



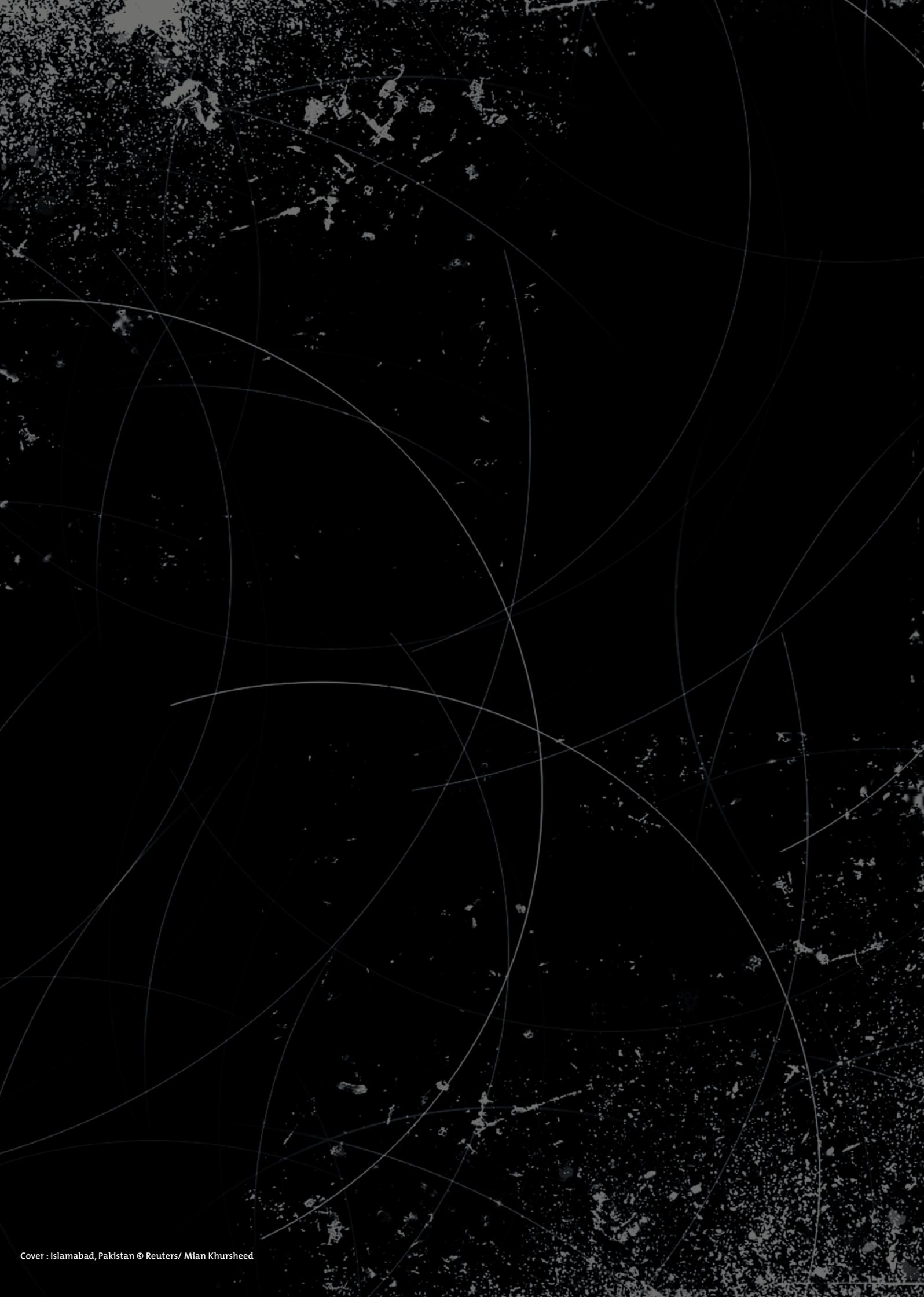
European
Commission

**TORTURED &
TERRORIZED
BUT NOT
SILENCED.**

Delivering on Human Rights Defenders

Highlights of the Semester

January-June 2012



Foreword

On a daily basis, around the world, Human Rights Defenders monitor the state of human rights and fundamental freedoms and strive to address their violations. They fight for ‘freedom’, ‘justice’, and ‘accountability’ even in – especially in – countries and regions of the world where these words are at risk of losing their very meaning, because of laws, practices or actions of repressive governments, criminal organizations, or abusive individuals.



For their courageous and visionary work, and despite international standards to protect them, Human Rights Defenders are ‘all too often’ subjected to threats to their lives and livelihoods, to severe persecution and punishment, to arbitrary arrest and detention, to prosecution by corrupt and politically controlled authorities and judiciaries. They frequently ‘disappear’, are tortured, and even killed because of their work. And increasingly, restrictive legislation against their activities or the systematic smearing of their reputations are tools used in lieu of the above, to simply intimidate them into submission, to discredit them, and to silence them.

