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ANNUAL  
REPORT



HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION



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ANNUAL  
REPORT

# HRF

## MISSION & OVERVIEW

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The Human Rights Foundation (HRF) is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that promotes and protects human rights globally, with a focus on closed societies. Our mission is to ensure that freedom is both preserved and promoted around the world. We seek, in particular, to sustain the struggle for liberty in those areas where it is most under threat.

ACCORDINGLY, WE BELIEVE THAT  
ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE ENTITLED TO:

## FREEDOM...

- ... of self-determination
  - ... from arbitrary detainment or exile
  - ... of association
  - ... of speech and expression
  - ... from slavery and torture
  - ... from interference and coercion in matters of conscience
- 
- 

## THE RIGHT...

- ... to be able to participate in the governments of their countries
- ... to enter and leave their countries
- ... to worship in the manner of their choice
- ... to equal treatment and due process under law
- ... to acquire and dispose of property

# Letter from the President

Early in 2014, *Business Insider* published a feature on tech billionaires, and two of these philanthropists listed the Human Rights Foundation (HRF) as one of their favorite causes.

In August 2014, HRF hosted the world's first-ever **hackathon for North Korea** in San Francisco, bringing North Korean defectors together with engineers, venture capitalists, and developers to figure out new and better ways of getting information into the world's most closed society. It generated global discussion, with Fareed Zakaria featuring the event on his CNN show. We've also continued to expand our **Disrupt North Korea** program by floating, smuggling, and broadcasting an array of outside media into North Korea. We even sent copies of the film "The Interview," a comedy from James Franco and Seth Rogen whose release was cancelled in the United States, across the border by balloon. Our work there was featured on major news outlets including CNN, ABC, and Newsweek. We started a campaign called **Hack Them Back** that allows people around the world to help get movies, media, and entire digital encyclopedias inside North Korea—and raised more than \$50,000 for North Korean human rights groups.

In October 2014, we organized our 6<sup>th</sup> annual **Oslo Freedom Forum (OFF)**, a three-day summit hosted in Norway that *The New York Times* calls the place "where the world's dissidents have their say." *The Guardian* says OFF is the "Davos for revolutionaries," and *The Economist* calls it "an annual human rights festival that attracts brave and enterprising opponents of despotism from all over the world." In Oslo, we unite speakers like Bassem Youssef, Yoani Sánchez, Pussy Riot, Aung San Suu Kyi, and Chen Guangcheng with philanthropists, technologists, top media, and international leaders from business and policy. This year the BBC came to Norway—the result was a **6-minute television feature** on the Oslo Freedom Forum, where they described our event as the "Davos for dissidents."

HRF's **Václav Havel International Prize for Creative Dissent**, which we award each year to innovators in the courageous art of resisting dictatorship nonviolently, continues to grow in influence. Laureates include Chinese artist Ai Weiwei and Cuba's Ladies in White, Turkish "Standing Man" Erdem Gunduz and Tibetan filmmaker Dhondup Wangchen, and members of the Russian feminist punk rock collective Pussy Riot.

This year, HRF also launched "**Speaking Freely**," a three-to-five-year legal research project that aims to expose the pervasive abuse of incitement and official defamation laws by authoritarian regimes, with the goal of encouraging international human rights courts to take a more robust stand for free speech.

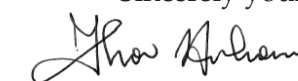
Through our various partnerships we were also able to provide tools and knowledge to human rights activists. We helped countless dissidents and journalists encrypt their sensitive information with tech firms Silent Circle and Wickr, taught human rights defenders how to ensure their digital and physical safety with a security firm, and, with the head of culture and trends at YouTube, brought together activists to learn how to create successful videos.

By the end of 2014, HRF has a full-time staff of 13, and despite our small size, we continue to effectively advance human rights and challenge dictatorship, loudly. Our work has recently been featured in *The New York Times*, *Politico*, *BBC World*, *CNBC*, *TIME*, *Amanpour*, *Foreign Policy*, *Bloomberg*, *The Daily Beast*, and *The Atlantic*, to name a few. Without hiring a PR company or paying a consultant, we've created a world-class media network to publicize the struggles of dissidents and the crimes of dictators.

As we look forward to 2015, HRF is excited to continue pursuing innovative ways to promote individual rights and support nonviolent dissidents and at-risk journalists, who still suffer under authoritarian regimes around the world. **Today, when roughly 3.9 billion people live under authoritarianism, your support of our efforts challenging oppressive governments is more important than ever.**

We hope you will continue to join us in this fight.

Sincerely yours,



Thor Halvorsen

President, Human Rights Foundation



Ten years ago, at the height of my professional success, I retired from chess to join a pro-democracy movement in Russia. **I realized that my dream was never only about chess; it was about making a difference—not only in Russia, but also in the promotion of human rights around the world.** This is why I was honored to join the Human Rights Foundation as chairman of its board in 2012. I am proud of what we have accomplished since then, but am even more excited about what we can do in the future. If we have learned anything from history about dictators, it's that they don't go away on their own. And the longer we wait, the harder it will be to remove them. Too many have forgotten how to challenge dictatorships. From Cuba to Korea, HRF brings together people who have not forgotten, and will never forget. Democracy, justice, and human rights must be fought for. We are not just hopeless spectators to the forces of history. I humbly ask that you join us and become more involved in our efforts in 2015. **With the power of HRF and its networks, we have the ability to take action and change the course of the world.**

Garry Kasparov

Chairman, Human Rights Foundation

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# 01

## OSLO FREEDOM FORUM

Each year, HRF produces the Oslo Freedom Forum (OFF) in Norway, bringing together leaders from academia, advocacy, business, media, policy, and technology to discuss how best to promote free and open societies. The sixth annual OFF, themed “Defeating Dictators,” took place in Norway on October 20-22, 2014.

More than 26,000 viewers tuned into the OFF livestream from 116 countries and joined the conversation using the hashtag #OsloFF, which became a trending topic in the United States. More than 13,000 posts about OFF across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram reached nearly 200 million people.



