

# Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition

## May – August 2010 Update

A series of Coalition meetings were held in Geneva, Switzerland to coincide with the meeting of Special Rapporteurs, Representatives, Independent Experts and Chairpersons of Working Groups and the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council from 28 June to 2 July.

The hosting of the Coalition's Secretariat by the Center for Women's Global Leadership came to an end in April and the Coordinator will return to Manila and be based at Isis International, the fiscal host of the Coalition.

### ACTIVITIES

#### *1. WHRD IC Meeting, 26 June, Geneva, Switzerland*

Coalition members took the opportunity of their presence in Geneva to hold a WHRD IC meeting on 26 June. The meeting discussed the draft Report on Urgent Appeals Responses for Women Human Rights Defenders at Risk, which is a joint study undertaken by AWID and the WHRD IC. The study is intended to generate shared principles for effective and gender-sensitive responses to urgent appeals and facilitate coordination among Coalition members that provide this type of assistance. Several key areas of concern surfaced in the study, which are critical to understanding how the members evaluate each appeal and the type and extent of response they provide. Forging a shared understanding and analysis of these issues among the members is crucial to begin developing a system of coordination of responses to women human rights defenders at risk within the network. In an effort to facilitate this process, the Coalition meeting discussed the concept of risk, the meaning of security, addressing gender and formulating principles for responding to urgent appeals. The draft report has been presented to the Working Group for comments and will be finalised after Working Group discussions in July and September. For further details, see the meeting minutes circulated to the Coalition listserve or contact the Coordinator: [whrd@apwld.org](mailto:whrd@apwld.org)

#### *2. Informal Meeting on the Workshop on Traditional Values, 28 June, Geneva, Switzerland*

On June 28, Coalition members were invited by Human Rights Watch (HRW) to an informal breakfast meeting to discuss the upcoming workshop on traditional values with representatives from the missions of Norway, Brazil, Argentina and Burkina Faso in Geneva. In a Human Rights Council resolution sponsored by the Russian Federation, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights is directed to hold a traditional values workshop in 2010 "for an exchange of views on how a better understanding of traditional values" can contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights. In the meeting, the participants agreed that culture/tradition and women's rights issues should definitely be included, but should not be the only focus. It was suggested inviting the Independent Expert on Cultural Rights, as well as the UN Special Rapporteurs on VAW, Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Indigenous Peoples and others, and possibly participation from civil society. The workshop is due to take place on **October 4 2010**. For more information, see the resolution A/HRC/RES/12/21 at:

[http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/sdpage\\_e.aspx?b=10&se=100&t=11](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/sdpage_e.aspx?b=10&se=100&t=11)

#### *3. Meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, 29 June, Geneva, Switzerland*

Several members of the Coalition met with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human rights Defenders, Margaret Sekaggya, on 29 June in Geneva to discuss her plan to focus on women human rights defenders for her report to the Human Rights Council in 2011. In the discussions, the Rapporteur shared that her report will be based on an analysis of the existing cases that her office has received over the past several years, which involve women human rights defenders. The Special Rapporteur felt this would be the best approach given the limited resources of her office. During the meeting, the Coalition submitted a briefing note to guide the analysis of cases and identified possible gaps given the limitations of relying only on submitted cases. See *Contributions to the 2011 Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders focusing on Women Human Rights Defenders*.

#### 4. *Global Report on the Situation of Women Human Rights Defenders, 27 - 28 June, Geneva, Switzerland*

The Working Group met in Geneva on 27 - 28 June to discuss the next steps in producing the Global Report. AWID, AI, APWLD, Forum Asia, Inform, Front Line, ISHR, PBI, OMCT, WLUML, along with an additional demographics expert and the Coordinator attended. In the meeting, the working group collectively developed the questionnaire for the data collection and finalised the methodology for data gathering. Data will be collated primarily from the databases of the members that respond to urgent appeals. The completed questionnaires are to be submitted on October 30, and the Working Group will meet again in December for a preliminary analysis and determine any need for additional data. For more information, see detailed minutes circulated to the Coalition listserv or contact the Coordinator: [whrd@apwld.org](mailto:whrd@apwld.org)

#### *Urgent Appeals*

The Coalition circulated and/or responded to the following cases between May and August 2010:

- i. **Iran:**
  - a. Ms Nargess Mohammadi arrest [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/the\\_observatory\\_iran\\_nargess.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/the_observatory_iran_nargess.php)
  - b. Halt execution of Ms Zeynab Jalalian [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/iran\\_halt\\_execution\\_zeynab.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/iran_halt_execution_zeynab.php)
  - c. Harassment and detention of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani's lawyer and his family [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/mohammad\\_mastafaie.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/mohammad_mastafaie.php)
  - d. Shiva Nazar Ahari cases [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/iran\\_revolutionary.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/iran_revolutionary.php)
  - e. Attacks against HRDs on eve of elections anniversary [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/iran\\_attack\\_against.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/iran_attack_against.php)
  - f. Ms Shadi Sadr sentencing <http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/node/2537>
- ii. **Yemen:** Harassment of Ms Afrah Sa'eed [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/yemen\\_increasing\\_harassment.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/yemen_increasing_harassment.php)
- iii. **Guatemala:** Attempted assassination of Ms Deodora Antonia Hernandez Cinto [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/guatemala\\_attempted.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/guatemala_attempted.php)
- iv. **Honduras:** Death threats against Ms Gladys Lanza [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/honduras\\_death\\_threats.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/honduras_death_threats.php)
- v. **Philippines:** Detention of nursing mother and baby [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/cirstina\\_palabay.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/cirstina_palabay.php)
- vi. **Kyrgyzstan:** Intimidation of Ms Tolekan Ismailova and Ms Aziza Abdirasulova [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/kyrgyzstan\\_interrogation.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/kyrgyzstan_interrogation.php)
- vii. **India:** HRD Mr Hazari Lal Jatolia excommunicated by caste council [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/india\\_hazari\\_lal\\_jatolia.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/india_hazari_lal_jatolia.php)

- viii. **Russian Federation:** Assault of Ms Sapiyat Magomedova [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/russian\\_federation\\_assault\\_sapiyat.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/russian_federation_assault_sapiyat.php)
- ix. **Zimbabwe:** Judicial harassment of LGBT activists Ms. Ellen Chademana and Mr. Ignatius Muhambi [http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/zimbabwe\\_judicial\\_harassment.php](http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/zimbabwe_judicial_harassment.php)
- x. **Fiji:** Judicial harassment of Imrana P. Jalal, charges later dismissed. (This was not published on the Coalition website, but monitored and responded to by Coalition members)

## SECRETARIAT

### *Hosting*

The Coordinator met with Front Line in Dublin, Ireland in March and it was confirmed that Front Line will be the new host of the Coalition Secretariat from January to June 2011.

### *Communications*

Volunteer Communications Officer, Tara Chetty, completed her work with the Coalition on April 30, to return to full-time study. While she remains in contact with the Coalition, there is a need for an experienced and committed individual to take on communications responsibilities including reorganising, managing and updating the website, updating the calendar of events, refining communication processes, producing promotional materials and keeping members updated.

### *Executive Committee meeting*

Representatives of AI, APWLD, Forum Asia, WLUML and the Coordinator held an Executive Committee meeting on 28 June. The statement of income and expenditure as of 30 June 2010 was presented to the Committee. The Committee also signed the six-month contract (June – December 2010) of the Coordinator as her fellowship with the CWGL ended. The Committee also approved the hiring of a part time Communications and Administration Associate.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

• 13 Sep- 1 Oct: Human Rights Council – 15 <sup>th</sup> session, Geneva, Switzerland
• 29 Sep-1Oct: CEDAW OP – 18 <sup>th</sup> session, New York, USA
• 4-22 Oct: CEDAW – 47 <sup>th</sup> session, Geneva, Switzerland
• 3-5 November: ISHR Consultation with Women Human Rights Defenders in Africa
• 17-26 Nov: Working Group on Arbitrary Detention – 59 <sup>th</sup> session, Geneva, Switzerland
• 22 Nov- 3 Dec: UPR Working Group – 9 <sup>th</sup> session, Geneva, Switzerland
• <b>29 Nov: Women Human Rights Defenders Day</b>
• 29-30 November: APWLD Consultation with UN Special Rapporteur on VAW, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
• 2-4 December: Forum Asia Asian Consultation on Human Rights Defenders, Manila, Philippines
• <b>5-6 December: WHRD IC Working meetings. Manila, Philippines</b>

See full calendar at:

[http://www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/pdf/whrd\\_ic\\_calendar2010.pdf](http://www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/pdf/whrd_ic_calendar2010.pdf)

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6 September 2010

Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition

Secretariat

[www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org](http://www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org)