

OBSERVATORY FOR THE PROTECTION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

FIDH / OMCT

/ STEADFAST IN PROTEST
ANNUAL REPORT 2007

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/ FOREWORD

OBSERVATORY FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS
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Ms. Hina Jilani

Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General
on the Situation on Human Rights Defenders (2000-2008)

2008 marks, together with the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the tenth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (or Declaration on human rights defenders) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. In 2000, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General entrusted me with the task of promoting and implementing this Declaration. As my time as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders is now coming to an end, it is particularly timely for me to reflect on these past years and look ahead at the challenges that still remain to be addressed.

During my eight-year tenure, I presented 34 reports, of which 21 to the Commission on Human Rights, 7 to the General Assembly and 6 to the Human Rights Council. I conducted 14 country visits to 12 countries (Angola, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Kyrgyzstan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Nigeria, Serbia including Kosovo, Thailand, and Turkey). I sent over 2,000 communications to 120 countries on the situation of over 3,300 defenders, 22 percent of whom were women defenders. Finally, I issued over 40 press releases raising concern over the situation of human rights defenders in 28 countries.

These figures evince my choice to adopt a broad definition of human rights defenders in accordance with the Declaration on human rights defenders, which states that people who, individually or with others, promote and strive for the realization of human rights are human rights defenders. I paid special attention to the challenges faced by women

human rights defenders who need additional protection measures to work in a secure environment. I also highlighted the plight of defenders who enjoy less protection and are more at risk of violations, such as defenders defending economic, social and cultural rights as well as rights of indigenous peoples, minorities, and lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders (LGBT).

I am particularly pleased that under my tenure, the Declaration on human rights defenders has gained increased visibility, and that direct reference to this text is made in several documents and instruments at the international, regional and national levels. Based on the rights and principles set out in the Declaration, I conducted in-depth studies of thematic areas that contributed to the development and articulation of the human rights discourse on defenders, and the identification of sets of recommendations and guidelines to facilitate the implementation of the Declaration.

These past eight years also saw the flourishing of vibrant national civil societies as well as the establishment and development of regional and international networks and coalitions of human rights defenders that refer to the mandate as their protection mechanism. These are developments I strongly encouraged. I also actively supported the establishment of regional human rights mechanisms and the adoption of normative frameworks for the protection of human rights defenders, such as the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the 2004 European Union Guidelines on human rights defenders.

However, several challenges still remain for the effective protection of human rights defenders. First of all, a sustained focus by all stakeholders on the situation of vulnerable groups of human rights defenders must continue. Of special importance is the gender dimension of the risks encountered when defending human rights. A lot has been accomplished and the momentum must be kept up. A greater degree of cooperation between the mandate of human rights defenders and States, particularly those which are less responsive, is further to be achieved. Finally, regional human rights mechanisms must be empowered and fully supported by all actors in order to ensure that human rights defenders enjoy the protection and legitimacy of a committed regional human rights framework.

Since its establishment in 1997 by the International Federation for Human Rights and the World Organisation Against Torture, the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders has relentlessly denounced acts of harassment and intimidation against human rights defenders throughout the world which impede their legitimate and non-violent activities in defence of human rights. I welcome the commendable work of the Observatory, and encourage it to continue its efforts in advocating a safe environment for all human rights defenders.

/ INTRODUCTION

OBSERVATORY FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS
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Over the past 60 years, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been promoted every day by women and men who bear witness on behalf of victims and demand justice for the weakest. From Andrei Sakharov to Digna Ochoa, from Shirin Ebadi to Hu Jia or Nelson Mandela, these human rights defenders contributed and still contribute to ensuring that the Declaration is a reality in the daily life of all.

The most important aspect of the Annual Report, which we have now published for nine years, is probably to provide an understanding of current events in relation to the situations that are experienced by human rights defenders. It is precisely because this correlation between the situation of human rights defenders and that of the societies in which they live is obvious, because a worsening of the conditions in which they act or live prefigures a de facto general deterioration in freedoms in their countries, that this year we have decided to change the format of the publication and to place the analysis of the forms of repression to which defenders are subjected in their political context, which is indissociable from the combats they lead for human rights and fundamental freedoms¹.