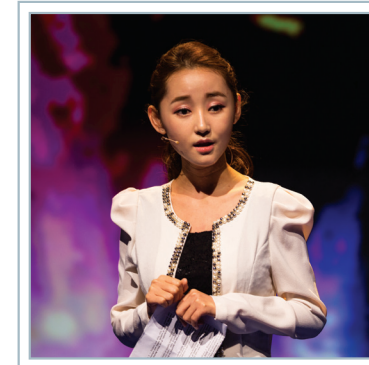
**Bassem Youssef**  
delivers the keynote address at  
the 2014 Oslo Freedom Forum



**Pussy Riot**  
2014 Oslo Freedom Forum speakers  
and Václav Havel International Prize  
for Creative Dissent laureates



**Mikhail Khodorkovsky**  
speaks at the 2014 Oslo Freedom Forum



**Yeonmi Park**



**Steven Pinker**



**Nico Sell**

“ They call it ‘Davos for Dissidents’ for a very good reason, but it matters because they’re sharing information and connections deeper and faster than ever before.” **-BBC**



**Jeffrey Wright**



**Yoani Sánchez**



**Garry Kasparov**

This year’s conference featured two workshops designed to increase the power and effectiveness of human rights promotion. One brought together YouTube’s head of culture and trends, TED’s former head of media relations, and the founder of StoryMaker to help participants learn how to craft a successful viral video campaign. The other featured a computer security firm that focused on teaching encryption and physical safety.

OFF amplifies the messages of its speakers and attendees by generating press coverage of human rights issues across the world. Hundreds of stories were filed from Norway and published in dozens of countries and languages. Speakers were profiled in outlets such as The Huffington Post, The Daily Beast, Foreign Policy, The Intercept, and The Miami Herald. Norway’s most prestigious paper called OFF speakers “the next generation of heroes,” and summarized the conference as a “contribution to world freedom.” OFF was covered by Norwegian television networks TV2 and NRK, with two speakers headlining the country’s most-watched morning news show.

“ An extraordinary array of courageous people who have defied authority—be it political, ideological or religious or a combination—at a high personal cost.” **-The Economist**



As usual,  
the Oslo Freedom Forum  
has gathered an impressive  
assembly of people to network  
and exchange ideas here  
in Oslo. And more than that:  
to give recognition to the  
courage of individuals across  
the globe who dare to stand up  
and speak out for principles that  
in this corner of the world  
we too often take for granted.

–Norwegian EU Minister  
Vidar Helgesen

Videos of all talks and performances are featured at [OsloFreedomForum.com](http://OsloFreedomForum.com) and this year's uploads saw more than **100,000 views** after just a few days online. They join an online library of more than **150 OFF videos**, which have attracted more than **1.6 million views** from almost every country across the globe.

A diverse range of institutions support OFF with programmatic advice, financial support, and in-kind donations. OFF's primary financial supporters are the Brin Wojcicki Foundation, the City of Oslo, Fritt Ord, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Thiel Foundation. OFF's program partners are Amnesty International Norway, Civita, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, LIM, and Plan Norway. In-kind support was provided by Cantadora, KIND, Manhattan Portage, the Nobel Peace Center, United Colors of Benetton, and Wickr.

SPONSORS



PARTNERS



SUPPORTERS





Super impressed by Oslo Freedom Forum.  
This is the Davos of human rights. But a deluxe  
networking event for brave activists not bankers.

- **Ben Judah** // @b\_judah



It has been an honor and an inspiration  
to be a part of the Oslo Freedom Forum again.  
So many remarkable speakers and visitors. #OsloFF

- **Garry Kasparov** // @Kasparov63



Great presentations by rights defenders at  
Oslo Freedom Forum @OsloFF. Watch <http://bit.ly/1CUvY1d>  
& follow @HRW's @astroehlein & #OsloFF

- **Human Rights Watch** // @hrw



I am floored and inspired by  
the incredible speakers at this year's @OsloFF -  
courage doesnt begin to describe their strength.

- **Elizabeth Dickinson** // @dickinsonbeth



At the @OsloFF to meet people who  
make the impossible seem possible. #osloff

- **Amnesty Norge** // @Amnesty\_Norge



Where do you get North Korean defector, Arab  
spring activists + Ukrainian revolutionaries in 1 place?  
Surreal +impressive Oslo freedom forum.

- **Laura Kuenssberg** // @bbclaurak



# THE IMPACT OF THE OSLO FREEDOM FORUM: FOUR SUCCESS STORIES



## SULEIMAN BAKHIT

Jordanian cartoonist Suleiman Bakhit showed us how comic books featuring Arab superheroes and female lead characters can help fight extremism and misogyny in the Middle East. Bakhit's Oslo appearance and subsequent video led to a profile in *The New York Times*, as well as an invitation to deliver the keynote speech at the Middle East's largest anti-extremism conference. It also led to his acceptance into a prestigious fellows program at the TED

conference, as well as the launch of a Kickstarter campaign to print more comic books. After U.S. government officials saw Bakhit's Oslo talk, he was invited to give remarks at the White House.



## IYAD EL-BAGHDADI

In April 2014, Iyad el-Baghdadi was summarily deported from the United Arab Emirates to Malaysia in retaliation for his criticism of the Egyptian regime, forcing him to leave behind his pregnant wife. He spent weeks stranded in the Kuala Lumpur airport before he was issued a temporary visa. **El-Baghdadi, a Palestinian writer raised in the UAE, rose to prominence following his reporting of the Arab Spring uprisings and their aftermath.** His Twitter account

has consistently been ranked as one of the most important social media accounts in the Middle East. With HRF's help, el-Baghdadi was able to travel from Malaysia to Norway to participate in the Oslo Freedom Forum in his first public appearance since his arrest. In a fiery speech, he called for a new generation of organized intellectuals and thinkers to reinvigorate the Arab Spring protests. Despite his expulsion from his home, el-Baghdadi has vowed to continue to fight on behalf of other democracy activists who remain voiceless.



