

REPORT: 2022 DUBLIN PLATFORM

FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT RISK



INTRODUCTION

Front Line Defenders hosted the 2022 Dublin Platform for human rights defenders at risk from 26-28 October, for the first time in person since 2019. Over the 2.5 days, we welcomed 101 human rights defenders (HRDs). As per previous Platforms, it was a unique occasion to meet, network, share experiences, successes and difficulties, as well as the threats they face and strategies they have developed to address them. The HRDs could also meet and network with the 155 international guests present. The Platform was preceded by a Donor Day bringing together 34 international donors to reflect on current challenges, opportunities and collaboration possibilities to support HRDs' work and protection.

THE AIMS OF THE 2022 DUBLIN PLATFORM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS WERE TO:

- 1 Analyse and expose the reality of the repression of human rights defenders and promote their work internationally.
- 2 Prioritise the **sharing of experience** so that human rights defenders can learn from each other and discuss what strategic lessons can be drawn for the prevention and minimisation of risk.
- 3 Provide an opportunity for participants to relate experiences, **make practical recommendations** in specific areas and influence thinking at the international level.

The **first day** featured an opening ceremony with HRDs and high-level guests to welcome participants and renew the commitment of international partners to their welfare. It was followed by regional working groups where HRDs could analyse the threats and opportunities specific to their region, and network among themselves. The afternoon saw the heads of selected international protection mechanisms discuss how they can be of help to HRDs and a panel discussion on the human rights impact of counter-terrorism and security laws.

The **second day** started with a panel discussion on gender ideology and the backlash on feminists and LGBTIQ+ HRDs and continued with a second session of regional working groups. In the afternoon, HRDs participated in a panel discussion on protection in the context of protests and social movements, and heard fellow defenders present their testimonies, after which they attended a candlelight vigil at the HRD Memorial Monument in central Dublin's Iveagh Gardens.

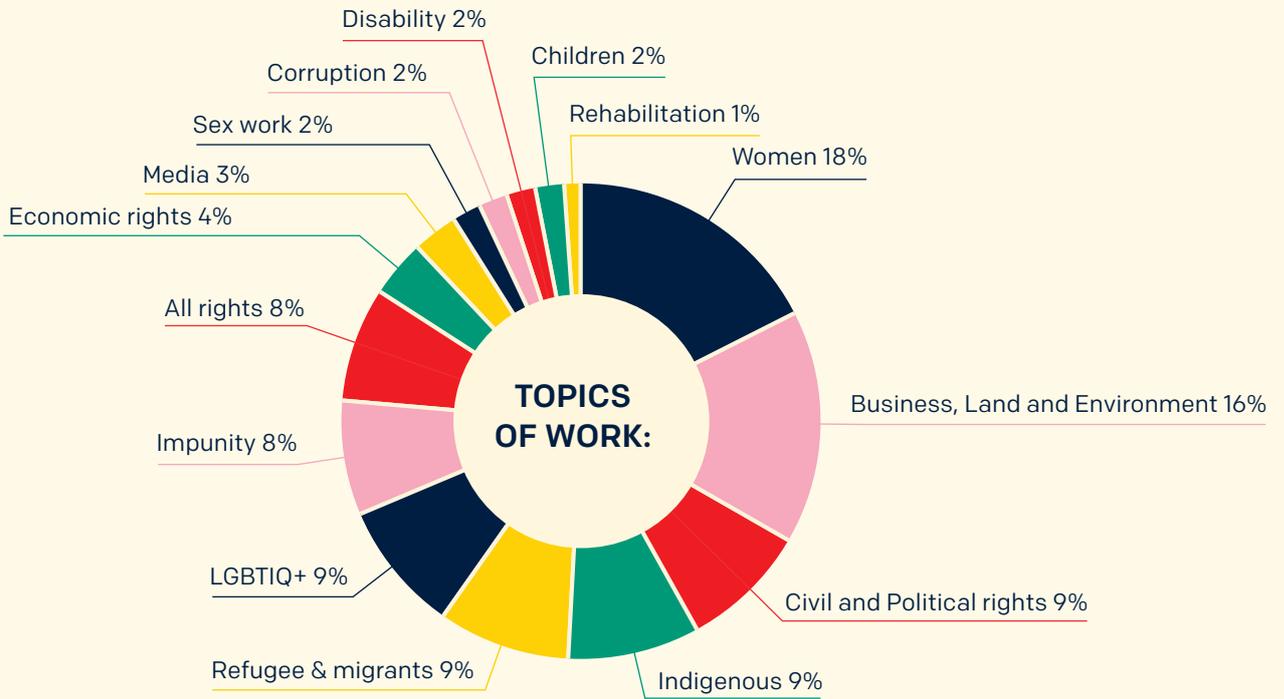
There were socials on both evenings to allow HRDs to relax, network and make friends.

