

I RISE

YOU MAY WRITE ME DOWN IN HISTORY
WITH YOUR BITTER, TWISTED LIES,
YOU MAY TROD ME IN THE VERY DIRT
BUT STILL, LIKE DUST, I'LL RISE.

DOES MY SASSINESS UPSET YOU?
WHY ARE YOU BESET WITH GLOOM?
'CAUSE I WALK LIKE I'VE GOT OIL WELLS
PUMPING IN MY LIVING ROOM.

JUST LIKE MOONS AND LIKE SUNS,
WITH THE CERTAINTY OF TIDES,
JUST LIKE HOPES SPRINGING HIGH,
STILL I'LL RISE.

DID YOU WANT TO SEE ME BROKEN?
BOWED HEAD AND LOWERED EYES?
SHOULDERS FALLING DOWN LIKE TEARDROPS.
WEAKENED BY MY SOULFUL CRIES.

DOES MY HAUGHTINESS OFFEND YOU?
DON'T YOU TAKE IT AWFUL HARD
'CAUSE I LAUGH LIKE I'VE GOT GOLD MINES
DIGGIN' IN MY OWN BACK YARD.

YOU MAY SHOOT ME WITH YOUR WORDS,
YOU MAY CUT ME WITH YOUR EYES,
YOU MAY KILL ME WITH YOUR HATEFULNESS,
BUT STILL, LIKE AIR, I'LL RISE.

DOES MY SEXINESS UPSET YOU?
DOES IT COME AS A SURPRISE
THAT I DANCE LIKE I'VE GOT DIAMONDS
AT THE MEETING OF MY THIGHS?

OUT OF THE HUTS OF HISTORY'S SHAME
I RISE
UP FROM A PAST THAT'S ROOTED IN PAIN
I RISE
I'M A BLACK OCEAN, LEAPING AND WIDE,
WELLING AND SWELLING I BEAR IN THE TIDE.
LEAVING BEHIND NIGHTS OF TERROR AND FEAR
I RISE
INTO A DAYBREAK THAT'S WONDROUSLY CLEAR
I RISE
BRINGING THE GIFTS THAT MY ANCESTORS GAVE,
I AM THE DREAM AND THE HOPE OF THE SLAVE.
I RISE
I RISE
I RISE.

Maya Angelou

FRONT LINE HEAD OFFICE
81 Main St, Blackrock
Co Dublin
Ireland
Tel: 00 353 1 212 37 50
Fax 00 353 1 212 10 01
info@frontlinedefenders.org

FRONT LINE - EU OFFICE
Square Marie-Louise 72
1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: 00 32 2 230 93 83
Fax: 00 32 2 230 00 28
euoffice@frontlinedefenders.org

WWW.FRONTLINEDEFENDERS.ORG

 **Front Line**

[DISPATCHES]



 **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;
- training and 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 Prize for International Development.



FRONTLINE TRUSTEES



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

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



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

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

Hina Jilani is an internationally known human rights lawyer and advocate for human rights defenders. She was the Special Representative of the Secretary

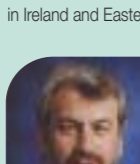


General on the situation of human rights defenders from 2000 to 2008. She and her sister Asma Jahangir co-founded the first all female legal practice in

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



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



Michel Forst is Secretary General of the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights. He was Secretary General of the Paris

Summit and Director of the French section of Amnesty International.



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

access to justice for all.



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



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

She was Director of Fundraising for the 2003 Special Olympics World Games.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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

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

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

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

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

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.



Remembering Natalya

Natalya Estemirova was abducted by unidentified men early on Wednesday the 15th July in Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, where she lived and worked as a human rights defender. She was bundled into a car and was heard shouting "I'm being kidnapped!" Calls to her mobile from a journalist due to meet her went unanswered

A few hours later, her body was found in neighbouring Ingushetia, Her hands were bound, two bullets in her chest and

one in her head. Her crime: researching and reporting on kidnappings, torture and murders, the 'disappeared' in Chechnya, and about the young men who had been abducted by death squads connected to the security forces.

Asked if she ever felt her life was in danger, she said: "Sometimes I just can't even come to feeling that, because I have such strong other feelings. I try to be very exact about how I go about things and I do have worries about my family and people close to me but I still have to do my work. Of course there are moments when I feel scared." Her work for the human rights organisation Memorial earned her the hatred of many powerful figures.

In 2003 Natalya spoke at our 2nd Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders at risk. She told me that the block of flats she lived in with her daughter was full of drunken soldiers and militias and was both unsafe and a bad example for her daughter Lana. We gave her a grant to move to a safer space where she continued her work. Aware of the relentless stress she lived under, we invited Natalya and her daughter Lana to Dublin for 3 months rest and respite. While in Front Line Natalya studied English and used the opportunity to accept invitations around Europe to speak at meetings in an effort to get some action on Chechnya. She spent lot of time with Lana exploring Dublin. Lana went to school in Blackrock for the 3 months and Natalya examined her homework daily.

"SOMETIMES I JUST CAN'T EVEN COME TO FEELING THAT, BECAUSE I HAVE SUCH STRONG OTHER FEELINGS. I TRY TO BE VERY EXACT ABOUT HOW I GO ABOUT THINGS AND I DO HAVE WORRIES ABOUT MY FAMILY AND PEOPLE CLOSE TO ME BUT I STILL HAVE TO DO MY WORK. OF COURSE THERE ARE MOMENTS WHEN I FEEL SCARED."

NATALYA ESTEMIROVA

The last time I saw Natalya was on the 30th April at a meeting in London. She was her usual brave self, warm and smiling. Her beautiful luminous eyes glowed as she spoke about her beloved daughter Lana. We talked about her situation and she said she thought it was a bit safer. How wrong sadly that turned out to be and how devastated we all were to lose someone we had come to know and love.

Mary Lawlor, Director, Front Line

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE >

In 2009:

■ Front Line awarded **154 grants** totalling €349,908 to individual human rights defenders and human rights organisations.

■ Front Line issued **249 individual appeals** on behalf of human rights defenders at risk.

■ Front Line was granted **Observer Status** with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

■ Front Line's field based protection coordinators **conducted missions** to Saudi Arabia, Yemen, United Arab Emirates, Iran, the Palestinian Territories, Oman, Iraq, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine.

■ Front Line also carried out **research missions** to The Gambia, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Colombia, Mexico and Hong Kong.

■ Front Line exhibition **Defending Life With Life**, which highlights the work of human rights defenders toured, Ireland and travelled to Australia and Brussels.

■ Front Line facilitated temporary **relocation for 112 HRDs** and some family members in 2009.

■ **Dr Yuri Melini** received the Front Line Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk, 2009 from Martin Sheen.

■ In response to demands from HRDs for increased field based presence Front Line completed first successful year of **Projection Coordinators** based in the Middle East and the former Soviet Union.



On the cover: Natalya Estemirova; (inset, from top) Walter Orlando Trochez, Honduras; Maryam Hosseinkhah, Iran; Jestina Mukoko, Zimbabwe.

THIS MAP ILLUSTRATES ONLY SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FACING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND THE RESPONSE BY FRONT LINE TO THOSE CHALLENGES.

