advocates of religious freedom who faced danger at the hands of religious conservatives.

The years of oppression meant that there were powerful stories of painful experiences, of threats, of loved ones assaulted and killed, personal imprisonment and torture.

The participants also spoke of how they dealt with these situations, for example about the need to leave any equipment behind and to dress like the people who live in the forest if you are going to talk to those communities. Others talked about the importance of developing relationships with the police who would then protect their organisations if hired thugs attacked. **The evaluations showed that (apart from one person who had attended security training before) all the HRDs**

THE YEARS OF OPPRESSION MEANT THAT THERE WERE POWERFUL STORIES OF PAINFUL EXPERIENCES, OF THREATS, OF LOVED ONES ASSAULTED AND KILLED, AND TORTURE.

### Feedback from participants:

- “Very interesting, opens our eyes about the importance of security.”
- “Very enriching sharing with other participants and the facilitators. What worked well was sharing and recognizing the universalities and particularities that



Azimjan Askarov with Anne Rimmer, Security Training in Kyrgyzstan.

**assessed their capacity to deal with the threats they faced as having increased by 2 or 3 points on a 5 point scale.**

The Security and Protection training programme is designed to have a practical impact. Following on from the training, some participants created security plans with their colleagues, and their families, some conducted workshops on security and protection in their home country with HRDs while others received grants to assist them to secure their offices more effectively. One participant (who received notification of death threats against her during the workshop) was assisted financially to relocate herself and her family within her country.

individuals / organizations go through and how we / they manage risks and protection.”

- “Now I will take more care of my personal wellbeing, planning before fieldwork and digital security.”
- “Absolutely, yes, I will do the [relaxation] exercises I learned regularly. They are very good. I feel the impact already.”
- “I will apply the knowledge in my work and share this knowledge with defenders back home.” □



Participants at Arabic Security Training in Beirut.



# Security Grants Programme

The purpose of Front Line's Security Grants Programme is to strengthen the security and protection of human rights defenders at risk worldwide. Human rights defenders can apply to the Security Grants Programme for a grant of up to €6,000 by filling out an application form and sending it to:

[grants@frontlinedefenders.org](mailto:grants@frontlinedefenders.org)

The grant is to enable human rights defenders at risk to take practical steps to improve their security and protection. For more information and for the application form [www.frontlinedefenders.org/guidelines-grant-applications](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/guidelines-grant-applications). Applications may be made in Arabic, Russian, English, French or Spanish.

In 2010 the Front Line Security Grants Programme awarded 180 grants, totalling €414,903 to individual human rights defenders and organisations at risk.

Security grants in 2010 paid for:  
■ steel and/or bullet-proof doors,

“WE RECEIVED A  
HANDWRITTEN NOTE  
ATTACHED TO A TOY  
BOMB THAT SAID ‘WIND  
UP YOUR OFFICE WITHIN  
21 OR IT WILL BE  
DESTROYED’ GIA

- bars for windows,
- alarm systems, CCTV and video Intercoms,
- legal fees,
- lighting around office or home,
- IT and communications equipment,
- temporary relocations,
- safe houses,
- surgery, family assistance,
- travel costs for prison visits by family,
- medication in prisons and transport to court hearings.

### These are just some of the grants allocated in 2010:

- January: el Centro Alternativo de Investigación y Protección de los Derechos Fundamentales en Colombia, CINPRODEC in Bogota, Colombia - 2 bullet proof doors with multiple locks, CCTV and 4 security windows.
- January: Red de Mujeres Afectadas por la Minería, Derechos en Acción, Guatemala - 14 indigenous WHRDs receive computer and human rights reporting training and psychosocial assistance.
- April: Femmes et Initiatives Locales pour le Développement Africain (FILDA) based in Uvira, eastern DRC - emergency relocation of woman human



Security camera funded by Front Line.

rights defender who had been sexually assaulted.

