



human rights *first*

American ideals. Universal values.



**2012 Annual Report**

# Welcome

## From the President and CEO

After his courageous escape from house arrest in April 2012, Chen Guangcheng was asked why he'd sought protection at the American embassy. His answer? Because "the United States holds itself up as embodying democracy and human rights."

He was challenging the United States to live up to its ideals. And that's precisely what we do at Human Rights First.

As an American organization, we believe we have a special responsibility to ensure that our country respects human rights. This sets us apart. We're the only organization whose primary mission is to foster American leadership on human rights.

We are in this not just to make a point, but to advance concrete, real-world changes that improve people's lives.

Our aim is to create conditions conducive to progress and to persuade public officials and other leaders to act. To that end, we form effective and unconventional coalitions, advance reasoned arguments grounded in policy expertise, and influence the public debate.

This report highlights some of our victories in 2012. Whether we were spearheading the successful effort to break U.S. ties to the Syrian regime's top weapons supplier, leading the charge for Senate sign-off on a landmark torture report, or securing relief for refugees mislabeled as "terrorists," we narrowed the gap between American ideals and American reality.

Thank you so much for joining with us to ensure that the United States respects human rights and remains a beacon of hope for the world.



Elisa Massimino  
President and CEO, Human Rights First

*"As a human rights defender in China, I feel that organizations like Human Rights First have played a very powerful role in promoting human rights around the world. You may not always see the effect, but we can feel it very clearly in China."*

—Chen Guangcheng, blind "barefoot lawyer" and 2012 Human Rights First Award winner





### Honoring an Activist to Highlight His Struggle for Human Rights

Elisa Massimino and Academy Award winner Christian Bale present the 2012 Human Rights First Award to “barefoot lawyer” Chen Guangcheng. In 2011, Bale had tried to meet him in China but was rebuffed by police.



# Shaping the Public Debate

We Keep the Most Pressing Human Rights Issues in the News

## THE SAN ANTONIO CURRENT

WHAT TEXAS CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMERS COULD  
TEACH THE BOOMING IMMIGRANT DETENTION SYSTEM



MICHAEL BARAJAS

ICE opened the private-run Karnes County Civil Detention Center this year in part to house low-risk immigrants held under mandatory detention.

for probation (the prison system's top feeder) and ordering the state parole board to raise its parole rate.

This year, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's population remained 17,000 prisoners below what state officials had projected, and "right-on-crime" advocates say Texas has saved over \$2 billion in the process.

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week

Pull  
playbook, two years later Texas pushed through  
landmark criminal justice reforms, shuffling funding  
to drug and DWI courts, curbing the average time

"Washington knows that a  
successful U.S. withdrawal  
depends on the Afghan  
government's eventual ability  
to deliver law, order and  
justice to its people."

-Daphne Eviatar, Human Rights First

## POLITICO

### U.S. must aid Afghan judicial system

By: Daphne Eviatar

March 13, 2012 09:38 PM EDT

A U.S. soldier's shooting spree that left 16 Afghan civilians dead Sunday is sure to exacerbate the difficulties of an already challenging U.S. withdrawal strategy.

Part of that plan was announced Friday, just before this tragedy, when the Obama administration said it had reached agreement with the Afghan government to hand over control of the U.S.-run detention center at Bagram within the next six months. What that means for about 3,200 detainees now imprisoned there remains unclear.

To the extent that this marks the beginning of the end of the decadelong U.S. project of indefinite detention of terror suspects without charge or trial, it's good news. (Now we just have to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay.)

But the agreement creates as many questions as it answers. In particular, how will the United States ensure that Afghanistan treats the detainees humanely, in accordance with international law? International law forbids the United States from transferring detainees to a situation where they risk torture or face other violations of international humanitarian and human-rights law — including the right to due process.

Handing over these Afghans to an abusive regime is also bad U.S. national security policy. Afghan opinion of the United States

## Forbes

Op/Ed | 1/31/2012 @ 4:44PM

### Privacy, Free Expression And The Facebook Standard

*Elisa Massimino is the CEO of Human Rights First*

In this barren economy, the impending public offering by Facebook is a rain. It will be a flood. We're talking biblical proportions: projected to bring in \$10 billion, it will be the largest IPO of any tech company in history, raising the value of the company to an estimated \$100 billion.

But what are investors investing in when they invest in Facebook?

The world's largest social networking site, for starters. If its users were a country, Facebook would be the third most populous in the world, more than twice as large as the United States. Facebook is an integral part of people's lives, a vehicle for expression and communication, a facilitator of

"Absent an effort to strengthen  
and clarify its policies on  
privacy and free expression,  
there may come a time when  
users everywhere de-friend  
Facebook."

-Elisa Massimino, President and CEO,  
Human Rights First







During his confirmation process, CIA Director David H. Petraeus told Sen. (Mark Wilson / Getty Images)

Editorial

## Free the torture report

*The American people have a right to know how 'enhanced interrogation' practices became U.S. policy and whether they produced useful information.*

April 27, 2012

THOMSON REUTERS NEWS & INSIGHT



## Nearly 500 convicted on terror-related charges since 9/11: report

NEW YORK, July 12 (Reuters) - Nearly 500 individuals accused of terrorism-related charges have been convicted in U.S. federal courts in the decade since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and almost 100 of those have been in New York courts, according to statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice released Thursday by a human rights organization.

Between the Sept. 11 attacks and December 31, 2011, 494 individuals were convicted in 60 different federal courts in 37 states, said Human Rights First. The group obtained the information through a Freedom of Information Act request to the Justice Department.

Brooklyn and Long Island had the highest number of convictions, a total of 49, the statistics showed. There were 45 in the Eastern District of Michigan, 44 in the Southern District of New York, 35 in the Eastern District of Virginia and 28 in the Southern District of Florida, according to the report.

A DOJ spokesman confirmed the statistics but declined further comment.

While the data does not prove the effectiveness of the criminal justice system, Human Rights First said, it shows that federal civilian courts have established a record of safely trying terror-related cases without threatening national security.

Critics say that the cases belong in military commissions because of potential security threats to the courthouses.

One high-profile case, that of accused Sept. 11 plotter Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and several alleged co-conspirators, was moved out of New York's Southern District to a military tribunal in Guantanamo Bay after lawmakers expressed concern about the cost of providing as much as \$1 billion to secure lower Manhattan, where the courthouse is located.



## Gay Rights In Uganda

Transcript for: Gay Rights in Uganda

MR. KOJO NNAMDI

13:07:10

First: Why gay rights could drive a wedge between the United States and one of its most critical allies in East and Central Africa. Uganda is on the cusp of passing legislation that could spell out life prison sentences for hundreds of thousands of LGBTI citizens.

MR. KOJO NNAMDI

# The New York Times

Op-Ed Columnist

## When Bahrain Said: Get Lost

By NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF | Published: December 22, 2012



Nicholas D. Kristof

Bahrain International Airport  
BAHRAIN, one of America's more repressive allies, tries to keep many journalists and human rights monitors out. I recently tried to slip in anyway.

The jir was up at the Bahrain airport when an immigrant's companion said, "Go back."

looking at me in horror and saying, "You."

The Sunni monarchy in Bahrain tightens its chokehold over the country every evening, there are clashes, with both sides growing more violent.

Around 100 people have been arrested in Bahrain in the past few days as troops opened fire on protesters who were chanting "No king, no law."