- AMERICAS**
- **Mexico:** LGBTII human rights defenders, Jaime Lopez Vela and Agustin Estrada Negrete, arrested and physically assaulted by police in the Federal State of Mexico
 - **Honduras:** Transgender human rights defender Cynthia Nicole Moreno murdered in Honduras (she was Front Line's translator during the 2008 mission)
 - **Peru:** Death threat received by human rights defenders Francisco Soberón, Carlos Rivera, Ronald Gamarra and Gloria Cano
 - **Ecuador:** Attack on human rights defender, Rosa Etelvina Misacango Churiir
 - **Guatemala:** Physical assault and death threats against human rights defender, Juana Bacá Velasco
 - **Nicaragua:** Police harassment and detention of women's rights defenders, and ill-treatment of Patricia Orozco upon arrest

- EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA**
- **Uzbekistan:** February 2009; human defender Ganihon Mamathanov, a human rights defenders working in the Fergana valley, sentenced to five years in prison on fabricated charges
 - **Armenia:** June 2009; arrest, beating and detention of human rights defender Arshaluys Hakobyan
 - **Kyrgyzstan:** March 2009; arrest of human rights defender, Tolekan Ismailova
 - **Russian Federation:** July 2009; assassination of human rights defender, Natalya Estemirova
 - **Moscow:** May 2009; Moscow Gay Pride banned for the fourth time
 - **Serbia:** February 2009; media NGO Pescanik targeted with vandalism and restrictions on freedom of expression
 - **Turkey:** May 2009; Human rights defender Filiz Kalayci re-arrested
 - **Turkmenistan:** October 2009; Arrest of ecological activist Andrey Zatoka
 - **Ukraine:** August 2009; Assassination attempt against human rights defender, Vitaly Salnikov and his family

- ASIA**
- **Sri Lanka:** Killing of Sunday Leader newspaper editor, Lasantha Wickramatunga
 - **Pakistan-administered Kashmir:** Threats against human rights defenders, members of Press for Peace
 - **India:** Attacks on human rights defenders, Raghendra Singh Tomar and Babita Singh, during child labour rescue mission
 - **Iran:** Detention of prominent women's human rights defender Shadi Sadr
 - **Indonesia:** Human rights defenders Illian Deta Arta Sari and Emerson Yuntho named as suspects in criminal defamation case
 - **Vietnam:** Human rights defender Tran Khai Thanh Thy attacked and then arrested on assault charges
 - **Philippines:** murder of human rights lawyers Concepcion 'Connie' Brizuela and Cynthia Oquendo in the Maguindanao Massacre
 - **China:** November 2009; human rights defender Lin Dagang was sentenced to two years in prison for illegally possessing state secrets in relation to a document which had been previously published on the internet

PERU: "WE ARE REALLY HAPPY ABOUT THE JUDICIAL RESULT, IT HAS BEEN A VERY DIFFICULT BATTLE, AND WHICH AS I MENTIONED IN A PREVIOUS EMAIL WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN MORE DIFFICULT WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF FRONT LINE, YOU PROVIDED US WITH THE SECURITY MEASURES THAT ALLOWED US TO CARRY OUT THIS WORK THAT HAS NOW HAD SUCH A GOOD RESULT. A VERY BIG HUG FROM LIMA, YES THERE CAN BE JUSTICE, YES WE CAN, THERE ARE RISKS BUT THIS IS OUR WORK, THIS IS OUR LIFE AND IN THIS MOMENT I WOULDN'T CHANGE IT FOR ANYTHING".



UGANDA: ON BEHALF OF THE WODIDEF, I AM WRITING TO YOU THIS MAIL. WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPRESS OUR FEELINGS FOR THE WORK DONE BY FRONT LINE TOWARDS OUR SITUATION. WE REALLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE WORK OF FRONT LINE IN PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT RISK. WE COULD NOT IMAGINE THAT HRDS AT RISK COULD BE PROTECTED LIKE THIS. THIS HAS EMPOWERED US IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS FOR WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE A RELIABLE FRIEND. ALL ACTIONS MADE BY FRONT LINE WERE VERY MEANINGFUL AND SUCCESSFUL.

POSITIVE NEWS

- **Ireland:** Dr Yuri Melini receives the Front Line Award 2009 from Martin Sheen.
- **Colombia:** human rights defender, Andres Gil freed after almost 2 years of detention on 31 August 2009. Andres Gil is a leader and a member of the Executive Committee of the Cimitarra River Valley Peasant Farmer Association (ACVC).
- **Honduras:** killers of human rights lawyer Dionisio Garcia Diaz convicted.
- **Ecuador:** Vicente Samaniego was released on 5 February 2009. Vicente Zhunio Samaniego had been arbitrarily detained since 20 January 2009, after being released from hospital.
- **Egypt:** The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights (EOHR) confirmed to Front Line that the organisation received a letter from the Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity stating that the ministry's previous letter dated 27 April 2009 threatening to dissolve the organisation was "done by mistake". The organisation thinks that this was a result of the support by Front Line and others.

- MIDDLE EAST / NORTH AFRICA**
- **Western Sahara:** Human rights defender Aminatou Haidar arbitrarily arrested by the Moroccan security at El Ayoun airport in Western Sahara and deported to Spain
 - **Tunisia:** Journalist and human rights defender Taoufik Ben Brik sentenced to six months in prison
 - **Iraq:** Journalist and human rights defender Imad Abadi shot in Baghdad
 - **Israel/OPT:** October 2009; detention of human rights defender Mr Mohammad Othman extended
 - **Syria:** Continued detention of Anwar AL Bunni
 - **Saudi Arabia:** Increasing threats and harassment against human rights defender, Waleed Sami Abu-Alkhair

- AFRICA**
- **Cameroon:** Lewis Medjo journalist and human rights defender sentenced by the Tribunal of First Instance in Wouri to three years' imprisonment and fined 2 million CFA (ca. 3,049 euro)
 - **DRC:** 4 human rights organisations in Goma eastern DRC receive death threats "You persist ... Apparently our first message did not tell you much. There will be silence forever. Let us do our business [sic]. Attention. You are all still very young. Mind you calm your children. We know what you do."
 - **Burundi:** The Forum for Strengthening Civil Society (FORSC) received notification of the cancellation of its authorisation by the Ministry of the Interior.
 - **Kenya:** Murder of human rights defenders, Oscar Kamau King'ara and John Paul Oulu "GPO"
 - **Nigeria:** Death threats and harassment against members of Global Rights and Development Initiative
 - **Somaliland:** Mohamed Abdi Guled "Urad" of the Somaliland Journalists' Association sentenced to five months' imprisonment
 - **Sudan:** Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development's registration cancelled and bank account frozen
 - **Zimbabwe:** Threats against Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, particularly Kucaca Phulu and Tineyi Mukweka

DURING 2009, Front Line conducted many missions to meet Human Rights Defenders to see their situation first hand.

The main purpose of these missions was to visit human rights organisations on the ground, to meet human rights defenders at risk, to take part in discussions related to the situation of human rights defenders in each country, and to highlight relevant international standards and mechanisms.

Discussions focused on how to strengthen the protection of HRDs and explaining the different support and protection programmes offered by Front Line. In some of these visits training was either a component or an issue to discuss.