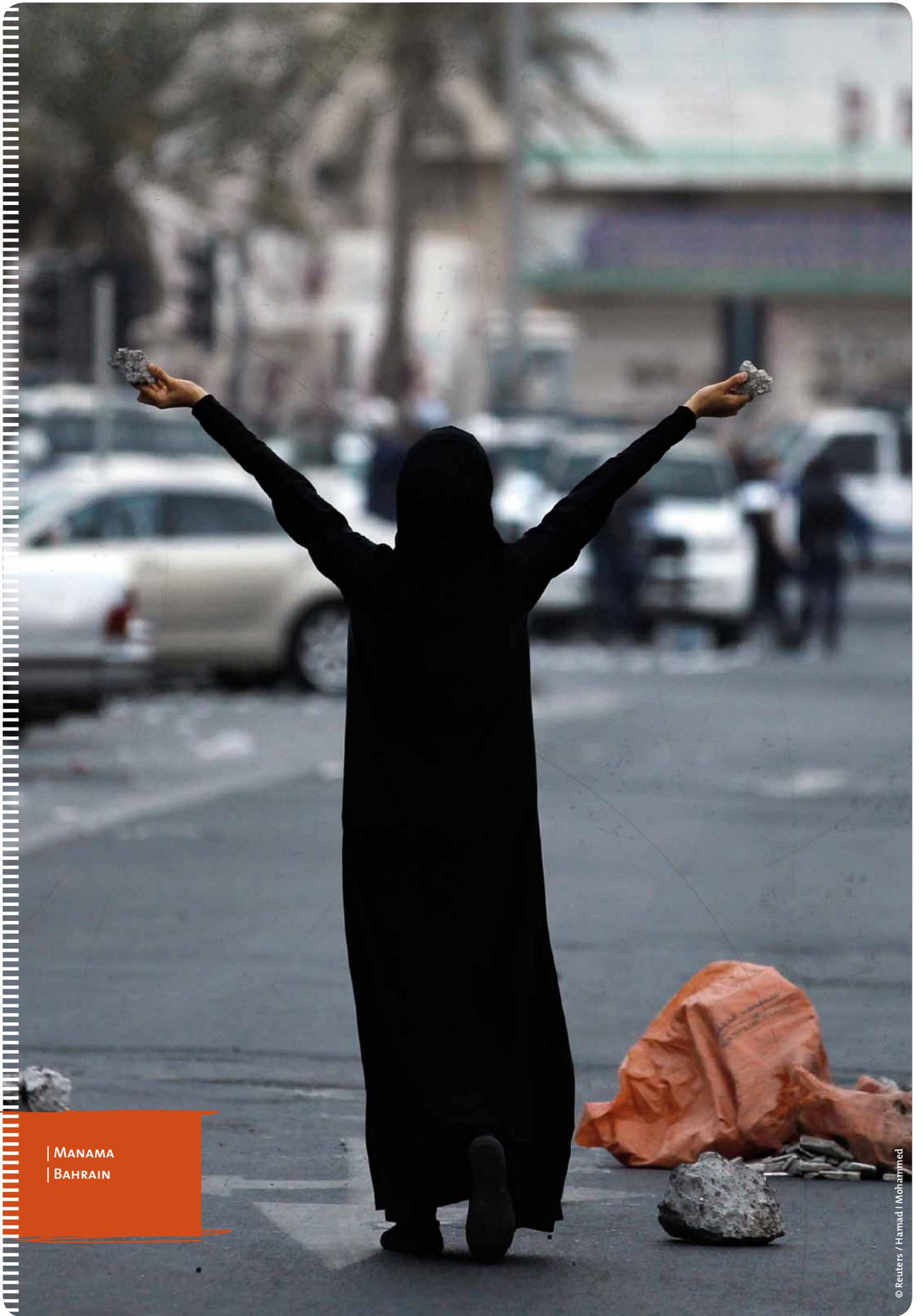
Standing by Human Rights Defenders is a longstanding commitment for the European Union. We have further bound ourselves to supporting them through public and specific Human Rights Defenders Guidelines that we adopted in 2004 and have since been applying throughout the world. From Brussels and through EU and Member-State Delegations on the ground, we monitor their trials, strive to release them when unfairly detained, sensitize local communities and the wider public to their work, consult with them on appropriate EU action for improving the human rights situation in specific countries or regions, support their organizations and activities, devise ways to circumvent censorship against them, and strive to protect and shelter them against harm.

We also constantly encourage foreign governments to engage with Human Rights Defenders and with Civil Society Organizations at large. We believe this is a prerequisite for enhancing the promotion of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democracy in different countries, just as we do in the EU itself.

