

Remarkable Resilience of Human Rights Defenders a Source of Hope Amid Global Rollback on Rights

At least 324 defenders killed in 32 countries for their peaceful work in 2024

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Despite an

increasingly hostile world with

expanded threats to their work, human

rights defenders (HRDs) everywhere

demonstrated a remarkable level of

resilience and determination as they resisted a global rollback on human rights, Front Line Defenders said as it launched its flagship report.



The Front Line Defenders Global Analysis 2024/25 gives a detailed panorama of the violations against HRDs at risk in 105 countries in all regions of the world last year.

The report also reveals statistics gathered and verified by the [HRD Memorial](#) – which Front Line Defenders coordinates – documenting the killings of at least 324 HRDs in 32 countries in 2024. HRDs working on land rights, citizen's rights and Indigenous peoples' rights each made up almost a fifth of the total, and the countries with the highest number of killings documented were Colombia (157), Mexico (32), Guatemala (29), Palestine (22) and Brazil (15). (See pp. 6-13 for complete data.)

"Year on year, hundreds of human rights defenders pay the ultimate price when they are killed for their work, having a devastating impact on their families and communities. It is a grim reflection of the immense danger faced by those who work peacefully to defend human rights," said Alan Glasgow, Executive Director of Front Line Defenders.

"Other threats and risks are manifold. Front Line Defenders' analysis shows that women's rights defenders globally and HRDs working in situations of conflict were among those most targeted for their work. It is a remarkable sign of these defenders' courage that they continue their struggle despite such immense danger. They are the best among us, who fervently believe a better world is worth fighting for."

Wide-ranging risks to HRDs

Arbitrary arrest/detention was the most commonly reported violation against HRDs around the world, followed by threats/other harassment, legal action, death threats and surveillance (see pp. 14-20 for a more detailed breakdown, including by region). Women HRDs reported slightly higher levels of threats/other harassment compared to their male counterparts, while trans and non gender-conforming HRDs reported this as the most common violation they faced overall.

Criminalisation of HRDs remained rife with 107 charges filed in 75 cases. The most commonly cited charges were linked to defamation (23.4%); national security (19.6%); other criminal charges (12.1%); public order offences (11.2%); and terrorism-related charges (11.2%). In every region, governments and non-state actors turned to the judicial system to disrupt, stymie, stigmatise, bankrupt and imprison HRDs, regardless of the human rights they were defending. Counter-terrorism legislation and “Foreign Agent” laws were among those weaponised for use against HRDs.

Globally, the five most targeted areas of human rights defence were: women’s rights (12%); LGBTIQ+ rights (9%); human rights violations in conflict (7%); human rights movements (6%); and environmental rights (6%). When considered together, environmental, Indigenous and land rights defenders accounted for 15% of the documented violations. (Regional breakdowns are available in the report.)

Women’s rights on the frontlines

According to Front Line Defenders data, defenders working on women’s rights were among the most targeted globally in 2024, ranking in the top three for all regions except one. This trend played out in numerous ways, with women human rights defenders (WHRDs) subjected to smear campaigns, criminalisation, arbitrary arrest and detention, as well as targeted with threats – including threats of sexual and gender-based violence.

WHRDs played key roles in protest movements seeking more just societies – for example in Bangladesh – faced stark discrimination in countries like Afghanistan and Iran, and shouldered heavy burdens in conflict and crisis situations, ranging from Gaza to Colombia, DRC, Myanmar, Sudan and Ukraine.

[Dr. Mahrang Baloch](#), an outspoken WHRD from Pakistan’s Balochistan region, faced ongoing risks throughout the year, including travel bans, smear campaigns and arbitrary detention. At the time of publication she remains jailed in Quetta after being arbitrarily arrested for leading a peaceful protest. In a foreword provided to Front Line Defenders, she described why HRDs persist in their struggle:

“We must continue to resist. Because human rights defenders are the ones standing on the frontlines, risking everything so that others may find their missing loved ones, so that everyone

can go to school, so that the silenced can speak, so that women raped in refugee camps can find justice, so that those fighting alone in their homes, their villages, their cities can know they are not alone. We must stand with them, and we must stand together. Not for a nation. Not for a religion. Not for a race. But for humanity. Because if we do not, who will?"

The statistics in the Global Analysis are derived from Front Line Defenders' casework and approved grant applications between 1 January and 31 December 2024. The statistics are based on 2,068 reported violations across 105 countries. Front Line Defenders documents multiple violations per case or grant, as this is the reality of the situation for human rights defenders. For more details on how these and the HRD Memorial data are gathered, please refer to the Methodology section at the end of the report.

For more information or to receive a full copy of the report, please contact:

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