A new Annual Report, then, but one that basically, sadly, confirms the tendency observed in recent years, i.e. the continuing repression of defenders ever more harshly. Once again this year, the little and partial progress that has been noted has again been counterbalanced at best by a stagnation, and at worst by a deterioration in the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Without being pessimistic, the situation of these rights and freedoms as well as of their defenders described in this Annual Report for 2007 is scarcely or not at all satisfactory.

1./ See methodology below.

In a majority of the countries covered in this Report, the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms is as complex and full of risk as ever. Although it is difficult to obtain precise statistical data for each country, many defenders still currently lose their lives because of their commitment. And although the international and regional inter-governmental mechanisms for the protection of human rights and the increasing media coverage of cases of human rights defenders who are in danger henceforth permit improved protection for many of them, they are nonetheless subjected to constant harassment and laws that are destructive of freedoms, which prevents them from carrying out their activities serenely.

How can psychological support be provided to the victims of international crimes and other serious human rights violations when it is impossible to travel within a country that is prey to war? Can one develop an effective programme of prevention against sexual crimes when threatened with death for being a member of an association? Who today can afford to make a regime to face up to its responsibilities, without being subjected in one way or another to violence by groups that are totally dedicated to the regime, or even by an extremely scrupulous State body that is likely to find all kinds of reasons for refusing to "register" your organisation? What reserves of artfulness must internauts draw on to escape the ever-present "Big Fire Wall", which has probably become the most effective anti-democracy virus nowadays, potentially benefiting from the de facto support of the sector's huge multinationals?

Arbitrary arrests, sentences handed out following unfair trials, or placements under house arrest continued this year, all constraints on the activities of hundreds of human rights defenders throughout the world. Subjected to verbal and physical violence by the authorities, private armed groups or the henchmen of such-and-such a regime, defenders have to cope with all kinds of accusations, each more extravagant and unfounded than the others. In addition, the obsession with "security" henceforth takes precedence over the requirement for citizens' liberty, including within the most democratic States, and those who refuse to accept this have to face appalling criticism. The year 2007 also confirmed the tendency to criminalise social protest in many of the world's countries.

Local or regional conflicts, the fight against terrorism, cultural relativism or, more simply, an election period that is uncertain for the Government in office: there are many factors – and just as many pretexts – to explain these securitarian tactics of retreat. There is no point in going over them all here, but we may nevertheless take note that these developments have considerable repercussions on the international system of human rights protection, which is prey to attempts to weaken it. We should stand back and realise how far we have come and the progress that has been made in recognising defenders and protecting them at regional and international level, progress that is due to all these defenders, to the mobilisation of civil society throughout the world, and also to Ms. Hina Jilani, to whom it is our duty to pay deserved tribute here.

In December 1998, following years of negotiation, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Declaration on Human Rights Defenders² as part of the festivities to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The mandate of Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Human Rights Defenders was subsequently created. Ms. Hina Jilani held this position for nearly eight years and contributed to a clear definition of the status of “human rights defender”.

Ms. Hina Jilani firstly contributed to promoting the idea that human rights defenders cannot merely be reduced to lists of organisations, however respectable they might be, but that the quality of defender is acquired through activities carried out on behalf of the rights of others. During her mandate Ms. Jilani also often stressed the fact that defenders do not need to have specific rights. The category of defender should not be defined in terms of legal identity but on the basis of the types of violations committed against them. By repressing defenders, the authorities of the countries concerned seek not only to prevent or restrict the exercise of rights recognised in international law, but also try to prevent the victims on behalf of whom defenders intervene from benefiting from the national and international solidarity that they deserve. The defence of defenders aims to maintain the indispensable

2./ The “Declaration on the right and responsibility of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms”.

link between victims who attempt to make their voice heard and the bodies that are charged with protecting their rights.

Finally, conscious that the most effective action is carried out as close to the victim as possible, Ms. Hina Jilani worked alongside the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders to reinforce or to create the regional mechanisms intended for the protection of defenders.