In this effort, we are especially proud of the key role performed by the ‘European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights’. The EIDHR has a track record of delivering support and offering a breath of fresh air to Human Rights Defenders, whether in their daily work or when at risk. We will continue to build on both the proactive and the reactive capacities of the EIDHR. Our aim is to expand upon a comprehensive Human Rights Defenders mechanism that this instrument will help fortify in the months and years to come.

Stavros Lambrinidis

EU Special Representative for Human Rights



| MANAMA
| BAHRAIN

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| MANAUS
| BRAZIL

Introduction

The UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) of 1998 states that all individuals, groups and organs of society have the right and the responsibility to promote and protect universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Yet, in many parts of the world HRDs are all too regularly publicly defamed, falsely accused of bogus charges, unfairly detained and convicted, threatened with death, beaten, arbitrarily tortured and executed. Their families are harassed and their offices raided. They are socially ostracised and are often fired from their jobs.

The European Union (EU) is committed to supporting those who strive to make all human rights recognised, fulfilled and respected, sometimes at the risk of their own lives and the wellbeing of their families. This commitment is strongly reaffirmed in the EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy¹.

While the European External Action Service (EEAS) ensures political support to HRDs, makes public declarations, raises individual cases in dedicated talks with nearly 40 countries and adopts specific approaches to third countries, the European Commission is responsible for operational support to HRDs on the ground.

Along with the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the Commission has provided, since 2007, more than EUR 142 million to support actions defending human rights and their defenders where they are most at risk. Projects helped protect HRDs, individuals and organisations alike, providing them with tangible means to work and reinforce their capacities.

Through these projects the EIDHR has built a strong network of partners, mostly local, regional and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), with whom it is able to deliver rapid and flexible support to HRDs at risk. It is a small, but specialised and essential, part of the EU response to crisis.

The European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights has been a key support for the achievement of the EIDHR. It also plays a prominent role in the discussions it holds, the recommendations it makes and the awareness it raises, all of which impact on the situation of HRDs.

Unfortunately, due to the risks encountered by some HRDs and their experience of retaliation, part of this support cannot be disclosed. It is only communicated on a need-to-know basis to relevant bodies of the EU institutions. Therefore, this report limits itself to cases where beneficiaries have agreed to disclosure. While this can be seen as being to the detriment of the EIDHR's visibility, it is largely counterbalanced by the need to protect the HRDs involved.

This report presents a sample of the activities implemented by the EIDHR in support of HRDs. It is not exhaustive² and does not describe those activities that cannot be made public for the sake of protecting beneficiaries. This report intends to describe how the instrument ensures the protection of HRDs and their capacity to act (Part 1), how the EIDHR ensures a comprehensive geographical coverage of support in all continents (Part 2), and how it protects targeted groups of HRDs (Part 3).

1

Adopted on 25 June 2012

2

Complete and detailed information is available on the various compendia of activities online at www.eidhr.eu.

'Courageous individuals fighting for human rights worldwide frequently find themselves the target of oppression and coercion; the EU will intensify its political and financial support for human rights defenders and step up its efforts against all forms of reprisals.'

EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy

'EU assistance shall aim in particular at [...] support for, protection of, and assistance to human rights defenders, in terms of Article 1 of the UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.'

European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

FUNDS FOR SPECIFIC PROJECTS DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS AND THEIR DEFENDERS WHERE THEY ARE THE MOST AT RISK, 2007-2013

2007	€	19 700 000
2008	€	22 700 000
2009	€	14 200 000
2010	€	25 200 000
2011	€	15 800 000
2012	€	21 300 000
2013	€	15 300 000
Total	€	134 200 000

HRDs often work to the detriment of their own safety and pay a heavy price for their commitment. This report is dedicated to all the individuals whose work, courage, and sacrifice inspire many others to fight for the fulfilment and respect of everyone's human rights, everywhere.



Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja was Protection Coordinator for the Middle East under a Front Line Defenders' project, when he resigned to focus on human rights in Bahrain. In June 2011, Abdulhadi was sentenced to life in prison, convicted on charges such as 'organising and managing a terrorist organisation', and 'attempt[ing] to overthrow the Government by force and in liaison with a terrorist organisation working for a foreign country'. Abdulhadi has been the victim of psychological and physical torture

and solitary confinement since his arrest. On 4 September 2012, the life sentence against Abdulhadi was upheld despite a deeply flawed legal process. Abdulhadi is a Human Rights Defender.

Nasrin Sotoudeh is a lawyer defending juveniles facing the death penalty, prisoners of conscience, human rights activists and abused children in Iran. A member of the Defenders of Human Rights Centre (DHRC) and the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), in 2010 she was condemned to 20 years imprisonment for 'acting against national security' and 'not wearing [the] hijab'. She is held in solitary confinement, denied any contact, and reportedly tortured. To protest against such treatment, she began a hunger strike in October 2012, raising further concerns for her physical wellbeing. She already came close to death in 2010 after similar hunger strikes. Nasrin is a Human Rights Defender.





