SECURITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS: SUPPORTING GRANTEE SAFETY

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND ORIENTATION
9:00 - 10:00 AM

Michael Hirschhorn introduced the Institute by saying that today is an exceptional example of IHRFG's peer leadership.

Institute facilitators Kate Kroeger and Julie Dorf began by thanking everyone and specially those who organized the event. They stated that because human rights defenders (HRDs) are best placed to instruct on HRD strategies, this is an "activist-led" institute. HRDs will be speaking throughout the day and will present case studies this morning. Later in the afternoon, participants will learn more about tools and techniques for effectively working with HRDs. They explained that the theme of the day is learning, and that the point of the Institute is to dive deeply into issues, identifying problems while emphasizing solutions.

Julie started a round of introductions among the panelists with the question: What do you want to get out of today? Participants' responses included:

- Long term prevention and support.
- What are funders doing that could be undermining HRD's security.
- Security strategies, policy and government effects in HRD's security.
- How to support cross-movement alliance building.
- How to compare and contrast national and international protection of HRD.
- Where the HRD protection starts/begins, and where the temporary and permanent relocation begins.
- Strategies to protect women HRD.
- What not to do, security and ethical issues.
- Sharing expertise/learning from each other.

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

Speakers:
- **Esther Adhiambo**, Programs Coordinator and Founder, PEMA-Kenya (Kenya)
- **Claudia Samayoa**, Founder, Guatemalan Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit (Guatemala)
- **Rauda Morcos**, Co-Founder, Aswat (Palestine)
- **Nawla Darwiche**, Co-Founder and Board Member, New Woman Foundation (Egypt)

Esther Adhiambo began by introducing the risks activists face in Mombasa, Kenya, where security of HRDs and LGTBI individuals and groups is always a concern. She also discussed how the security committee operates in the context of the Islamic religion and culture. [Notes of this first part of the session are incomplete].

Claudia Samayoa began by saying that many governments are promoting policies that help transnational corporations at the expense of human rights. Governments are promoting the perception that HRDs are terrorists, anti-development, or a threat to national security. While transnationals and governments build their power through illegality and violence, HRDs build their power through legality, non violent resistance, and through consensus and participation. We need to create national and international solidarity to promote the reduction of violence and to create coherence among movements. The international solidarity element comes from funders like this group.

Claudia introduced a case in La Puya, Guatemala where a mining venture was undertaken without consultation with the local communities. Information should have been provided by the government, but is currently the role of companies to provide this. In La Puya, a middle class woman began organizing people in municipalities when the mineral exploitation began without consultation in 2011. She was shot last year, but fortunately survived. Communities began nonviolent resistance in 2012. This woman HRD asked people not to respond violently even if she died. The movement was not known because it was a citizen-only driven movement. Organizations that began supporting them and communicating their situation around the world, created national and international mobilization which helped to the legitimization of the movement. The government was attempting to portray the human right defenders and the community as aggressive. Today, the issue continues and there is more to do.

Rauda Morcos discussed security issues her organization confronted during the 2007 Aswat conference, which was the first Palestinian conference about freedom of expression, choice and existence that included LGBT members/speakers, political leaders, and others involved in the defense of human rights. The conference faced threats from diverse religious fundamentalist groups against the conference itself, the participants, speakers and even against her. The organizers needed to strategize a response to those threats in a short period of time. Having support that is not only economic but also moral, such as Urgent Action Fund provided, was important. Unfortunately, even with the threats against them, they could not call the state police for protection because the Israeli police would not have been willing to support a group of Palestinian human rights activists. Cases like this demonstrate the importance of private funding for activists and HRD security.

Nawla Darwiche talked about the current situation of HRDs in Egypt. Under the Mubarak regime, from 1981-2011, human rights NGOs were often unable to register with the government or operate officially. Under the rule of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF), the situation hasn't changed and has actually gotten worse. Human rights organizations have continued to play a major role in the revolution

and its aftermath, and many human rights offices have been closed down and hundreds of people were killed or tortured. Women were targeted in an attempt to create fear among the revolutionaries.

