

Solidarity with human rights defenders at risk, particularly those in detention

The 42nd FIDH Congress, meeting in Bogotá, Colombia, from 29 to 31 October 2025, wishes to express its unwavering solidarity with, and support for, human rights defenders around the world who are victims of harassment, threats, attacks, repression, criminalisation, and arbitrary detention as a result of their commitment to the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights.

Expressing solidarity with representatives of FIDH member organisations who are subjected to continued arbitrary detention.

Deploring the fact that in many countries, the universality of human rights and their protection system is increasingly being challenged by state and non-state actors on the pretext of political, economic, cultural, religious or security imperatives.

Highlighting that in authoritarian countries, as well as in countries experiencing democratic backsliding, marked by the deterioration of the rule of law, lack of judicial independence, and sometimes marred with corruption, nepotism and discrimination, discourses questioning counter-powers continue to be trivialised, generating increased divisions within societies, and consequently the exclusion of human rights defenders from public debates, preventing them from playing their role as checks and balances.

Denouncing the smear campaigns and the dissemination of fake news presenting defenders as “enemies of the state”, “foreign agents”, “criminals”, “traitors”, “threats to national security”, or “terrorists”.

Deploring the increased repression of peaceful expressions of solidarity around the globe with peoples suffering human rights violations such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Underlining the fact that the security of human rights defenders is particularly precarious in conflict, post-conflict, occupation and crisis situations.

Concerned with the increasing number of human rights defenders pushed to exile in order to escape repression in their home country.

Strongly condemning the growing phenomenon of transnational repression, whereby authoritarian governments increasingly monitor, threaten, harass, abduct or forcibly repatriate exiled human rights defenders and dissidents, and/or pressure their relatives in their home countries or in exile in order to silence them, in violation of international law and notably the right to freedom of movement as well as the right to asylum.

Expressing deep concern about the shrinking civic space and increasing use of restrictive laws that target civil society organisations, especially through undue or discriminatory limitations on access to international funding, burdensome administrative regulations, and asset freezes, all of which dramatically hinder the work of defenders.

Denouncing the misuse of counter-terrorism, anti-money laundering, and national security legislation to criminalise the peaceful and legitimate work of human rights defenders.

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Condemning the increasing abuse of digital surveillance technologies, including spyware, to unlawfully monitor defenders, journalists and activists, violating their rights to privacy, security and freedom of expression.

Appalled by the increase in the repression of environmental human rights defenders as well as defenders advocating for just transitions and fighting against the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

Condemning the criminalisation and arbitrary detention of migrants' rights defenders - notably in **Tunisia**, where Saadia Mosbaah, Cherifa Riahi, Saloua Ghrissa, and Sonia Dahmani remain behind bars, while in **Cyprus**, Doros Polykarpou faced continued judicial harassment, such as members of the Migration Monitoring Association in **Turkey**, and search and rescue workers in **Italy**.

Further concerned by the increased harassment and criminalisation of NGOs and human rights defenders denouncing the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Deploring the sanctions issued by the U.S. government against NGOs and individuals supporting the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on Palestine and Afghanistan.

Concerned by the considerable reduction of civic space for human rights defenders at the national and international level, against the backdrop of the global crisis, security concerns, conflict situations, political violence and the growth of anti-rights, anti-gender, extremist and/or religious movements, notably in **Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, China, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Georgia, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Indonesia, India, Israel, Kenya, Laos, Maldives, Mali, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Senegal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, the United States of America, Venezuela, Vietnam and Zimbabwe**, to name but a few.

Deploring the proliferation of laws criminalising human rights defenders' work, including freedom of association and the right to peaceful protest, and their improper use by law enforcement actors.

Highlighting the fact that the vulnerability of defenders often stems from a lack of visibility, recognition and understanding of the role of human rights defenders, impunity for perpetrators, a lack of political will to respect human rights, including land and environmental rights and rights relating to sexual identity and orientation.

Underlining the long-standing patterns of gender inequality, the instrumentalisation of religion, tradition, cultural or family values, leading to gender-based restrictions and violations against women, the denial of women's rights to sexual and reproductive health, equal status before the law, protection against violence and participation in public and political life, and hence to specifically targeted attacks against women human rights defenders, who are targeted not only for their gender but also for what they do as human rights defenders and other economic, social, cultural or geographical factors such as class, age, language, sexual identity or orientation, location, ethnicity, etc.

Concerned by the funding cuts affecting human rights defenders and NGOs all over the world, and particularly impacting feminist organisations and movements in countries governed by populists, conservatives and/or the far-right.

Paying special tribute to the representatives of our member organisations who have left us in the last three years, such as Nour Naser Abu Al-Nour and Dana Yaghi from PCHR in Gaza, killed along with 46 members of their families in Israeli strikes.

Also paying tribute to those engaged in courageous fights, sometimes at the cost of their health, such as Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja in Bahrain, who has been on hunger strike for months.

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Denouncing the deaths and killings of human rights defenders notably in **Colombia, Ecuador, Eswatini, Honduras, India, Mexico, and Thailand.**

Deploring in particular the fact that many human rights defenders are detained arbitrarily, often in poor conditions, sometimes under torture, on trumped-up charges and after proceedings that violate the right to a fair trial, particularly those working under authoritarian regimes, or in situations of political crisis or social protest, such as in **Algeria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Burundi, Cambodia, Chile, China, Democratic Republic Congo (DRC), Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Niger, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine/Russia, Uzbekistan, the United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, and Vietnam.**

Deploring many other forms of repression and reprisals (defamation campaign, harassment, legal proceedings, etc.) to which the representatives of FIDH member organisations are also subjected in many countries, and the arbitrary detention of many of them:

- in **Algeria:** Rahim Bakhtaoui and Hamid Goura, two members of the LADDH, have been respectively detained since October and December 2021 for their involvement in the Hirak protests. Larbi Tahar, Former President of the LADDH, has been detained since September 2024. In August 2025, Nassera Dutour, President of the Collective of the Families of the Disappeared in Algeria (CFDA), was detained without explanation at Algiers airport, forcibly returned to Paris, and prohibited from entering her own country despite being an Algerian citizen.
- in **Bahrain:** Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, a prominent Bahraini human rights defender, former President and Co-Founder of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), and Founding Director of the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR), has been arbitrarily detained since June 2011, serving a life sentence following the suppression of pro-democracy protests in Bahrain. .
- in **Belarus:** Ales Bialiatski, President of the Human Rights Centre Viasna, Valiantsin Stefanovic, member of the Board of Viasna and Vice-President of FIDH, and Uladzimir Labkovich, Viasna lawyer, have been arbitrarily detained since July 2021, while Maria (alias Marfa) Rabkova, Viasna member, has been detained since September 2020;
- in **Turkey:** Hasan Ceylan, Chairperson of the Bitlis branch of the İHD has been arbitrarily detained since March 2017.
- in the **United Arab Emirates:** GCHR Advisory Board member Ahmed Mansoor has been arbitrarily detained since March 2017.
- in **India:** Khurram Parvez, Coordinator of the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) and the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Society Coalition (JKCCS), has been arbitrarily detained since November 2021, while Irfan Mehraj, Kashmiri journalist and former JKCCS researcher, has been detained since March 2023.
- in **Russia:** Yuri Dmitriev, historian and representative of International Memorial in Karelia, in the north of the country, has been arbitrarily detained since June 2018, while International Memorial and the Human Rights Centre "Memorial" were dissolved in December 2021 on the basis of the "foreign agents" law;
- in **Myanmar:** Myanmar Alliance for Transparency and Accountability (MATA) members Kyaw Min Htut and Man Zar Myay Mon have been arbitrarily detained since September 2021 and June 2021 respectively, in the wake of the military coup;
- in **Thailand:** Anon Nampa, prominent pro-democracy activist and human rights lawyer from Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (TLHR), has been arbitrarily detained since 26 September 2023 under lèse majesté charges;

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- - in **Venezuela**: Eduardo Torres, human rights defender and member of the legal team of the NGO Venezuelan Programme for Education and Action on Human Rights (PROVEA), has been detained since May 2025.

In light of the above, the 42nd FIDH Congress calls on the competent authorities to:

- **Guarantee** the protection and the physical and psychological integrity of all human rights defenders, in particular those most vulnerable to attacks;
- **Immediately and unconditionally release** all human rights defenders arbitrarily detained, including representatives of FIDH member or partner organisations;
- **Combat** impunity for crimes and other violations against human rights defenders, and promptly, thoroughly, impartially and transparently investigate all allegations of attacks against human rights defenders;
- **Ensure** that, until charges are dropped, all judicial proceedings are conducted with full respect for the right to a fair trial under international law;
- **Publicly and unequivocally recognise** the legitimate, positive and necessary role played by human rights defenders in society, including their right to participate in decisions that affect them (infrastructure, mega-projects, trade agreements, etc.), and refrain from any action aimed at stigmatising, delegitimising or otherwise discrediting human rights defenders;
- **Withdraw or amend** all laws restricting and criminalising the defence of human rights; and
- **Investigate** all instances of unlawful digital surveillance against defenders, ensure effective remedies for victims, and impose corporate human rights due diligence obligations on technology companies whose products are used to target defenders;
- **Take** robust measures to address transnational repression and protect relocated or exiled defenders, including through protection visas, protective measures, and international prosecution of cross-border offences committed against the latter;
- **Comply** in all circumstances with the provisions of the United Nations (UN) Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted on 9 December 1998 by the UN General Assembly.