Egypt

IN MARCH, a regional Training-of-Trainers workshop, held in Egypt, brought together 12 potential trainers in Digital Security, following which two training workshops for human rights defenders were conducted in Cairo and Bahrain in June and September.

United Arab Emirates

IN JUNE, Front Line met with human rights defenders at risk in the United Arab Emirates and discussed the situation with senior members of two human rights groups in the country.

Saudi Arabia

IN JULY, Front Line visited western Saudi Arabia, a country where human rights organisations are not allowed to operate, to meet activists from different cities and backgrounds, including women, young activists and advocates.

Iran

IN AUGUST, a visit was conducted to Iran, in the aftermath of the disturbances and violations which followed the presidential elections. To study the situation on the ground Front Line had meetings and discussions with human rights groups, HRDs at risk, human rights lawyers who were involved in the HRDs' cases and visited the families of detained HRDs.



Caitriona Rice with Suciwati, wife of assassinated human rights defender Munir

Yemen

THE VISIT TO YEMEN in May included meetings with human rights organisations at risk in order to conduct a needs assessment. That resulted in a training programme in October for four organisations, which included a workshop on protection and related international mechanisms, a workshop on digital security, and a round table discussion on the situation of human rights defenders and ways of enhancing their protection.

Gaza

IN SEPTEMBER Front Line met with human rights defenders in Gaza and discussed the very difficult ongoing challenges they face in the context of the ongoing siege and severe restrictions on their freedom of movement.

In October, a workshop was conducted in Ramallah in the West Bank in coordination with the Independent Commission for Human Rights, on International standards and mechanisms related to human rights defenders and the work of Front Line. This was followed by round table discussions by 20 participants representing 12 organisations and media activists.

Senior members of ICHR office in Gaza participated through video conference. Front Line also visited human rights organisations in Ramallah and Jerusalem to discuss the situation and possible

cooperation related to human rights defenders.

Oman

THE VISIT IN NOVEMBER to Oman was to participate in a seminar on empowering women in Oman and meeting with activists.

Iraq

THAT SAME MONTH Front Line met several Iraqi human rights organisations in Baghdad and facilitated a training session in Erbil/Kurdistan for 25 human rights educators from different cities on "human rights education during conflict" and on the work and protection of human rights defenders.

In December, a regional workshop took place in Cairo where human rights defenders and European diplomats from six countries met to discuss the implementation of the European Union's Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.

Indonesia

"THE WORST THING IS THAT they have stolen my profession; my economic and intellectual rights have been infringed. They didn't succeed in threatening me, so they went one further and made me leave my job".

This is just one of the quotes from a

well known freelance journalist in Makassar, South Sulawesi who was forced to leave his job as a result of defamation charges brought against him by the Provincial Chief of Police. Subsequently he was acquitted but the charges were just one form of persecution he has faced as a result of his work as a journalist and human rights defender. He has had death threats, threats of detention, rats have been left outside his home and he almost faced having to leave the country for his own protection.

"MY STRATEGY IS ALWAYS THAT WE MUST RESIST THIS. IF THEY SPEAK, WE SPEAK. WE CANNOT BE SILENCED. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THAT WE DON'T USE VIOLENCE"
HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER, JAKARTA

In October 2009 Front Line visited Indonesia to meet human rights defenders and hear accounts of the challenges that they continue to face in carrying out their work. 11 years after the fall of the Suharto regime, and 5 years after the assassination of leading human rights defender Munir, those working to protect the rights of others in Indonesia continue to report threats and harassment such as; torture, ill-treatment, arbitrary detention, death threats, and an increasing trend of using criminal defamation cases against HRDs in order to obstruct their work and silence them.

Mexico

IN NOVEMBER 2009 Front Line travelled to Mexico City and Chihuahua to hold a series of meetings with human rights defenders who reported threats against their life and personal integrity, arbitrary use of the criminal justice system, physical attacks, arbitrary detention and continuous surveillance. HRDs face threats and persecution from the side of the authorities, transnational corporations, organised criminal groups and narco-traffickers, and due to the high



Caitriona Rice and Leonor Rebassa with HRDs in Chihuahua, Mexico

levels of overall insecurity there is a state of almost absolute impunity where the authorities refuse to acknowledge the extent of these problems.

Journalists, environmentalists, women activists and defenders who work with local communities are particularly at risk. The work of human rights defenders is regularly discredited and the response to questions about growing insecurity through militarisation has been "what do you want, security or human rights", as if these two concepts must be mutually exclusive.

Colombia

"WE REALLY BELIEVE THAT MANY of us would not be alive today, and our organisations would not exist, if there had not been an intensive and sustained engagement from the international community."

Front Line undertook a mission to Colombia in December 2009. Our visit was hosted by Somos Defensores a Colombian Programme which is a joint project of four organ-

contd. over >



Principe Gabriel Gonzales, Regional Coordinator of the Political Prisoners Solidarity Committee

isations working to protect human rights defenders in all parts of the country.

During our visit we met with many human rights defenders as well as representatives of the Government's protection programme. Workshops were held in Bucaramanga, Cali and Bogota with human rights defenders from a diverse range of regions. Participants included trade unionists, leaders of women's groups, environmentalists, journalists, social movement leaders, Afro-Colombian defenders and defenders of Indigenous Peoples' rights.

In Bucaramanga we met with Principe Gabriel Gonzalez of the Committee for Solidarity with Political Prisoners (CSPP) who recently spent 15 months in prison on trumped up charges. This is part of a pattern of fabricated prosecutions of human rights defenders, often with evidence from supposedly demobilised guerrillas or paramilitaries.

Ending the misuse of state intelligence and ending unfounded criminal prosecutions against human rights defenders are two of the five key demands of the campaign for the right to defend human rights in Colombia.

Front Line is one of the more than 120 national and international organisations to have joined the campaign and we participated in the launch events in Dublin and Brussels.

Defenders in Colombia are demanding an end to the stigmatisation whereby Government representatives from the President down equate human rights defenders with terrorists and guerrillas which encourages attacks against them and a call for structural improvements in the protection programmes for those at risk.

One human rights defender we met had been waiting two years for a reinforced door for his office.

The most important demand is for an end to impunity for those who attack human rights defenders. Official investigations of threats against human rights defenders are almost nonexistent.

LGBTI rights and protection

IN MARCH 2009 HEARTLAND Alliance organised a conference in Chicago to bring together interna-



Jestina Mukoko celebrating International Human Rights Day at reception in Dutch Embassy in Dublin after her release.

tional and grassroots activists and organizations working to advance LGBTI rights and protections. They invited Front Line to facilitate a session on security and protection and practical measures that LGBTI rights defenders can use in order to prevent or minimise security lapses or incidents through analysis and planning; and also introduce strategies for emergency responses to persecution or harassment of LGBTI rights defenders at both.

Zimbabwe

AT THE TIME OF FRONT LINE'S visit to Zimbabwe in September 2009, the security and economic situation had improved since implementation of the Global Political Agreement in January 2009. Human rights organisations however were pessimistic about whether this environment would hold. Fears of a new wave of attacks against defenders materialised in November 2009 with the arrest of several civil society leaders.

