



**WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS INTERNATIONAL COALITION  
AUGUST 2011  
UPDATE**

**1. ACTIVITIES and UPDATES**

1.1 Statement concerning WHRD Leyla Yunus:

After the unlawful destruction of the property owned by Leyla Yunus on the night of the 11 August 2011, the WHRD IC issues a statement condemning this apparent retaliation by the Azerbaijan Authorities.

The building, owned by human rights defender Leyla Yunus and her husband, was destroyed by bulldozers the day after she gave an interview to the New York Times newspaper criticizing a "beautification" project in the capital Baku. The coalition is concerned that the demolition of the property appears to be an act of retaliation by the authorities, targeting Leyla Yunus for her open criticism of government endorsed forced evictions and the demolition of buildings in central Baku as part of a reconstruction project. The statement and more information is available on the website: 24th August 2011: [WHRD Coalition Condemns the Apparent Retaliation of the Azerbaijan Authorities Against Human Rights Defender Leyla Yunus](#)

1.2 'Traditional values' update:

The Human Rights Council (HRC) Resolution 16/3 (March 2011), "Promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms through a better understanding of traditional values of humankind" tasks the HRC Advisory Committee to "prepare a study on how a better understanding and appreciation of traditional values of dignity, freedom and responsibility can contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights". ARC wrote a joint NGO statement expressing concerns at a "traditional values" approach to human rights, WHRD IC signed on to this statement, as did many of the individual organizational members. The final version of the statement (endorsed by 65 NGOs, and now with the official document number A/HRC/AC/7/NGO/1), is published on the HRC Advisory Committee website. <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/advisorycommittee/session7/documentation.htm>

A HRC Advisory Committee meeting was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> Aug attended by some WHRD IC member organizations and other NGOs who made strong statements, expressing concerns with a traditional values approach.

### 1.3 Letter of solidarity:

A solidarity letter was sent on behalf of the WHRD IC to FARUG Uganda after the break in at their office at the end of July. Although no one was in the office at the time, a lot of crucial equipment was taken and the Police were slow to respond. FARUG thanked WHRD IC for the support and commented; “We do surely hope that this never happens again or to any other groups.”

### 1.4 Website updates:

There have been some updates to the website including a calendar for 2011-2012, the Jan – July update and some new resources including [Addressing Gaps in the Defense of Women Human Rights Defenders: A Report on the Strategic Conversation](#) (2011). If you would like any events or activities to be added to the calendar, or if you have a new resource, please let us know through the ‘contact us’ page on the website.

## **2. URGENT APPEALS**

**The Coalition and its members issued urgent appeals on: (available from the website)**

India, 29 August 2011: [India, 29 August 2011: Human rights defender and environmentalist Shehla Masood shot dead](#)

Russian Federation, 8 August 2011: [Judicial harassment of women human rights defender](#)