Indeed, the last ten years have been ten years of drawing up mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders, and today, in Africa, the Americas and Europe, these undeniably work. The Observatory, which contributed to their establishment, welcomes them and notes that this international and regional protection today permits improved knowledge of situations that were previously concealed. But in recent years the international context that has contributed to releasing States from their obligation to condemn – even formally – unacceptable practices (torture, arbitrary arrests, etc.), has also permitted the same States to circumvent their obligations with regard to the protection of defenders. The latter are therefore now increasingly subject to legislative abuses at local level, and to friendly understandings at international level that aim to damage their capacity to act.

Human rights defenders are often victims of their own success in the field and are consequently subject to a backlash on the part of the most repressive States, against which we must react immediately if we want to avoid a risk of regression.

This year, the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the tenth anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders should therefore be, for us and for all those who take risks in the field to defend the rights and freedoms promoted in these Declarations a year in which to rejoice and to wish long life to these texts that are the core of the human rights protection system established since the Second World War. Yet, current events world-wide are there to remind us how often the needle veers to red with regard to access to fundamental rights and freedoms. And the main indicator is certainly that of how human rights defenders are able to act in the field.

/ METHODOLOGY

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The 2007 Annual Report of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders presents an analysis, country by country, of the political context that prevailed in 2007 and the most prevalent forms of repression against human rights defenders, illustrated by cases of individual or collective repression. These analyses are supplemented, in the form of a CD-ROM attached to the Report, by a compilation covering all cases handled by the Observatory, updates of cases from the 2006 Report, and certain cases that were not addressed but whose importance required them to be included in this report. The cases presented reflect activities of alert, mobilisation, and support conducted by the Observatory on the basis of information received from member organisations or partners of the FIDH and OMCT¹. We take this opportunity to express our appreciation and heartfelt thanks for their valuable collaboration and their vital contributions.

This Annual Report is not exhaustive, insofar as a number of countries are not addressed. This reflects our choice to focus on situations effectively dealt with by the Observatory. In addition, in some States, systematic repression is such that it renders impossible any independent activity or organised defence of human rights, as is the case in North Korea or Libya. On the other hand, conflict situations in countries such as Iraq or Afghanistan make it extremely difficult to isolate trends of repression aimed exclusively at human rights defenders. These situations are, however, subject to other activities conducted by the Observatory, such as advocacy with intergovernmental organisations and States. The report does not reflect the possible – and too rare – positive measures or practices, which does not mean they do not exist. Rather, the Report is a reflection of the protection mandate of the Observatory, and its actions in cases of repression against human rights defenders.

1/ See Annex 1 p. 298.

/ THEY MUST KNOW THAT THEY ARE NEVER ALONE

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Ms. Barbara Hendricks,
Opera Singer, United States of America

Human rights defenders are born of necessity, the necessity to take a stand and the inability to stay silent.

Human rights defenders are the body, the voice and conscience of our family of humanity.

From the heart and soul of this body of humanity has sprung the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

They stand for all of us as they put themselves in harm's way, are arrested, harassed and killed as they stand not only for their own particular causes but also for the respect, promotion and defence of human rights for all of us.

They stand when others will not or cannot. They stand because their only other choice is a life without freedom and maybe even death.

They depend on our solidarity and support. They must always know that they are never alone. We must support them every step of the way not because they need us but more importantly we need them.

Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 there have been many successes but the situation continues to deteriorate in many countries. We know that hard won freedoms and advances can be lost in the blink of an eye. We must all remain on our guard. Freedom is not given, it is earned and demands a constant vigilance. The fight is never won but the fight is essential to our human destiny. Humankind is forever at the crossroads and the direction toward tyranny and injustice is too easily travelled. When we are para-

lysed by fear we allow power hungry leaders, sometimes with little or no resistance, to move us down the slippery slope of so-called protections for our own good that land us to a situation in which our most self evident freedoms that we haven taken for granted are gone. The voices that warn us of these dangers, the voices that fight to establish freedoms where they have never existed are the voice of the human rights defenders. Without individual human rights defenders, human rights treaties risk remaining a dead letter.