Much of the risk originates in the near-total absence of the rule of law. Despite a long history of harassment and the existence of a well established mechanism to react promptly to abuses against human rights defenders, the abduction of Zimbabwe Peace Project's Director

Jestina Mukoko came as a shock to the whole NGO community.

Abductions, physical violence and arbitrary arrest are coupled with unfounded prosecutions, generally from the same handful of prosecutors. Although release is often secured, this practice draws time and resources from NGOs. ZANU-PF continues to accuse NGOs of being subversive, pro-Western or advocates of gay marriage to discredit them and increase the risk of attack from militias or other groups.

The Gambia

"WE LIVE IN A CLIMATE OF FEAR". This is the comment most often heard from human rights defenders in the Gambia, during Front Line's visit in November 2009. While there is no systematic policy of everyday arrest or physical violence, the murder and the disappearance of two well-known journalists in 2004 and 2006, where the police are believed to be implicated, is a vivid memory. The authorities seem to operate by targeting people as an example to others and reminding them what can happen to critical voices. The trial of the Gambian Press Union's executives in June 2009 for publishing a statement criticising the impunity prevailing for the murder and disappearance of their colleagues, must be read as such a reminder. Another recent warning was the outrageous televised statement made by the Gambian President on 21 September 2009 threatening human rights defenders – Gambian and foreigners alike – with death should they criticise the government.

Uzbekistan

IN 2009, THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS defenders remained difficult in many countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia and Front Line undertook several research missions in this region.

The mission to Uzbekistan in February-March permitted Front Line to better understand the situation of human rights defenders working at high risk under constant surveillance. Several human rights defenders continue to remain in prison and there are serious concerns for their health. Since the beginning of 2009, at least

four human rights defenders were sentenced to long-term imprisonment on fabricated charges. Human rights defenders continue to be subjected to physical attacks, harassment and surveillance by the authorities.

Kyrgyzstan

DURING FRONT LINE'S MISSION to Kyrgyzstan it became clear that the situation has deteriorated significantly. The amendments adopted by parliament on 13 June 2008 to the 2002 Law 'On the Right of Citizens to Hold Peaceful Assemblies' restricted freedom of assembly by establishing a licensing system for public assemblies. As a result, protests in 2009 were forcibly dispersed by the authorities and the participants were prosecuted. The repression of peaceful demonstrations has escalated, especially during the presidential campaign in summer 2009 which resulted in the arrest of hundreds of peaceful demonstrators.

Belarus

IN BELARUS, where Front Line carried out a mission in August two human rights organisations have been able to register officially. The others continue to work illegally and could be prosecuted under the Criminal Code. The Belarusian authorities maintain their hostile attitude towards NGOs and human

IN BELARUS, WHERE FRONT LINE CARRIED OUT A MISSION IN AUGUST, ONLY TWO HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REGISTER OFFICIALLY

rights defenders whose activities are presented as being primarily political and mainly financed by the West. The state-owned media, especially Belarusian television, which is under total governmental control, are used to discredit the work of human rights defenders.

Ukraine

IN SEPTEMBER 2009 FRONT LINE carried out a preliminary research mission to Ukraine to meet human rights defenders and get their evaluation of the current security situation for human rights defenders.

North Caucasus

IN 2009, THE SITUATION of human rights defenders dramatically worsened in Russia, especially in the North Caucasus. The violence reached an unprecedented level with a series of murders of human rights defenders. In Chechnya, Natalya

Estemirova, member of the Grozny office of Human Rights Center Memorial was abducted and killed on 15 July 2009.

Zarema Saydulaeva and her husband, Alik Djabrailov, both working in the humanitarian organisation Save the Generation which helps children victims of war, were detained and killed on 10 August. On 11 August, the journalist Malik Akhmedilov, editor of a Dagestan based newspaper, was found shot dead in his car. On the night of 19 August 2009, the office of Mothers of Dagestan for Human Rights was burned to the ground. On 25 October 2009, In Ingushetia, Mr Maksharip Aushev, businessman and human rights activist was shot and killed.

A climate of impunity continues to prevail in Russia for those who have carried out grave human rights violations. The lack of independent and effective investigations and hostile rhetoric towards human rights defenders by state authorities encourages the feeling of impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators and the increasing harassment and persecution of human rights defenders in the Russian Federation.

Throughout 2009 Front Line worked to highlight this situation to the international community and the need for the development of more effective mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders in this region. The worsening situation for human rights defenders and the need for better coordination between national organisations and the development of a domestic and regional alert system were the main topics of discussion during the Round Table on Human Rights Activism, organised by the Office of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, which took place in September in Kiev (Ukraine).

During the Human Dimension and Implementation meeting, the annual conference of the Office for the Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organisation of Security and Cooperation of Europe, Front Line, and a representative of the Human Rights Center Memorial, organised meetings with the ODIHR Focal Point on Human Rights Defenders and the representative of the European delegations. []



Tolekan Ismaelova, Yelena Urlaeva, Masha Chichtchenkova, and Anne Rimmer

Protection and security training for HRDs

FRONT LINE'S PROTECTION AND SECURITY TRAINING PROGRAMME has been developed in response to requests from HRDs at risk for training which will help them to protect themselves more effectively against the dangers they face.

During 2009, 77 HRDs at risk from 24 countries were trained directly. Many of these carried out follow-up training in their home countries.

In 2009 Front Line conducted ToT workshops in Mexico City and Brussels which brought together human rights defenders from 18 countries. Follow on workshops were carried out by HRDs who had attended ToTs and other workshops were also conducted in eastern DRC (for women HRDs), Kenya, Kyrgyzstan and Yemen.

Through their participation in Front Line's security training workshops, human rights defenders at risk can realistically assess and minimise the risks they face by: sharing with each other their protection strategies; gaining insights by considering the threats they face in a systematic way;

and developing personal and organisational security plans. These plans will both reduce the likelihood of risks materialising, and reduce the impact of any which do.

In Kenya, an urgent workshop was arranged at the request of HRDs after 2 HRDs were shot and killed in their car – an up-scaling of violence against HRDs. The HRDs there talked about the growing climate of insecurity. One result of this was increased social isolation, as family members and former friends did not want to be associated with activists who were perceived as anti-government. On the other hand, HRDs restricted the amount of time they spent with their loved ones in case their presence led to an attack. In a time of great insecurity, HRDs were losing the close network of support which could help them endure increasing danger.

The demonisation of HRDs

At a number of the workshops, a recurring theme was the 'demonisation' of HRDs – by the authorities, the media and communities.

One participant from eastern DRC said 'I am too scared even to go to church because my neighbours threaten me'. Strategies to deal with this demonisation included organising meetings with the authorities to explain the defender's work and how it would benefit the community and country, developing better relationships with journalists and alternative media outlets, and holding community meetings.

One of the HRDs from a Central Asian Republic had actually been denounced to the authorities by her neighbours as a traitor for her work in defending the rights of others. She said that her relationships in the community completely transformed over time – particularly when the local community benefited from her successful efforts to improve access to electricity distribution in the neighbourhood.

Deteriorating situations

Another theme was the deteriorating situation for HRDs in many countries. In the ToT in Mexico City participants from eight countries across the

QUOTES FROM WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS:

"WHAT WORKED WELL WAS THE GROUP DYNAMIC, THE RICHNESS OF THE INFORMATION AND THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE FACILITATORS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE OBSERVATIONS."