## THULANI MASEKO

Thulani Maseko is a persecuted dissident in the often-overlooked country of Swaziland, Africa's last absolute monarchy. In March 2014, King Mswati's regime jailed Maseko on charges of "contempt of court" after he authored articles questioning the independence of the country's judicial system. Publishing criticism of Mswati's ruling party is banned in Swaziland, where the king uses draconian laws to imprison his opponents. After completing extensive

research, HRF sent a letter of protest to Swazi diplomats and regional Western ambassadors, published a front-page article in *The Atlantic* on the injustice in Swaziland, and issued a public statement about Maseko's unlawful detention that was subsequently picked up by newswires and media outlets across the world. After Maseko was sentenced to two years in prison, HRF invited his wife, Tanele Maseko, to Oslo to read a letter he wrote from his prison cell. In June 2015, the Swaziland Supreme Court ordered the release of Maseko, conceding that the state had no case against him. HRF continues to increase global awareness of the plight suffered by dissidents in Swaziland.



## YEONMI PARK

Yeonmi Park is a North Korean refugee and an expert on the country's black market economy. Park was born in Hyesan, North Korea. As a child, she lived as part of North Korea's elite until the regime punished her father for selling items to China and banished him and his family to the northern part of the country, where poverty, starvation, and "disappearances" became a part of everyday life. Park and her family escaped North Korea through China

and Mongolia in 2007. After speaking at OFF 2014, Park was invited to speak before the British Parliament and the U.S. Department of State, and at several events including a technology conference in Miami, two TedX events in Bath and Hangang, and at Georgetown University and Smith College. She was subsequently offered a book deal to write about her life. The book, "In Order to Live," will be published in September 2015.

# 02

## VÁCLAV HAVEL INTERNATIONAL PRIZE FOR CREATIVE DISSENT



The 2014 Václav Havel International Prize for Creative Dissent Laureates (left to right): Lhamo Tso, representing Dhondup Wangchen; Erdem Gunduz; Nadezhda Tolokonnikova & Maria Alyokhina of Pussy Riot

HRF founded the Havel Prize to honor the memory of the late poet, playwright, and statesman Václav Havel, who served as chairman of HRF from 2009 until his death in December 2011. Havel believed in unmasking the lie of dictatorship by “LIVING IN TRUTH,” and using courageous and creative methods to do so. The Havel Prize is awarded to people who embody these principles. Past Laureates include Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, Syrian cartoonist Ali Ferzat, Cuban civil society group the Ladies in White, North Korean democracy activist Park Sang Hak, Saudi women’s rights advocate Manal al-Sharif, and Burmese opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

The 2014 Laureates were Turkish performance artist Erdem Gunduz, Russian punk protest group Pussy Riot, and recently freed Tibetan filmmaker Dhondup Wangchen, represented in Oslo by his wife Lhamo Tso.

As in prior years, the three Havel Prize Laureates each received the “Goddess of Democracy,” a sculpture that represents the iconic statue erected by Chinese students during the Tiananmen Square protests of June 1989. The 2014 Havel Prize Laureates also shared a prize of 350,000 Norwegian kroner (\$60,000).

The Havel Prize was created by HRF with the enthusiastic endorsement of Dagmar Havlová, Havel’s widow, and is funded by grants from the Brin Wojcicki Foundation, the Thiel Foundation, and the John Templeton Foundation.



Javier El-Hage  
HRF's General Counsel

This year, HRF’s Center for Law and Democracy launched **Speaking Freely**, a three-to-five-year comparative legal research project that aims to educate decision makers and the general public about the importance of embracing the highest possible legal standard for the protection of free speech.

The research project will first track the ancient origins of the offenses of “incitement” and “defamation of public officials,” their evolution in the Middle Ages, and their adoption as legal provisions by European nations and their former colonies. Then, the project will study the evolution of the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment free speech standard and the rationales behind it, while charting the pervasive abuse of incitement and official defamation laws by authoritarian regimes.

The project will study, compare, and disseminate landmark U.S. court opinions in the evolution of the broad protections guaranteed under the First Amendment juxtaposed with different speech-restricting laws enforced in both modern-day authoritarian states and liberal democracies around the world.

**Speaking Freely is made possible thanks to a grant by the John Templeton Foundation.**

# 03

## SPEAKING FREELY: A COMPARATIVE LEGAL RESEARCH PROJECT

### RAMÓN JOSÉ VELÁSQUEZ // 1916 - 2014



HRF is sad to report the passing of Ramón José Velásquez, the Venezuelan statesman and author. A member of HRF’s International Council, Velásquez was a remarkable man with many titles, including president of Venezuela (1993-1994). Velásquez co-authored the famous “Black Book of the Dictatorship,” a detailed account of extrajudicial executions, torture, and other abuses committed by the military regime in Venezuela under General Marcos Pérez Jiménez in the 1950s. Velásquez was arrested in 1952, soon after the book was published. After he was freed from jail in 1958, Velásquez joined the first democratic government in Venezuela and in 1993 he was named interim president by Venezuela’s Congress. He spoke at the Oslo Freedom Forum in 2009. HRF was honored to count on his advice and on his friendship, and will continue to celebrate his life through its work.

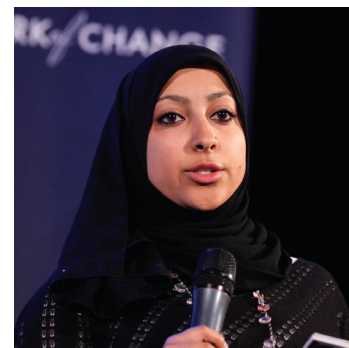
# 04

## ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS COUNTRY BY COUNTRY

### BAHRAIN & BURUNDI

### PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In September, HRF condemned the arbitrary arrests of Maryam al-Khawaja, co-director of the Gulf Center for Human Rights (GCHR), and Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, president of the Association for the Protection of Human Rights and Detained Persons (APRODH). Both were previous speakers at OFF. Al-Khawaja was detained by Bahraini authorities as she arrived to the island kingdom to visit her father, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, a political prisoner in critical condition on a hunger strike. Mbonimpa was jailed as part of a pre-election crackdown after he criticized Burundi's ruling party on a radio program.



