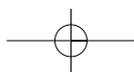
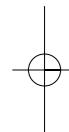
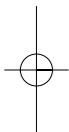
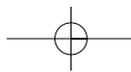
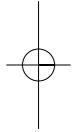
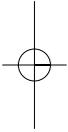




HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS  
ON THE FRONT LINE





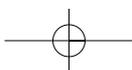
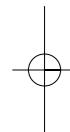
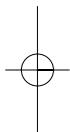


**Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights  
Defenders / FIDH and OMCT**

**Human Rights Defenders  
on the Front Line**

**Annual Report 2004**

Foreword by  
Lida Yusupova





Drafting, editing and co-ordination :

Catherine François, Julia Littmann, Juliane Falloux and Antoine Bernard (FIDH)  
Delphine Reculeau, Mariana Duarte, Anne-Laurence Lacroix and Eric Sottas  
(OMCT)

The Observatory thanks Marjane Satrapi, comic strip author and illustrator of the  
annual report cover, for her constant and precious support.

The Observatory thanks all partner organisations of FIDH and OMCT, as well as the  
teams of these organisations.

Distribution : this report is published in English, Spanish and French versions.

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FIDH – International Federation for Human Rights  
17, passage de la Main d'Or – 75 011 Paris – France  
Tel.: + 33 (0) 1 43 55 25 18 – Fax: + 33 (0) 1 43 55 18 80  
fidh@fidh.org / www.fidh.org

OMCT – World Organisation Against Torture  
8, rue du Vieux-Billard – Case postale 21 – 1211 Geneva 8 – Switzerland  
Tel.: + 41 22 809 49 39 – Fax: + 41 22 809 49 29  
omct@omct.org / www.omct.org



## FOREWORD UNITED AGAINST HORROR

by Lida Yusupova

*Human rights defenders in Chechnya have to work in an extremely difficult environment. For over ten years the war has been raging more or less in camera - almost no foreign journalist, no international human rights NGO can have access to this conflict zone.*

*Who are these people who are presently defending human rights in Chechnya? They are ordinary citizens, who were often far removed from such problems before the war: journalists, academics, lawyers, schoolteachers and students. We have joined forces to react and to try to oppose the violations of the rights of our compatriots, the arbitrary and criminal practices our people are subjected to.*

*Working alongside our friends and colleagues of the human rights centre Memorial, I found a place where I could be useful. We provide legal assistance to the victims and their families. In particular, we try to locate persons who have been abducted, and we help the families in their dealings with the administrative and judicial systems. We defend those who are arrested or arbitrarily detained. The detainees I see in prison have sometimes been tortured to such a degree that they can barely get up or sit down. Some do not dare to complain, for fear of reprisals. If I call for a doctor, the penitentiary administration usually refuses. We also keep a register of all the cases of violations brought to our knowledge. This mass of information, once processed and classified, is published regularly in the form of a chronicle of day-to-day violence.*

*We are aware of the risks. Since 2000, six lawyers who were trying to defend the population and obtain the application of the law have disappeared, and another was killed in his home in the presence of his family. Those remaining work under constant pressure.*

*We are cut off from the rest of the world. The community of States has abandoned thousands of victims to their tragic fate. The support of our Russian col-*

FOREWORD

*leagues and of international NGOs is vital, and often in taking up our cause they represent our last hope. Another source of hope, more personal but nevertheless important, lies in the feeling that if a major problem were to arise, our fate would not pass unheeded, and that our friends will rise up to defend us and to continue our struggle.*

*For all these reasons, for me the 2004 Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders<sup>1</sup> was both an encouragement and an honour. I received it as a token of trust and encouragement.*

*The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, managed by the FIDH and the OMCT, is doing a remarkable job, which is absolutely necessary in a world in which those who defend the rights that belong to everyone are exposed to danger and injustice. Such solidarity is of immediate importance, and gives me the strength to persevere in my action. In the long run, such solidarity unites men and women thousands of miles apart, in their daily struggle against horror, for the sake of human dignity.*

Lida Yusupova  
Co-ordinator of the Memorial office in Grozny (Chechnya)  
Martin Ennals Award, 2004

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<sup>1</sup> The Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders (MEA), established in 1993, is a unique collaboration among eleven of the world's leading human rights NGOs, for the protection of human rights defenders. The following organisations are represented on the Jury: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, International Alert, International Commission of Jurists, International Federation for Human Rights, International Service for Human Rights, World Organisation Against Torture, Diakonie Germany, Huridocs, Defence for Children International.



## **LET'S JOIN FORCES! TESTIMONIES**

"I would like to thank you for all your valuable support that helped me getting through this hard time".

Shirin Ebadi, chairperson of the Defenders of Human Rights Centre in Iran, 2003 Nobel Peace Prize and FIDH member.  
Iran, 14 January 2005.

"Thank you for all your efforts to save us".

Emmanuel Nsenguiyumva, president of the League for the Protection of Human Rights in Rwanda, in exile.  
Burundi, 3 August 2004.

"I wish to thank the Observatory. My family and I are grateful for all the actions you unfailingly took to relieve our suffering lately".

Golden Misabiko, honorary president of the Association for the Defence of Human Rights / Katanga section.  
Democratic Republic of Congo, 17 August 2004.

"I wish to express my most sincere thanks and gratitude to you all for your concern, appeals, support and solidarity which helped in my release from Jhapa district prison. I read the Observatory's appeals when I was detained and I drew a lot of strength and hope from them thinking I was not alone in this struggle. Thank you for your efforts which led not only to my release, but also to the release of other victims like me all over the world".

S.K. Pradhan, secretary general of the Peoples Forum for Human Rights and Development / Bhutan.  
Nepal, 14 October 2004.





#### TESTIMONIES

"I would like to thank the Observatory for its support which arrived at a particularly difficult moment for me and my colleagues. Your help and support is of a great value to us all".

Stephania Koulaeva, president of the Memorial Anti-Fascist Commission, Saint-Petersburg.

Russian Federation, 1 September 2004.

"In the name of the MDDHL, I wish to express our deepest gratitude to the Observatory for its support. We can feel we are not alone and carry on a fight we chose knowing its legitimacy: the protection of human rights".

Abdoulaye Math, president of the Movement for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms (MDDHL).

Cameroon, 26 October 2004.