Hla Hla Win
27 years



Win Maw
17 years



Maung Maung Zeya
17 years



Ngwe Soe Lin
13 years



Sithu Zeya
8 years



FREE BURMA VJ

FREE BURMA'S VIDEO JOURNALISTS

17 video journalists for the Democratic Voice of Burma are in jail. Their struggle to bring the atrocities being committed in Burma to a global audience is considered a crime by the regime.

www.freeburmavj.org



DEMOCRATIC VOICE OF BURMA
An independent Burmese media organisation committed to responsible journalism.

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS
FOR PRESS FREEDOM

| BANGKOK
| THAILAND

1

Ensuring HRDs' protection and capacity to act

The personal and professional security of HRDs is the first and foremost priority of the EIDHR. Making sure that activists are aware of the risks they face when monitoring oppression and promoting human rights, as well as helping them pre-empt these risks, is essential for HRDs to become fully-equipped vectors of change in their societies.

Responding to emergencies

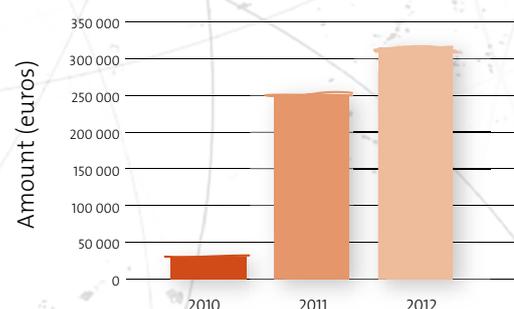
In order for HRDs to be able to do their work, they need to be supported with the means to leave the country if threats become unbearable; the ability hire a lawyer if they are judicially persecuted; have medical care covered if they are beaten or tortured; and have their families provided for if they are detained. More simply, they need to be supported if they do not have the tangible means to carry out their day-to-day activities.

EIDHR-supported actions, whether they are geographically or thematically focused, make this direct support to HRDs available. Moreover, the European Commission directly provides urgent assistance through the EIDHR emergency mechanism for HRDs at risk. This mechanism allows the Commission, whether in headquarters or in delegations, to channel modest emergency grants of up to EUR 10 000 to defenders in need of support. Since 2010, more than 300 HRDs in over 20 countries have received this type of direct support, totalling close to EUR 600 000.

SMALL GRANT FOR HRD

The Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) is one of the few independent media networks that circulated free information inside Burma/Myanmar for over 10 years. Its journalists played a crucial role in exposing violations and repression that marred the country. Many journalists from Burma/Myanmar paid a dear price for their commitment and spent long years behind bars. In March 2012, the EIDHR provided an urgent grant of EUR 10 000 to nine of DVB's journalists, who were released following January's amnesty. These funds provided urgent medical care to help them recover from the harsh conditions of detention. The funds also provided them with the means to resume their journalistic activities at this crucial moment in Burma/Myanmar's transition.

EMERGENCY INDIVIDUAL GRANTS TO HRDs



Making sure defenders are safer

The EIDHR supports a number of key partners specialised in building and improving the security of HRDs across the five continents and, in particular, in those countries where HRDs are at particular risk.

With the motto ‘Protect one, defend a thousand’, Front Line Defenders (FLD) is among these partners. Endangered activists may contact FLD on a 24/7 basis to receive an immediate emergency grant; assistance to obtain security bolts or alarms; urgent relocation; or any other kind of suitable help. In the past three years FLD has organised in-field training in more than 30 countries, where HRDs learn to assess risks and threats linked to their own environment and how to react to them. Hundreds of organisations were shown how to protect information and communications and circumvent Internet threats. FLD’s HRD toolkit is available for anyone to download at <http://www.frontlinedefenders.org>.

Another of EIDHR’s key partners, Protection International (PI), works with local HRDs to establish permanent technical desks that help HRDs set up, implement and manage personalised security plans. PI has also produced a number of user-friendly protection manuals that respond to specific types of threats, according to the profile and activities of certain categories of HRDs, for example, women, LGBTI activists or defenders living in isolated areas. These manuals are available to everyone online in various languages at <http://www.protectioninternational.org>.

Facilitating temporary relocation

While most EIDHR operations provide a response to the immediate and medium-term needs of protection and support of HRDs in their countries, many are forced to flee when the security risks become unbearable. In these extreme cases, the EIDHR supports the temporary relocation of HRDs at risk to a safe haven in another part of their own country, or in the region, or – as a last resort – in Europe, until the situation allows them to return home.

As an example, endangered HRDs in need of urgent protection from Azerbaijan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran, Libya, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Mexico, Russia, Sudan and Syria, are currently and temporarily relocated with EIDHR support.

