

PRE-CONFERENCE INSTITUTE

SECURITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS: SUPPORTING GRANTEE SAFETY

**JANUARY 23, 2013
MARRIOTT UNION SQUARE, SAN FRANCISCO**



**ORGANIZED AND SPONSORED BY THE
IHRFG HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS
WORKING GROUP**

DESCRIPTION

Whether you focus on resource rights, sexual health and rights, or work in conflict or post-conflict regions, advocates and activists struggling for change in these areas take great personal and organizational risks. Funders – regardless of the issues they support – are paying increasing attention to the safety challenges facing grantees on the front lines.

The needs of human rights defenders are as diverse as the issues on which they work:

- At least 711 resource rights activists have been killed in the past decade;¹
- In 2011, Justice for Peace Foundation documented the forced disappearance of 59 individuals in Thailand, including the well-publicized cases of Somchai Neelapaijit, the human rights lawyer who was tortured and murdered;²
- At least 61 human rights defenders were killed in Mexico from 2006-2010. Defenders of environmental rights, indigenous leaders, and defenders of women's rights have been particularly targeted;³
- During the Egyptian Revolution, the Egyptian army beat, detained, and electrocuted 17 women, including 7 who were further strip-searched, threatened with prostitution charges, and forced to undergo 'virginity tests'.⁴

This institute will provide international funders with an overview of the safety and security needs and priorities of human rights defenders. Led jointly by donors and activists from around the world, participants will acquire tools they need to be as effective as possible in assessing, preventing, and responding to security threats faced by grantees.

OBJECTIVES

Through the experiences of human rights defenders and peer funders, participants will leave with an understanding of and practical strategies, tools, and methodologies to:

1. Assess the areas of vulnerability of human rights defenders and their safety needs and priorities;
2. Prevent situations of threat and/or vulnerability and promote safe environments for human rights activism; and
3. Respond quickly and effectively to emergencies and explore long-term strategies to respond to security threats faced by grantee partners.

¹ *A Hidden Crisis? Increase in Killings as Tensions Rise Over Lands and Forests*, Global Witness Briefing, 2012: http://www.globalwitness.org/sites/default/files/library/A_hidden_crisis.pdf

² *JPJ Calls in Thai Government to Prevent Enforced Disappearances and Ensure Remedies for Past Disappearances*, Justice for Peace Foundation: <http://justiceforpeace.org/?p=1457&lang=en>

³ *Second Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in the Americas*, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/defenders/docs/pdf/defenders2011.pdf>

⁴ *A Continuation of Violations: Military Policy Towards Women Human Rights Defenders*, Nazra for Feminist Studies, December 2011: <http://nazra.org/sites/nazra/files/attachments/militarypolicytowardswhrdsen2011.pdf>

AGENDA

8:30-9:00 am **BREAKFAST AND REGISTRATION**

9:00-10:00 am **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND ORIENTATION**

Kate Kroeger, Executive Director, Urgent Action Fund for Women's Rights

Julie Dorf, Senior Advisor, Council on Global Equality

10:00-11:30 am **ASSESSING SECURITY VULNERABILITIES OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS: AN INTRODUCTION**

What do we mean by "human rights defender" and other jargon? What are some types of risks that defenders face? How can these risks be identified? Through the study of four issue areas, participants will gain an understanding of key terms and trends confronting human rights advocates: Conflict Settings; Resource Rights; Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity; and Shifting Political Contexts

Savoy

Conflict Settings

The Israeli- Palestinian conflict has been endured by generations. It is a conflict over land, recognition, rights and existence. This case study is from the eyes of a Palestinian queer activist, Rauda Morcos, living within the borders of Israel, working to resolve the conflict and navigating potential threats. This perspective will highlight the daily dilemma of where to belong and how to live this reality without losing your identities. The case study will analyze how Rauda navigates threats from her community with the backdrop of the broader Israeli/Palestinian conflict and occupation by reviewing a safety and security checklist. We will identify how to organize, choose your struggle and seek regional and international assistance via an urgent security grant.

- **Speaker:** Rauda Morcos, Co-Founder, Aswat; Regional and Community organizer, MENA region, MantiQitna Qamb (Palestine)
- **Facilitator:** Keely Tongate, Program Director, Urgent Action Fund

AGENDA CONTINUED

10:00-11:30 am ASSESSING SECURITY VULNERABILITIES OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS: AN INTRODUCTION, CONTINUED

Telegraph Hill Resource Rights

The organized communities of San José El Golfo and San Rafael Ayampuc (Frente Norte del Area Metropolitana) in Guatemala have opposed the unilateral approval for the gold mining venture of Kappes, Cassidy and Associates (a US-based company) and are requesting their right to consultation through nonviolent measures. Human rights activists have endured violence and threats, including attempts on their lives. Different types of protection measures and international support have been developed to respond to the security risks and ensure their safety to continue working.