Maryam al-Khawaja  
2011 Oslo Freedom Forum speaker



Pierre Claver Mbonimpa  
2010 Oslo Freedom Forum speaker

In October, HRF welcomed the release of al-Khawaja and Mbonimpa. However, both the governments of Bahrain and Burundi placed restrictions on al-Khawaja and Mbonimpa and charged them with inciteful and defamatory speech, which is one preferred method of repressive governments to silence criticism. HRF is investigating these cases through its Speaking Freely project and has called on both governments to drop all charges against al-Khawaja and Mbonimpa.

### CHINA

### CAMPAIGNING FOR INTELLECTUALS & MINORITIES UNDER THREAT

In 2014, HRF—together with four Nobel Peace Prize Laureates and several major human rights organizations—filed a letter with the United Nations and the European Union calling on them to request that China immediately release the jailed 2010 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Liu Xiaobo and lift the severe restrictions against his spouse, Liu Xia. In support of the Liu family, HRF screened at the Oslo Freedom Forum a video smuggled out of China of Liu Xia reading her poems. Her husband, Liu Xiaobo, remains the world's only imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. Each year, HRF republishes Liu Xiaobo's moving and historic Nobel lecture. This year, we were also able to publish the lecture in The Atlantic magazine.



Liu Xiaobo  
and his wife, Liu Xia

HRF also focused attention on Beijing's repression of the Uyghur people. A predominantly Muslim ethnic minority in a country that is 91.6 percent Han Chinese, the Uyghurs live primarily in the Xinjiang region of China. In February, HRF condemned the arrest and enforced disappearance of Uyghur professor Ilham Tohti, calling on the Chinese government to release him immediately. Tohti is a leading academic and one of the most prominent commentators on basic rights issues affecting the Uyghur people. In September, after a secretive trial filled with inconsistencies, Tohti was sentenced to life in prison after being convicted of "separatism." HRF continues to spotlight the plight of the Uyghur people, as well as the Tibetan people and other minorities repressed by the Chinese Communist Party.

## CUBA

### SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM

In 2013, Cuban journalist Roberto Guerra addressed the Oslo Freedom Forum about the dangers he faces running the independent news agency Centro de Información Hablemos Press (CIHPRESS) out of his living room. On June 11, 2014, Guerra himself was the victim of a brutal attack by Cuban state agents. After breaking his nose and leaving him with cuts and bruises all over his body, his attacker warned him, “This is so that you can see what we do to members of the opposition.” No one was charged for the attack.

In July, HRF was the only global human rights organization to act decidedly on behalf of Guerra in submitting a petition to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. HRF’s petition asked the UN Special Rapporteur to send an urgent appeal to the government of Cuba to explain the brutal assault and to take immediate measures to protect Guerra and his family. This case is only one example of the widespread repression, persecution, and imprisonment faced by Cuban journalists, and an indicator of how important it is to continue to support their work.



Roberto Guerra

## ECUADOR

### CHALLENGING A FREE PRESS CRACKDOWN

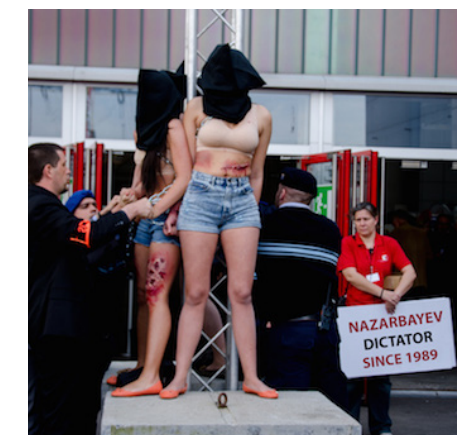
HRF continues to highlight the Ecuadorean government’s systematic attacks on press freedom. The recently passed “Organic Law of Communications” restricts the type of information that can be broadcast and published by the media, and has led to more than 100 recent legal proceedings against journalists, the shutdown of the print edition of at least four newspapers, and a looming threat to other media outlets that they must follow the rules or close their doors. In one example, this past January HRF condemned a ruling by the country’s National Court of Justice that upheld a sentence against two journalists who were sentenced to 18 months in prison and fined \$145,000 in damages for “judicial libel.”

Also this year, HRF reported on the harassment suffered by Ecuadorean journalist Betty Escobar and her family just days after she was mocked by President Rafael Correa during his weekly TV broadcast. The journalist received a bouquet of flowers at her home in New York City, along with a veiled threat: “Your friends from Ecuador. We will pay you a visit...” The same messages were sent that day to her family in Ecuador. HRF is following the work of the New York City Police Department to identify the source of the threat against Escobar. In August, HRF general counsel Javier El-Hage participated as an expert speaker on a panel about human rights in Guayaquil, Ecuador. On this visit, El-Hage experienced firsthand the hostile environment in which human rights defenders operate in Ecuador, risking their freedom, property, and even their lives by publicly criticizing the government.

## KAZAKHSTAN

### SPOTLIGHTING A CORRUPT TYRANNY

Kazakhstan’s repressive government receives little attention in the Western media, but in recent years HRF and other NGOs have effectively exposed the widespread mass media censorship, as well as the system of arbitrary detentions and politically-motivated torture and imprisonment, currently in force in this Central Asian country. In April 2014, HRF organized a public protest outside of the Davis Cup tennis match in Geneva to draw attention to the fact that Switzerland’s opponent, Kazakhstan, had been ruled by a brutal autocrat since 1989. HRF called on the Swiss government to demand that Kazakhstan respect its international commitments and ratified human rights treaties.



Protestors outside of the Davis Cup in Geneva

President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s exploitation of Kazakhstan’s enormous mineral wealth has enabled him to keep a low personal profile while presenting a progressive image of his government to the West. Meanwhile, civil society groups and journalists in the country live in constant fear. HRF’s Geneva protest and activities in Kazakhstan—including the release of a detailed report on the country’s persecuted media outlets last year—aim to direct the world’s attention to Nazarbayev’s many crimes.