The **third morning** featured a Q&A with the EU Special Representative for Human Rights and more HRD testimonies, followed by the closing ceremony with traditional Irish music and a thank you from the Board of Front Line Defenders to HRDs for having come to the Platform.

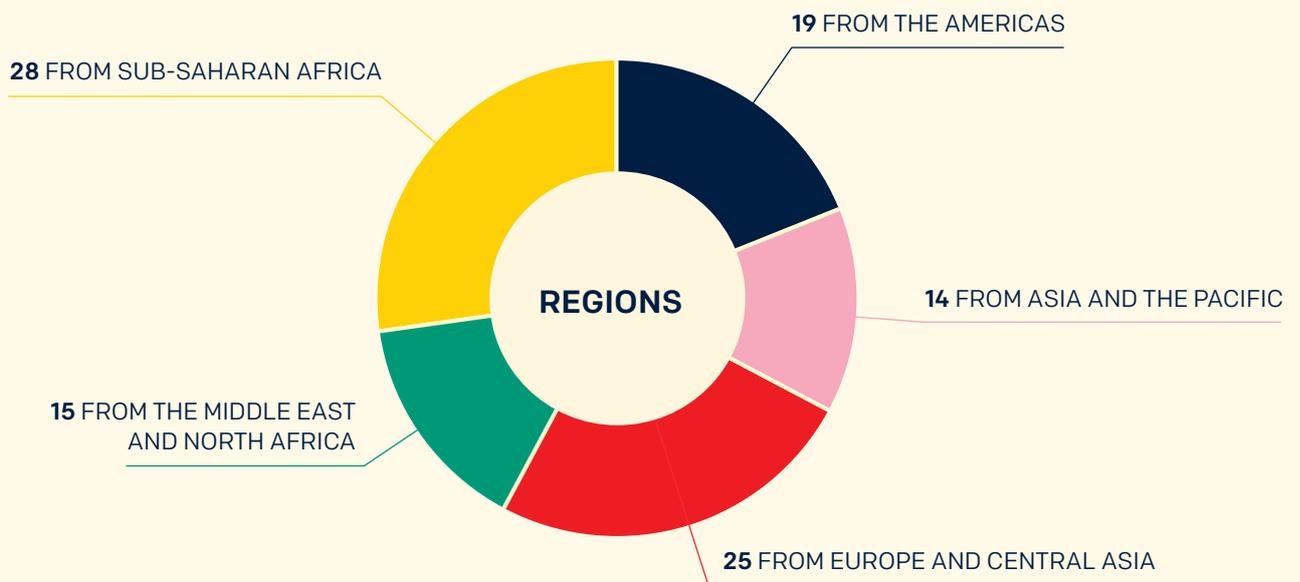
**DUBLIN PLATFORM
2022 IN NUMBERS:**

101 HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

155 INTERNATIONAL GUESTS



REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF HRDS:



101 HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS OF WHICH:

1 TRANS WOMAN

35 MEN

63 WOMEN

2 GENDER NON-CONFORMING INDIVIDUALS



VERÓNICA VIDAL,
FRONT LINE DEFENDERS BOARD

OPENING CEREMONY

“Let’s join forces in our struggle against those who want to tell us how to live and who to love! And let’s celebrate our successes and continue to hope in building a better world.”

(VERONICA VIDAL, FRONT LINE DEFENDERS BOARD, MEXICO)

The Platform was opened by keynote speakers **Sarah Bireete, HRD of the Uganda Center for Constitutional Governance** who asked participants to witness her experience. She spoke of the range of intimidation methods targeting HRDs including attacks, cyber surveillance, the harassment of family members, and at country level the closure of organisations and their accounts, torture, kidnapping, long detention without trial and the killing of HRDs.

SARAH BIREETE, HRD OF THE UGANDA CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE, DELIVERS A KEYNOTE SPEECH ON DAY 1



The Irish Government prioritises HRDs and their protection in its foreign policy, stressed **Jack Chambers, TD, Irish Government Chief Whip and Minister of State for Sport and the Gaeltacht**: “HRDs are humanity’s best hope for justice and accountability.” He invited HRDs to use the platform as a safe space to strategise and enlist partners’ support.