The oppression is not just in Bahrain. Police clubs and beatings are common in Bahrain — but also in other Gulf states.

In the larger Arab world, the situation maybe doesn't matter as much as it does here, but it is a close call in some cases with American interests.

After that initial crackdown, the repression mostly averts its eyes, but also of American interests.

After that initial crackdown, the repression mostly averts its eyes, but also of American interests.

The human rights situation in Bahrain has deteriorated over recent months, and is now entrenched, Amnesty International says on Bahrain. It concluded that repression and repression unleashed.

The crackdown has, in turn, hardened the opposition, which increasingly turns to Molotov cocktails, rocks and other weapons to confront the authorities. Moderates on both sides are being marginalized.

This is a tragic turn for Bahrain, which traditionally was a lovely oasis of prosperity, moderation and tolerance. Astonishingly, the king, Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, can blame himself for the escalation of violence.

He has imprisoned leading advocates of peaceful resistance, like Nabeel Rajab, the globally respected president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights. My take is that the regime intentionally jails peaceful moderates so as to leave the protest movement in the hands of young men who are more radical.

**"The Obama administration initially spoke out against the crackdown but has since been 'inconsistent and muted,' notes Brian Dooley of Human Rights First. 'This has been horribly frustrating for human rights activists in Bahrain hoping that the U.S. would support their push for democracy,' he added."**

**—Nicholas Kristof, New York Times**

But the king, Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, can blame himself for the escalation of violence. He has imprisoned leading advocates of peaceful resistance, like Nabeel Rajab, the globally respected president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights. My take is that the regime intentionally jails peaceful moderates so as to leave the protest movement in the hands of young men who are more radical.

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# The Washington Post



10/03/2012

## Blasphemy, right to freedom of expression and our most sacred beliefs

By Elisa Massimino

In his recent speech at the U.N. General Assembly, amid global protests and calls to ban perceived insults against religion, President Obama gave a stirring defense of the right to freedom of expression. "Like me, the majority of Americans are Christian, and yet we do not ban blasphemy against our most sacred beliefs. ... In a diverse society, efforts to restrict speech can become a tool to silence critics, or oppress minorities," he said.

Muslim leaders are using the controversy over a YouTube video to raise their push at the United Nations for a "defamation of religions" resolution—a global blasphemy code. Speaking for the 56-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Pakistan's ambassador Zahir Akram said the video, like Koran-burnings and anti-Islamic cartoons, is "flagrant incitement to violence" that should not be protected by law. The Arab League is also calling for the international community to criminalize blasphemy.

While it might be tempting to treat a non-binding U.N. measure as benign or irrelevant, that would be a mistake. The "defamation of religions" resolution would validate the national blasphemy laws that have led to persecution and violence in many countries and lead to their proliferation.

# THE HILL

## Pentagon's contract with Rosoboronexport should stop

By Winnie Chen, senior fellow, Human Rights First - 6/5/12

With two suicide bombings and an upsurge in Syrian security forces last week, it's clear that the six-point plan brokered by joint U.N.-Arab League envoy Kofi Annan is falling apart. Violence and atrocities in the country are escalating on a daily basis. It's also clear that the United States needs to do more to stop those who are enabling the Syrian regime's crackdown.

Next week, Congress has a chance to do just that. The 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is headed to the floor of the House this week, and members should use the opportunity to pass legislation that will prohibit all new contracts and Department of Defense funding to companies enabling the Syrian government while it continues to carry out attacks on civilians. Specifically, Congress should act to



## Woman Up

Why Hillary Clinton needs to stand up for the women of Egypt

BY ELISA MASSIMINO | JULY 13, 2012



The Egyptian law granting women the right to file for divorce, started in 2000, was championed by former first lady Suzanne Mubarak, who saw women's empowerment as a woman's rights advocate. Yet the law was not as much as the help it was for women as it was for the government to control the population.

My organization, Human Rights First, asked Morsi Hassan, Hassan's brother and executive director, what Hassan ought to do with Morsi. "Representation for women in the parliament is important," she told us. "In addition to her representation for women in the new cabinet," she urged the secretary of state to press Morsi to make good on his promise to select a woman as one of his vice presidents and to appoint women to other important positions.

Hassan also encouraged Clinton to mention violence against women and women Morsi's commitment to take concrete steps — such as a pledge to fight for investigations into charges of sexual assault and prosecution of those responsible — to combat this growing problem. She should also urge Morsi to support the codification of laws of state to give Morsi to make good on his promise to select a woman as one of his vice presidents and to appoint women to other important positions.



# Building Consensus: The Human Rights Summit

## A Unique D.C. Event Spurs Momentum for Change

Kicking off our inaugural summit, Ken Feinberg—the master problem-solver best known for handling the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund—told the crowd that he’s proud to serve as vice chair of Human Rights First because we’re “committed to finding concrete ways to advance human rights and human dignity.”

That commitment to concrete solutions was on display at the summit, where participants offered practical ways for the U.S. government to lead on a host of human rights issues, from mass atrocities to Internet freedom to democracy in the Middle East.

And because the summit brought together an unusually diverse group—frontline activists, Democratic and Republican members of Congress, administration officials, military leaders, academics, journalists, corporate executives—it built broad-based support for action.

The summit will become an annual gathering that raises the profile of human rights issues in Washington and builds momentum for change.



Senator John McCain (R-AZ)



Samantha Power, Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights at the National Security Council

**Looking for Leadership.** Human rights activists discuss what they want from the United States. From left to right: Cristina Hardaga from the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center (Mexico); Lorne Craner, President of the International Republican Institute (moderator); Dr. Rula Al Saffar, medic (Bahrain); Julius Kagwa, Executive Director of Support Initiative for People with Atypical Sex Development (Uganda); Haris Azhar, Coordinator of KontraS (Indonesia)





***“Human rights must come first  
or they won’t come at all.”***

–Garry Kasparov (at right), Chairman of  
Russia's United Civil Front, at our 2012  
Human Rights Summit



**Beacon Award Ceremony.** From left: Gen. Carter F. Ham, singer Dianne Reeves, Elisa Massimino, and Geoffrey Bannister who accepted the award on behalf of his cousin Ambassador Stevens, the posthumous honoree.

### **Encouraging American Leadership by Celebrating It**

During our summit, we award the Beacon Prize to an individual or organization whose work embodies the best in the tradition of American leadership on human rights. The inaugural honoree was the late Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens for his heroic work in postwar Libya and a career of building bridges in a region where Americans are often viewed with mistrust.

# Cracking Down on Assad's Enablers

## A New Law Cuts U.S. Ties to Syrian Regime's Top Arms Supplier

Genocide and other crimes against humanity are complex, organized crimes that require infrastructure, planning, and resources. That's why we target third parties whose support for perpetrators makes mass atrocities possible. The idea is to disrupt the supply chain for slaughter.

We've taken the lead in focusing global attention on the Assad regime's enablers. In particular, we've focused on its largest weapons supplier: Rosoboronexport

Rosoboronexport, the Russian government's arms dealer, has provided Assad with a range of weapons and supplies that he's used to kill thousands of Syrians in a conflict that's become a human rights catastrophe. In 2011 alone, Russia shipped an estimated \$960 million worth of heavy arms to Syria. We've tracked these shipments and outlined steps the international community should take to stop them.

In 2012, we saw the potential benefits of this approach. A ship, the *Alaed*, was headed to Syria carrying refurbished

combat helicopters. After we sounded the alarm, the U.S. State Department worked with the British government to deny it insurance coverage. The ship was forced to return to Russia.