I am an active patron of the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders (MEA). We are inspired by dedication that its namesake Martin Ennals, a pioneer of the modern human rights movement showed throughout his life for the defence of human rights.

Created in 1993, this award is granted annually to someone who has demonstrated an exceptional record of combating human rights violations by courageous and innovative means. The fact that the 10 most important human rights organizations, including both the International Federation for Human Rights and the World Organisation Against Torture, are on the Jury, is an inspiring symbol of cooperation among NGOs. The 17 Laureates of the MEA are not the only human rights defenders that deserve our support, but they have an exemplary function (see www.martinennalsaward.org) and help to legitimize the work all of human rights defenders, who are nowadays often painted as troublemakers or even worse as helping “terrorism”. When you see what these people have had to endure for their belief, you realise that the Observatory is a crucial tool in the worldwide fight for human rights. We must continue to give our full support to these courageous defenders by helping to shed light on their struggles and by defending human rights of those nearest us, in our homes, at our workplace and in our communities, everyday in every way and with the means that we have. Let us also not forget to honour our fallen defenders whom we have not been able to protect, for it is on their bloodied shoulders that we all are able to stand in order to continue the fight.

/ ALTERNATIVE PATHS FOR THE GOOD OF HUMANITY

OBSERVATORY FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS
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Mr. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel
Nobel Peace Prize, 1980, Argentina

Humanity needs to create a “new social contract”. It is reaching a limit, one at which the pacts, the international protocols and the conventions sanctioned and approved by the United Nations must undergo a more profound analysis, and create control and prevention instruments for the defence of the human rights of individuals and peoples.

In the past six decades, i.e., since the proclamation of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights by the United Nations, we have witnessed progress in many areas. Regrettably, in others, human rights violations continue in countries that were the engines and the promoters of the achievements of the past. A concrete example is the United States of America, which systematically violates human rights and justifies the use of torture. We could also mention Israel, China, Burma, African countries and, in Latin America, Colombia and Mexico, among others. Often, the victims of these violations include human rights defenders, who embrace their ethical commitment with generosity and responsibility, standing next to their fellow man and their peoples.

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), is a fundamental and necessary contribution to the conscience of the international community and to the organisations that are responsible for preventing human rights violations and ensuring their protection around the world.

Convened by the United Nations, the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (1993) advanced the process of reflection and

understanding of human rights in their integrity. There, concepts on the environment, development and the self-determination of peoples were elaborated. However, if we look at the global situation, we are necessarily preoccupied. We demand that international and national organisations assume their responsibilities with regards to the conflicts humanity currently faces. We have not yet created control and prevention instruments. I believe that States must make political decisions in order to achieve this goal.

Many human rights defenders are attacked and sometimes murdered by groups and Governments that attempt to silence the voices that denounce grave human rights violations. The impunity with which they act, as well as the frequent complicity of judicial authorities, allow these aberrant practices to continue.

Today, this persecution is evident in countries like Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Colombia, and in African countries like Rwanda and Congo, as well as in others that were mentioned above, such as Burma and China. Let us not forget the prison conditions and murders in Afghanistan and Iraq, and in the American military base in Guantánamo, Cuba. The serious risks human rights defenders take make a compelling case for the need to strengthen the instruments that protect their lives and security.

In the framework of this brief discussion, it is necessary to deepen and improve the structure of the United Nations, which is currently debilitated by great powers that continue to use the veto to hinder sanctions against ongoing violations they commit against the human rights of individuals and peoples.

The Observatory not only gathers these indicators and calls for reflection; it also searches for alternative paths for the good of humanity.

/ UNSUNG HEROES

OBSERVATORY FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS
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Mr. José Ramos-Horta

President of Timor-Leste, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, 1996

Over the years, as I knocked doors around the world begging to be heard, strolled the long corridors of the Palais des Nations in Geneva or the UN Headquarters in New York, waiting and accosting young and presumptuous diplomats who seemed always in a hurry, with no time to see a little character like myself, there was a group of humble, professional, dedicated people who had time for me – they were the Human Rights Defenders.