- June: Russian Federation - legal fees for lawyer of imprisoned HRD Aleksey Nikiforov and transport and accomodation costs to enable his lawyer and wife to visit him in the penal colony.
- July: Grassroots in Action – GIA – A women’s organisation Peshawar, Pakistan – CCTV, mobile phones, wireless video door phones, finger print security door locks and a secure scan metal detector.
- September: GAPWUZ (General Agriculture and Plantation Workers’ Union), Harare, Zimbabwe – internet access, surveillance cameras, and security training
- November: Ayad Muayyad Salij, Iraqi Institution for Development emergency relocation after Iraqi Army squad broke into his home in Mosul city to arrest him.

### FEEDBACK FROM HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS WHO RECEIVED FRONT LINE SECURITY GRANTS IN 2010

“It is the first time I received a grant of any kind ... in recent years and particularly this year, repression, threats and raids have become unsustainable. I am completely grateful to you for the confidence and great support you have given to our security.”

Alejandro Argueta. >



Installation of a security door.



# Digital Security and Training

With recent events in Tunisia, Egypt and across the Middle East, we have seen the power of social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter to help mobilise action for political change. We have also seen how governments who feel under pressure instinctively target digital communications to protect their power.

Around the world repressive governments are increasingly concerned about the freedom and power that the internet gives to ordinary people – and especially human rights defenders.

As social networks become more sophisticated, so too do the attempts to undermine the work of human rights defenders by infiltrating computer systems and social networks and targeting their users. This is why all human rights defenders should be concerned about digital security to protect themselves and their colleagues.

This is why Front Line established the Digital Security programme – and in 2010 Front Line delivered 24 digital security workshops for HRDs in 14 countries.

In addition, Front Line cooperated in the translation of our handbook “Digital Security and Privacy for HRDs” into Spanish and Vietnamese – both available on:

[www.frontlinedefenders.org/eseccman](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/eseccman)

To share skills and knowledge on digital security Front Line initiated a new Digital Security Internship and welcomed interns from 4 countries.

In cooperation with our partner organisation Tactical Tech, Front Line translated Security-in-a-Box into Vietnamese and is working on translating it into Farsi, Burmese, Mandarin, and other languages. We also updated chapters of Security-in-a-Box and added a new version of the tools.

See [www.security.ngoinabox.org](http://www.security.ngoinabox.org)

To help consolidate this work Front Line organised Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops for 20 new trainers from the Middle East and Asia regions.



## SECURITY-IN-A-BOX

Security-in-a-Box is a toolkit of peer reviewed free and open source software and guides for improving the security and privacy of storing information and communication. The aim is to simplify this complicated area and provide people with a basic understanding of the risks, starting with the source of the risk and finishing by providing a solution. A solution that will not only propose a specific tool, a software programme, but one which will also address the need to change some of the habits of work on the computer to minimise the risk.

Security-in-a-Box covers a wide range of topics and skills that are essential to the human rights defender. We approach digital security as an integral part of the broader protection task. That is why we start with the basics of: How to protect your information from physical threats. These are the foundations for the security of any further work on the computer and other electronic devices like mobile phones or digital cameras. On this foundation we build more skills:

- How to protect your computer from malware (like viruses) and hackers.
- How to create and maintain secure passwords.
- How to protect sensitive files on your computer.
- How to recover from loss of information.
- How to destroy sensitive information.

This is the process of making the information that you store more secure. Another area is the protection of communication:

- How to keep your Internet communication private.
- How to remain anonymous and bypass censorship on the Internet.

The whole toolkit is available online on the Internet – you can get it from Front Line’s website or from: [www.Security.NGOinaBox.org](http://www.Security.NGOinaBox.org) The Toolkit is also available on a CD/DVD for HRDs at risk. The toolkit, with both the tools and guides is currently available in Arabic, English, French, Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese. There are plans for translating guides and tools into other languages.

We’ve seen how Security-in-a-Box, together with the relevant training, has a significant impact on the protection of human rights defenders and independent journalists all over the globe.



➤ **Feedback from MOVICE, Colombia:** “If we had not obtained a grant from Front Line Carmelo’s family would have had problems to pay the travel costs to visit Carmelo in prison. Carmelo had some health problems when he entered prison, so needed medication paid with this grant.

Without this grant the family would not have been able to visit so often, which helped maintain Carmelo’s morale”.

