

# Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition

## February 2010 Update

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Human Rights Council (HRC) meetings, coming up in March 2010, will continue to be sites of advocacy for the Coalition, to raise the visibility of women human rights defenders and their concerns. As outlined in the 2009 WHRD IC report, we will be looking into the gender integration efforts of the Human Rights Council and working with other UN mechanisms, aside from our existing work with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, which could also foster strategic collaborations for the protection of women human rights defenders. The Coalition is also taking part in emerging debates, in particular 'terrorism and counterterrorism' and militarism.

### **MARCH ACTIVITIES**

#### **1. Parallel Events**

**CSW:** In partnership with Cordaid, the Coalition is co-sponsoring a panel on the **Impact of counter terrorism measures on women activists: responses, strategies and the need to defend human rights to ensure security**. The panel, a parallel event to the CSW session, will be held on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2pm-3.30pm, on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor of the UN Church Center in New York City. Presenting will be Jessica Nkuuhe, Uganda-based director of Urgent Action Fund Africa; Nonibala Naregbam, of the Integrated Rural Development Service Organisation, India; and Raissa Jajurie, lawyer for the Alternative Legal Assistance Centre/Saligan, Philippines. Mary Jane Real, WHRD IC coordinator, will be facilitating the panel.

**HRC:** In collaboration with Forum Asia and other organisations, the Coalition will be sponsoring a parallel event to the Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva in March. The panel, on **addressing reprisals against women and other human rights defenders** for using UN human rights mechanisms, will include Margaret Sekaggya, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders. The discussion will focus on operationalizing the new HRC resolution 12/2 from October 2009, "Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights". The panel will be held on March 10<sup>th</sup> from 1pm-3pm in Room XXVII (27), Palais des Nations.

Related to this parallel event, the Secretary-General has called for submissions to a report he is submitted to the Council on alleged reprisals against persons cooperating with UN human rights mechanisms, as well as recommendations on how to address the issues of intimidation and reprisals. The deadline for submissions is was **February 22**, and we have shared this information with partners and networks. We urge you to share any submissions you may have made to this, on the listserve, so we can raise them again during our parallel event on the same topic.

#### **2. March 8 Statement**

As we have done in the past, we will be producing a WHRD IC statement for March 8, which we will also deliver as part of our oral intervention at the HRC session. Please send your ideas on the key issues we want to highlight in the statement.

### **OTHER ON-GOING ACTIVITIES**

#### **1. Global Report on the Situation of Women Human Rights Defenders**

The working group on the Global Report on the situation of WHRDs will meet during the CSW in New York, on March 7<sup>th</sup> from 3pm – 5pm to discuss the implementation of this project.

Related to this, Ms. Sekaggya has confirmed her commitment to deliver a **report focused specifically on women human rights defenders for her last report to the Human Rights Council, slated on March 2011, with the final draft due by December 2010.** She welcomes the input of the Coalition, and is open to meeting with the Coalition for a consultation sometime on **June 26 - 27, 2010, in Geneva**, during the HRC June session, to discuss the framework and contents of the report. Please tentatively block the dates in your calendar.

### **3. Documentation Manual on Violations against Women Human Rights Defenders**

The working group, made up of the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) and International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP-AP) have been working on the manual for documenting human rights violations against WHRDs. A draft is expected to be ready by the end of March 2010. The final publication is due to be complete by November 2010.

### **4. Urgent Appeals Monitoring Mechanism Study**

Immaculada Barcia has been contracted by AWID as lead researcher to produce the study. She has begun her interviews with some of you and will be circulating a draft by **April 2010.**

### **5. Advocacy on Women Human Rights Defenders Issues**

The Coalition developed its briefing paper on **Policy Considerations for Security Concerns in the Aftermath of the 12 January 2010 Earthquake in Haiti.** A smaller working group of the Coalition is discussing the follow up to this paper, particularly in terms of advocacy with donors for broadening access to the humanitarian aid to include women's specific needs and ensure access for women human rights defenders to rebuild their offices and operations and become part of the reconstruction efforts post-disaster.

[http://www.defendingwomendefendingrights.org/pdf/FINAL.Haiti\\_Statement\\_2\\_February\\_2010.pdf](http://www.defendingwomendefendingrights.org/pdf/FINAL.Haiti_Statement_2_February_2010.pdf)

The Coordinator participated in Front Line's 5<sup>th</sup> Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders held from **5 – 7 February 2010** in Dublin, Ireland. The platform included a session on women human rights defenders and drew many women and LGBTI defenders from around the world as participants. The Coordinator also used the conference as an opportunity to meet with several of the Coalition members and with potential funders.

### **UPCOMING ACTIVITIES**

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| • 15-19 Mar: Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances – 90 <sup>th</sup> session. Geneva.       |
| • 22-26 Mar: International Coordination Committee of National Institutions – 23 <sup>rd</sup> session. Geneva. |

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Tara Chetty, Communications Officer, Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition

[tarachetty@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tarachetty@yahoo.co.uk)

[whrd@apwld.org](mailto:whrd@apwld.org)

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