Today I am writing this small introduction for the Annual Report 2007 of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (a joint programme of OMCT and FIDH), as a modest tribute to these unsung heroes who in their home countries struggle daily with bravery, facing arbitrary arrest, imprisonment, sometimes torture and death, to safeguard the basic human rights of fellow human beings.

In Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, Europe, the work of human rights defenders often go unnoticed. Of course in democratic countries with a strong rule of law, civil society and free media, the work of human rights defenders is less risky and is well supported in goods and grants that enable them to have an impressive operational machinery, abundant staff, easy access to media, and to lobby the US Congress, the United Nations, the European Union, etc. They circulate in cocktail parties, attend Hollywood functions and rub shoulders with movie stars like George Clooney, Angelina Jolie and others. I never managed to get that close.

The brothers and sisters in remote places like Burma or Chad do not have these luxuries. They operate in rundown offices, cook their own cheap meals or buy them from a street food stall, move around town in beaten-up cars, and must always be alert. Many languish in jails around

the world. Some are dead. Indonesian human rights defender Munir was poisoned to death in a first class seat in the Indonesian national airliner Garuda. Beware of invitations from flight attendants or pilots to move you from your miserable coach seat to first class.

It is highly unlikely that the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council would want to extend further assistance and protection to human rights defenders. But the Secretary-General and High Commissioner for Human Rights might wish to look into ways to further assist them as they do have some prerogatives to take independent initiatives to assist human rights defenders. Nordic countries and the European Commission should increase assistance to them.

Today I am the Head of State in a newly-independent country still struggling to consolidate peace and democracy. On day one of independence in 2002 as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I led the process in my own country to have our National Parliament ratify all major International Human Rights Conventions. Pursuant to our Treaty obligations we have submitted two reports to the Treaty bodies. How many Western democracies have done this?

In closing, I bow to my unsung heroes.

/ ACTORS FOR PEACE

OBSERVATORY FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS
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The Most Reverend Desmond Mpilo Tutu

Archbishop, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, 1984
South Africa

For decades, South Africa was probably one of the countries in which human rights violations were both the gravest and most widespread.

The generalised system of apartheid negated the very principle on which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was built, i.e. equality between all human beings regardless of their race, sex or birth. Having made inequality between men a law, the apartheid regime could only maintain itself by violence and force. The inversion of values was so extensive that the demand for legality appeared as a crime and its denial as a right.

Faced with this situation, there was considerable pressure to respond to oppression with the same tools oppression used to impose itself. Strong convictions and a deep attachment to ethical and fundamental values were needed to fight for human rights while respecting the principles of non-violence and of peaceful conquest of denied rights. The women and men who embarked on this long journey towards the rule of law did not allow themselves to resort to violence in order for justice to triumph. They believed in the power of persuasion and in the need to anchor their action in a framework that called for the respect of the other, despite the other's own lack of respect.

By doing so, these women and men became victims that were even more easily repressed, as they refused to use the means of their oppressors. Their actions had to incite an active minority of their fellow citizens – notably within the white minority – to support their demands and to unite in their struggle. These human rights defenders, who acted to protect not their own rights but rather all the rights of all people, also suffered the exactions of an unjust power. And yet they played a funda-

mental role, not only in the protection and support they brought to the leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle, but also as bridges between these human rights activists and the members of their own communities, who began to realise that the system was not only unjust but also doomed.

When the moment came for the transition to a democratic regime that would respect all South Africa's children, there was a terrible risk that the majority – which had been a victim for such a long time – would revolt and seek revenge. Everyone both expected and dreaded the conflict that many experts believed was inevitable. If modern South Africa was able to emerge without bloodshed, it is first and foremost because of leaders like Nelson Mandela, who after years of illegal detention in inhumane conditions provided examples of authorities who were attached to human dignity and to the rule of law, for which they had always fought. And yet, realistically, if the message was received by the white minority whose blindness had perpetuated a heinous regime for so long, it is perhaps thanks to the human rights defenders who had incessantly called for a sense of human dignity within this community. Human rights defenders are not only the protectors of those who fight for justice when it is denied – they are also indispensable factors of pacification when it finally triumphs.