## SAUDI ARABIA

### EXPOSING A KINGDOM OF JAILED DISSIDENTS

Waleed Abu al-Khair is a prominent Saudi human rights lawyer and a prisoner of conscience who was sentenced in July to 15 years in jail for “insulting the judiciary” and “inciting public opinion against the kingdom.” In October, HRF condemned the travel ban arbitrarily imposed against his wife, human rights advocate Samar Badawi, and called on the government to lift it immediately. As Badawi attempted to board a plane from Jeddah to Brussels to advocate for her husband’s release at the 16<sup>th</sup> EU-NGO Forum on Human Rights, she was stopped and informed of the ban by an airport official.



Waleed Abu al-Khair in prison

Authoritarian regimes in the Middle East are increasingly issuing arbitrary travel bans to silence critics who have the potential to reach audiences in democratic countries. Samar Badawi is a noted advocate for women’s rights, in a country where women are not allowed to vote or even drive a car. Mr. Abu al-Khair’s case is one example of targeted enforcement of the newly enacted Anti-Terrorism Law, whose overly broad and vaguely worded provisions can be read so as to criminalize even the most basic expressions of dissent. HRF contends that, by effectively banning all critical views against the government, these provisions violate Saudi Arabia’s obligations under international law. **HRF will continue to advocate for the freedom of these dissidents under its Speaking Freely project.**

## VENEZUELA

### SPEAKING OUT ABOUT AN OPPOSITION UNDER ATTACK

Venezuelan opposition leader Leopoldo López was arrested on February 17, 2014, as he was leading a peaceful march in Caracas. HRF was the first NGO to declare López a prisoner of conscience after determining that he was persecuted, arrested, and imprisoned exclusively for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of speech, and that his actions to rally his followers under the slogan “the street is the way out” constitute protected speech under international human rights law. In March, HRF organized a closed door meeting with experts on political imprisonment and nonviolent resistance to brainstorm ideas and create a “best practices” manual for political prisoner campaigns. At the meeting, HRF introduced López’s family to human rights attorney Jared Genser, who then went on to lead López’s legal defense internationally.



Venezuelan soldiers react violently to a peaceful protest in Caracas

HRF also brought global attention to Venezuelan violations against due process and freedom of association by highlighting the regime’s spring 2014 crackdown against human rights defenders and students protesting censorship in the media. HRF reported on the arbitrary arrest of Rodrigo Diamanti, head of the human rights organization A World Without Censorship, and the detention of 243 peaceful student demonstrators. HRF also strongly condemned the arbitrary detention and torture of students Marco Aurelio Coello and Christian Holdack by state agents. Coello was wrapped in a rubber mat and beaten repeatedly, received electric shocks, and was even doused in gasoline as agents armed with lighters threatened to burn him alive. Venezuela’s government continues to crack down on its critics, and HRF continues to spotlight this repression.

# SPECIAL FOCUS ON NORTH KOREA

Through the Disrupt North Korea project, HRF collaborates with North Korean defectors to increase their technical expertise, networks, and international impact. In addition, HRF participates in informational balloon launches that float democracy literature and equipment into North Korea as part of an ongoing effort to break the regime's information monopoly.

In January 2014, HRF partnered with the NGO Fighters for a Free North Korea in a successful balloon launch that sent 20 large hydrogen balloons carrying more than 500,000 democracy leaflets and DVDs into the hermit kingdom. The balloons' payloads contained pictures and statistics of life outside the regime, transistor radios that can tune in to foreign broadcasts, and USB drives loaded with offline versions of Korean-language Wikipedia. The launch received widespread media coverage everywhere from Wired to AFP and was

featured as a "Photo of the Day" in the Telegraph and Getty Images. HRF staff later appeared on BBC primetime television to discuss the event.

In February, HRF brought prominent defectors Park Sang Hak and Kang Chol-hwan to the Bay Area to collaborate with Silicon Valley's successful entrepreneurs. During the five-day trip, HRF organized meetings at the headquarters of Twitter and Wikimedia, hosted an evening event with dozens of SF-based investors, addressed the Korean-American community in Silicon Valley, and held a tech workshop at Stanford University. As reported in Ars Technica, The Mercury News, and Vice, the trip inspired new ideas for bringing information into North Korea, including importing auto-play Wikipedia devices and incorporating new elements such as GPS devices into the balloons to better track where information is distributed.



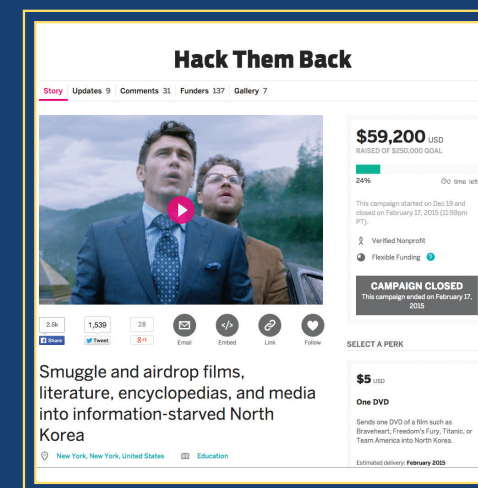
Prominent North Korean defector Kim Heung Kwang, head of North Korea Intellectuals Solidarity

## HACK NORTH KOREA

In early August, HRF hosted **Hack North Korea**, a two-day gathering of more than 100 technologists, engineers, venture capitalists, designers, coders, and North Korean defectors in downtown San Francisco for the world's first North Korea-focused hackathon. Prominent North Korean defectors and refugees Park Sang Hak, Yeonmi Park, and Kim Heung Kwang traveled from Seoul to educate Hack North Korea participants about how information is currently brought into the tightly-controlled dictatorial country. Participants broke into teams and built on this existing knowledge to brainstorm new and innovative ways of getting information past the North Korean regime's information blockade.