The Commission is putting in place an upgraded temporary relocation programme as an integrated part of the operational component of the EU HRDs’ mechanism. To this end, closer and stable cooperation with NGOs, universities, cities, local authorities and other players is essential.

Exposing human rights violations

Having access to timely, reliable and independent data about the human rights situation on the ground is paramount. This is particularly difficult in countries where there is a conflict; where there is a partial or complete state control of the media; where secure access to the Internet is almost impossible; or where reprisals against dissidents are feared.



| DUBLIN
| IRELAND

The EIDHR is supporting the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), considered by the international media as a key source of information on what is happening in Syria today. The SOHR monitors human rights and publishes only verified information about serious violations committed against the Syrian population by all parties in the conflict. Thanks to its wide network of activists in the country and in neighbouring countries who, despite the dangers to their own lives, are committed to informing the world of what is happening in their cities. The SOHR is able to collect verifiable information about human rights abuses and to pass them on to international organisations such as the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria or to the media, so that one day those responsible for abuses may be held accountable. Similar groups engaged in other remarkable work in extremely dangerous contexts are also supported by the EIDHR.

The work of HRDs in the field also needs to be accompanied by strong advocacy and awareness-raising action on the international scene. The EIDHR supports the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme implemented by the International Federation of Human Rights and the World Organization Against Torture, to mobilise activity around the plight of HRDs. Essential international watchdogs, they raise the alarm when legislation is being envisaged that curtails rights and the means of human rights organisations to work. They monitor trials, bringing to the public eye the injustice that exists in many countries. They reach out to legislators and politicians, including EU Member States and institutions, so that support to HRDs stays at the top of their agendas.

Creating the right synergy

The coordination and synergy between EIDHR partners, their action and their capacities, and their links to the actions and initiatives of the EEAS and the European Parliament (EP) on the political level, are paramount to ensuring that HRDs all over the world succeed in making their societies fairer, more democratic and fully endowed with fundamental rights and freedoms.

Several HRD mechanisms exist within inter-governmental organisations. In 2008 in Brussels, the above-mentioned Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders gathered all these mechanisms together for the first time to improve the synergy of existing means and techniques of protection, and to find ways of enhancing coordination and complementarity.

The UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, the African Commission Special Rapporteur, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, the European Union, and key NGOs are since part of this coordination. They meet and exchange regularly. The EIDHR supports and takes part in these regular inter-mechanism meetings.

Moreover, the EIDHR is strengthening its coordination with independent national human rights institutions to support human rights mechanisms at both regional and local levels.



**ST.PETERSBURG |
RUSSIA |**



| MANILA
| PHILIPPINES

**Migrants
are not
commodities!**
APL/SALAG

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2

Ensuring comprehensive geographical coverage

Since 2007, the EIDHR has developed comprehensive geographical coverage of its support to HRDs, reaching all the world's most at-risk places for HRDs by 2012. Below are some examples of projects aimed at defending the defenders in different regions. In addition to its numerous regional projects, the EIDHR also finances global projects for HRDs, as well as country-specific projects, either through local calls for proposals or via confidential projects for the most difficult cases that cannot be disclosed.

Supporting defenders in the South Mediterranean and Gulf regions

In the South Mediterranean region, an EIDHR project implemented by the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF) allows for urgent action in support of defenders at risk in highly repressive and volatile environments. For example, 44 HRDs operations were delivered by the EMHRF in Syria in 2011-12.

The project also offers strategic support to HRDs to reinforce monitoring and documentation of human rights violations, provides legal and psycho-social support, as well as representation and advocacy for victims. In remote regions of Tunisia, this strategic support strengthened 17 new human rights organisations in 2011-12, enabling them to promote long-term reforms.

An EU project, implemented by the Yemen Observatory for Human Rights, provides vital support and direct assistance to HRDs in Yemen and countries in the Gulf region. The project also organises training on awareness raising, advocacy and networking, and courses on national, regional and international human rights mechanisms and instruments. In addition, this project ran a communications campaign and established an annual award for HRDs. While reinforcing the capacities of human rights activists to do their work in safety, the project contributes to the creation and strengthening of regional mechanisms aimed at promoting and protecting HRDs.

The EIDHR deploys more than 55 new operations per year in the South Mediterranean and Gulf regions. Since 2007, the EIDHR has supported 16 specific projects defending human rights and their defenders where they are the most at risk in these regions.

Supporting defenders in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

An EIDHR project implemented by Civicus supported human rights and their defenders in the countries of the former Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The project established a network that provides HRDs with direct support, capacity building, and information sharing, helping them with lobbying and campaigning activities. The project also raised awareness of HRDs and their work through media campaigns, and promoted advocacy activities on respect for human rights. The projects contributed, in particular, to strengthening targeted civil society organisations (CSOs), easing law-based restrictions on them, especially obstacles to the registration and operation of organisations. It created a safer environment for local activists to operate without fear of intimidation, threats or repercussions, and fought the isolation of civil society in the region.