Civil society – and especially the youth – must be allowed to participate in policy processes, said **Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**, in a video statement. Human rights must inform all areas of government work, he said, while promising to step up the UN’s own work to protect voices and expand civic space, creating stronger alliances with business and the media.



JACK CHAMBERS, TD, IRISH GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR SPORT AND THE GAELTACHT



ANDREW ANDERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CALLED HRDS AN INSPIRATION AND SALUTED THEIR ROLE IN FINDING A SOLUTION TO MOST CHALLENGES FACED BY THE WORLD. HE PAID TRIBUTE TO HRDS WHO WERE KILLED SINCE THE LAST PLATFORM IN 2019, AND THOSE WHO COULDN'T COME BECAUSE THEY ARE IMPRISONED

THE HIT MACHINE DRUMMERS, A BLACK LEATHER-CLAD, CELTIC WARRIOR-LIKE ENSEMBLE OF MUSICIANS, PLAYED A 15- MINUTE SET TO CLOSE THE MORNING PLENARY AND LED PARTICIPANTS INTO A JOYFUL DANCING SESSION



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' TESTIMONIES



Space was given in the plenary for HRDs to share their experiences by presenting personal testimonies. More than 30 HRDs took the stage to reflect on their activity, challenges, and successes and in return, received attention, empathy, and support. Their stories were compelling and inspiring. **Here is a sample:**

WHRD: *"I wanted to ensure that the gruesome violations of human rights that happened in my country were a thing of the past. A truth and reconciliation commission was set up and today I am happy that all the recommendations were accepted by the Government. This fight is for the whole country."*

WHRD: *"There is a story behind all the numbers of deaths: a friend killed by her father because she was in love; a girl shot by her brother to clean the family honour; her colleague killed for being an HRD; the civilian dead in the Russian bombing. Those victims should encourage us to continue fighting for human rights."*

WHRD: *"I feel like I'm with family here, I feel strong, as we are together. Women have a key role in our community in passing on the spiritual knowledge to the next generations."*

WHRD: *"Thank you for letting me be the voice of those who have no voice. Those who are unsafe, who are fragile."*

WHRD: *"You get rid of every document, every file, every picture and sit by the door and wait for policemen to arrive any moment. You walk in the street looking left and right to see if you're followed. You know you're next, you just don't know when. We're destined to fight till our last breath."*

WHRD: *"We want development but with a human face, because we are endangered, and our most remote populations are victims of land-grabbing by the mining company. But it is worth continuing to fight because we won, and the company was finally stopped by the State."*



REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS

Participants broke out into regional working sessions, to examine more informally the issues facing HRDs in their countries, how they are responding to them and how other HRDs or the international community can help. These groups also helped HRDs from the same region to get to know each other and create networks.

AFRICA

HRDs spoke of trying to defend rights in the African subcontinent, but facing repression, even when advocating for the implementation of existing laws and rights. In countries experiencing a breakdown of the rule of law, harassment and violations are carried out at the hands of the government but also the military, private companies, and ordinary citizens indoctrinated with state propaganda. Too often, women and girls' rights are violated, especially during armed conflict, and HRDs equated with 'the opposition'. Spyware including Pegasus has been used against many HRDs without any recourse possible for them other than alerting the international community. Governments use terrorism

charges as a pretext to further limit freedom of expression, including on social media. Attempts to publicise corruption have been met with imprisonment, and the silencing of HRDs and journalists renders violations invisible on the international scene. Power and wealth allows autocratic rulers to overturn constitutional term limits and buy the acquiescence of politicians. HRDs have to declare what they use funds for, and many are abandoning all human rights activities for fear of retaliation against family members.

HRDs called on the international community to recognise and validate WHRDs working on sexual violence, help train them and assist with well-being as dealing with this issue takes a toll on their mental health; and to create or support more protection mechanisms for activists, civilians, and HRDs. They also called on each other to place greater emphasis on building resilience so that they do not have to leave their organisations or countries as a way to protect themselves; and to organise country-level meetings that encourage different movements to collaborate - even at the sub-level of counties and districts. They brainstormed on creating an African HRD caucus which could be supported by the international community, to discuss the issues faced by HRDs in the continent; and on how to set up more systems which would take on board emergency cases of HRDs who need to be relocated etc, with a specific focus on women and their self-identified protection needs.