A panel of judges heard presentations on concepts ranging from the low-tech—using slingshots to catapult banned materials over the border—to the more advanced, such as hiding films inside video games and creating private mesh networks. The winning idea, which uses compact satellite dishes to receive information, will be implemented by HRF. The event was profiled in publications ranging from Fast Company to The Wall Street Journal. **The hackathon is another step in building a bridge between the defector and Silicon Valley communities, allowing more information than ever to reach the North Korean people.**

## #HackThemBack



In December, HRF launched **Hack Them Back**, an Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign meant as a response to the pro-North Korean cyber-attack on Sony Pictures. Through this initiative, individuals were able to support efforts to get films, books, educational materials, and technical equipment to the North Korean people. The initiative followed a peer-to-peer approach, where anybody concerned could help the underfunded yet courageous men and women who are bringing about change in North Korea through the power of information and ideas.

HRF appeared on **Bloomberg**, **ABC** with **George Stephanopolous**, and **Inside Edition** to talk about the campaign, which was also featured in **Newsweek**, **NBC**, and the front page of **CNN.com**. The campaign raised more than \$50,000 to flood North Korea with news reports, culture, and knowledge offering 25 million isolated and repressed people a window to the outside world.

# 05

## MAKING DICTATORSHIP MAINSTREAM

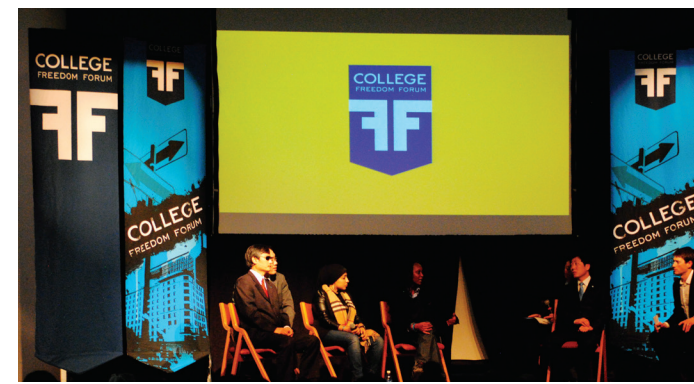
HRF continued to leverage pop culture as a way to generate mainstream visibility for the crimes of dictators that normally escape the media spotlight. In 2013, it highlighted celebrities like Jennifer Lopez, Kanye West, and Mariah Carey, who all performed for authoritarian leaders.



Angola's dictator, José Eduardo dos Santos, paid Mariah Carey \$1 million for a private performance

In 2014, Grammy-award winning singer-songwriter Erykah Badu performed at a birthday celebration of Swaziland's King Mswati III, Africa's last absolute monarch. While Badu partied, political prisoners languished in a prison not far from the king's palace.

HRF issued a press release about Badu's performance that spread from an AFP wire to The Guardian to MSN to Pitchfork to Rolling Stone to UPI to the LA Times, and even broke through to popular culture at BET, E!, Billboard, and The Hollywood Reporter. HRF followed up with a column in TIME about the situation, challenging Badu on her plans to play for the more repressive dictator of the Gambia. HRF's letter was received by the U.S. and Norwegian authorities, who applied pressure before Maseko was released from prison. As a result of HRF's efforts, Badu cancelled her plans to play in the Gambia. This is one example of how HRF commentary helps drive global discussions about human rights abuses in often-overlooked countries.



A panel with the CFF Boulder speakers: Chen Guangcheng, Maryam al-Khawaja, Kasha Jacqueline and Park Sang Hak, moderated by HRF's Director of Institutional Affairs, Alex Gladstein

## COLLEGE FREEDOM FORUM

HRF's new College Freedom Forum (CFF) series brings the experience of HRF's annual human rights summit, the Oslo Freedom Forum, to college campuses and university audiences.

Following a successful inaugural event at Tufts University in 2013, HRF held the second CFF on March 11, 2014, at the University of Colorado Boulder. More than 400 students attended to hear from Chinese rights activist Chen Guangcheng, North Korean defector and democracy activist Park Sang Hak, Bahraini rights advocate Maryam al-Khawaja, and Ugandan LGBT rights advocate Kasha Jacqueline. With the CFF series, HRF has created a much-needed space for human rights discussion on university campuses.

## OSLO SCHOLARS

The Oslo Scholars Program offers undergraduate students who have a demonstrated interest in human rights an opportunity to attend the Oslo Freedom Forum and spend their summer working with some of the world's leading human rights defenders and activists. This year's Oslo Scholars Program included three students from Tufts University, sponsored by the Institute for Global Leadership, as well as five students sponsored by the Norwegian investment firm Kistefos. The 2014 Oslo Scholars worked with: Kang Chol-hwan and the North Korea Strategy Center in South Korea; Srdja Popovic and CANVAS in Serbia; and Ghanaian economist George Ayittey and Equatoguinean human rights lawyer Tutu Alicante in the United States. The students collaborated closely with the activists for six weeks, helping them implement new projects to advance human rights.



Ukrainian democracy activist Yulia Marushevska being interviewed for Norwegian television at the 2014 Oslo Freedom Forum

# 06

## TOMORROW'S HUMAN RIGHTS LEADERS

# 07

## PARTNERING FOR GREATER IMPACT

Workshop attendees experienced a fast-paced, in-depth security training that focused on identifying when a person is being targeted by hostile entities, practicing methods to lessen one's risk, and minimizing damage if a person's security is compromised. The instructors focused on protecting sensitive information through examining the flaws and benefits of various communication devices.



2014 Oslo Freedom Forum workshop

## PROTECTING DISSIDENTS

In October 2014 at the Oslo Freedom Forum, HRF joined forces with a private security agency to present a workshop geared toward protecting high-risk individuals who have access to sensitive information.

## ADVERTISING HUMAN RIGHTS



Award-winning ad created by Grey Brasil in collaboration with HRF

One method dictators use to control their image is hiring PR firms to design campaigns that create a false reality and conceal a government's human rights abuses. In direct response to this approach, HRF partnered with ad agency Grey Brasil to highlight human rights abuses, such as torture and censorship, using traditional advertising techniques.