"I'M GOING TO SIT DOWN IMMEDIATELY WITH THE MEMBERS OF MY ORGANISATION TO PASS ON THIS TRAINING AND PUT IN PLACE A SECURITY STRATEGY."

"I WILL CHANGE MY OLD BEHAVIOUR AND ADAPT IT IN LINE WITH THE KNOWLEDGE I ACQUIRED."

"AS A RESULT OF THE TRAINING, I WILL TAKE SECURITY ISSUES VERY, VERY SERIOUSLY, BECAUSE ANY CARELESSNESS COULD BE COSTLY – INDIVIDUALLY AND ORGANISATIONALLY."

"IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THE TRAINING, I WOULD HAVE BEEN AMONG THOSE WHO WERE DETAINED."



Gégé Katana, (left) DRC, and Lalla Aicha Cheikhou Ouédraogo, Mauritania, at the ToT in Brussels

region spoke movingly of the challenge of continuing to work in increasingly dangerous environments. Participants had faced assaults, torture, imprisonment, home burning, office attacks, assassination attempts and threats against family members. Most had been labelled 'enemies' and 'terrorists' and all worked in environments with impunity. The perpetrators were varied: government; military and police units; para-military armed groups and anti-para-military militias; 'social-cleansing' groups; narco-traffickers; mining and logging companies. As a result of the above, the cumulative stress experienced by the HRDs was tremendous – one participant said "In the 37 years we have been working, we have saved many lives but also buried many people ... We are kind of dead – alive, living dead."

Participants also highlighted their vulnerability whilst travelling in rural areas, and identified elements of the protection and contingency plan which could be set up to address the threats and vulnerabilities. The group role-played a HRD driving to a remote area and being attacked by armed men (see photo, left). In this role play, when the HRD was attacked, she rang her office and left her phone open so that her office contact could hear what was happening. The office colleague rang the nearest village contact who came to the scene and explained to the armed men that the defender was not a threat, but helped their community – and she was released. Local knowledge was seen as crucial. As one participant said "If

they are criminals they will take your valuables and you can run; if they are narco-traffickers they will kill you". If you know who they are you can better assess the risk and your reaction."

HRDs display incredible courage and ingenuity in facing the threats they encounter

Women HRDs in Africa talked about the difficulties and dangers inherent in exposing sexual abuse and denouncing rapists. One defender explained that, in the rural areas where strangers were treated with suspicion, one way of passing on information was to pose as a bread seller and give specially marked breads containing messages to designated contacts.

A Human Rights Defender at a different workshop explained how he had been abducted by members of the security forces and bundled into the boot of the car. This method had been used to abduct defenders before killing them. This defender found that his mobile phone had not been taken from him and he calmly called a colleague, giving the name of one of the people who had abducted him. His colleague was able to contact a superior of the abductor, who rang the subordinate and told him to set the defender free.

When being released, this defender was told "say nothing about this incident" – he immediately went to the media and publicised the incident!



Role play of attack by armed men on HRDs, during ToT in Mexico City

Digital Security and Training



DIGITAL COMMUNICATION brings new opportunities but also new risks, that we understand less, that are less intuitive to us. The most dangerous offenders who take advantage of this situation and who manipulate communications to their own ends are governments. There are countries where freedom of expression and information along with other freedoms are not respected. **Online journalists and bloggers now represent 45% of all media workers in prison worldwide.**

Fortunately there are means and tools to improve your digital security and privacy, there are steps to take to avoid this risk. In response to this task Front Line together with Tactical Tech and a number of other organisations created a project called **Security in-a-Box**.

It is a toolkit of peer-reviewed free and opensource 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 basic understanding of the risks. Starting with the source of the risk, of the problem, 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.

We wanted also to reduce the overwhelming choices of tools often faced by people when trying to find solutions to their problems, by

SECURITY IN-A-BOX IS A TOOLKIT OF PEER-REVIEWED FREE AND OPENSOURCE 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 BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE RISKS

presenting the best preselected software tool. We reviewed recommended software and accompanied it by clear explanations of how to use it and it is written for the non-technical user.

In 2009 we published a second edition of the toolkit. During this first phase of the Security project, we have distributed 2,500 hard copies of the toolkit on request in over 45 countries.

Together with Tactical Tech we have trained over 800 HRDs and independent journalists in Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. We received a steady average of more than

10,000 visits a month to the website with Security in-a-Box.

The new and improved edition of the toolkit 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.
- How to protect your computer from malware (like viruses) and hackers.
- How to create and maintain secure passwords.

These are the foundation 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 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 protection of communication:

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

SECURITY IN-A-BOX

The whole toolkit is available online on the Internet – you can get it from Front Line's website or from: 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 **French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and English**. There are plans for translating guides and tools to 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.



Aftermath of police raid, Western Sahara

Front Line Grants Programme

FRONT LINE'S GRANTS Programme provides support to strengthen the security and protection of human rights defenders at risk worldwide.

Human Rights Defenders can apply for a security grant to Front Line by filling out an application form and sending it to:

grants@frontlinedefenders.org

For more information and for the application form please see:

www.frontlinedefenders.org/guidelines-grant-applications

Applications may be made in Arabic, Russian, English, French or Spanish. Grants are given for amounts up to a maximum of €6,000.

In 2001, Front Line's budget was €50,000. In 2009, Front Line awarded 154 grants, with a total of €349,908 to individual human rights defenders and human rights organisations.

Front Line typically awards grants for measures to improve the security of HRDs offices such as: bars or grills on windows, metal doors and gates, roofing grills, CCTV cameras, secure storage facilities and unarmed guards. Grants have been given for ICT security measures such as

laptops to enable HRDs to work in safe places and communicate securely. Mobile phones and radio patrol UHF radios have been provided for HRDs in remote areas.

HRDs have been given security grants to purchase cameras which will enable HRDs to collect photographic evidence when a HRD is being harassed.

Medical and legal assistance have also been provided to HRDs who have been tortured or who are facing spurious legal prosecutions. Transport has been provided when HRDs are at risk using public transport. □



Above: In Peru, members of the Bagua community demonstrating to protect the land rights of indigenous communities

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In 2009 there has been a marked increase in emergency grants to human rights defenders at immediate risk. Approximately 45% of the total grants being awarded were awarded for the relocation of HRDs. LGBTI human rights defenders, women human rights defenders and indigenous human rights defenders face particular risks.

Front Line temporarily relocated 112 HRDs and some families of HRDs to safe houses within the country or region.

Recently, Front Line has developed a new initiative to help human rights defenders manage the stress of working under intense pressure.

FEEDBACK FROM HRDs WHO RECEIVED GRANTS IN 2009:

Front Line awarded a relocation and security grant for the home and office of Philippine women's human rights defender, Cerila Anding, a union representative from Compostela Valley Province: "Frankly, I still don't know what would have happened. Maybe, I would already be a victim of extra judicial killing or any cases of human rights violations. Three weeks ago, a woman union president (in a neighboring plant) was shot while driving her motorcycle. Fortunately, she survived. **The Front Line grant gave us a breather space – a shelter that make us slept better.**"

Front Line provided an unarmed guard to "Women Journalists Without Chains" in Yemen (see picture page 18). "Now that we have a guard and an independent office, we feel more secure and comfortable. Having such a feeling enables us to do our job in defending rights and freedoms the best way possible."