We've also highlighted the fact that the U.S. government is, in effect, enabling the enablers through the Pentagon's contract with Rosoboronexport. In April 2012, thanks to our efforts, a bipartisan group of 17 senators called on the Defense Department to cancel the contract.

Then in December 2012, Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) introduced an amendment to the Defense Authorization bill that cuts Pentagon ties to Rosoboronexport. The Senate passed it unanimously, and the House approved a similar amendment introduced by Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Kay Granger (R-TX).

The measure, which President Obama signed into law, shows Russia that it can't sell weapons to Assad with impunity. And it sends a message to the world: enabling atrocities isn't business as usual.



### A New Entity to Galvanize Government Action: The Atrocities Prevention Board

This was a longtime goal of ours, an agency that facilitates a whole-of-government effort to prevent mass atrocities. Above, Human Rights First's Sadia Hameed talks about atrocities in the Syrian conflict on PBS's *American Voices*.



**"Thank you [Human Rights First] for being so important and so relevant to our country and to the world. ... You bring us back to core values."**

**-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel**

## Where There is Political Will, There is a Way to Stop Weapons Shipments

We've been tracking enablers' ships since the outset of the Syrian conflict. This is a tale of three of the few that received international attention.

European countries allowed the *Chariot* (route in green) to deliver 60 tons of AK-47s and rocket launcher ammunition through European waters.

The *Professor Katsman* (purple) followed the same path as the *Chariot* to deliver rotor blades and possibly other munitions.

The United States worked with the British government to deny the *Alaed* (yellow) insurance coverage, forcing it to turn around.

■ E.U. Member States/signees to the Arms Embargoes against Syria

○ Points where inspections/interventions could have taken place

### The Chariot

Tracked in January 2012.  
Delivery made.



### The Professor Katsman

Tracked in May 2012.  
Delivery made.



### The Alaed

Stopped in June thanks to international pressure.



## A Bipartisan Effort to Crack Down on Enablers

Our effort to end the U.S. relationship with Assad's top arms supplier earned support from a range of policy makers. In the *Houston Chronicle*, Elisa Massimino praised Sen. John Cornyn's leadership on this issue.

## HOUSTON CHRONICLE

### Cornyn leading bipartisan effort to stop Syria's enablers

By Elisa Massimino | June 28, 2012

Imagine if, during this politically divisive presidential campaign season, Republicans and Democrats in Congress found a way to work together. Now imagine that they took united action on one of the world's most pressing and challenging issues. Imagine no longer. Over the last few months, Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, has led a bipartisan effort to halt the slaughter in Syria by pressuring Russia to stop supplying the regime with weapons. Russia sold Syria nearly \$1 billion worth in 2011, and Russian weapons continue to flow into the country as the regime steps up its crackdown. Recent estimates put the death toll at more than 13,000.

Russia's support for President Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian dictator, reveals the key role that third parties

play in mass atrocities. Historically, those seeking to stop the worst human rights abuses have focused on the direct perpetrators. But mass atrocities are not simply spasms of hatred and violence. They are organized crimes requiring infrastructure, planning and resources. For several years, we've urged the U.S. government to target enablers - the countries, companies and individuals who provide the means to attack civilians. The idea is to disrupt the supply chain that fuels these atrocities.

That's what Cornyn is trying to do. Most recently, he joined with Sen. Richard Durbin, D-Ill., to lead a bipartisan group of senators, including Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., and Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., who are pressing for a resolution that would condemn Russia for arming Assad. "The United States can no

longer turn a blind eye as they prop up his despicable regime and enable its murderous reign over the Syrian people," said Cornyn. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has slammed Russia for helping to push Syria toward civil war, and this resolution would underscore the resolve of the United States to cut Assad off from his lifeline in Moscow. Last week, the U.S. government tracked a ship carrying attack helicopters back to Syria from a Russian repair facility. U.S. authorities and their British counterparts worked with UK P&I Club, an insurance company, to revoke the ship's coverage, halting the delivery. The ship has headed back to Russia. But the Obama administration needs to examine the U.S. government's own ties to Russia's sole arms dealer. While Russia's

# Freeing the Truth about Torture

## A Senate Committee Signs off on a Landmark Report

We won an important victory in 2012 when the Senate Intelligence Committee—in a bipartisan vote—adopted the findings of its three-year investigation of the CIA torture program.

This 6,000-page report is the most comprehensive record of the program to date and could end once and for all the public debate about torture's efficacy. But if some in Congress and former CIA officials get their way, Americans will never get to see it.

The committee vote was the first step to getting this important document declassified and released. We know from experience that unless Americans get the facts about the harm the program did—not only to our nation's moral standing but to its security—it will be difficult to establish a durable consensus against torture.

Shortly after the release of the Abu Ghraib photos in 2004, we assembled a powerful coalition of more than 50 retired generals and admirals—leaders who had put their lives on the line to advance American ideals and ensure our security. To make the case that torture is immoral, illegal, and harmful to national security, they traveled the country to meet with and educate public officials.

President Obama said these generals and admirals made an “extraordinary impression” on him. That's why they were standing behind him—literally—in 2009 when he signed an executive order banning torture.

But the torture program's dark legacy lives on—as does the possibility of its return. Many Americans are willing to support torture if they believe it keeps them safe. That's why its proponents claim torture played a key role in the hunt for Osama Bin Laden.

Every time this bogus claim threatens to get traction—after Bin Laden's death, a year later around the anniversary, during the debate over the film *Zero Dark Thirty*—we join with anti-torture allies in Congress, like Senators John McCain and Dianne Feinstein, to push back. Feinstein has said the Intelligence Committee report debunks the claim that waterboarding led the United States to Bin Laden and shows that torture was “far more widespread and systematic than we thought.”

Releasing the report would allow Americans to see what was done in their name. And it would trigger a public reckoning of the damage torture did—the suffering it inflicted and the ways it undermined U.S. national security.



**Anti-Torture Military Leaders  
Go to Washington**

Human Rights First's Dixon Osburn, and retired flag officers urged senators to support the release of a landmark report on the CIA's post-9/11 interrogation and detention of terrorist suspects.



***"I will never forget the role that Human Rights First, and Elisa in particular, played in the fight to end the cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of detainees during the previous administration."***

**–Senator John McCain at the 2012 Human Rights Summit**



Scene from *Zero Dark Thirty*

### **Setting the Record Straight on Torture**

Torture proponents argued that *Zero Dark Thirty* supported their claim that torture led the United States to Bin Laden.

But according to those with access to classified information, torture not only didn't help, it prolonged the hunt. On the *Today Show*, Elisa Massimino called on the CIA to set the record straight.





# Engaging the Power of Popular Culture

## We Encourage Entertainment that Educates and Inspires on Human Rights

American popular culture, which reaches into living rooms and theatres around the world, has the potential to move and educate millions of people. We challenge the entertainment industry to recognize this power and tackle human rights issues with the accuracy and complexity they demand.

We created the Sidney Lumet Award for Integrity in Entertainment to honor creators who meet this challenge.

The story of the 2012 winner, Showtime's *Homeland*, began years ago. That's when we discovered that military recruits were imitating the interrogation techniques of torture-happy Jack Bauer, hero of the hit show *24*.

In response, we launched a project called Primetime Torture. We produced

a factual video about interrogation for use in military academies. And we took professional interrogators to Hollywood, where they met with the makers of *24* and urged them to depict interrogation—and torture—in an accurate way.