HRD: *“There is an increase in homophobia because a group that claims to preserve ‘good morals’ has the support of religious leaders, and the majority trusts and listens to them, so that they are confident in putting forward a bill that will criminalise sex workers and LGBTIQ+.”*

WHRD: *“In my country, abortion is prohibited and approximately 3,000 women die every year from illegal ones - it’s like 10 airplanes full of women crashing every year. Activists working on this issue are called ‘witches’ and rejected by their families. We need to collect more data on the issue, help with self-care for HRDs, visibility and international networking.”*

HRD: *“Our people have experienced displacement since the war ended, due to armed men carrying out illegal logging and mining. Civil society organisations’ bank accounts are frozen, and have been deregistered, media have been closed down and those investigating violations around oil fields are intimidated or abducted.”*

Ethiopia WHRD: *“The ongoing conflict has increased sexual violence against women, but activists, who are sometimes survivors are labelled as terrorists.”*

HRD: *“Pipelines are being built on our land and the government has not signed the necessary agreements with the multinationals that will allow farmers to continue working the land, and local populations have not been compensated. We have tried to inform them of the impacts, on fighting for their rights, and on alternative work possibilities.”*

AMERICAS

HRDs discussed issues around the provision of support for HRDs at risk by local and international actors, how funding by the latter could be made more supportive of the work of HRDs, and how to integrate self-care and trauma support into their daily lives. Trans HRDs in particular shared the difficulties they face as women and as HRDs, where the barriers they encounter in both their professional and private lives blend into each other. HRDs should remain rigorous and professional because they will always be criticised and defamed.

A HRD summarised the discussions as: “take care of each other, support each other” as HRDs need funding for self-help, but it is usually the last of one’s priorities. They agreed that international funding should be made easier to access at the local level, with requirements made less complex and the processes quicker. Donors should stop funding their priorities, imposing them on HRDs, and support organisations and people most in need. Support should be holistic and cover the needs of HRDs in a unified way. There is a need for flexible, multiannual funding that allows for both stability and creativity, but also for respecting workers’ rights, as emphasised by feminist organisations.

HRD: *“We have opened a space to help HRDs and journalists in need of protection. We have a programme to prevent burnout in the families of the disappeared, who are exhausted and need respite and rehabilitation from sacrificing their needs to their quest.”*

HRD: *“My country does not recognise gender based violence or the LGTBI community. For many trans women, sex work provides the necessary stability... The pandemic was catastrophic for us, we had no access to help, and support was denied because of lack of documents, or attitudes towards trans women, or for not presenting like in our documents. We have no social security, we have to negotiate everything on an ad hoc basis.”*

ASIA

HRDs discussed having witnessed crises, notably in Myanmar, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. Governments are criminalising HRDs instead of protecting them, making HRDs but also their families and close ones face danger. Enforced disappearances are on the rise, and the lack of accountability of social media platforms is imperilling HRDs. Working on indigenous and land rights has never been more dangerous, with many activists risking their lives, especially when dealing with extractive companies. Governments seem keener to adopt laws criminalising HRDs than to regulate the work of companies involved in human rights violations. Difficulties in accessing funding limits the reach of HRDs’ work and their capacity to sustain themselves and their activities.

Among the solutions discussed was a need for HRDs to provide more human rights education for people and for colleagues, especially for indigenous people. Organisations with credibility who have direct and strong links with social media companies, should help ensure that HRD profiles are not blocked.

HRDs and critical voices who are forced to leave their countries deserve support, but most donors and governments want to help only those inside. The international community should: provide more recognition for HRDs to help with their protection; create/support an enabling space for HRDs to travel abroad for rest, respite and discussion; and help with visas instead of currently blocking them. HRDs need funding and resources for a range of support including: holistic security; legal support – lawyer groups could be initiated within countries and networks to connect them with HRDs; space for sharing stories in smaller spaces before elaborating on strategies and recommendations; and rapid response mechanisms which can flag and respond within minutes to online emergencies and life-or-death situations like blasphemy cases.