In July 2009, Front Line gave the Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU) in Nairobi, Kenya, a grant for CCTV cameras with remote backup as a security feature. Wanjiru Gathuru from IMLU said "Many Human rights defenders and their organisations in Kenya have been threatened and attacked. With this grant we can now be able to capture with our new CCTV cameras, accurate images of suspects who are likely to be aggressors or otherwise aid in aggression when they visit the IMLU office premises. As a result this generous contribution from Front Line, staff already feel safer while on the premises"

In October 2009 Front Line issued an emergency grant to the members of LGBTI Group AJEM (Asociacion de jovenes en moviemento) to enable them to buy and electronic alarm and intercom system for their offices.

In Mogadishu, Somalia, Front Line awarded a grant to Radio Banadir, for cameras, bulletproof vests, barbed wire for the top of the wall of the organisation's office. This is what the organisation said: "Over the years the security of the capital of Somalia was deteriorating. As a result, many journalists have been forced to flee from the country. These particular security measures not only give protection for our media personnel but also provide a strong spirit for the journalists who are operating in the various hostile sectors in the Capital."



Launch of "Insiste Persiste Resiste Existe" report in Brussels

Tshikaya were arrested in March in the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the EU Office called the Commandant of the prison where they were detained, exchanged SMS with EC Commissioner Louis Michel, and raised the case with the Czech Presidency and the Belgian Government. The EU Presidency

FRONT LINE'S EU OFFICE has continued to develop its advocacy work for human rights defenders at risk and to promote interaction between HRDs and EU decision-makers, through the sending of urgent appeals, submission of briefing notes in relation to the EU agenda, organisation of HRD visits to Brussels and interactive field workshops gathering HRDs and diplomats in Mexico City and Cairo.

One of the main challenges is getting feedback from the EU about actions taken on behalf of HRDs. The EU Guidelines on human rights defenders read: "If action is taken on behalf of the EU, EU Missions should provide feedback to human rights defenders and/or their families." Although the Czech Presidency of the EU was active in this field, providing information on most cases raised by Front Line, this remains an important issue which should lead EU Governments and Institutions to move from personal dedication to flexible mechanisms of action and feedback.

Good practices

Front Line recognises the progress made since the adoption of the EU Guidelines in 2004. Protection of human rights defenders is now high in the EU and Member States' agenda. The European Commission (EC) is funding NGOs, including Front Line, to help protect the physical and psychological integrity of HRDs at risk. On several occasions the Human Rights Unit of the EC has invited Front Line to present its experience and views to EU and Member State officials on training.

In the field, examples show that where there is political will, the EU can make a difference.

When HRDs Floribert Bahizire, Dolly Inefo Mbunga and Donat

Presidency and the Belgian Government. The EU Presidency

FRONT LINE RECOGNISES THE PROGRESS MADE SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE EU GUIDELINES IN 2004. PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IS NOW HIGH IN THE EU AND MEMBER STATES' AGENDA. THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (EC) IS FUNDING NGOS, INCLUDING FRONT LINE, TO HELP PROTECT THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF HRDS AT RISK

made a demarche, and the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs issued a public statement. The defenders were released three days after their arrest.

At the end of June, **Azerbaijan** was about to adopt amendments to the law on NGOs that would have threatened civil society. The EU Presidency delivered a demarche to the authorities in Baku, and the Parliament did not vote on the draft as planned.

In **China**, at the end of July, human rights defenders Xu Zhiyong and Zhuang Lu were arrested by police at their homes in Beijing. The European Parliament Human Rights Unit called to inform us about their demarche

towards the Chinese Embassy in Brussels, in which they requested information on HRDs' whereabouts. The EU Office then called the EU to take action in relation to the refusal to grant lawyer and family visits. They replied that the EU was preparing a confidential demarche which would include such requests. Both HRDs were finally released.

Death threats were received in November by journalists and human rights defenders Frederica Jansz and Munza Mushataq, who work at the *Sunday Leader*, a newspaper in **Sri Lanka**, whose former Editor-in-Chief, Lasantha Wickramatunga, was murdered in January 2009. Following the sending of HRD contact details by the EU Office on 10 November, the European Commission Delegation in Colombo spoke to Frederica Jansz and offered to organise a meeting with the diplomatic community to discuss about their case, on 16 November.

Moving up a gear

At a time when the European Union is at a crossroads, reviewing its foreign policy architecture under the Lisbon Treaty, Front Line's EU Office will continue to strive for improved implementation of the Guidelines, and – first and foremost – for making sure EU Governments and Institutions focus on the outcomes of their actions on behalf of human rights defenders at risk.

The EU Office will therefore call on the EU to move up a gear in the protection of human rights defenders through its external policy agenda, more specifically with the aim of involving human rights defenders in the drafting, monitoring and review of local strategies through a participative methodology, and by appointing focal points who can play an active role in contacting and protecting human rights defenders at risk on behalf of EU missions.

The appointment of such focal points – both at central and mission levels – would help human rights defenders identify the EU as a key actor able to provide them with practical support, in accordance with the core values of the EU, giving these values increased status and credibility. This would in addition confer increased legitimacy on the work being done by human rights defenders. □

ON 8TH MAY 2009, FRONT LINE WAS JOINED BY PARLIAMENTARIANS and leaders of the NGO, political and business communities to pay tribute to an outstanding and courageous human rights defender.

The Front Line Award 2009 was presented to Dr Yuri Melini of CALAS (The Centre for Legal Action on Environmental and Social Issues) in Guatemala, by Front Line's Special Representative, actor and activist, Martin Sheen at a ceremony in Dublin's City Hall. Dr Yuri Melini was awarded the Front Line Award because of his work to uphold the rights of the indigenous people of Guatemala against the ruthless interests of the logging and mining companies who put the profits of their companies before the interests of the community.

On 4 September, 2008, Yuri Melini was shot 7 times as he was leaving his home and as a result spent 22 days in intensive care. He was shot because his human rights work challenged the interests of powerful people. Yuri Melini in the last two years has documented 128 attacks on environmental activists and has led the campaign to bring the assassins of environmental campaigners, lawyer Erwin Ochoa López and Julio Armando Vásquez (CONAP – Guatemalan National Council of Protected Areas – workers) to justice.

In accepting the Award Dr Melini said "I accept this award on behalf of the people of Guatemala because the environment belongs to everyone, not just to one small group. In Guatemala there should be room for everyone irrespective of their point of view. This is why I dedicate myself to continue the struggle for human rights in Guatemala.

The other nominees selected by the Front Line jury for the 2009 Front Line Award included Danilo Rueda from Colombia, Yaena Solaemae from Thailand and Samuel Mohochi from Kenya.

Speaking at the event Front Line Director Mary Lawlor said "Whether facing attack by paramilitaries in Colombia, revenge by the army in Thailand, a corrupt legal system and police force in Kenya or the risk of assassination by elements of the security forces in Guatemala, all four nominees have shown that around the world there are people who think more of the rights of others than of their own safety".