Since the revolution, fundamentalists' discourse has become more prominent. Since the Muslim Brotherhood came to power foreign grants have not been approved or allowed to enter the country. The New Woman Foundation has not been able to access the funds related to 8 grants, forcing them to reduce their hours of work. In Egypt, journalists are killed for documenting human rights violations, opponents are tortured and killed. Moreover, women's rights are not supported by the new government. In the Egyptian parliament, there were only 11 women out 498 members. Moreover, how can the new constitution be representative of the Egyptian people? There are 51 million voters out of the 83 million people living in Egypt and 68% of people abstained from voting. There is no freedom of expression, members of the press who criticize the government are attacked, newspaper offices are burned, journalists are prosecuted by military courts, and fundamentalists placed the Egyptian media production under siege for days. HRDs are taking the following steps:

- Denouncing violations via publications, mobilizations and campaigns
- Building local coalitions of human and women's rights activists
- Bringing law suits against the government
- Drafting alternative laws
- Requesting flexible/discrete grants from their funders
- Collecting money from members and friends

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
One participant asked about possible strategies to support collaboration of Egyptian and international groups to bring about change.

Nawla replied that funders should try to coordinate more – there are lots of efforts but not many lasting results. For example, many funders are working to stop Female Genital Mutilation in Egypt, but the practice has only decreased by 1%. Solidarity is also very important. Funders can help mobilize communities abroad. Sometimes HRDs don't have access to these communities, but funders do. The mobilization of Egyptians abroad in front of Egyptian embassies is a way to demonstrate solidarity.

Another participant asked about human rights discourse. Knowing that receiving foreign funding is sensitive right now, how can funders be helpful without making it more difficult for HRDs to do their work?

Rauda replied that if the funds are used in programs that seem to be based on westernized notions, it can cause problems locally. This issue is not unique to the Middle East, it happens all around the world. It is important to create spaces for dialogue and to work with a partnership model. Instead of an individual funder analysis, do a collective analysis.

Also organizations don't always have access to funding because of structural constraints, for instance lacking access to the internet or to safe internet, causing them not to be able to send an application, or when the application is so long that it may be difficult to complete. Making it easier for organizations and human right defenders to apply for the help is important.

Participants then broke out into four small groups (Conflict Settings, Shifting Political Contexts, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, and Resource Rights) focusing on three questions:

1. What were successful and unsuccessful responses to the threats you faced?
2. What were the specific vulnerabilities you faced?
3. Where were the threats coming from (state, non state)?

CONFLICT SETTINGS

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

Rauda explained that Aswat ("voices") is a group of LGBT women based in Palestine with offices in Haifa founded in 2001 (but only officially in 2004). Their conference, "Home and Exile in the Queer Experience," was to include women from all over Palestine. They started exploring having a conference in 2006, and immediately after publicizing the details in the Aswat newsletter there was a response in a main Palestinian newspaper denouncing the feminist movement and quoting Rauda and other women leaders from Palestine and mentioning the conference. Details about the conference, such as the location, also appeared online and pamphlets denouncing the conference were distributed. Despite this, Aswat continued with the conference planning, expecting that the demonstrations would be violent and with a big number of people. The conference organizers decided they did not want to call the police no matter what, because they didn't want to be in the position in which the Israeli police would have to defend them from their own people. Instead, they hired a security company, to secure the event and the participants and organizers. The security company was given a checklist, asking not to use violence against anyone, and to call the police only as a last resort. In the end, there were only around 50 people demonstrating in a silent manner outside the place where the conference was being held. A rapid response grant provided by Urgent Action Fund (UAF) allowed them to hire the security company for a longer extent of time, and there was no questioning about why they decided to use a security company instead of the police. That time spent on the phone giving ideas and moral support created a different relationship between Aswat and UAF.

380 people ended up attending the conference, including people from outside the region who came mostly to offer support and solidarity. Many people wrote letters from different countries to offer their support and some funders even came to attend the conference. This support was very useful and very timely. Many people just registered to attend even if they couldn't, to show support. Palestinian organizations also came, for example two important Palestinian organizations came without being publically announced. No Israeli LGTBQ organizations participated in the conference, though Aswat has found a religious Israeli women's group with whom they have engaged, despite their different political/religious backgrounds. They have found that they have language and limitations in common.

One participant asked if Rauda saw any benefits of being publically "out" as a lesbian woman in Palestine.

Rauda explained that for some people it is difficult to be seen with her because she is publically "out." However, this allows other people to find ways to talk to her, and she has learned a lot about others who were also going through issues surrounding their sexual identities and orientation. For her, being "out" is a benefit for herself and others.