*24*'s Executive Producer Howard Gordon went on to produce *Homeland*, which we recognized for its complex and fact-based depictions of coercive interrogation, illegal surveillance, and indiscriminate bombing. The show portrays the unintended—often catastrophic—ramifications of these actions, the harmful domino effect that occurs when the United States abandons its principles.

Accepting the award, Gordon thanked us for engaging with him and challenging his assumptions.



Former FBI Special Agent Joe Navarro and Col. Stu Herrington, both veteran interrogators, meet *24* producer Howard Gordon in 2007.



Claire Danes and Damian Lewis in Showtime's *Homeland*

Fox's *24*. After we heard from military trainers that recruits were imitating the abusive tactics of *24*'s Jack Bauer, Human Rights First brought the dean of West Point and professional interrogators to Hollywood to meet with the show's writers and producers. That creative team went on to create Showtime's *Homeland* which offers a more nuanced look at the costs of abandoning our values in the fight against terrorism.





***"The writers and producers of Homeland have a long relationship with Human Rights First. And that relationship started with a disagreement. But here we are tonight. Together. And it's a poetic moment for us."***

**—Howard Gordon, writer and producer of 24 and Homeland**

Sidney Lumet  
[1924–2011]



Alex Cary, Howard Gordon, and Chip Johannessen, producers of Showtime's *Homeland*, accept the Sidney Lumet Award for Integrity in Entertainment.

### Mobilizing Experts to Shape the Debate

Amid the controversy over *Zero Dark Thirty*, we rallied real interrogators to report what they learned in the trenches: that legal, humane techniques are the best way to produce valuable intelligence. The *New York Times*'s Maureen Dowd quoted Tony Camerino, a 20-year veteran of the Air Force.

## The New York Times

### *A Tale of Two Women*

By MAUREEN DOWD

WASHINGTON. Rarely have there been two such intriguing women at the heart of such a dramatic true story.

The first, a smart, prickly, compulsive C.I.A. operative in her 30s, is the real-life Carrie Mathison (minus the slinky behavior at work). She started at the agency out of school, just before the Twin Towers were attacked on 9/11, and worked in Islamabad tracking terrorists with the monomaniacal zeal of Captain Abah Lake Carrie, she's a talented analyst but not, according to colleagues, Miss Congeniality. The Washington Post's Greg Miller wrote about the young woman who spent years meticulously hunting down Osama

bin Laden, convinced that they could find the fiend by trailing the couriers who hand-delivered messages to him. The inspiration for Maya — the character played by Jessica Chastain in the new Kathryn Bigelow/Mark Boal movie, "Zero Dark Thirty" — the C.I.A. operative was allowed to share her story with Boal for his screenplay. She is described in the movie as a "her against the world" lone wolf and "killer" whose loner life is better when they don't disagree with her. She was working in Pakistan as a targeter, recruiting spies and finding drone targets, when President Obama put bin Laden's capture back on the front burner. "The operative, who remains

undiscovered, was passed over for a promotion that many in the C.I.A. thought would be impossible to withhold from someone who played such a key role in one of the most successful operations in agency history," Miller writes. Who do you have to kill to get a raise around here? Miller continued: "She has shared with C.I.A. colleagues over credit for the bin Laden mission. After being given a prestigious award for her work, she sent an e-mail to dozens of other recipients saying they didn't deserve to share her accolades, current and former officials said," since they had tried to obstruct her. We've become obsessed with

# Supporting the Fight for Freedom in Bahrain

## A Lifeline and Advocate for Bahraini Activists

In 2012, we broadened and intensified the work that in 2011 made us a leading American advocate for human rights in Bahrain.

Since the beginning of Bahrain's democratic uprising in February 2011, the monarchy, a U.S. ally, has arrested and detained thousands.

Torture of activists is commonplace, and several have died in custody. Hundreds have been convicted in trials that don't come close to meeting international standards.

But those fighting for freedom in Bahrain are in for the long haul, and so are we. By amplifying the voices of activists and keeping international attention focused on their struggle—and on the high cost many of them pay for their advocacy—we give them a measure of protection and open up space for them to operate.

Brian Dooley, who directs our work with international activists, has done extensive on-the-ground reporting, documenting abuses and monitoring trials. His work highlighting injustice and advocating for activists has made him a go-to source for reporters and policy makers.

As a close ally of Bahrain, the United States should be standing with Bahrainis who want democracy and doing all it can to encourage the regime to respect human rights. Relying on activists' expertise to inform our advocacy, we press the United States to do just that. And because activists are their own best spokespeople, we connect them directly to American policy makers.

In 2012, our President and CEO Elisa Massimino traveled to Bahrain with board member Rear Admiral John Hutson (USN, Ret.), where they met with the commander of the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet. The conventional wisdom is that the United States can't push for reform in Bahrain because it hosts our naval base. But as Hutson pointed out to Vice Admiral John W. Miller, it's precisely because of this that the United States has a particular interest in seeing a peaceful transition to democracy.

Upon her return from Bahrain, Massimino reported that activists there are still looking to the United States for support. And she took to the *Washington Post* to urge U.S. lawmakers to back democratic reform because, without it, the conflict will deepen and hurt not just Bahrainis but also American interests.



**Amplifying the Voices of Bahrainis**

Human Rights First's Brian Dooley has teamed up with Bahraini activists, including Maryam Al-Khawaja (above), vice president of the Bahraini Center for Human Rights, winner of our 2012 Roger Baldwin Medal of Liberty. Two of our other activist partners, who were later sent to prison, asked Bahraini children who'd been exposed to violence to draw whatever they wanted to. The result was "Through Children's Eyes," (right) a powerful exhibit that was displayed on Capitol Hill.



**"I'm free now, and I just wanted to thank you for the great job that Human Rights First did on my case. You are a great friend."**

**-Said Yousif Almuhaftah,  
Bahrain Center For Human Rights**



## A Call for American Leadership on Bahrain

After visiting Bahrain, Elisa Massimino wrote a piece in the *Washington Post* making the case that it is in the interest of the United States to support democratic reforms in Bahrain.

## The Washington Post

### An intolerable status quo in Bahrain

BY ELISA MASSIMINO

During my 25 years as a lawyer and human rights advocate, I've been in many courtrooms in many places. But I've never seen anything quite like what I recently witnessed in Bahrain. I sat in on one of the hearings for the 28 medics being prosecuted after treating injured protesters during the democratic uprising last year. In the chaotic courtroom, the judge dismissed arguments by defense lawyers that their clients had been tortured. That's when Nabeel Tamman, one of Bahrain's leading car, nose and throat specialists, raised his hand and asked for permission to speak. Seemingly mistaking him for one of the defense lawyers, the judge acknowledged Tamman, who spoke the words he had not been allowed to say publicly before any Bahraini judicial authority since his detention in 2011. "My name is Nabeel Tamman. I am one of the medics, and I was tortured," Tamman described what he suffered at the hands of government officials; the judge quickly ended the hearing. If this is what the rule of law looks like in Bahrain, I thought, no wonder the country is in crisis. It has been one year since the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), a body set up to investigate the events surrounding the uprising, issued its report. The BICI confirmed what Human Rights First and other international nongovernmental organizations had been saying for months: that the government had swept up thousands in illegal arrests, used excessive force against protesters and engaged in a pattern of abuse that resulted in at least four prisoners being tortured to death. To his credit, King Hamad accepted the report's recommendations and promised to implement them. Several Bahraini government ministers I met pointed proudly to a new police code of conduct and a special office to prosecute human rights abuses. But the people on the receiving end of the policing and justice systems in Bahrain told me that these "paper reforms" have meant next to nothing in the real world. If anything, they say, police conduct has worsened, and the judicial system remains hopelessly politicized. No senior government figure has been held accountable for last

# Protecting the Persecuted

## Top-Notch Legal Representation for Refugees in Need

In 2012, we provided legal services worth more than \$29.5 million to some 800 indigent refugees seeking asylum, winning 90 percent of our cases. This work traces back to the earliest years of our organization.

Thirty years ago, when the United States launched an unprecedented program of mandatory detention of Haitian boat people arriving in Florida, we helped secure the release of 1,800 refugees after finding volunteer lawyers to represent them.

That effort evolved into one of the largest and most successful asylum representation programs in the country. We recruit and train attorneys from the nation's top law firms, and together we've helped thousands of people begin new lives in freedom and safety.

Our clients come from all over the world. They include survivors of torture, war, and genocide; women escaping the threat of "honor killings;" and people persecuted because of their race,

religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or beliefs.

The need is great. Anti-immigrant sentiment, misplaced security concerns, and simple ignorance perpetuate a system riddled with injustice and arbitrary barriers. Many languish in jails and jail-like detention centers. Others live in limbo, cut off from their families and unable to work.

This is where we step in. We help them navigate the daunting immigration system, and we recruit and train lawyers who provide them with high-quality pro bono representation.

The impact of this work could not be more dramatic: life instead of death, freedom instead of repression, for thousands.

And this impact will increase in coming years as we expand our capacity to provide representation beyond New York and Washington, D.C. to other areas of the country where the need for legal representation is great.



**Aissata Sissoko**

"I was a medical student in Mali before fleeing to the United States to escape female genital mutilation. I had seen my sister forced to be circumcised. The only way I could avoid this fate was to flee. Approximately eight months after my arrival in the United States, I was apprehended by immigration officers who took me to the Wackenhut Detention Center in Queens, New York. I was granted asylum with the assistance of my pro bono attorneys from the law firm of Alston & Bird LLP."



***“Human Rights First develops strong cases and clients; when I have a pro bono case from them, I know I have a chance to make an impact.”***

**—Steven H. Schulman, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP**



## HELPING PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

In the last five years we've helped nearly 1,000 refugees from 82 countries receive asylum in the United States.

● 1-10 asylees  
 ● 11-20  
 ● 21-30  
 ● 31-40  
  41-50  
 ● 51-60  
 ● 60-70

## Better Treatment for Detained Refugees

The government holds thousands of immigrants, including many refugees, in jails and jail-like facilities. We helped secure a commitment from the government to transition from a penal model to a more humane one. The *New York Times* quoted us in its article on new detention standards, which we called an “important step forward.”

## **The New York Times**

### **Detention for Immigrants That Looks Less Like Prison**

BY KIRK SEMPLE AND TIM EATON

On a patch of Texas farmland near the Gulf of Mexico, immigration officials on Tuesday unveiled one of the most visible results of a three-year-old plan to overhaul the nation's immigration detention system: a brand-new center intended to provide a less penal setting for detainees. Just don't call it prison, they insist. The center is the nation's first to be designed and built with the new reforms in mind and represents a shift from the federal government's longtime reliance on jails and jail-like buildings that immigrant advocates have long argued are inappropriate and unduly harsh for people being held



on civil violations. Detainees will be free to move through much of the center 24 hours a day. Unarmed staff members, dressed in blue polo shirts and khaki trousers, are known as “resident advisers,” not guards. “To bring the fundamental changes to a system that was that big and that diverse, we knew it was going to be difficult and time-

# Helping Refugees by Reforming the System

## Relief for Refugees Mislabeled “Terrorists”

A girl whose life was in danger fled the Democratic Republic of Congo and came to the United States. But when she sought asylum, her case was delayed for years. The reason: back in Congo, a rebel group notorious for its use of child soldiers had kidnapped her and forced her into military training.

Obviously, terrorists shouldn't get asylum. But the provisions Congress enacted to make sure they don't are so broad—and so broadly construed—that they harm law-abiding refugees, including *victims* of terrorism. Thousands—some seeking asylum, others applying for permanent residence or reunification with their families—were mislabeled.

As a result, some were denied protection by the United States. Others were put into legal limbo, separated from their families for years and unable to work or otherwise fully participate in American life.

Several years ago, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) acknowledged that its method of applying these provisions was harming refugees, and it granted exemptions—but only to a limited number.

Because of our work representing refugees, we see up close the devastating impact of this mislabeling, so we're uniquely positioned to press for change. And that's just what we did. Joining with a diverse coalition, we called on President Obama to give people an opportunity to prove they pose no threat.

In August 2012, DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano responded, signing a formal exemption that will help some 4,000 refugees whose cases were “on hold” due to association with groups labeled as “terrorist” because they used armed force. These groups include Iraqis who rose up against Saddam Hussein in 1991 and Sudanese political opponents of President Omar Al-Bashir.

Their cases can now move forward and they can be reunited with their families, find employment, and receive the full protection they need.

Building on this positive step, we're pressing the government to implement this exemption effectively and to change how it interprets the law so that it doesn't continue to mislabel people who deserve protection.



**Obama Administration Moves to Help Refugees in Danger**

We achieved an important objective when the White House reduced delays in security check processing for refugees, speeding up resettlement of those at risk.



*"I've been pleased to work with Human Rights First to make sure the United States remains a safe haven for the persecuted."*

—Dr. Richard Land, President of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, Southern Baptist Convention



GETTY IMAGES

## Safeguarding the Human Rights of LGBT Refugees

We released a report documenting the danger and difficulties facing LGBT refugees in Uganda and Kenya. The *Advocate* wrote about the report, highlighting our recommendations for protecting this vulnerable population.

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### PROTECTING LGBT REFUGEES FROM VIOLENCE

BY ANDREW HARMON

How can LGBT refugees be protected from violence, in sprawling camps the size of major cities, and in countries where their very existence is outlawed? It's a crisis in every sense of the word, but one that US and UN officials have said they're committed to tackling. Through the lens of two East African countries where anti-LGBT discrimination is pervasive, the group Human Rights First has laid out practical steps on how to do so. And the group's new report, "The Road to Safety," shows what's really at stake. Consider this: In 2010, two refugee women

in Uganda were abducted and raped because they had been assisting LGBT refugees. In November 2011, a gay male refugee in Uganda was locked in his home and a group of refugees tried to burn him alive. Five cases of "corrective rape" of lesbian or transgender male refugees in Uganda were reported by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) between June and November 2011. A gay Somali teenager in Kenya was deced in a gas line in 2010 and would have been set on fire by a crowd of Somali teenagers in Eastleigh, Nairobi, if not for the interven-

tion of an older Somali woman. As the report details, LGBT refugees in Uganda and Kenya are "shockingly marginalized," having fled persecution from other countries in the region, yet targeted in the very refugee communities in which they now live. Like Uganda, Kenya, home to the world's largest refugee camp in Dadaab, also has laws criminalizing same-sex relationships. "The vulnerability of LGBT refugees is compounded by their frequent isolation from family and refugee social support networks, and a range of particular barriers they face in securing assistance from services for which they are



# Defending Religious Freedom

## At the United Nations, Victory Over a Blasphemy Code

In our work, we have to be vigilant to make sure our victories stay won. That was true last year, when we fought successfully to make sure the United Nations did not backslide on its approach to blasphemy.

In 2011, we first beat back an effort at the U.N. to ban “defamation of religions.” Amounting to a global blasphemy code, the measure would provide cover to national blasphemy laws, which have led to grave human rights abuses.

Mobs and governments use such laws to stifle dissent and persecute religious minorities. The laws also incite violence in the way that Jim Crow laws in the United States gave license to lynch mobs.

In 2012, for example, Pakistan authorities arrested Rimsha Masih, a 14-year-old Christian girl, for alleged blasphemy. An imam had accused her of desecrating the Koran, inciting a mob to gather and demand that she be punished.

The arrest drew international condemnation, and a court eventually cleared her of all charges. But the girl and her family had been forced to go into hiding.

A month after Rimsha Masih’s arrest, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) used the controversy over the anti-Islam film, “The Innocence of Muslims,” to renew its call at the U.N. to restrict “defamation of religions.” So we renewed our effort as well. Armed with our report, “Blasphemy Laws Exposed: The Consequences of Criminalizing ‘Defamation of Religion,’” we made sure U.N. delegations understood the inherent dangers of these laws.

We also promoted rights-respecting ways to combat intolerance. “Much can be done to fight hatred without restricting speech,” we said in a joint statement with the Muslim Public Affairs Council, “and governments should condemn hatred and set the example.”

In 2012, the United Nations again voted in favor of such an approach, backing a resolution that calls on governments to fight intolerance with speech, open debate, interfaith and intercultural initiatives, religious freedom, and human rights education.

This secures our 2011 victory and will bolster our efforts going forward to use U.S. leverage to reform blasphemy laws in countries like Tunisia and Egypt, where such laws are likely to be reviewed in 2013.



**Condemning Hatred, Protecting Speech**

Speaking at the U.N. after an offensive anti-Muslim video sparked protests, President Obama condemned the video but argued against efforts to restrict antireligious speech. He struck the right balance and bolstered the effort to fight intolerance while protecting free expression.



**"A 2012 report by Human Rights First—'Blasphemy Laws Exposed: The Consequences of Criminalizing 'Defamation of Religions'"—outlines several types of problems with the application of blasphemy laws worldwide."**

**—Rev. Chloe Breyer, executive director of the Interfaith Center of New York and associate priest at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, West Harlem, quoted in the *New York Times*, August 29, 2012.**



AFP/GETTY IMAGES

### **A Go-To Source on Religious Freedom**

Bill Keller of the *New York Times* cited "experts at Human Rights First, who follow the region vigilantly," to point out that in Pakistan and elsewhere, fundamentalists use blasphemy laws as weapons against their political opponents.

## **The New York Times**

### **THE SATANIC VIDEO**

BY BILL KELLER



THE alchemy of modern media works with amazing speed. Start with a cherry anti-Muslim video that resembles a bad trailer for a Sacha Baron Cohen comedy. It becomes YouTube fuel for protest across the Islamic world and a pretext for killing American diplomats. That angry spam begets an inflammatory Newsweek cover, "MUSLIM RAGE," which in turn inspires a Twitter hashtag that reduces the whole episode to a running joke.

"There's no prayer room in this nightclub. #MuslimRage." You lose your nephew at the airport but you can't yell his name because it's *JIHAD*. "MuslimRage." From provocation to trauma to lynchings in a few short news cycles. It's over in a week. Except, of course, it's far from over. It moves temporarily off-screen, and then it's back: the Pakistani retailer accused last week of "blasphemy" because he refused to close his shops during a protest against the video; France locking down diplomatic outposts in about 20 countries because a Paris satirical newspaper has published new caricatures of the prophet. It's not really over for Salman

Rushdie, whose new memoir recounts a decade under a clerical death sentence for the publication of his novel "The Satanic Verses." That fiasco, if not precisely the starting point in our modern confrontation with Islamic extremism, was a major landmark. The fiasco was dropped in 1998 and Rushdie is out of hiding, but he is still careful. His book tour for "Joseph Anton" (entitled for the pseudonym he used in his clandestine life) won't be taking him to Islamabad or Cairo. Rushdie grew up in a secular Muslim family, the son of an Islam scholar. His relationship to Islam was academic, then literary, before it became excruciatingly personal. His memoir is not a handbook on

# Board of Directors

## Chairman William D. Zabel

Blind “barefoot lawyer” Chen Guangcheng was the highest profile dissident to come to the United States for protection in 2012, but he wasn’t alone.

The United States has long led the world in providing safe haven to the persecuted and to refugees forced to flee their homes. But because of flaws and lacunae in the law and in the system, our country sometimes fails to be the land of freedom it should be.

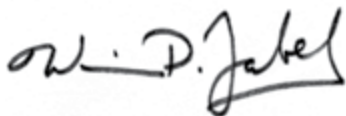
Now that the U.S. Congress finally seems poised to pass immigration reform, Human Rights First is leading the fight to ensure that such legislation helps the most vulnerable immigrants receive the treatment they deserve and the protection they need. For this effort, we’re drawing on our organization’s decades of experience helping indigent asylum seekers win their cases.

In the late seventies, we helped craft the legislation that became the landmark Refugee Act of 1980, which brought U.S. refugee policy into compliance with international law. We also exposed the due process violations in the detention of thousands of Haitian refugees in Florida. We then recruited and trained attorneys to provide them with pro bono legal representation.

Today we operate one of the largest and most successful asylum representation programs in the country. Partnering with lawyers from leading firms, we have helped thousands of refugees begin new lives free from violence and repression.

Now, in addition to working to reform refugee policy, we are hoping to expand our asylum representation program into areas of the country with a need for lawyers willing and able to take on asylum cases. This growth will help the United States to strengthen its leadership on human rights. On immigration issues, we are challenging our government to live up to our country’s ideals.

Thanks to the partnership and support from our funders and supporters, Human Rights First is able to continue to protect vulnerable refugees, reform U.S. immigration policy, and support human rights activists around the world. As you read through this report, I hope you share my pride in our accomplishments. Thank you for standing with Human Rights First.



William D. Zabel  
Human Rights First Board Chairman



**Honoring a Friend and  
Human Rights Champion**

At our annual dinner, Board Chair William Zabel (left) and Human Rights First honored Professor Jerome Cohen (right) for his tireless efforts to highlight the repression of China’s public interest lawyers, like Chen Guangcheng.



***“Human Rights First is smart,  
strategic, and focuses on results.”***

—Elliot J. Schrage, VP Communications,  
Marketing and Public Policy, Facebook

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Our board member and famed problem-solver Kenneth R. Feinberg, best known for handling the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, praised Human Rights First for devising concrete solutions to pressing problems.

## **Admiral Hutson Reports Back from Bahrain**

Board member John D. Hutson, a retired rear admiral in the U.S. Navy, accompanied Elisa Massimino on a fact-finding mission to Bahrain. After the trip, he wrote a piece arguing that democratic reform in Bahrain would benefit not just Bahrainis but also U.S. national security.

## **The Virginian-Pilot**

### **Push for Democratic Reforms in Bahrain**

BY JOHN D. HUTSON

THE United States should not push too hard for democratic reform in Bahrain because the country hosts the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet. That's the conventional wisdom on U.S. policy toward its ally.

On the contrary, it's precisely because of the presence of the 5th Fleet that the U.S. has a particular interest in seeing a peaceful transition to democracy in Bahrain — indeed, throughout the Middle East — American ideals and interests are aligned.

I recently traveled to this small island nation, governed by a Sunni

monarchy, to meet with pro-democracy activists and government officials. I also met with the commander of the 5th Fleet, which is responsible for all naval forces in the Middle East. The Navy has spent almost \$600 million doubling the size of the base. As I discussed with Vice Admiral John W. Miller, outside of the Bahraini people, nobody should feel a greater stake in this struggle than the 5th Fleet.

The vast majority of protesters are nonviolent, but a pattern of clashes between a small minority and the police has emerged. One clash in October left a policeman dead and

another seriously wounded. And recently bombs rocked the capital, killing two foreign workers.

Citing such incidents, the government recently banned all public rallies and demonstration. This is a dangerous, counterproductive move that increases the chances of widespread violence. The U.S. should try to help Bahrainis avoid this disastrous outcome.

Historically, the U.S. has backed autocracies in the Middle East in the name of stability. But as we know from recent experience, the calm of repression is the false calm of a slowly boiling pot; inevitably it

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***"Thank you Human Rights First for all the help. We will not waste this gift we have been given."***

**—Ms. K, Human Rights First pro bono client from Kyrgyzstan**

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### **Bringing Targeted Killing Into Line with International Law**

In *Foreign Policy*, Human Rights First's Gabor Rona and Daphne Eviatar surveyed the shaky legal foundation of the government's targeted killing program and explained how it should be strengthened.



### **Kill the Kill List**

The Obama administration is grossly misreading international law when it comes to targeting terrorists.

BY DAPHNE EVIATAR, GABOR RONA

Earlier this week, the New York Times published a stunning front-page article by Jo Becker and Scott Shane that portrays U.S. President Barack Obama as so genuinely concerned about the ethics of U.S. warfare that he's taken to personally reviewing the government's "kill list" to make the ultimate moral calculation of who gets to live or die, based on secret U.S. intelligence. The Times described the president as poring over terrorist suspects' biographies — their "baseball cards," as one unnamed official put it — and making the final determination of whether and when a suspected terrorist leader, and sometimes his family, will be killed. But if the president's personal involvement is laudable, the killings themselves are no



less controversial. And, if the Times's reporting is accurate, the program itself is illegal. Becker and Shane confirm what we could only guess from remarks made by Obama's advisors in the past: that the United States is targeting to kill individuals overseas who do not pose an imminent threat to the United States and who are not directly participating in hostilities against Americans. That's a violation of international law. Let's review the tape. On April 30, counterterrorism advisor

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—Adrian Arena, Director of International Human Rights Programme, Oak Foundation



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Human Rights First talks—  
and acts.”**

**—Jeffrey Heller, Human Rights First  
volunteer and activist**

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## **A 9/11 Survivor Monitors 9/11 trial for Human Rights First**

Adm. Donald J. Guter, who was in the Pentagon when American Airlines Flight 77 struck it on 9/11, observed the Gitmo trial of Khalid Sheik Mohammed and four suspected coconspirators. In the *Miami Herald*, Adm. Guter explained why the government should have held the trial in the proven federal court system.

## **The Miami Herald**

APRIL 16, 2012

### **GITMO TRIALS ‘NOT THE U.S. AT ITS BEST’**

BY ADM. DONALD J. GUTER

I was in the Pentagon on 9/11. One moment I was chairing a meeting of senior Navy Judge Advocates, the next moment we were all viewing breaking news coverage of the World Trade Center attacks. Then the building shook. American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon. One of my Judge Advocate officers, Mari-Rae Soppet, was on the plane. For me, the 9/11 attacks are personal. So is the need to bring those responsible to justice. This week, more than a decade after 9/11, I will be sitting a short distance away from Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four other al Qaeda defendants as they stand trial for their alleged involvement in the attacks. Unfortunately, this will not be a trial in the hallowed U.S. federal court system but a tribunal in the beleaguered military commission system at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. There has not been, and will not be, a more important 9/11 trial. As a former Judge Advocate General of the Navy, as an American, I want it to be fair, legitimate and exemplary. Likewise, I want the verdict to be credible, certain and, perhaps above all, final. But the military commission system is still largely untested and constitutional questions remain. When compared to the solid history and foundation of our federal court system, the commissions leave us with only unfounded hope that they will be able to bear the weight of this trial. Given some politicians' insistence that KSM be tried at Gitmo, you would think the military commission system had a sterling record. In fact, bogged down by ever-changing rules, it has held a paltry seven trials, which have led to five plea bargains. The impact of the trial will be felt far and wide. The world will be watching, and the system of justice on display will not be the United States at its best. Al Qaeda will be watching, too. They will see their members facing wartime

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does supports the cause of  
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**–George Nicolau, arbitrator/mediator,  
and our first donor**

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## Amplifying the Voices of Activists

We helped bring Bahraini activist Rula Al Saffar to the United States so that she could speak directly to American policy makers. A nurse who was arrested after treating injured protestors, she wrote a piece in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* urging Americans to support her country's democratic uprising.

## The Philadelphia Inquirer

JUNE 13, 2012

### Facing Prison for Treating Bahrain's Wounded

BY RULA AL SAFFAR

This week, I expect to hear if I will be going to prison for 15 years. The verdict on my appeal, as well as those of 19 other medics convicted in a sham Bahraini military trial last year, is due on Thursday. The Bahrain regime targeted us for treating protestors who were injured in democracy protests. I lived and worked in the United States for many years, some spent studying at Widener University in Chester. It's where I learned to volunteer, and last year, when demonstrations erupted in Bahrain, that's what I did. Salmaniya Medical Complex, the country's main public hospital, was overwhelmed by protestors hurt by regime forces, so I went to the emergency room to help treat them.

Several weeks later, on entering a government office, I was blindfolded and handcuffed. Over five months of detention, I was beaten, electrocuted, and sexually harassed. Then I was convicted. All just for doing my job. After I left the United States to return to Bahrain, I became an assistant professor at the College of Health Sciences and the head of its emergency nursing program. I'm also president of the Bahraini Nursing Society. It was as a nurse, not an activist, that I was arrested. My treatment at the hands of my government is not unique. Although Bahrain's uprising has not received as much attention as others in the Middle East, it is proportionally the largest. Tens of thousands have

marched to demand democracy and respect for human rights. The regime has shot at, arrested, abused, and wrongly convicted many of them, and killed some. All along, the response from the U.S. government has been disappointing. The Obama administration has been mostly silent as it ally perpetuates the sort of abuses that draw loud rebukes from Washington when they happen in Syria. Tear-gas canisters that police have fired at protestors, sometimes lethally, say "Made in the USA." Now the Obama administration plans to resume selling weapons to the Bahraini monarchy, rewarding a regime that has brutally cracked down on a democratic uprising. This will deal a crushing blow

# 2012 Financials

## More than \$29.5 Million of In-Kind Contributions

Human Rights First works with hundreds of committed pro bono lawyers who dedicate their time and talent to protecting the rights of refugees seeking asylum in the United States. In the past year, volunteer attorneys in New York, New Jersey, and the Washington, D.C. area put in more than 65,573 hours to represent hundreds of asylum seekers. Their participation—worth more than \$29.5 million—is four times the value of each dollar we spend on program services.

## Additional Financial Information

Human Rights First is a 501(c)(3) registered charity, has an annual independent audit performed, and files informational returns with various governmental regulatory agencies. A copy of the full audited financial statements by BDO LLP is available upon request.

## Charity Ratings



★ ★ ★  
Three Star Charity



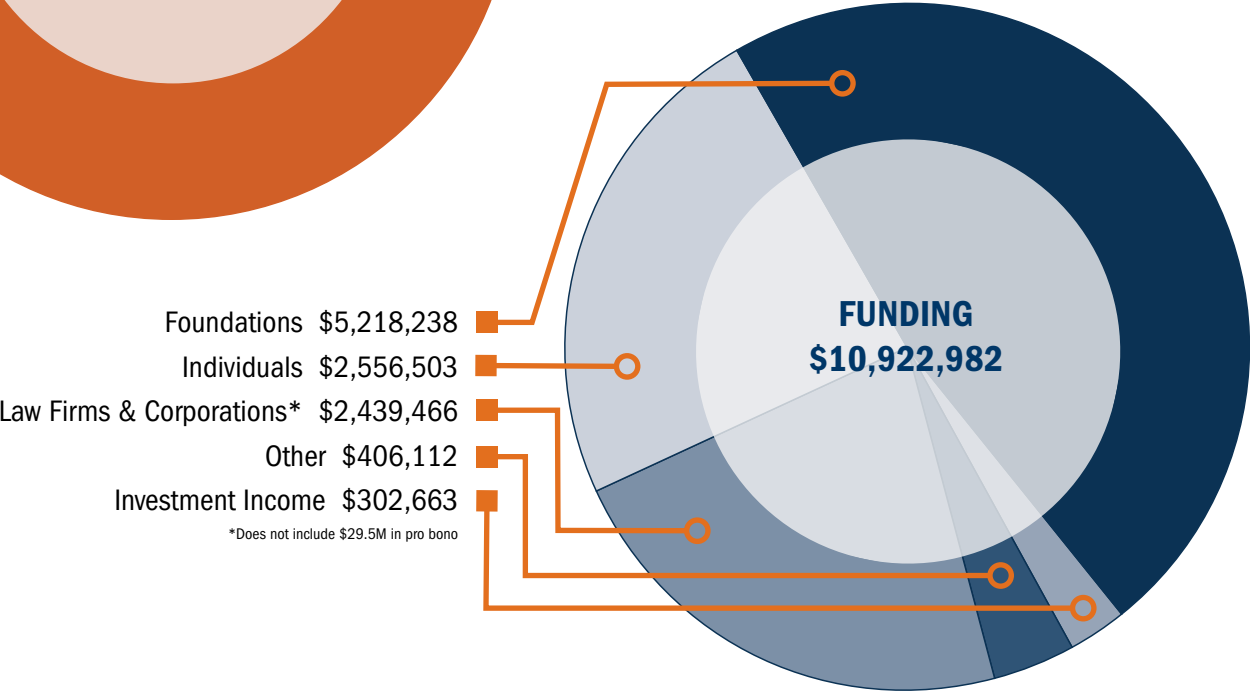
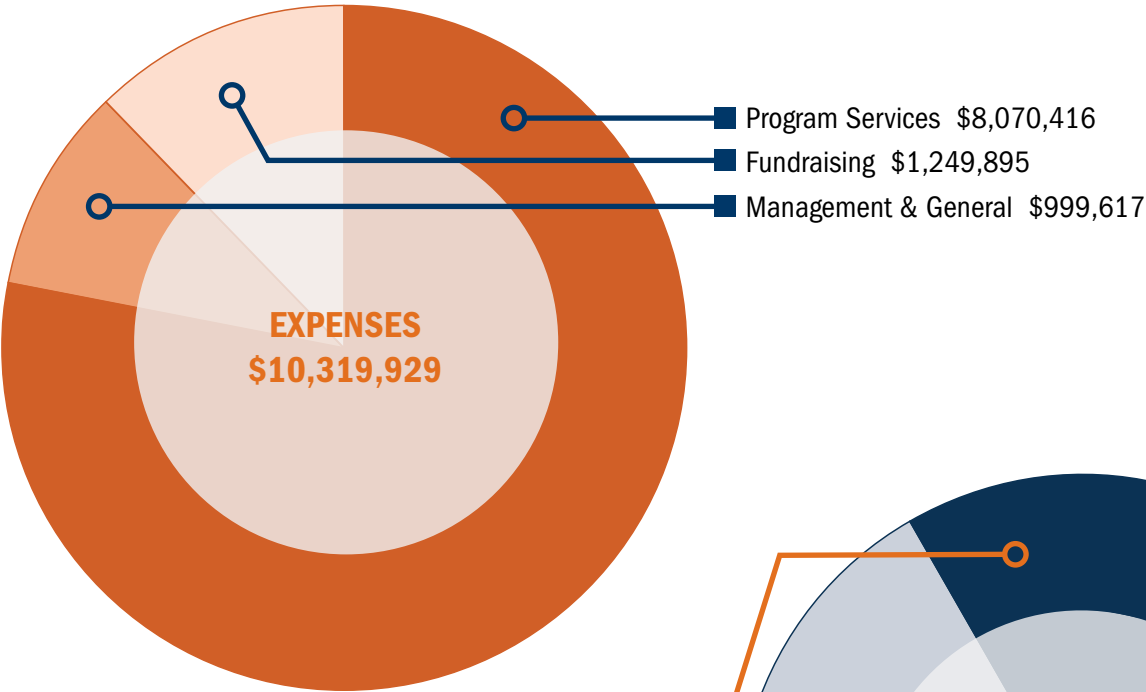
## FINANCIAL POSITION \*

Assets	2012	2011
Current Assets		
Cash and Equivalents .....	7,535,948	7,084,844
Investments at Fair Value .....	885,673	853,511
Prepays, Security Deposits, and Other Rec. ....	252,442	261,334
<b>Total Current Assets .....</b>	<b>8,674,064</b>	<b>8,199,689</b>
Total Pledges and Foundation Grants .....	5,786,531	5,779,981
Total Combined Campaign .....	24,999	58,832
Total Fixed Assets .....	633,242	345,055
<b>Total Assets .....</b>	<b>15,118,836</b>	<b>14,383,557</b>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities .....		
Current Liabilities .....	708,062	601,795
Deferred Revenue .....	25,960	-
<b>Total Current Liabilities .....</b>	<b>734,022</b>	<b>601,795</b>
Net Assets		
Unrestricted Net Assets .....	8,886,798	4,096,912
Board Designated Net Assets .....	2,500,000	2,500,000
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets .....	1,998,016	6,184,849
Permanently Restricted Net Assets .....	1,000,000	1,000,000
<b>Total Net Assets .....</b>	<b>14,384,814</b>	<b>13,781,761</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets .....</b>	<b>15,118,836</b>	<b>14,383,557</b>

\*Unaudited as of report publication, April 5, 2013



*"Highest-rated human rights organization."*  
-Charity Watch





**American ideals. Universal values.**

Human Rights First is an independent advocacy and action organization that challenges America to live up to its ideals. We believe American leadership is essential in the struggle for human rights so we press the U.S. government and American companies to respect human rights and the rule of law. When they fall short, we step in to demand reform, accountability, and justice. Around the world, we work where we can best harness American influence to secure core freedoms.

[humanrightsfirst.org](http://humanrightsfirst.org)

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