WHRD: *“We organise protests and marches, and also pursue legal cases to protect indigenous people but have been prosecuted because of our work. We have been resisting for more than 10 years. We are protecting our ancestral lands but we are the ones being evicted, a genocide is being committed against us but no one talks about it.”*

HRD: *“The Government uses malware like Pegasus for mass surveillance, certain people are framed and jailed, also through social media.... In jail, HRDs face medical negligence and their families cannot even visit them.”*

HRD: *“We have to hide behind violence against women to work against enforced disappearance. But even then, the Prevention of Terrorism Law is used against HRDs working on the issue and we do not have enough lawyers in the country to challenge the law.”*

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

HRDs spoke about the mounting oppression of women’s rights as the basis for the rise of all forms of oppression. Religious arguments of immorality or blasphemy are levelled against HRDs to criminalise them, shame them societally, attack their legitimacy and expose them to violence from non-state actors. Women in particular face sexualised smear campaigns. Sometimes these actions sow division even among HRDs. HRDs also shared the difficulty of meeting each other, due to restrictions in freedom of movement from one MENA country to another. In countries affected by conflict or violence, not being able to move from one region to another limits their human rights work. HRD want support in creating groups, direct connections with other HRD groups, and building networks. Protection has to be collective. The reputation of HRDs is important, so when there is a defamation campaign it is important to find solidarity from all the HRDs in the region. It is helpful to have HRDs mentioned in urgent appeals, and awards and recognition can sometimes serve as protection tools, so it is easier for HRDs to raise their voice. Emergency grants must be quicker, and the tools should be more flexible.

WHRD: *“MENA HRDs don’t have enough spaces where they can meet and share, so Front Line Defenders creating these opportunities is crucial to build networks.”*

WHRD: *“As a woman doing human rights work I got variously accused of cooperating with other states, of being immorally dressed, of racism, and have to face more pressure to make my organization successful. I am angry about all this hostility.”*

WHRD: *“Right now if I want to stand in solidarity with another neighbouring country I can face terrorism charges as a result.”*

HRD: *“We are no longer a successful revolution. Young HRDs were considered as impulsive trouble makers, so they pushed us back.”*

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

HRDs discussed the worsening situation for migrant rights defenders, who are accused of destabilising countries, promoting foreign agendas and terrorism. Attacks feature their dehumanisation and that of the people they support. European countries have not yet set up HRD protection mechanisms, when they have been supporting them abroad. There is a rise in anti-feminist, anti-LGBTQ rhetoric linked to the right, nationalism and nativism, but also for scapegoating as a distraction against political and economic issues. Anti-gender movements are also supported by Russia, and governments carry out smear campaigns and doxxing to get others to do the dirty work for them in attacking feminists.

HRDs need to organise the same way the right does, using clear, simple, intelligible language and framing and coordinating between actors. They need to have the same capacity to influence societal narratives. CSOs need the same resources as those funded by repressive regimes or those supported by religious groups in order to fight them, and to promote their own narratives and counter regressive gender ones. Human rights platforms and specific programmes for HRDs should be much easier to access for local activists who don't speak English; and more HRD protection programmes should be developed inside the European space, with particular focus on women, LGBTQ and migrant rights defenders.

WHRD: *"I work on migrants' rights and have been documenting pushbacks. The authorities started targeting my family using state security laws and using racist discourse as my husband is Muslim."*

Mamadou Ba, Portugal: *"There are no protection mechanisms for HRDs within the EU, and migrants rights defenders are subjected to institutional violence and to death threats. The increase of far right movements heightens the risks we face yet the issue of racism within the human rights movement is still taboo."*

Kazakhstan: *"The government supports extremist groups who harass LGBT & women's rights groups. They are mostly male religious groups and are easily manipulated."*

(HRD Bulgaria): *"My government openly uses an anti-feminist, anti-LGBT discourse and since last year, the violence we face us is switching from verbal abuse to physical attacks. At each presidential election, the LGBT community is used as a scapegoat."*

REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION MECHANISM PANELS

Three panels allowed HRDs to interact with high-level representatives working on HRD protection at the United Nations, the European Union and the Council of Europe.

Panel on International Protection Mechanisms

Mary Lawlor (UN Special Rapporteur on HRDs) and **Dunja Mijatović (Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights)** explained their mandate to HRDs. Lawlor receives and examines information on cases of human rights defenders at risk, and on this basis can ask questions of governments, which serves to highlight the case and make authorities accountable. She carries out missions to countries to examine the situation faced by HRDs, and can make recommendations for their protection. She also presents thematic reports to the UN plenary where she sets out possible strategies, such as recently for anti-corruption HRDs. She reminded participants that they are always welcome to send their cases to be taken up by her office, so that she can make a formal communication to their government (as long as they are not very urgent as this process takes time), or give it visibility. She is also having some successes in raising issues with companies. Mijatović, on the other hand, stressed that her role is to raise with CoE Member States their obligations with regards to HRDs on all occasions, and any gaps or failings that she notes. She also meets with HRDs to hear their analysis of the country situation.