Front Line Exceptional Award

For the first time Front Line presented an Exceptional Award which went to Irishman John Ging, Director of Operations for the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). In presenting the Award Front Line Chairman Denis O'Brien said "His is an objective and authoritative voice conveying the horrific reality on the ground in the Gaza Strip to an international audience – a voice that is increasingly recognised – but at a price. Just over a year after he took up this role masked gunmen fired on his armoured car before he managed to drive off. A number of his staff and students have been killed in the Israeli attacks in recent months. □

"I ACCEPT THIS AWARD ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF GUATEMALA BECAUSE THE ENVIRONMENT BELONGS TO EVERYONE"
DR YURI MELINI

FRONT LINE AWARD FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT RISK

The annual Front Line Award was established in 2004 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 the 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 include:

- 2005 **Mudawi Ibrahim Adam**, Sudan
- 2006 **Ahmadjan Madmarov**, Uzbekistan
- 2007 **Gégé Katana**, DRC
- 2008 **Anwar Al Bunni**, Syria



Dr Yuri Melini receiving the 2009 Front Line Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk from actor and human rights activist Martin Sheen

Defending Life with Life

IN 2008 FRONT LINE in partnership with Irish newspaper *The Sunday Tribune* sent a journalist and a photographer to Honduras Western Sahara, the states of Assam and Tripura in North East India, Serbia and Kenya to hear at first hand the experiences of human rights defenders at risk. In addition to the articles appearing in newspapers in Ireland, the UK and Spain the project also produced a wonderful photographic exhibition called **Defending Life With Life**.

THE EXHIBITION PRESENTED A PRACTICAL AND EFFECTIVE WAY TO EXPLAIN TO A WIDER PUBLIC WHO HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS ARE, WHY THEY ARE AT RISK AND ABOVE ALL WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PROTECT THEM

In 2009 Front Line decided that the exhibition presented a practical and effective way to explain to a wider public who human rights defenders are, why they are at risk and above all what can be done to protect them.

In Ireland the exhibition was shown in the offices of Irish Aid in Limerick where it was opened by Ireland's Minister of State for Overseas Development, Mr Peter Power TD. In Cork where the exhibition was viewed by 800 people in one night during the city's night of culture, the exhibition was opened by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork Cllr Kieran McCarthy, who said "But in every corner of the world as noted by Front Line there are heroes – human rights defenders. There is the unsung hero, not living in an action programme or action movie but living in very real life situations striving forward, pushing inch by inch, making a difference providing a sense of belief and confidence in campaigning for rights and a better world and future."

The Exhibition then showed in Kilkenny Castle for a month before completing its Irish tour in the City Museum Galway.

In every instance the reaction of the people who viewed the exhibition was one of shock and awe. Shock at the fact that such violence could be visited on brave people standing up for the rights of others and awe at the courage of the human rights defenders who take violence, intimidation and the risk of assassination in their daily stride.

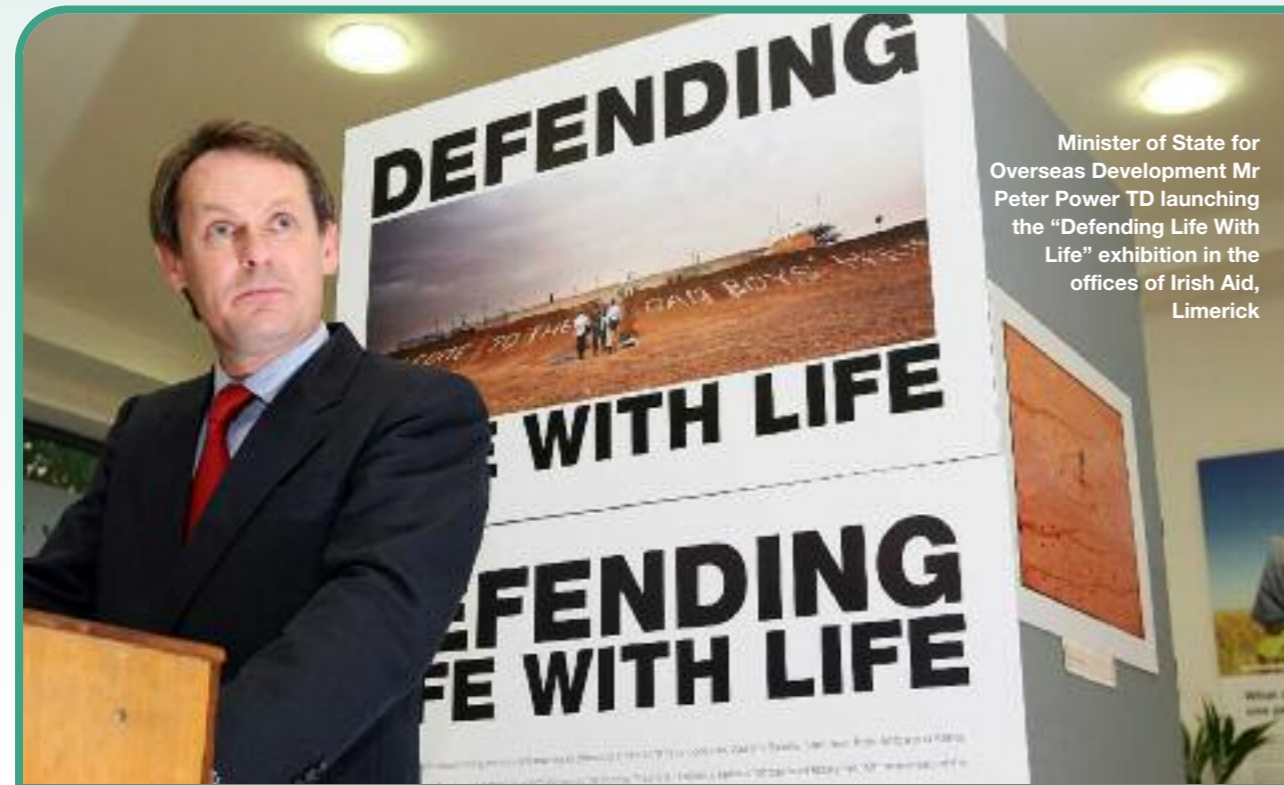
In Australia, Defending Life With Life was shown in the Bleeding Heart

Gallery, Brisbane due to the generous support of The Wise Foundation. In Brisbane the exhibition was opened by Ms. Kerry Rea MP, Chair of the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Australian Parliament who was also speaking on behalf of Australia's Foreign Minister Mr Stephen Smyth MP.

The opening was an opportunity to highlight Front Line's campaign calling on the Australian Government to introduce Australian Guidelines on the protection of human rights defenders similar to those already in place in the EU and Europe. Andrew Anderson and special guest Njeri Kabeberi, Director of the Kenyan Centre for Multi Party Democracy spoke at the opening. They also undertook a series of meetings with key government and NGO contacts to urge them to support Front Line's proposal. On 15 December Defending Life With Life opened in Brussels with the participation of Ms Riina Kionka, Personal Representative on Human Rights of the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union / High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Front Line's special guest on this occasion was Serbian human rights defender Ms Biljana Kovacevic-Vuco Director Of YUCOM, (the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights). □



Sunday Tribune photographer Mark Condren with some of the photos from the Defending Life With Life Exhibition



Minister of State for Overseas Development Mr Peter Power TD launching the "Defending Life With Life" exhibition in the offices of Irish Aid, Limerick



Michael D Higgins opening the exhibition in Galway



Deputy Lord Mayor of Kilkenny, Cllr Seán Ó hArgáin and Jim Loughran at the opening of the exhibition in Kilkenny

Rest & Respite and Fellowships

SUNANDA DESHAPRIYA, a journalist working for human rights, peace and media freedom in Sri Lanka spent 6 months in Geneva on the Front Line Fellowship.