- **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)

Nawla was asked to clarify a statement during her presentation regarding foreign grants being refused. Nawla explained that, like many NGOs in Egypt, the New Woman Foundation (NWF) is registered under the Ministry of Social Solidarity, which means they need authorization from the Ministry to accept any funding. Since the Muslim Brotherhood was elected they have had difficulty getting the Ministry to approve foreign funding. There are some ways of getting around this, like receiving funds through a private company. Then it is just a matter of accepting wire transfers rather than a grant. One tricky issue is that the grant is then taxed. Other options of getting foreign funding in the country are not very safe because organizations can only maintain legal status if they are registered with the government. The government is working on a draft of a new NGO law to close any outlet for other methods of legal registration (for instance registering as a law firm or other private company).

Nawla was asked if there was a possibility of elections soon. She replied that there will be elections this year and that the outcome of the elections will also depend on the law regulating the election. The Islamists have proposed a new law that would benefit their parties, which is under study by the constitutional court who will decide if it is constitutional or not. Another big problem is that there is no uniformity in terms of the size of electoral areas so the number of votes each representative needs to be elected is very unequal – some need 500 and some need 5,000.

Turning to the three guiding questions, Nawla stated that threats come from both state and non-state actors. Non-state actors include mainly the reactionary groups gaining power in Egyptian society. They are accusing the human rights community of being agents of the West despite the fact that they themselves are taking money from Qatar and Saudia Arabia. The threats are not only directed at human right organizations but women's rights organizations and women everywhere. Unveiled women are attacked in the streets and mobs assault them, rape them, cut their hair, etc. The military is not sympathetic to women's rights at all. Some of them are influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood's way of thinking. The Legal Advisor of the military supreme council won't even shake hands with a woman, for instance.

Nawla stated that the issue of foreign funding is a double-edged sword. This issue has been used since Mubarak and now again under the Muslim Brotherhood in order to taint the image of HRDs who take money from the West. The average Egyptian doesn't understand the situation and so also considers us agents of the West. In our experience, facts are the best response to this. We prepared a report on the foreign funding the Egyptian government received, for instance. The overall lack of financial support is also a problem.

A participant asked if there is documentation of what the Egyptian human rights community wants from the international community. Nawla responded that the Egyptian people perceive the international community as being in full support of the Islamists. This is particularly true of the United States. Nawla added that funders have an important role to play – advocating with their governments to impact the Egyptian government, particularly when it comes to aid.

Anne-Sophie Schaeffer added that this is a dangerous period for Egypt – laws that get put on the books now will impact the country for years to come. What is happening is happening really fast. For funders not based in the country there is a need for a better understanding of issues that will have a long-term impact on the country. Funders need to rely on activists on the ground – each context is so different but everything everywhere is happening really fast. Need to adapt quickly to activists' needs.

Funders can also shift their expectations – require less on reporting. There could be specific grants for advocacy so that these groups can advocate against these discriminatory laws. If core funding is impossible, then it is helpful for donors to give protection framework grants that allow activists to determine quickly what they best need.

Nawla stated that organizations can only ensure their survival with core funding. There are some funders that insist on having their name on whatever it is they are funding (the EU, for instance). This can be very dangerous. The NWF works in rural areas and going in under an EU banner does not look good.

Nawla explained that the issue of sustainability is difficult – is it really worth sustaining an organization if it cannot do activities? Organizations' credibility is being challenged.

With regards to sustainability, Nawla explained that funding the purchase of flats or office space is key – currently NWF pays very expensive rent and this makes it very difficult to stay open in situations like this. Yet funders generally refuse funding requests that would allow for the purchase of space. This is a key part of the sustainability of an organization. In times of shifting political contexts or repressive regimes, the question of sustainability needs to be addressed by the organizations themselves and by the funders. How can we ensure that the organization will remain no matter what happens?

Responding quickly is also key. The situation changes in a matter of days. Funding through direct funding organizations is also helpful. It is important to fund a combination of internal and external advocacy, and within the international financial institutions to condition support to Egypt on the status of the NGO law, protection of HRDs, etc.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

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

Esther Adhiambo explained that PEMA is an LGBTQ community-based organization in Mombasa, which is a very religious town (Muslim) and a tourist destination. PEMA aims to educate and sensitize community leaders to the LGBTI population, including religious leaders, health care workers, and police. In 2009, they achieved community-based organization (CBO) status, and currently, PEMA has 159 members, 35% of whom are women. This is significant because PEMA began as an organization for men who have sex with men, but now it includes all LGBTI people. PEMA staff and members face many security threats. Esther reported that recently, a PEMA member was beaten and raped.

Esther went on to explain PEMA's security system. They host security trainings with 25 participants each with a curriculum for HRDs developed by Frontline. So far, PEMA has trained 75 people, and have about 75 more to train. Esther said they decided to train those who are more active with PEMA and who are

more likely to be effective with speaking with police. PEMA trained some members as paralegals, so they could understand court proceedings.