MARY LAWLOR, UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON HRDS, DUNJA MIJATOVIĆ, COUNCIL OF EUROPE COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, AND ARNOLD TSUNGA, FRONT LINE DEFENDERS BOARD



International Protection Mechanisms

Eamon Gilmore, EU Special Representative for Human Rights presented his mandate and answered HRD's questions. The EU's purpose is to preserve peace, and conflict often follows from the denial of human rights, that is why they are at the core of EU foreign policy. "HRDs imagine the world as it should be. Some forces try to convince us that human rights are imperialism, that security, economic development have to come first- that is stripping us of our humanity. Human rights protect us, but also connect us." He meets HRDs wherever he goes on mission to head an EU Dialogue on Human Rights with the EU's strategic partners. He will raise with governments the issues that HRDs bring to his attention, and aims to give legitimacy to civil society where the space for it is closing.

EAMON GILMORE, EU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



THEMATIC PANELS

Panel Discussion on the Impact of Counter-Terrorism and Security Laws on Human Rights

HRDs discussed with Nicholas Miller of the International Centre for Non-profit Law the impact of new counter-terrorism laws in 140 countries since 9/11, encouraged by a global architecture legitimised by the international community, and compounded by broader civic space closure. State responses to the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in increased restrictions and the use of surveillance measures. Vaguely worded measures allow States to misuse laws against HRDs, and special security tribunals don't guarantee due process, undermine HRDs legitimacy, allow longer sentences, and pre-trial detention. All this is silencing defenders and having a dramatic impact on their work. HRDs in the panel shared their experiences with harassment and criminalisation under counter-terrorism laws, how these give excessive power to security forces, who can detain people without warrant for long periods, and reduce legal guarantees. Once they have been accused of terrorism, HRDs have all their actions scrutinised, cannot turn to security forces for protection as they are the harassers and there are no institutional safeguards. States seem to apply these laws more frequently to their critics than they do to genuine terrorists.

Panel discussion on protection of HRDs in the context of protests & social movements

During the afternoon panel on Day 2, HRDs discussed the obstacles they face in holding peaceful protests, with governments refusing to allow them, attacking demonstrators, and ignoring international criticism even by the UN. HRDs leading protests are demonised as "terrorists", "foreign agents" and "saboteurs", and harassed on social media. More and more states are adopting repressive laws: for example in the US, all 50 states have adopted 253 decrees limiting protests. Security forces violently attack climate protests, despite the fact that younger HRDs are frequently taking part. **Michel Forst, UNECE Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders** agreed that the rise of populism is worrying in this regard, and is nourished by 'fundamentalist' beliefs in capitalism, nationalism or religion. He recommended that the UN and Embassies increase their monitoring of protests, to document and flag State violations.

NICHOLAS MILLER OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW LEADS A PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE IMPACT OF COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SECURITY LAWS ON HUMAN RIGHTS.



PANEL DISCUSSION ON PROTECTION OF HRDS IN THE CONTEXT OF PROTESTS & SOCIAL MOVEMENTS



MICHEL FORST, UNECE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS.



Panel Discussion on Gender Ideology and the Backlash on Feminists and LGBTIQ+ HRDs

HRDs discussed the backlash against gender equality and how it is affecting them, with the achievement of feminist and LGBT movements being challenged by the anti-gender movement. Draft laws on violence against women are being paused if they contain gender language, women are told to “respect traditions, culture and religion,” the LGBTIQ+ movement is accused of putting children in danger and challenging parental dominance. HRDs working on these issues have had to be relocated due to attacks and threats, and some have even been killed. HRDs agreed that among the things needed are: to challenge how human rights rhetoric is used to discriminate against people; for States to be reminded of their obligation to protect everyone; and more safe spaces for HRDs to carry out this work.

Sex worker HRD: We are having to carry out our work in unsafe spaces. We are politically persecuted because we are fighting an ideological battle. We are excluded from many feminist and even LGBT groups, and do not get funding like them, even though we denounce human trafficking and trans and sex workers were at the forefront of Stonewall. We want to be visible in the human rights movement. We are people too, we exist, we are human, we are feminist, we are poor and persecuted for defending our rights.”