**LGBTI HRD David Kuria** of the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya, relocated for three months, had received serious threats: “I feel very

much in charge of my life now, as opposed to feeling powerless and helpless. The grant also enabled me to take security issues more seriously, which in turn has enabled me to be bolder about activism”.





# Advocacy towards the European Union

Front Line's EU office works to mobilise the power and influence of the European Union on behalf of human rights defenders at risk. Through its constant advocacy Front Line works to keep the protection of human rights defenders high on the EU agenda to secure effective action through enhanced implementation of the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.

## Advocacy

As the EU reviews its foreign policy it is important for Front Line to work to ensure that the protection of human rights defenders is given priority. Through the EU Office, Front Line took part in preparatory meetings in advance of EU-third country human rights dialogues on – the Russian Federation, Uzbekistan, China, Indonesia, Morocco and the GCC countries, providing details of recent cases of HRDs at risk and outlining the main threats. Front Line also took part in subsequent debriefings on the outcomes of those dialogues.

Part of Front Line's advocacy work is to facilitate access by human rights defenders to the various EU institutions. To that end the EU Office organised meetings with EU officials for HRDs from Palestine, Mexico, India, Afghanistan and Bahrain. A particular highlight was when Dr Soraya Sobhrang, winner of the 2010 Front Line Award met High Representative Catherine Ashton.

In order to develop its contacts with HRDs, Front Line had meetings with HRDs invited by other NGOs from 30 countries.

## EU Guidelines on HRDs:

A key element of Front Line's advocacy work is focused on the promotion of and training on the EU Guidelines on HRDs. If fully implemented the Guidelines would dramatically improve the security and protection of HRDs via the network of EU missions around the world.

In 2010 the EU Office mapped the most active EU

embassies in the field of HRDs, in 20-25 priority countries, with the aim of improving Front Line's advocacy work. The outcome is a list of EU missions Front Line could rely on for urgent cases.

In 2010 the Spanish Presidency of the EU endorsed a Front Line proposal to hold field meetings between HRDs and EU diplomats with the aim of adopting/revising local implementation strategies. By the end of 2010 such meetings had taken place in 73 countries. An additional development was the decision to appoint EU field Liaison Officers to coordinate the work between EU Missions regarding the implementation of the EU Guidelines on HRDs and, to serve as local contact points for HRDs.

At the end of 2010, liaison officers had been appointed in 77 countries.

## Training

Front Line organised field workshops in Bahrain and Cambodia to convert the awareness of the EU Guidelines into action and clarify the expectations of, and obstacles faced by,

HRDs and diplomats.

In May Front Line also organised a digital security training workshop in Brussels for EU officials and NGOs which gathered 10 EU Officials from the European Commission and Council of the EU, six NGO representatives and a representative of the newly-established OHCHR Regional Office in Brussels.

## Fact-finding mission in Bahrain:

A field mission to Bahrain was conducted by Head of Office in September, to raise the case of

blogger and HRD Ali Abdulemam and other detained HRDs. Key recommendations to the EU were presented to the EU Council Group on Middle East & GCC on 11 October.

## Public Awareness

The EU Office organised the showing of "Defending Life With Life" a photographic exhibition documenting the experiences of HRDs in Western Sahara, N. East India, Honduras, Kenya and Serbia. The exhibition, in Les Halles Saint Géry, Brussels, was seen by thousands of people. □



EU High Representative Catherine Ashton greets Dr Soraya Sobhrang, winner of the Front Line 2010 Award.

**In 2010 Front Line's EU Office carried out high-level advocacy on 112 different cases of HRDs at risk in 42 countries. Front Line was able to record positive feedback in 35% of these cases in the form of démarches, statements, trial observation or meetings with HRDs and their lawyers.**

**Russian Federation:** Following criminal proceedings against Ms Anastasia Denisova the German MFA raised her case during meetings of European Embassies' human rights experts and during the HR Consultations with Russia. Following a meeting at the EU Delegation, the public prosecutor withdrew the case.