PEMA also pays attention to logistics that could threaten security, Esther continued. For instance, members do not take their motorbikes all the way to the office, but rather leave them far away and then walk to the office so as not to draw attention to its location. The office is not easily accessed, which is good for security. Members travel in groups of two or three in order to be more secure. Further, Esther said, PEMA utilizes a specific hotline to advertise events and uses Facebook for advertising purposes, as well. She noted that she'd received several threats via Facebook, so that security on that platform wasn't always ensured.

Esther discussed how there is an inherent tension between safety and visibility for PEMA. They have reached out to religious leaders, police, and judiciary members to ask about conducting trainings. The Mombasa police have agreed to a two year training, which wasn't easy, Esther explained, but was definitely a victory.

Esther noted that PEMA has worked with a few human rights NGOs in Nairobi, but that she hopes PEMA will work together more often with other NGOs.

In terms of reaching out to media, Esther said that PEMA has tried to discuss working together with local media outlets in Mombasa. They've seen a few stories about their work, but not many. PEMA has a few allies in media, which will publish positive stories about their work, but some still ask insensitive questions.

PEMA is part of a coalition with similar organizations in Kenya and Tanzania, and they hope to model best security practices within that network.

Lastly, Esther discussed PEMA's main needs. They need flexible funding, she said, because they can't wait for checks for relocation, for example. PEMA has found that local donors are more flexible. Digital technology and software is expensive but necessary for PEMA members' safety. Funding trainings, she said, is necessary for sustainability. She concluded that PEMA also wants to learn how to use international mechanisms to their advantage.

RESOURCE RIGHTS

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

Claudia Samayoa discussed the organized communities of San José El Golfo and San Rafael Ayampuc (Frente Norte del Area Metropolitana) in Guatemala who have opposed the unilateral approval for the gold mining venture of Kappes, Cassidy and Associates (a US-based company) and who have requested 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.

Claudia recommended that funders take the following into account:

- Verify the capacity of the group requesting funding.
- Funders should work with grantees on a risk analysis and security plans, including support for staying in-community versus exiting the country.
- Early warning or prevention side: local networks need to share the information they hear.
- Must distinguish the funding organizations we represent:
    - Recognize who is in the best position to take certain actions (and also their limitations).
    - Increased coordination is always a good thing.
- A complex web of state and non-state actors makes it difficult to know who is behind each threat:
    - For example, in the case of Guatemala, many of the people working for security companies are military officers, which complicates things.
    - Local corruption also complicates the possibility of identifying the source of threats.
- International advocacy is a key role for funders.
- Networks of defenders (resource rights defenders, women HRDs, etc.) are important.
- Urgent funding and grants for emergency protection are often unsuccessful. We need to work on that as funders.

ASSESSING/PREVENTING SECURITY BREACHES: A PRACTICUM
11:45 AM - 12:30 PM

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

Claudia Samayoa began the panel by describing her organization's approach to protecting HRDs. She explained that UDEFEGUA both trains trainers and works with organizations to move from reactionary to preventative measures with organizations. The trainers UDEFEGUA trains go into communities to create protocols and planning processes around the protection of HRDs. She said that UDEGEFUA asks a series questions before training an organization's staff.

- Do we know the organization's rights and obligations? They must be nonviolent for UDEFEGUA to work with them.
- Are we being infiltrated? UDEFEGUA asks questions to discern rumors from reality.
- What is the context analysis of the organization? What are their areas of focus, the political context, etc.? If the Board of Directors knows this but the staff doesn't, it is important for them to have the same information.
- What is the security assessment (or risk analysis)? What are their threats and how do they enhance their vulnerabilities or are diminished by their capabilities? We have to recognize that the violence is a threat against our work, Claudia said. Over the past few years, she added, UDEFEGUA has been trying to make sexual harassment and homophobic remarks, as well as other kinds of verbal harassment, recognized as security threats.

It's better to have five security rules and commit to them, Claudia explained, than it is to have many rules that aren't followed. In this vein, UDEFEGUA has begun to help organizations talk about their risk analysis to funders, helping the organizations relate why they need funding for specific security purposes. UDEFEGUA also works to help organizations develop early warning systems, other protection methods, and to leverage funds for protection. UDEFEGUA also conducts IT workshops with organizations. Finally, non-material support can often be just as vital as material support, Claudia added.