The ads depict images of people around the world who have turned into monsters through the abuse of power, displayed with the tagline: "War brings out the worst. Bring out your best. Help us defend human rights." The campaign ran in a variety of publications, including O Destak in Brazil, and was featured in numerous media outlets, including Update

or Die and Best Ads on TV, where it was chosen as "Best Print Ad of the Week" on May 21, 2014.

## EXPANDING OFF'S REACH

HRF is expanding the reach of the Oslo Freedom Forum through strategic conference partnerships. These events introduce the unique OFF experience to a new audience and inspire them to get involved with the human rights community.

### WIRED 2014, OCTOBER 16-17

Tech magazine WIRED's flagship conference featured a panel curated by the Oslo Freedom Forum. "OFF Presents" included Jordanian comic book creator Suleiman Bakhit, Wickr founder Nico Sell, and Ukrainian democracy activist Yulia Marushevskya. HRF president Thor Halvorssen introduced the panel, which was praised as one of the best sessions of the conference.



Suleiman Bakhit presents for the Oslo Freedom Forum panel at WIRED 2014

### SIME MIA, DECEMBER 1-3

Each year Sime MIA brings together global leaders from technology, media, and the arts in Miami to exchange ideas. OFF curated one of the 2014 plenary sessions, "Oslo Freedom Forum Presents – Storytellers and Dissidents," which featured Thor Halvorssen and OFF speakers Yeonmi Park and Suleiman Bakhit. The Miami Herald wrote a profile of the conference and highlighted how HRF is partnering technologists and entrepreneurs with human rights activists to make a greater impact.



On stage at Sime MIA

Beyond London and Miami, HRF representatives also publicly spoke about human rights in 2014 in New York, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., Geneva, at Harvard University, and at the European Parliament.

## MEDIA IMPACT



HRF has developed an extensive and diverse media network and expertise. Despite our limited staff and resources, in 2014 our work on dictators and dissidents was published in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, TIME, El País, The Atlantic, Foreign Policy, The Daily Beast, and Politico. HRF representatives have also appeared on television to discuss human rights on outlets such as ABC, BBC, Bloomberg, Fox, CNN, and MSNBC. Millions of people follow HRF staff, representatives, and OFF speakers on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.





08

FINANCIAL  
REPORT

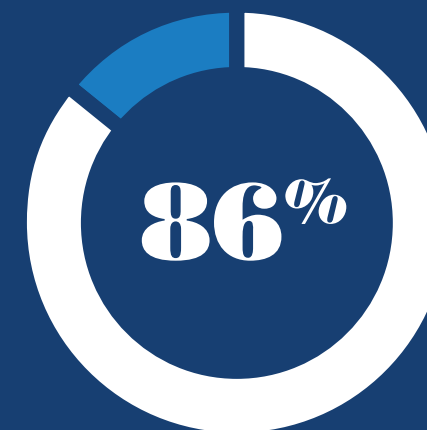
INCOME



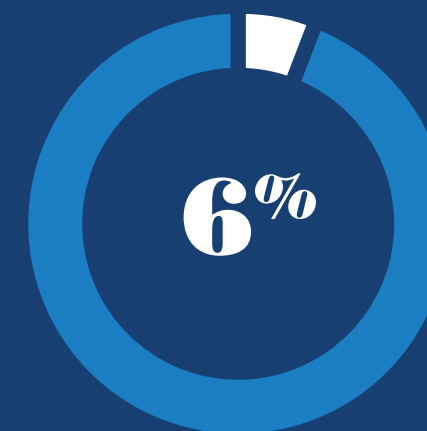
INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS  
\$601,700



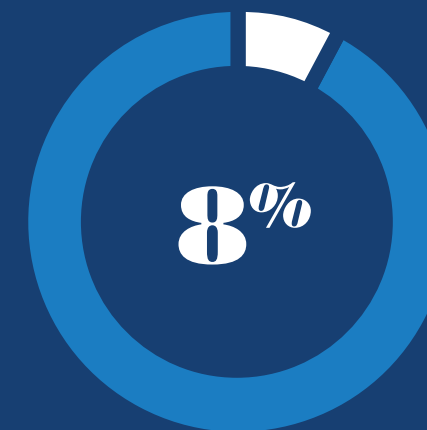
**TOTAL: \$3,892,975**



PROGRAM  
\$2,369,300



DEVELOPMENT  
\$165,300



ADMINISTRATION  
\$220,400

**TOTAL: \$2,755,000**

EXPENSES

# 09

## STAFF AND BOARD

### INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL, DIRECTORS & ADVISORS

#### CHAIRMAN

Garry Kasparov

#### INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

Kenneth Anderson  
George Ayittey  
Vladimir Bukovsky  
Palden Gyatso  
Mart Laar  
Jacqueline Moudeina  
Amir Ahmad Nasr  
Abdel Nasser Ould Ethmane  
Park Sang Hak  
Mutabar Tadjibaeva  
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Elie Wiesel  
Harry Wu

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thor Halvorssen  
Ron Jacobs  
Garry Kasparov  
Robert A. Sirico

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(1936-2011)  
James Q. Wilson  
(1931-2011)  
Ramón J. Velásquez  
(1916-2014)



### STAFF BIOS



#### CELINE ASSAF // INTERNATIONAL LEGAL ASSOCIATE

Celine joined HRF's Center for Law and Democracy in 2014 to focus on the protection of freedom of expression in Arabic and French-speaking countries around the world. She has since co-authored a legal report on the case of Waleed Abu al-Khair in Saudi Arabia. She completed a master's in international law at Columbia Law School, and she also holds a master's in French Law from Pantheon-Assas Paris II, France. Celine was born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon, where she earned her Bachelor of Laws from Saint-Joseph University.



#### JAVIER EL-HAGE // GENERAL COUNSEL

Javier El-Hage holds master's degrees in international law from Columbia Law School and the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. He was a professor of constitutional law for two years at the Universidad Privada de Santa Cruz-Bolivia and has held visiting faculty positions in other Latin American universities, such as Universidad Andina Simon Bolivar, and Universidad Francisco Marroquin. Included in Javier's publications on constitutional and international law is HRF's report "The Facts and the Law behind the Democratic Crisis of Honduras 2009-2010," which was extensively quoted by the Honduran Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2011. Javier heads HRF's legal department and HRF's Center for Law and Democracy, where he researches and writes on comparative constitutional law, international democracy law, and international human rights law.