**Kyrgyzstan:** Trial and life sentence for Mr Azimjan Askarov The EU Special Representative for Central Asia raised the case with the Kyrgyz authorities, the chairwoman of the European

Parliament sub-committee on HR wrote to the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan in Belgium and EU High Representative Catherine Ashton published a statement condemning the life sentence. Azimjan Askarov was eventually moved to a prison in Bishkek where his treatment improved.

**Guatemala:** Death threat and raid on the premises of human rights journalist Mr Marvin del Cid. The case was sent to the EU Delegation in Guatemala City on 2 July. They replied on the same day that they had contacted the source – UDEFEGUA – to enable them to assess the case at the next EU Filter Group session.

**Swaziland:** Police broke up a civil society meeting and arrested human rights defenders, including Mr Musa Hlophe, coordinator of the Swaziland Coalition of Concerned Civic Organisations (SCCCO). The German and British embassies

in Pretoria closely followed the situation. The HRDs arrested were subsequently all released without charge.

**Cambodia:** Fear of legal proceedings against trade unionists Tola Moeun, Ath Thorn and Morm Nhim following strike actions. The case was raised on 20 September with diplomats who had participated in the Front Line workshop in Phnom Penh. The case was discussed by the EU Missions, and the French Chargé d'affaires called the Ministry of Interior about it. On 1 October, the Prime Minister ordered the Court not to arrest anyone for being on strike.

**Pakistan:** New threats against Parvez Aslam Choudhry. The EU Delegation raised the case with the authorities and contacted Parvez. The EU supported his request for police protection. □



# Thank you

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EIDHR)  
THE FORD FOUNDATION  
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THE OAK FOUNDATION  
THE NORWEGIAN ROYAL MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
THE BELGIUM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
THE IRELAND FUND  
FOUNDATION OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE  
SWISS FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
THE IRIS O'BRIEN FOUNDATION  
THE OVERBROOK FOUNDATION  
HIVOS  
THE AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD SERVICE  
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THE JACKSON FAMILY FOUNDATION  
THE GERMAN EMBASSY DUBLIN  
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PARTICIPANTS OF THE 2010 FRONT LINE GOLF CLASSIC

FRONT LINE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SINCERELY THANK OUR MANY INDIVIDUAL PUBLIC DONORS WHOSE SUPPORT IS VITAL TO OUR EFFORTS.

PLEASE HELP US TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN 143 COUNTRIES BY DONATING TO THE PROTECTION FUND FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT RISK.

THE PROTECTION FUND IS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT FRONT LINE'S SECURITY GRANT'S PROGRAMME AND OTHER FORMS OF DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS.

100% OF DONATIONS TO THE PROTECTION FUND WILL GO DIRECTLY TO THE PRACTICAL SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS WHO ARE AT RISK AS A RESULT OF THEIR WORK TO PROMOTE OPEN AND JUST SOCIETIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

"THANK YOU FOR ALL THE NOISE YOU MADE FROM ABROAD, I WOULD HAVE DISAPPEARED BUT I AM HERE."  
-HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER, ZIMBABWE

To learn more about this and other Front Line activities please visit us at [www.frontlinedefenders.org](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org) or contact Charlie Lamson at + 353 1 212 3750 [charlie@frontlinedefenders.org](mailto:charlie@frontlinedefenders.org)

# REPORTS FROM THE FRONT LINE

“IF WE WANT  
CHANGE WE MUST  
CONTINUE TO  
WORK, THEY  
CANNOT KILL US  
ALL.” DR SORAYA  
RAHIM SOBHRANG,  
AFGHAN  
INDEPENDENT  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
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 **Front Line**



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# The Laughing Heart

your life is your life  
don't let it be clubbed into dank submission.  
be on the watch.  
there are ways out.  
there is a light somewhere.  
it may not be much light but  
it beats darkness.  
be on the watch.  
the gods offer you chances.  
know them.  
take them.  
you can't beat death but  
you can beat death in life, sometimes.  
and the more often you learn to do it,  
the more light there will be.  
your life is your life.  
know life is your life.  
know it while you have it.  
you are marvelous  
the gods wait to delight  
in you.

**Charles Bukowski**



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