/ CHINA: MAJOR SETBACKS

OBSERVATORY FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS
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Mr. Wei Jingsheng

Writer, 1996 Laureate of the Sakharov Prize
for Freedom of Thought, China

In the last a couple years, Chinese human rights have experienced minor progresses in some areas, but over all major setbacks.

The minor progresses are reflected by all death sentences being approved by the Supreme People's Court. Since the era of Deng XiaoPing, the authorisation and approval of the death sentences were given to the provincial courts, even district courts, which resulted in massive abuses of the use of death sentences. For their own political motivations or revenge purposes, many local officials expanded the use of death penalties, even making faults and wrongful cases for personal and selfish gains. The death penalty in China represents more than 3/4 of the whole world.

Under the pressure of the public opinions, both internationally and within China, especially the mobilisation of various NGOs, the Chinese Government had to face this issue seriously. Finally, starting last year, the right to approve the death penalty returned to the Supreme Court. According to the unpublished estimation of the Chinese jurisdictional department, in the next few years, the number of death penalty sentences will be reduced rapidly, the difficulty for the local officials to make related false and wrongfully cases will be increased. This is a major achievement of the global efforts for the promotion of human rights.

However, in almost all the other areas, Chinese human rights conditions have suffered major setbacks, in particular in two areas.

1. Major setbacks in the areas of freedom of speech

Because of sanctions and penalties against various media professions being adopted in order to cut and modify information according to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the freedom of press has reduced to the lowest level of the world. Besides, the freedom of commentaries was restricted to meet the propaganda standard of the CCP, especially electronic media. Beside self-censorship, China also has the strongest Internet blockage. Information that does not meet the standard of the CCP's propaganda is very hard to reach the Internet users.

People of various media who try to break through this speech blockage (such as journalists, editors, freelance reporters) often suffer cruel assails, such as losing jobs, being beaten by the Mafia, or even sent to jail. What should be underlined in particular are the Western businesses' help to the CCP agencies' efforts of searching the dissidents, as well as blockage of the Internet, which resulted in jail sentences against innocent people.

2. Severe repression against human rights defenders

The collective rights defending activities of the Chinese people have been developing rapidly in the folder of several times every year, both in number and scale, which resulted in the creation of many rights lawyers and group leaders. Because of their leadership and consultancy, the effectiveness of the rights defending activities was increased in larger scale as well. This is a particular case in China: because the Government does not take the responsibility to protect the people, because more and more officials are accomplices of the evil forces, people have to organise themselves to protect their own rights and thus produce their own leaders.

Meanwhile, CCP's repression against the rights movement has come from the traditional, without certain rule type, into the systematic repression that have its goal, and rules to follow. On one hand, there are newly equipped, most modern military police of 200,000 that cooperate with local polices and are composed into a large and strong repression system that specifically targets people's rights activities. On the other hand, the CCP tries to destroy all the leaders and right defending people by severely torturing the detained rights defenders, in an effort to destroy them both physically and mentally. Many political prisoners were destroyed both ways, thus losing their ability to make a living.

In particular, last year the Chinese Government's repression has rapidly upgraded, in an effort to make sure there is no dissident voices from the people during the 2008 Olympics. The repression scale has been expanded into the Western sportsmen, media and tourists. In a few Western countries, this kind of repression of dissident voices has been relayed by some Western politicians, such as: Belgium, England and New Zealand who tried to repress their sportsmen to express their political opinions during the Olympics.

We have reasons to believe, it is not just the Chinese people who suffer the repression; the repression is expanding towards every corner of the world.

/ ACRONYMS MOST FREQUENTLY USED IN THE REPORT

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ACHPR	African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
ECHR	European Court on Human Rights
EU	European Union
FIDH	International Federation for Human Rights
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
IACtHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
ICC	International Criminal Court
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LGBT	Lesbiens, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OMCT	World Organisation Against Torture
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund