



4th Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders

22 – 24 November 2007, Dublin Castle

Peace, in the sense of the absence of war, is of little value to someone who is dying of hunger or cold. It will not remove the pain of torture inflicted on a prisoner of conscience. It does not comfort those who have lost their loved ones in floods caused by senseless deforestation in a neighbouring country. Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where the people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free.

HH The Dalai Lama¹

The aims of the 4th Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders are to:

- i) Analyse and **expose the reality** of the repression of human rights defenders and promote their work internationally.
- ii) Prioritise the **sharing of experience** so that human rights defenders can learn from each other and discuss what strategic lessons can be drawn for the prevention and minimisation of risk.
- iii) Provide an opportunity for participants to relate experiences and **make practical recommendations** in specific areas and influence thinking at the international level.

Background

Front Line – the International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders was founded in Dublin, Ireland on the 22nd February 2001 with the specific aim of protecting Human Rights Defenders at risk.

A Human Rights Defender (HRD) is an individual who works on behalf of their fellow citizens to uphold any or all of the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN on 10th December 1948.

The Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders has previously been held in January 2002, September 2003 and October 2005; each time bringing together over 100 human rights defenders at risk from over 70 countries.

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Nobel Lecture, 1989

Céad míle fáilte

Dear friends,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you here to Dublin, particularly those of you who have overcome many difficulties and challenges in order to be with us. Our hope is that the Platform will provide stimulating discussion and opportunities to learn from fellow human rights defenders as well as a safe space away from the risks and threats you confront because of your work.

Over the last few years a growing number of human rights defenders have been talking to us about the stresses that they confront because of the demanding nature of their work on behalf of others as well as because of the threats and attacks that they face as a result of that work. They have told us how difficult it can be to manage this stress. How it is often difficult to talk about it. And how it impacts on their work, their home life, their security and their own well-being. They emphasised how finding ways to better manage stress would help them to be more effective in their work.

Following an expert workshop on stress management we held in June 2007 with human rights defenders and various professionals we have sought to include some discussion in the agenda on Friday. We will have a psychotherapist available if anyone would like to talk to her (please ask for details at Reception). We are also offering you a number of activities which you might like to try out as exercises in stress release or just for fun.

Each morning there will be an option to take a Tai Chi class. This is a traditional Chinese form of gentle exercise which is reputed to be very healthy for people of all ages. On Saturday afternoon you can sign up for a workshop on "Tools for Well-being" offered by Capacitar, an organization founded in Nicaragua in 1988 in response to violence and war trauma. There will also be opportunities to sign up for Indian head massage.

All of these activities are optional and are intended to be fun and to stimulate discussion and exchange on what might be the most effective and appropriate paths to stress management in your culture and context. If you have any questions about this please speak to one of the Front Line staff. We will be circulating a questionnaire on Saturday and would very much welcome your feedback through that or in person over the next few days.

We are also fortunate to have a talented and multilingual team of computer security experts who will be available throughout the Platform for consultancy on your needs and interests. Please contact them at the internet cafe outside the conference hall.

We hope that you will enjoy your time here in Ireland. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help you.

With very best wishes,

Mary Lawlor
Director

4th Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders

Thursday 22nd

- 08.00 Optional: Tai Chi (Bedford Hall, Dublin Castle)
08.30 Breakfast and registration, at Dublin Castle

Opening

Chair: Denis O'Brien, Chairman, Front Line Board of Trustees

- 09.30 Opening Remarks, Denis O'Brien, Chairman, Front Line
09.45 Video presentation
09.55 Dermot Ahern TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs
10.10 Mary Lawlor, Director, Front Line
10.20 Keynote Address
Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
10.45 Questions for the High Commissioner
11.00 Cultural Presentation
11.15 Coffee break

Human Rights Defenders at Risk

Chair: Noeline Blackwell, Front Line Board of Trustees

- 11.45 Testimony: Mary Akrami, Afghanistan
Justine Masika, Democratic Republic of Congo
12.00 Women Human Rights Defenders
Presentation of Claiming Rights, Claiming Justice, Mary Jane Real, Asia-Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development (APWLD).
Presentation of Being Women Human Rights Defenders: Security Matters in Activism, joint report by Urgent Action Fund, Kvinna till Kvinna and Front Line, by Vahida Nainar, Project Researcher/Author.
Response to presentations:
Sandra Moran, Guatemala,
Fadzai Muparutsa, Zimbabwe
Questions and comments.

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- 13.00 Lunch
Indian Head Massage available (for human rights defenders):
Please sign up at registration desk in Dublin Castle
(13.30) Informal Digital Security Session (optional)

Human Rights Defenders at Risk

Chair: Noeline Blackwell, Front Line Board of Trustees

- 14.30 Testimony: Wan Yanhai, China
Ziyad Hmeidan, Palestine
- 14.45 Panel discussion on the specific challenges facing human rights defenders
Bernice Celeyta, Colombia
Medha Paktar, India
Bakhtiyor Hamraev, Uzbekistan
MacDarling Cobbinah, Ghana
- 15.45 Coffee Break
- 16.15 Working Groups
- Reviewing the patterns of attacks against HRDs, including the specific challenges facing women HRDs, what are the trends we should be most concerned about? What are the potential counter-strategies?
- 17.30 Close of Conference
- followed by*
- Reception at Dublin Castle offered by Mr. Dermot Ahern TD, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Friday 23rd

- 08.00 Optional: Tai Chi (Bedford Hall, Dublin Castle)
- 08.30 Breakfast at Dublin Castle

Chair: Michel Forst, Front Line Board of Trustees

- 09.30 Testimony:
Ghada Jamsheer, Bahrain
Leandro Gaspar Scalabrin, Brazil

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- 09.45 Jean Bosuyt, European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), feedback on joint Front Line and ECDPM conference on Development Agencies and the protection of Human Rights Defenders held at the European Commission, Brussels, 15 and 16 October 2007.
- 10.15 Presentation on the work of the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, Ms Hina Jilani, and the procedures for submitting information. Guillaume Pfeiffle Associate Human Rights Officer, Special Procedures, OHCHR
- There will be an opportunity for human rights defenders to ask questions from the floor.
- 11.00 Coffee Break
- 11.30 Testimony:
Riza Fanilag, Philippines
Mirtha Vasquez, Peru
- 11.45 Managing stress and how this impacts on the security of human rights defenders at risk. Input from the expert workshop on managing stress.
- Jane Barry, Urgent Action Fund
Au Broquil, Philippines
Otto Saki, Zimbabwe
- There will be an opportunity for human rights defenders to ask questions from the floor.
- 12.45 Lunch
Indian Head Massage available (for Human Rights Defenders): please sign up
- (13.15) Informal meetings (optional)
CIVICUS: consultation re Early Warning Systems for the identification and response to the initial signs of threats to civil society
FreeDimensional: consultation re the organization of community arts space and local resources for the support and protection of individuals who create dialogue on global issues and inequalities through their art and media.
- Chair: Andrew Anderson, Deputy-Director, Front Line*
- 14.15 Testimony:
Akifa Aliyeva, Azerbaijan

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Christian Mounzeo, Congo-Brazzaville

- 14.30 Presentation on capacity building in the area of security and protection for human rights defenders, Anne Rimmer, Front Line Training Coordinator
Presentation on Digital Security, Wojtek Bogusz, Gabriel Bombambo, Front Line
- 15.00 Workshops: identifying practical measures for the protection of HRDs including with regard to advocacy at the international level, training and capacity building in security as well as the area of stress management;
- what can HRDs do themselves?
- what should the international community be doing?
- what should international NGOs such as Front Line be doing?
- 16.15 Coffee Break
- 16.45 There will be an opportunity during the Friday for human rights defenders to sign-up to deliver a brief testimony in this session.
- 17.45 Close and Group Photograph
- Free time*
- 19.30 Dinner, Dublin City Hall (volunteer guides leaving Jury's at 19.15)

Saturday 24th

- 08.00 Optional: Tai Chi (Bedford Hall, Dublin Castle)
08.30 Breakfast at Dublin Castle

The challenges we face

Chair: Kieran Mulvey, Front Line Board of Trustees

- 9.30 Testimony
Aminatou Haidar, Western Sahara
Mahomed Mutsul'gov, Russia
- 9.45 Panel discussion on regional measures and mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders

Reine Alpini-Gansou, Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights
Daniela Salazar Marín, Human Rights Specialist, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

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Riina Kionka, Personal Representative of the SG/HR on Human Rights, Council of the European Union

- 11.00 Coffee Break
- 11.30 There will be an opportunity during the Friday for human rights defenders to sign-up to deliver a brief testimony in this session.
- 12.30 Closing remarks, Mr Kieran Mulvey, Front Line Board of Trustees
- 12.45 Close - Cultural Presentation
- 13.00 Lunch
Indian Head Massage available (for human rights defenders)
– please sign up
- The Saturday afternoon will be free for participants to visit Dublin. There will be an opportunity to sign up for a bus tour or a Capacitar session (please sign up at reception desk on Friday. Capacitar for Human Rights Defenders only).*
- 19.30 Farewell Party at the Excise Bar, Lr Mayor St, IFSC, Dublin 1
Buses leaving Jury's hotel at 7.00pm

Working Groups

In each of the two working group sessions participants will choose from one of four working groups organised by language. Each working group will follow the same agenda.

Working Group A Interpreted in Arabic, Russian, French, Spanish and English

Chair: David Sykes, Front Line Board of Trustees
Rapporteur: Aisling Reidy, Human Rights Watch

Working Group B French

Chair: Michel Forst, Front Line Board of Trustees
Rapporteur: Helene Desodt, AI France

Working Group C Spanish

Chair: Brendan Forde, Itinerant Franciscans, Colombia
Rapporteur: Stefania Minervino

Working Group D English

Chair: James Mehigan, Front Line UK Board
Rapporteur: Chris Collier

Conference Rapporteur

The Conference Rapporteur will be Robert Archer, Executive Director of the International Council for Human Rights Policy. The conference report will draw on the reports of the four workshops, the plenary sessions and issues which emerge in discussions Robert has with human rights defenders around the conference.