Catherine Townsend spoke next about security assessments from a donor's perspective. When speaking with grantees, she asked, how do we talk about security and how do we support it? This theme has come up often at Wellspring, she said. Wellspring was reacting to a lot of emergencies, but they didn't know what they could do around prevention. So, she continued, Wellspring developed questions to provide guidance to funders and staff.

The goal of the questions is to assess grantees' strengths and weaknesses and channel funding accordingly. Catherine clarified that this is not meant to be an evaluation. Instead, Wellspring is looking to integrate this line of thought into due diligence processes because they want to partner with grantees to discuss these issues. Wellspring wants HRD security to be a integrated throughout the development of the grant, not included as an afterthought. They encourage grantees to ask for capacity building funds up front, and they hire security organizations to help with grantees' security. As a result of these consultations, Wellspring is collecting data on HRD needs across regions and issue areas. They've learned to keep it simple at first and celebrate all steps in the right direction, in order to affirm grantees' progress.

David Mattingly reflected on how funder actions could impact grantees' security. He described several areas in which this is very important:

- Communication with grantees: How funders ask for information, whether over email or phone (especially sensitive information like that around security planning). Figure out how to transmit sensitive information safely.
- Funders' communications: This can give grantees unwanted attention, like when a funder's grants list is published online, for instance.
- Site visits: Organizational information on an itinerary, for example, should be shared with caution.
- Funder profile in the field: When funders conduct site visits, they can bring dangerous attention to grantees. For example, if a funder visits a mine in Guatemala with grantees, then the mine owners may see that and the grantee's security may then be at risk.

Audience comments included the following:

- It is important for funders to realize that they have different privileges than HRDs, especially when in the field. When they're in the field, funders must ensure they don't bring unwanted attention to grantees. For example, it may be important to travel with the same taxi drivers who grantees trust rather than introducing new taxi drivers to grantees.
- Funders must be aware of the power dynamics implicit in asking security questions. Funders should be sensitive to grantees' situations and avoid asking questions that will create difficult choices for grantees (i.e. do we risk our safety by taking these funders around the community or do we not have them come?)
- Both digital security and information security is key, like lists of participants with contact information.
- When funders promote what they're funding, they may be risking grantee security. But as funders, we want to explain what we fund beyond direct services, so there exists an inherent tension in this.

Speakers
- **Bahey El-Din Hassan**, Director, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
- **Mary Lawlor**, Executive Director, Front Line Defenders
- **John Lindsay-Poland**, Research and Advocacy Director, Fellowship of Reconciliation-USA
- **Ali Ravi,** Privacy and Expression Programme Director, Tactical Technology Collective

Bahey El-Din Hassan explained that Egyptians have spent the past six years fighting three regimes: the Mubarak regime, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), and the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). Bahey is currently involved in the Forum of Independent Human Rights Organizations, a network of several independent local NGOs in Egypt, whose main reference is the universality of human rights. The network's purpose is to coordinate and exchange information and expertise, assess and respond to political developments, and promote freedom of association. They have focused on ending the storming of NGO offices and preventing the adoption of repressive NGO laws proposed under the governments of Mubarak and the SCAF.

Bahey discussed some recommendations for funders:
- Identify coalitions/networks of independent human rights NGOs by their status, political attitude and the work accomplished.
- Be attentive to NGO laws that enable HRDs to operate freely and that guarantee the right to association.
- Be attentive to-and supportive of- national NGO efforts for increased integration of advocacy on the national, regional and international levels.
- Be attentive to-and supportive of-their recommendations and needs including convening and travel costs.
- Be supportive-not only financially-to their recommendations and assist in implementing them with the capitals in the North (US/EU) and with international financial institutions.

Mary Lawlor reiterated that we are all aware of the shrinking space for HRDs and raised the question of how to foster political will to protect human rights defenders. She advised the following:
- Effective international action needs to be fast, accurate, and strategic
- It is helpful to strategically develop personal contacts with those who we ask to take action. Do not ignore the oppressors
- Adopt a flexible approach, be compelling and coherent. Be ready and take advantage of already scheduled meetings
- Rapid international action can make a big difference for the security of human rights defenders. Moral support and solidarity can have a preventive effect
- Look for innovative ways of raising awareness and building support
- International action can also be counterproductive and should always be led by defenders themselves and their families

Mary then discussed a policy-related example from her work with Frontline: In 2004, the European Union adopted guidelines on HRDs. The guidelines are not legally binding, but represent a clear political commitment by EU member governments. The guidelines established liaison officers which serve as contact point for HRDs. In 2012, Frontline forwarded more than 200 cases to the EU. It received

responses in 71% of cases and positive responses in 47% of cases. The positive responses don't mean that the HRDs were released, but they do mean that the EU took positive action.