The EIDHR launches more than 90 new operations per year in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Since 2007, the EIDHR has supported 15 specific projects defending human rights and their defenders where they are the most at risk in the region.

Supporting defenders in Africa

An EIDHR project, the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, provides protection capacity building to African HRDs across all sub-regions of the continent. The project improves their working environment and focuses especially on the most-at-risk HRDs: LGBTI rights defenders, female HRDs, journalists and HRDs working in areas of conflict. The project develops and deploys secure communications tools, delivers security assessments and security training, and monitors and documents the security of HRDs. The project also enhances advocacy capacity, networking and coordination among HRDs to enable them to do their work more effectively across the whole of Africa.

The EIDHR launches more than 185 new operations per year in Sub-Saharan Africa. Since 2007, the EIDHR has supported 30 specific projects defending human rights and their defenders where they are the most at risk in the region.

Supporting defenders in Asia

An EIDHR project empowers HRDs in South East Asia to increase respect for human rights and the rule of law through an effective ASEAN human rights system. Implemented by the International Commission of Jurists Association, the project increases the capacity of HRDs to interact with key players in the development of regional human rights instruments. HRDs are provided with technical and legal advice, direct financial assistance and consultative platforms on which to exchange ideas. The project also increases the awareness and understanding of judges, lawyers, and national human rights institutions of the need to protect human rights and HRDs by advancing a common rule of law approach.

The EIDHR deploys more than 70 new operations per year in Asia. Since 2007, the EIDHR has supported over 27 specific projects defending human rights and their defenders where they are the most at risk in the region.

Supporting defenders in Latin America and the Caribbean

An EIDHR project implemented by Asociación Consorcio y Justicia has established a comprehensive strategy to protect and promote human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. The project created a Fund for the Defence and Protection of Defenders to improve direct financial support, complemented by a technical and strategic training programme. It created an Observatory for Democracy and Human Rights to allow the systematic sharing of information and immediate action when defenders find themselves in at-risk situations. The project also develops strategic diplomacy, civil society and South-South multilateralism, and strengthens regional networks to allow for joint action at the regional level.

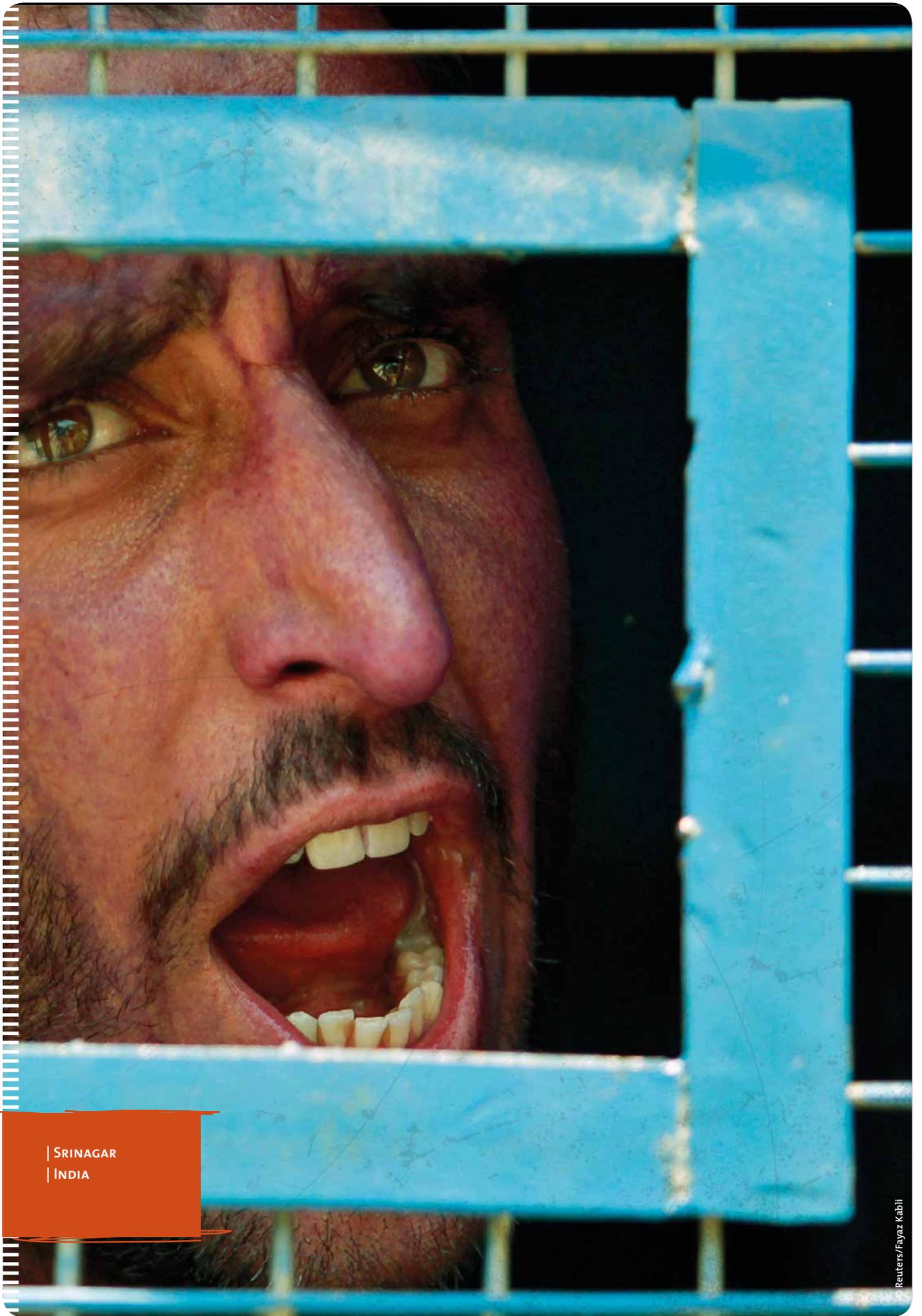
The EIDHR launches more than 110 new operations per year in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since 2007, the EIDHR has supported more than nine specific projects defending human rights and their defenders where they are the most at risk in the region.