He was forced to leave Sri Lanka in 2009 due to threats linked to his human rights work. During his time on the Fellowship he worked on building networks among the Sri Lankan diaspora communities, Tamil and Sinhala, who are committed to strengthen democracy in Sri Lanka. He engaged in lobbying and advocacy on human rights in Sri Lanka with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other human rights mechanisms.

“What is important for human rights defenders at risk is not only finding a safe environment to live but also to keep their human rights work ongoing. This Fellowship has meant evading death and continuing my contribution towards the struggle for human rights in Sri Lanka.”

My field of human rights activism is freedom of expression. I continue to write and publish, deliver speeches and presentations, do advocacy and networking on human rights issues in Sri Lanka.

I have reached thousands of people through my work during the last few months. The impact of human rights activism is difficult to gauge in the short term in a country like Sri Lanka

Human rights fellowships for human rights defenders at risk are at their best when they are based on trust. That is what Front Line fellowship has been to me.”

Elmahjoub Maliha, a member of the Collective of Saharawi Human Rights Defenders (CODESA) Western Sahara, spent 3 months on Front Line’s Digital Security Internship in Dublin. He gained experience in IT support and developed specific skills related to digital security that can help protect

human rights defenders and their work. He hopes to carry out training in digital security with human rights defenders when he returns to Western Sahara.

Dr Ahmed Osman, a medical doctor from Sudan, came to Dublin on our Humanitarian visa scheme due to the serious risks he was facing. He took English classes and received medical treatment.

THE WEEKS I SPENT IN REST AND PERSONAL REHABILITATION IN DUBLIN WERE CRUCIAL TO MY ABILITY TO FUNCTION IN A COMPLEX AND PRECARIOUS ENVIRONMENT
ANNA PINTO

Anna Pinto, Director of the Centre for Organisation Research and Education (CORE) in North East India came to Dublin on our rest and respite programme for 3 weeks in March.

“The weeks I spent in rest and personal rehabilitation in Dublin were crucial to my ability to function in a complex and precarious environment which gets more violent and unreasonable every day. Without this support and the range of assistance I was offered I would not have been able to continue my work, perhaps my entire organisation would have had to close.”

Jaber and Amna Wishah of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights also visited on rest and respite for a few weeks in August.

TIC POUR TOUS Tic Pour Tous – IT & Communication for all – was founded as an independent NGO in Kinshasa in 2007 as a follow-

on from Front Line’s project to provide IT support for human rights defenders in Eastern DRC. This original project arose from the needs of human rights defenders in this troubled part of the country to communicate securely and safely. For example, at that time the only way for human rights defenders in Uvira to communicate with their colleagues and supporters in other parts of the country and the world was by crossing the border to use internet cafes in Burundi. As a result they were often picked up crossing the border along a militarised road. The initial project started with a focus on establishing an internet resource centre in Uvira and providing training and support to defenders in Kisangani, Goma and

Bukavu. Subsequently, internet resource centres were opened in Butembo and Kindu and training has been undertaken in Fizi, Lubumbashi and Kinshasa. The project, led by Gabriel Bombambo who is now the Executive Director of Tic Pour Tous, has been so successful that it has developed into an independent foundation with the aim of developing and promoting digital security training throughout the country in order to facilitate the protection of data that is essential to the work in defence of human rights. At the end of 2009 Tic Pour Tous succeeded in opening a fourth internet resource centre for human rights defenders in Bunia. □



R Tawakkol Karman and colleague in Yemen

Women Journalists Without Chains, Yemen
(see article, page 13)

“Now that we have a guard and an independent office, we feel more secure and comfortable. Having such a feeling enables us to do our job in defending rights and freedoms the best way possible.”

Contributors

Front Line is grateful for the generous support of the following contributors

FRONT LINE INCOME 2009

- The European Commission (EIDHR)
- The Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Irish Aid
- The Sigrid Rausing Trust
- The Ford Foundation
- The Norwegian Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The Oak Foundation
- Zennström Philanthropies
- The American Jewish World Service
- Foundation Open Society Institute
- The German Embassy Dublin
- The Michael Jackson Family Foundation
- The Overbrook Foundation
- BBs Coffee & Muffins
- Glanbia Consumer Foods
- The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
- Rothco Advertising Integration
- The Iris O’Brien Foundation



THANK YOU

PROTECTION FUND FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT RISK

In 2009 Front Line launched the **Protection Fund for Human Rights Defenders at Risk**. Please help us provide practical support to Human Rights Defenders at risk. 100% of donations to the Protection Fund directly protect human rights defenders who routinely face death threats, illegal prosecution, imprisonment, violence, and defamation as a result of their non-violent human rights work on behalf of others.

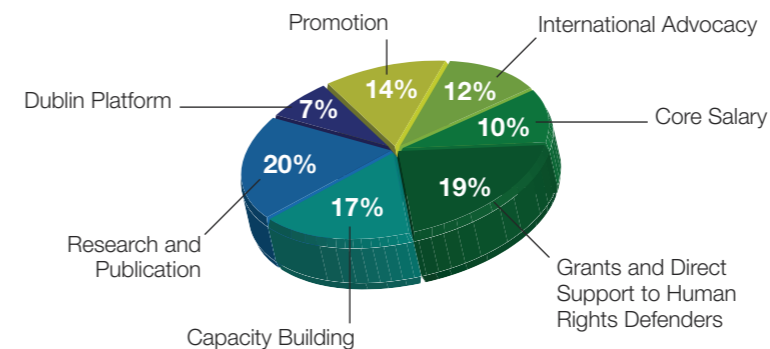
The Protection Fund for Human Rights Defenders at Risk is designed to support Front Line’s established Grants Programme and other forms of direct assistance to human rights defenders at risk. The Front Line Grants Programme provides grants of up to €6,000 for the specific purpose of strengthening the protection of human rights defenders. In emergency cases Front Line can approve and wire a grant in a matter of hours. Grants can pay for emergency relocation, medical or legal costs, communications equipment, office or home security.

“THROUGH THIS PROGRAMME I HAVE FELT A SENSE OF SECURITY THAT DID NOT EXIST BEFORE THE ASSISTANCE I RECEIVED. I AM THEREFORE ABLE TO CONCENTRATE MORE ON MY WORK THROUGH THE FEELING THAT MY FAMILY AND MYSELF ARE SECURE.”
WOMAN HRD IN ZIMBABWE

In 2009 Front Line made 154 grants totalling €349,908 to individual human rights defenders and organisations in 42 countries throughout the world.

To support Front Line, please contact Charlie Lamson at + 353 1 212 3750 or email: charlie@frontlinedefenders.org

2009 Front Line Expenditure



www.frontlinedefenders.org



REPORTS FROM THE FRONT LINE