John Lindsay-Poland explained that protective accompaniment is not acting as a human shield. It involves looking at the chain of command between decision-makers and perpetrators and then enacting pressure at all levels.

There are three primary impacts that stem from accompaniment: protection, encouragement, and building a global movement. Accompaniers provide a physical presence 24/7 and are always ready to respond**.** Trust and developing face-to-face relationships are essential. Accompaniers are there upon the request of HRDs. It is about being present without being a protagonist. That we know of, no human rights defender is ever been injured or killed while receiving accompaniment. The United Nations is increasingly recognizing accompaniment as an effective alternative to actions by state organizations. Generally, accompaniment raises the profile of a community and often increases the legitimacy of defenders and also involves monitoring and public awareness-raising. John suggested that funders think of themselves and their local staff as protective accompaniers. For instance, if a grantee is testifying at a court case, attend with him/her.

Ali Ravi opened by emphasizing that digital security is not solely the purview of the IT Department. As technology continually changes, digital security measures need to also change. As one example, the amount of information available in a smart phone is much more valuable than that contained in a general cell phone. By uploading our information we sometimes do the surveillance for the surveillance entities. We need to be sure to have ownership over our information. A few key pointers: 1) Tactical Tech's "Security in a box" tool, which is available in 14 languages, is an important resource for funders and grantees; 2) https is secure; http is not.

One participant asked if Skype was a secure means of communication. Ali responded thatTactical Tech does not recommend Skype. They Recommend open-source software so that others can test the platforms. Skype isn't open-source so it cannot be proven that it is secure. Skype is owned by Microsoft, which doesn't have sterling history with security. Skype in China has provided backdoor channels for authorities to eavesdrop. Also Skype allows multiple and simultaneous log ins, so if someone steals your password, that person could listen in through your account. Google Talk is sometimes better.

There is a coalition comprised of 13 governments and the MacArthur Foundation that is working on digital security issues. This is administered by Freedom House and CIVICUS will receive the grant for advocacy. Ali suggested that there is space for collaborating on EU advocacy on digital security issues

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
One participant asked when it is *inappropriate* to use protective accompaniment.

John replied that it is inappropriate if HRDs don't want it. Also in the case of full blown warfare and you are in a situation where the actors don't care if civilians are hurt. This is often more dangerous than if one actor is against an HRD. You have to be able to analyze the chain of influence and identify actors.

Another participant asked about the most important things grantees can do in terms of digital security.

Ali responded that having good "Password hygiene" is important. Don't have your password be "password." Also maintaining good "social network hygiene" and not posting too much information about yourself. It is also important that funders work in an encrypted way. One example: a phone call between an activist in Syria and someone outside of Syria was interrupted in the middle by police interceptors saying, "Please speak in Arabic. We can't understand English." All postal mail coming out of Israel is opened by Egyptian authorities. It can be challenging for funders to balance not being paternalistic or prescriptive when trying to ensure grantee communication occurs through safer channels. Also bear in mind that the lure of funding drives people to behave in ways they otherwise wouldn't. The burden is on the funder to ensure that communication remains private and anonymous.

Facebook is a challenge for personal safety, but it is important for one's organization to be out there. Don't be so scared you are paralyzed. As one participant shared, "In the Middle East the security of twitter can be problemmatic, but we used it to create a revolution." Digital security is empowerment tool, not one of fear.

RESPONDING TO THREATS YOUR GRANTEES FACE
3:30 - 4:30 PM

Participants broke out into their small groups from the morning session.

CONFLICT SETTINGS

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

Rauda stated that International solidarity is not helpful with LGBTQ issues in Palestine; it is seen as interfering or reinforcing Western values. It is better for straight Palestinians to stand in solidarity. The first reaction to LGBTQ rights in the region is that it is part of a western agenda, and that LGBTQ persons don't exist in the Arab world.

One example of how international interference can make things worse: a gay man in the U.S. pretended to be a lesbian Syrian blogger, around the time of the start of the revolution. It is the right of local groups to decide when they feel it is best to stop working underground and put an issue on the political agenda. When a LGBTQ person is attacked and the West speaks out in support, it is seen as the West coming to the "rescue" again. A local voice is much more important. HIVOS, Urgent Action Fund, and the Global Fund for Women understand the need for local activists to set the agenda.