| JAKARTA
| INDONESIA



| SANTO DOMINGO
| DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



| SRINAGAR
| INDIA

3

Protecting targeted groups of Human Rights Defenders

Since 2007, the EIDHR has complemented its geographical coverage with additional support dedicated to targeted groups of HRDs. Below are some examples of projects defending various specialised groups of defenders. In her 2011 report, Margaret Sekaggya, UN Special Rapporteur on HRDs described how each of these categories is particularly at risk, either because of the group they belong to or for their activities.

Supporting journalists and bloggers acting as defenders

Journalists and media workers are often targeted because of their reports on human rights violations or because they witness human rights violations. Due to the impact they can have on society by disseminating information about human rights, attempts to silence them involve killings, arrests, arbitrary detention, torture, harassment, or the abuse of legal frameworks such as censorship.

Article 19, an EU project implemented by the East Africa Journalist Defence Network operates in Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Rwanda, countries in which journalists are exposed to physical threats, assault, intimidation, and harassment, resulting in self-censorship, forced exile and, in the most extreme cases, death. This network ensures access to immediate support and defence mechanisms for journalists under threat. It increases the capacity of journalists and HRDs to advocate effectively and defend the universal right to freedom of expression, also enhancing knowledge and fostering solidarity through regional exchanges.

Supporting lawyers acting as defenders

Another group of HRDs at particular risk in some countries are lawyers, who are regularly subjected to threats to themselves or their families. They are physically attacked, abducted and even forcibly 'disappeared' simply for doing their jobs. Cases exist where the simple appointment of a lawyer to a human rights activist has led to the imprisonment of the lawyer. In Colombia alone, as many as 25 lawyers may be killed each year.

Avocats sans Frontières implements an EIDHR project that increases the protection of lawyers in the Great Lakes region and East Africa. These lawyers have suffered violations either because they themselves are active HRDs, or because they provide legal assistance to those who are. The project put a Protection Trust Fund in place in order to ensure sustainable financial aid and urgent material support to lawyers and other HRDs, as well as improving the capacity and training of lawyers to use protection mechanisms effectively to support their clients in the long term.

Supporting female human rights defenders

Both defenders of the human rights of women and female defenders who defend any human rights face particular risks because of the intersection between their advocacy and their gender. They are often at risk of violence, prejudice and exclusion because they are challenging accepted socio-cultural stereotypes about the role and status of women.

In Central and South America, the Latin American Mining Monitoring Programme (LAMMP) is implementing an EIDHR project that protects and supports rural and indigenous female activists in their campaign for socially and environmentally responsible mining. LAMPP provides protection to activists in situations of risk, offers legal assistance, and helps to build capacity in the areas of human rights, fundraising, information technology, and lobbying. The project helps to develop a culture of respect for female HRDs, allowing them to promote and defend their individual and collective rights against the mining projects that affect them.

Supporting defenders of economic and social rights

Although economic, social and cultural rights are given the same emphasis in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights as civil and political rights, legal mechanisms for claiming redress for violations are severely underdeveloped in comparison. Indeed, HRDs still encounter resistance from governments and other sectors of civil society when invoking these rights.