- **Speaker:** Claudia Samayoa, Founder, Guatemalan Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit (Guatemala)
- **Facilitator:** David Mattingly, Director of Programs, Fund for Global Human Rights

Savoy Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Discriminatory attitudes of the public, the government, the police and religious leaders have combined to create an environment in which LGBTI people on the coast of Kenya are denied access to their basic rights. Persons Marginalized and Aggrieved (PEMA) in Kenya was founded in 2008 in response to the death, a year earlier, of a gay man who had been shunned and stigmatized by members of his family due to his sexual orientation. Since the group's inception, they have faced threats in response to their work, including office break-ins, threatening phone calls, assault and murder. Realizing that these threats were having a significant effect on staff and members, PEMA began engaging with ally organizations to support them in building security systems and networks and train staff and members.

- **Speaker:** Esther Adhiambo, Programs Coordinator, PEMA-Kenya (Kenya)
- **Facilitator:** Jesse Wrenn, Associate Director, Global Strategic Allies, American Jewish World Service

AGENDA CONTINUED

10:00-11:30 am ASSESSING SECURITY VULNERABILITIES OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS: AN INTRODUCTION, CONTINUED

Russian Hill

Shifting Political Contexts

Despite offering unprecedented opportunities for progress, political transitions can result in regression and bring new forms of violations. This is currently the case in Egypt. Human Rights Defenders are perceived as political adversaries and ideological enemies. Is there a way out of the systematic chain of threats they face in this transitional phase? Looking at the case of the New Women Foundation, Nawla Darwiche will reflect on strategies that have been and could be used by women's rights defenders and funders to counter such threats and create a long-term response to reinforce the human rights movement at this challenging yet crucial time.

- **Speaker:** Nawla Darwiche, Co-Founder and Board Member, New Woman Foundation (Egypt)
- **Facilitator:** Anne-Sophie Schaeffer, Programme Director, Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF)

11:30-11:45 am BREAK

11:45 am -12:30 pm ASSESSING/PREVENTING SECURITY BREACHES: A PRACTICUM

Participants will examine their own thought processes and procedures when conducting security assessments and reflect on how aspects of their grantmaking (such as site visits) impact their grantees' safety.

Speakers:

- Claudia Samayoa, Founder, Guatemalan Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit (Guatemala)
- David Mattingly, Director of Programs, Fund for Global Human Rights
- Catherine Townsend, Program Officer, International Human Rights, Wellspring Advisors

AGENDA CONTINUED

12:30-1:30 pm **LUNCH**

1:30-3:15 pm **TECHNIQUES FOR PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO SECURITY BREACHES: HOW TO MINIMIZE RISKS AND IMPACTS**

What are some practical tools or approaches that funders can use to support human rights defenders under threat?

Specific tools and strategies to be discussed include:

- *Development of local networks and coalitions:* Bahey El-Din Hassan, General Director, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
- *Advocacy:* Mary Lawlor, Executive Director, Front Line Defenders
- *Protective accompaniment:* John Lindsay-Poland, Research and Advocacy Director, Fellowship of Reconciliation-USA
- *Digital security:* Ali Ravi, Privacy and Expression Programme Director, Tactical Technology Collective

3:15-3:30 pm **BREAK**

3:30-4:30 pm **RESPONDING TO THREATS YOUR GRANTEES FACE**

How can we integrate the tools discussed in the previous session to create a comprehensive response to threats faced by human rights defenders? Participants will explore the ways in which these tools can be used in the context of the four cases studied at the beginning of the day.

4:30-5:00 pm **WRAP-UP AND EVALUATION**
Kate Kroeger & Julie Dorf, Institute Facilitators

PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Anne-Sophie Schaeffer, Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF)
- Catherine Townsend, Wellspring Advisors
- David Mattingly, Fund for Global Human Rights
- Jelena Djordjevic, Urgent Action Fund
- Jesse Wrenn, American Jewish World Service
- Julie Dorf, Council for Global Equality
- Kate Kroeger, Urgent Action Fund
- Katrin Wilde, Channel Foundation
- Keely Tongate, Urgent Action Fund



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