Asian LGBTIQ and indigenous WHRD: “I cannot separate my identity from my work: the attacks and rejection are against both. I have no support from government nor from human rights movements. Young LGBTIQ activists face mental health issues because of attacks on social media. They are not recognised for being HRDs and don’t have a community. Social media companies are not accountable for the risks they expose them to. There are no safe spaces for them to carry out their activism.”

WHRD: “Political parties allied with the church are creating a moral panic around gender issues to rally popular support despite the fact that their policies are clearly in favour of the richer classes, and publicly scapegoat HRDs to direct attacks towards them. This must be called out and the State reminded of its obligation to protect everyone.”

Mary Jane Real, Front Line Defenders Board, Philippines: “Power relations are being fought over our bodies. The criminalisation and pathologisation of LGBT people and activists is being normalised.”

PANEL DISCUSSION ON GENDER IDEOLOGY AND THE BACKLASH ON FEMINISTS AND LGBTIQ+ HRDS



Candlelight Vigil at the Human Rights Defender Memorial Monument in Iveagh Gardens

A beautiful and moving moment of gathering, reflection and celebration was held on the evening of 27 October at the Dublin HRD Memorial, a monument initiated by Front Line Defenders in collaboration with the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs – a unique space designed to commemorate the hundreds of human rights defenders killed annually while carrying out their peaceful work.

Relatives and colleagues of HRDs murdered in Honduras, Costa Rica and the Maldives commemorated their loved ones and gave testimony of their loss as cries of “You are not alone!” and “La Lucha Continúa!” rang out in the darkness.



CANDLELIGHT VIGIL HELD AT THE HRD MEMORIAL MONUMENT IN CENTRAL DUBLIN'S IVEAGH GARDENS



THROUGHOUT THE PLATFORM

Physical and Digital Security Support

A team of digital security experts was available to provide one-to-one support to HRDs in digital clinics throughout the 2.5 days of the Platform, while one-to-one physical security clinics were also available to review physical and personal security strategies for the home, office, or while travelling.

- 98 HRDs (51 women, 44 men and 3 non-binary persons) attended the individual, tailor-made digital protection consultations.
 - 22 HRDs, (13 women and 9 men), attended the personalised physical security consultations.
-

Communications and Visibility

Front Line Defenders informed Irish and global media about the Platform and offered media and visibility support to HRDs who wanted to avail of it:

- Irish media outlets were invited to the opening ceremony and a press release about the event was shared with global media and posted online in six languages. At least 11 media stories in eight countries were published/broadcast about the Platform, including a photo in the Irish Times featuring a HRD at the candlelight vigil.
 - Media interviews were arranged for four HRDs, three of which resulted in coverage.
 - Eleven video and audio interviews were recorded with W/HRDs from 11 countries, which will be developed into videos and podcasts for use on Front Line Defenders' social media channels in the coming months. HRDs were asked to indicate beforehand if they were interested in this option, and we tried to achieve a balance between different themes, regions, and time availability.
 - Two professional photographers captured individual and group portraits throughout the 2.5 day event, and also took individual portraits of W/HRDs with UN Special Rapporteur Mary Lawlor, which were printed and shared with them as a memento of the Platform.
 - Urgent social media posts and a video appeal were posted on social media to assist three HRDs during or in the immediate aftermath of the Platform.
-

Well-being, culture and self- and collective care

A number of safe spaces and psychological well-being clinics were also provided for HRDs, as well as cultural offerings, throughout the duration of the Platform:

- 30 HRDs attended Listening Ear sessions with a psychologist.
- 31 HRDs visited the well-being room where they could rest, take some time out from the busy main spaces, and join some centering exercises with a coach.
- HRDs availed of a prayer room and family room throughout the event.

HRD Katsia Zhyhniarouskaya held a plenary session on “Voice practice as a tool of well-being and collective care”, leading participants into a singing and movement session to relax and vibrate.

Donor Day

On 25 October, the day before the Platform started, Front Line Defenders hosted 34 donors and funders. Among them were foundations, NGOs, Government ministries, regional funds and international organisations. The gathering allowed them to assess the funding landscape for HRDs, and share ideas and good practices regarding effective funding strategies to support HRDs at risk in difficult contexts, how to address common barriers encountered by funders when supporting HRDs – particularly the most marginalised and at-risk – and practical solutions for enhancing cooperation among funders.