An EIDHR project implemented by the International Secretariat of the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) addresses violations of international labour standards and textile workers' human rights, particularly freedom of association and the right to organise and bargain collectively. The CCC helps factory workers to be fairly treated and decently paid. It sounds the alarm when workers' rights are violated, ranging from poor working conditions, low or no wages, harassment, violence, suspension, dismissals and – in some cases – death. The project provides immediate support for urgent cases, legal advice and medical expenses. It helps to build the capacity of defenders of garment workers' rights in producer countries and raises awareness in developed countries, using consumer pressure to push companies to take responsibility for the conditions in which their products are made. Some brands have responded by adopting codes of conduct and drafting policies on corporate responsibility – an important first step towards abolishing sweatshop conditions.



Supporting defenders of migrant rights

An estimated 500 000 undocumented migrants cross Mexico every year in their attempt to reach the USA. They face arbitrary arrest, extortion, rape, kidnap and murder by criminal organisations or even the police along the way. Their defenders are faced with progressive criminalisation and are the victims of harassment and violence simply for providing assistance to migrants.

An EIDHR project implemented by Soleterre provides a platform for defenders of the rights of migrants in Central America and Mexico, and supports local organisations battling the

| LA PAZ
| BOLIVIA

systematic threats and violations committed against migrants, as well as the aggressive treatment received from some national authority agents. These organisations include national Human Rights Institutes and Casas del Migrante, which provide basic humanitarian assistance and shelter to migrants. The project raises awareness about widespread violations, improves the relationship between law enforcement and HRDs, and provides a fund for direct support to HRDs at risk. Soleterre staff themselves have been directly and violently intimidated for their work.

Supporting defenders of LGBTI rights

Gender identity and sexual orientation are used as justifications for serious human rights violations around the world. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people are victims of persecution, discrimination and gross ill-treatment or extreme forms of violence. HRDs protecting those who are, or who are themselves perceived to be, LGBTI are at particular risk.

The Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights has been supported by the EIDHR to launch the Francophone LGBTI Advocates Initiative (FLAI) in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, and Togo. This project improves the capacity of human rights leaders to address LGBTI issues through local, national, and regional advocacy. It improves the safety and security of HRDs by documenting violations and developing security plans. Around 135 LGBTI civil society actors, 11 LGBTI CSOs, 90 HRDs, and at least 90 media professionals have been supported to improve public awareness and knowledge about LGBTI rights.

Supporting defenders of minority rights

Many states contain ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities whose human rights are often abused due to their perceived threat to majority groups. Discriminatory actions are often justified by reference to 'national security' or populist discourses stressing the preservation of languages and cultures. Generally, these minorities are poorer, face discrimination, and have less power, influence, or access to remedies.

In Serbia, extremist behaviour and incitement to racial and religious hatred is still reported, and in some areas tension with ethnic Albanian communities, religious divisions with Muslim communities, and discrimination against the Roma persist, leading to outbreaks of violence and a dangerous operating environment for defenders of minority rights. Advocacy Initiatives for Minorities is an EU project implemented by Group 484, which promotes human and minority rights and helps foster a climate of inter-ethnic tolerance. The project provides support to young activist leaders engaged in the promotion of minority rights and interethnic dialogue, and allows them to increase their political participation and make an impact on decision makers. It provided training to HRDs on existing international and national legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms for the protection of minority rights, as well as supporting them to institutionalise local initiatives.



BEERSHEBA |
ISRAEL |

Supporting defenders of indigenous peoples' rights

Indigenous peoples are often the victims of historical exclusion or forced assimilation; many are victims of human rights violations, discrimination, and land grabbing. Their defenders are often exposed and become victims of violations themselves.

An EU project supports the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) in setting up a mechanism to support Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Defenders (IHRD) at risk. The fund created responds to immediate and urgent needs of IHRDs and their families, alleviating their suffering and mitigating the consequences of the violation of their rights. It also provides sanctuary to those facing serious threats to their personal security and wellbeing as a consequence of their work. The project also promotes indigenous peoples' rights through advocacy and lobbying, supported by increased documentation, capacity and alliance building. Thanks to this project, the AIPP is now dealing with hundreds of HRD cases in all 18 Asian countries in association with 48 local indigenous peoples' organisations.



| ASUNCION
| PARAGUAY

Supporting defenders of environmental rights

HRDs working on land and environmental issues are highly exposed to attacks on their physical integrity, often by non-State aggressors, and many are killed because of their work on the environmental impact of extractive industries and development projects, or the right to land of indigenous peoples and minorities.

An EIDHR project run by Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) mobilises global protection for environmental defenders at risk around the world and gives visibility to cases of abuse against them. It provides urgent, direct support to activists. It assists communities in local struggles related to sustainable, democratic control over natural resources by providing training and capacity building on rights protection. It builds support for the respect of human rights by government, business and the public through advocacy, policy recommendations and international public outreach. Between March and September 2012, 10 campaigns supported groups from Africa, Europe and Latin America by providing them with direct material and financial support, the means to approach relevant players, and online petitions.



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