Digital security is critical. Twitter and apps have been used a lot within the MENA region. It is important to never travel with a lot of information on your computer because you are always stopped and your laptop is confiscated for a period of time. Rauda changes her computer every two years and doesn't use Skype to communicate; there are groups working on developing a secure network.

SHIFTING POLITICAL CONTEXTS

- **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)

Anne-Sophie and Nawla outlined strategies funders can use in funding in transitional contexts like Egypt and how can funders adapt to changing conditions/developments on the ground.
- Provide discreet, timely, and core funding:
    - In Egypt, human rights defenders are now considered not only as political adversaries but also as ideological enemies.
    - Foreign funding is a highly sensitive issue, instrumentalized by the government.
    - Be cautious when discussing and visiting organizations on the ground – maybe do not go to the offices of the organization if your presence could endanger them.
    - Discreet funding should still have strict criteria and due diligence processes – after the revolution in Egypt there was a surplus of foreign money and it was not being given carefully.
    - Funders/NGOs should be able to name activities differently so as not to attract attention. Call it "education" or "travel" expenses rather than "human rights."

- Assuming that funders may not always want to provide core support to NGOs, funders would need to be flexible in case these NGOs are at risk, so that their grants can be used for rent or staff salaries.
- Fund the building of sustainable movements on the ground (this includes support for buying office space, paying staff/organizational expenses directly, etc.)
- Fund organizations regardless of their status (unregistered or registered as private companies, law firms or others) as many local organizations have different status in order to avoid government scrutiny.

- Be creative, flexible in getting funding where it is needed:
  - Fund through local sources – this is particularly important in Arab region (working to raise funds from local sources in-country through advocacy, training, etc.)
  - If you fund private companies rather than relying on government approval to fund NGOs, funders need to be prepared that the group may have to pay taxes. The NWF has a parallel private company to enable them to receive funds but they need to pay taxes on these funds, for example.
  - Fund through intermediaries who are able to fund non-registered organizations. If a new NGO law is adopted designed by the MB, all charities will have to re-register under the new law. Besides providing support to unregistered groups, the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation has also helped organizations in these types of contexts to register abroad.
  - Sometimes funders may need to provide cash in person, other times funders may want to consider transferring money to different accounts of relatives or trusted individuals or academic institutions to get money in the country and to the organizations.
    i. One tactic used under SCAF was to scrutinize personal bank accounts of activists they knew were associated with NGOs – then their bank accounts were blocked. Governments are beginning to learn from one another and even these mitigation methods are becoming more difficult to get away with.

- Consider grantees as partners and not grantees:
  - The Euro-Mediterranean Foundation's board is comprised of HRDs from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Even if this is not the right model for all funders, it is possible to have advisory committees with similar make-ups. This would ensure that there is an understanding of the current situation and would keep funders up-to-date about what is happening on the ground.
  - For HRDs to do effective work it must be on their terms and based on what they see as being priority needs. Funders need to share the risk and burden of their grantees.

- International advocacy by funders directed at their own governments
  - Looking at Tunisia, just after the fall of Ben Ali, the interim government adopted and ratified a number of international conventions and adopted a new law on associations. Civil society development and movement today in Tunisia is now a huge force – the opposite case from Egypt. Since the current government was elected in Tunisia no additional international conventions have been ratified, but the work of the interim government has made it difficult for this government to go back on the progress of civil society. Advocacy on the part of international funders for these new governments to adopt and ratify international human rights conventions will have a huge impact on the future of the civil society movement in these countries.
  - In Egypt there is a need for convening a meeting with major funders working in Egypt with major human rights actors and international actors to assess future priorities and address international advocacy.

- The NGO law and freedom of association is key in this context and this would be a good place to start advocacy efforts. Without this we will witness the decline of the NGOs and human rights movement in Egypt.
- A key role for international funders is to pressure their governments (not the Egyptian government) to keep the Egyptian government accountable for violations of freedom of association and assembly, and refuse to disclose any information about civil society organizations.
- Western governments should have separate sections in their consulates for HRDs to facilitate visa procedures for HRDs at risk.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

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

Esther began the conversation by giving more context about Mombasa, the city where PEMA is located. In Nairobi, she said, LGBT visibility is considered safe. In Mombasa, however, it is not safe. Activists in Mombasa who are not from Mombasa can create tension. There have been threats to hold demonstrations against the LGBT commuity on Fridays because everyone goes to the Mosque on Fridays. Mombasa not a metropolitan place like Nairobi, Esther explained, rather, it is very Islamic. Usually PEMA activists are Christians, not Muslim. The local government benefits from tourism, but tourism as a whole has little impact on LGBT life.