#### SANDRA GERMAINE // EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

Sandra joins HRF with 10 years of experience in business administration across various industries. She received her bachelor's degree in political science and philosophy, as well as a master's degree in business administration from Loyola Marymount University.



### **ALEX GLADSTEIN // DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**

Alex is HRF's director of institutional affairs. He has also served as vice president of strategy for the Oslo Freedom Forum since its inception in 2009, and is coordinating HRF's Disrupt North Korea initiative. Alex's writing and views on dissidents and dictators have appeared in TIME, The Atlantic, BBC, CNN, The Guardian, ABC, Foreign Policy, NBC, and The Wall Street Journal. He has spoken about HRF's work at MIT, the School of Visual Arts, and the European Parliament. Before joining HRF, he served as a foreign policy advisor in the British Parliament. Alex is a magna cum laude graduate of Tufts University, where he majored in international relations and Middle Eastern studies.

### **ROBERTO GONZÁLEZ // INTERNATIONAL LEGAL ASSOCIATE**

Roberto graduated with honors from Rafael Landívar University in Guatemala, where he earned a Bachelor of Laws. In 2010, he was awarded first place on a human rights moot court competition. The following year, he joined the Washington College of Law's Program of Advanced Studies on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. As part of HRF's Center for Law and Democracy, Roberto's research focuses on comparative constitutional law and international law. He is working toward a master's degree in law from Fordham University.

### **THOR HALVORSSEN // PRESIDENT & CEO**

Thor is a Venezuelan-born human rights advocate and film producer. Described by The New York Times as "a champion of the underdog and the powerless," he began advocating for human rights as an adolescent in London by organizing opposition to South African apartheid. He became involved full-time in the promotion of due process and individual rights after his father became a political prisoner in Venezuela. He founded HRF after his mother was shot during a political protest in Venezuela in 2004. He is the Patron of the Prague-based Children's Peace Movement, On Own Feet. Thor has lectured at universities across the world on matters of individual rights, and his opinions and views have appeared in numerous venues, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, The Washington Post, National Review, National Public Radio, TIME, the Daily Telegraph, New York Post, and GQ, as well as televised outlets such as Al Jazeera, CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, BBC, HBO, and many others.

### **JAMIE HANCOCK // MEDIA RELATIONS COORDINATOR**

Jamie joined HRF after completing her master's in international politics and business at New York University, where her thesis focused on the erosion of press freedom in Latin America. She also holds a bachelor's degree with a double major in international political economy and Spanish language and literature from the University of California at Berkeley.

### **JACOB HOI JENSEN // PROGRAM OFFICER**

Jacob graduated with honors from Eugene Lang Liberal Arts College in New York City, where he studied history. His studies focused mainly on modern European history, especially the development of the Danish welfare state. Originally from Copenhagen, Denmark, Jacob has spent the last seven years of his life in the United States.

### **KATIA KRASAVINA // PROGRAM OFFICER**

Katia Krasavina is a Russian democracy activist. In 2005, she moved from St. Petersburg to New York and pursued a dual degree in political science and psychology. She joined HRF in 2013 after graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Brooklyn College.

### **JOHN LECHNER // PROGRAM & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

John is a graduate of Syracuse University, where he studied international affairs and economics. He held two summer internships with HRF before beginning a full-time position in the summer of 2013. Born in Stavanger, Norway, John spent his formative years overseas and hails from Houston, Texas.

### **SARAH E. PARKER // SENIOR PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

Sarah began working with HRF in 2008, after receiving a bachelor's degree from Duke University, where she studied Latin American history, culture, and politics, with a concentration in human rights.



### **CENTA REK // INTERNATIONAL LEGAL ASSOCIATE**

Centa is a Bolivian attorney and cum laude graduate from Santa Cruz Private University, where she earned a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in law. She worked for seven years as legal counsel in the oil and gas industry before moving to New York in late 2011. Centa joined HRF's legal department in 2012 and has since co-authored several international human rights law reports, petitions, and amici curiae, including Media Crackdown in Kazakhstan, The Case of Miguel Ángel Hernández Souquett, The Case of María Lourdes Afiuni Mora, and The State of Independence of the Judiciary in Venezuela.

### **NIKKI SINGH // ASSOCIATE**

Nikki began working with HRF after completing a bachelor's degree in international affairs at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where her studies focused mainly on Latin America and the Spanish language. She held a summer internship with HRF before beginning a full-time position in September 2014.

### **JESSICA TIRADO-MCKINNEY // PROGRAM & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

Jessica holds a master's degree in international affairs with a focus on human rights from New York University, and a bachelor's degree in political science and sociology from State University of New York at New Paltz. She has previously worked for the International Rescue Committee, coordinating capacity-strengthening projects in five countries. Jessica has also worked in field settings with several local NGOs, including documenting human right violations against children along the Burma-Thailand border, monitoring caste-based human rights abuses in Nepal, and supporting micro-enterprise business development in Rwanda.

### **SARAH WASSERMAN // CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

Sarah serves as senior vice president of the Oslo Freedom Forum. Before joining HRF, she worked with Gray Global in public relations and the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. Sarah is on the Board of Visionaries at Hope for Vision, a nonprofit that supports research into preventing and curing retinal diseases; and the Committee of heart&feet at the Andrea Rizzo Foundation, which sponsors programs that provide special needs children with dance therapy. She graduated from Brown University with a concentration in international relations, focusing her studies on Latin America.

### **ROSS WITTENBERG // PROGRAM & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

Ross joined HRF in 2008 as an intern while earning a master's degree in international relations with a specialization in human rights and foreign policy analysis from the John C. Whitehead School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University. When he completed his degree, he was hired on a full-time basis. He previously graduated from DePauw University with a major in conflict studies.

# Contact

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