Summary of Survey of Human Rights Defenders at Risk

Front Line Defenders conducted a survey among HRD participants at the Platform designed to analyse global risk levels for HRDs and to garner a snapshot of the issues impacting them.

Despite all the difficulties they encounter, HRDs mentioned various **achievements** that can be attributed to civil society activism in their countries, such as growing acceptance of feminist work in some places, in dismissing trumped up charges against them, or in demanding accountability from the government.

- 61% of HRDs, however, rate the **level of risk** that they face in their country as high to extremely high, ranging from 50% in the Americas to 85% in Asia. Trans and disability rights HRDs rated it at 100%.
- Arrests and detention are the most frequent form of violation experienced by HRDs in Africa, Asia and the MENA region, whilst in ECA and the Americas, HRDs experienced cyber attacks or digital surveillance the most.

In the context of their work as human rights defenders, 63% of WHRDs have experienced threats, harassment or violence because of their **gender**.

- 79% of HRDs say new restrictive laws and/or policies that limit their capacity to do human rights work have been introduced in the last three years. 67% said that they, or their colleagues, had faced legal charges in the last three years.
- Not a single HRD described their access to funding for their human rights work as sufficient.
- 48% of HRDs have received funding specifically for their, or their organisation's, security and protection, and for the vast majority of those, the source of the funding was international and within that, 74% from INGOs, with the rest equally shared between foundations on one hand, and international organisations/governments on the other.
- 88% of HRDs have not received support for their protection and security from **foreign diplomats** in their country.

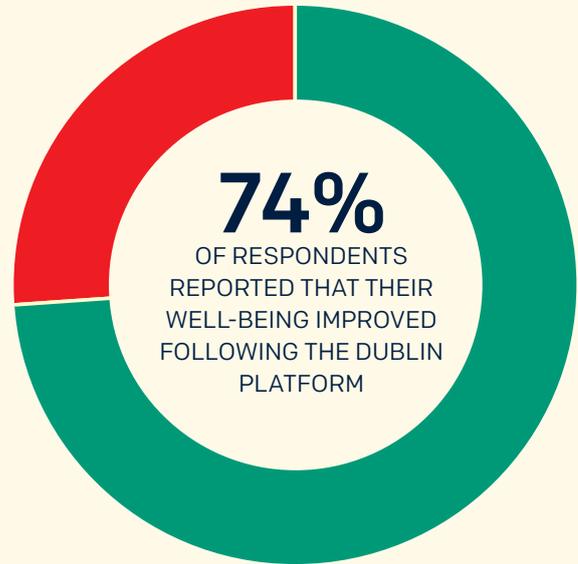
In terms of **help** needed to continue human rights work in the face of risks, HRDs rated long support, international advocacy, trainings, and financial work as their priorities.

IMPACT OF THE DUBLIN PLATFORM

100% OF HRDS WHO COMPLETED EVALUATION SURVEY SAID THAT THE PLATFORM HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THEM.

THE BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS OF THE DUBLIN PLATFORM FOR HRDS WERE RANKED AS FOLLOWS :

1. SOLIDARITY
2. STRENGTHENED NETWORK
3. INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS
4. INCREASED KNOWLEDGE
5. WELL-BEING
6. SOME REST



THE DUBLIN PLATFORM 2022 PARTICIPANTS AT DUBLIN CASTLE





COVER PHOTO AND ABOVE: HRD CHRISTOPHER CASTILLO AND WHRD MELISSA MARTÍNEZ OF HONDURAS DELIVER TESTIMONIES DURING THE DUBLIN PLATFORM 2022.

2022 DUBLIN PLATFORM

FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT RISK

DUBLIN

First Floor
Avoca Court
Temple Road
Blackrock
Co. Dublin
A94 R7W3
Ireland

Telephone: +353-1-212-3750

Fax: +353 1 233 8695

Email: info@frontlinedefenders.org

BRUSSELS

Square Marie - Louise 72
1000 Brussels
Belgium

Telephone: +32-2-230-9383

Fax: +32-2-230-0028

Email: euoffice@frontlinedefenders.org



WWW.FRONTLINEDEFENDERS.ORG



Photo credits: All images are © Front Line Defenders, © Kamil Krawczak/Front Line Defenders and © Alex Zaradov/Front Line Defenders. Front Line Defenders subscribes to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages.

Design by www.NickPurserDesign.com