With Mombasa's religious community in mind, PEMA has reached out to 19 religious leaders so far, both Catholic and Muslim. PEMA members have one on one conversations with them, and then ask them to go tell four of their friends about what they learned, which is PEMA's way of creating a network. Sometimes, religious leaders believe the myth that LGBT organizations are funded by the West and therefore very rich, so they ask PEMA for laptops and money.

PEMA's security committee, a team of members who respond to security isssues, can be reimbursed for their expenses, but they are not paid.

Esther then turned to the tools and techniques that PEMA employs. PEMA mostly uses Facebook to advertise activitise and trainings, so realizing that Facebook isn't necessarily safe has been surprising. PEMA needs to know how to reach members without utilizing unsafe technology.

Laura Garcia said that Semillas has just begun a program on security for WHRD. They provided cell phones for activists, who then agree to certain rules. It has been a challenge to coordinate security actions with other organizations when security rules are sometimes disregarded, she said. Laura noted that when collaborating with others, information becomes more dispersed and easier to lose control of. One way Semillas has handled this paradox is to keep groups small and only give information to those who need it.

Despite how unsafe technology may be, Laura said, they have to use it. Often when there are security breaches in technology, she noted, it's the user who is the problem, not the technology itself. (An example of this: An activist who is being pursued by the government may update Facebook with her location, thinking it is secure.) Because of this, activists must be trained on how to use the tools we have

and how to avoid unsafe behavior. Funders must remember, Laura continued, that core support is one of the biggest ways funders can support digital security efforts. For example, PEMA's office is in an upscale neighborhood in Mombasa, so the core support they use to pay rent is essential for that part of their security efforts. There is so much funding for security trainings, Esther added, but not as much funding to implement and sustain those strategies. Laura concluded that funders must consider the lived realities of their grantees before they consider how to fund for security needs.

Someone else in the group commented that it is important to initiate conversations about how we can best fund grantees. Being open and upfront about funding possibilities is key (core support, emergency funds, etc.).

Another person noted that when there's a funder driven request for a security plan, it can be more fruitful in the long term because the organizations receiving the training will have more of an ability and opportunity to integrate that into their daily functions.

Part of the funding requirements at another group member's organization are that the grantee's executive director is present at the security training. They also give the grantee a few security-related changes that they can work on immediately. It's very important, she concluded, to incorporate a security plan within the larger scope of grantee activities.

Laura added that funders can play an important role in telling grantees that they deserve to spend money on security and they deserve not to have threats against them. At Semillas, she said, they play a role in speaking from the outside and giving perspective to activists, often through psycho-social support. Also, one particular activist doesn't follow security protocol, and Semillas has drawn boundaries around how they can help her in those situations.

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

[No notes available for this discussion]

REPORT BACK
Each small group reported back on the key points of their discussion:

Resource Rights:
- In the past the focus was on the evacuation of HRDs, but now the focus is on providing tools and support so that they can stay in-country. Funders should work with grantees on a risk analysis and security plan. Often organizations rely too much on the director. If the director is threatened, he/she should be able to leave and the organization should be able to continue without their presence.
- Early warning and prevention are critical. Establish support networks to share information about threats.

- Funders and activists have different roles in emergencies and it is important to think about who is best positioned for what action. There is need for increased coordination.

Sexual and Gender Orientation:
- Core flexible support and digital security measures are critical.
- Provide follow up after security trainings to support grantees in implementing that training.
- Be mindful of psychosocial effects of activism such as trauma and burn out.

Shifting Political Contexts:
- Provide more flexible funding
  - Need for core support and consciousness about the sustainability of movement building.
  - With suspicion of foreign funding, it might be helpful for funders to pay grantees expenses directly instead of via grants.
  - View the groups you fund as partners instead of grantees.
  - Share risks between the funder and activist. For example, funders could bring cash with them with they travel to provide to the grantee. The risk doesn't need to be entirely with the grantee.
  - Reinforce funding from local sources.
- Advocacy role for funders
  - Funders should pressure their own governments to advocate on behalf of grantees and their agendas.
  - Be very careful with information sharing.

Conflict Setting Group:
- Support is important, both international and local, but with international be sensitive and don't interfere in local agendas.

WRAP-UP
4:30 - 5:00 PM

Kate and Julie facilitated a report back on what participants had learned throughout the day. Participants also expressed appreciation for the inclusion of activists as well as the efforts of organizers. Participants then filled out evaluation forms.