

INVITATION - THE OBSERVATORY

Steadfast in Protest :

Human rights defenders more than ever at risk

Publication of the Observatory Annual Report 2011 in Kampala, Uganda

At the occasion of the publication of its 14th Annual Report 2011, the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), organises a press conference in Kampala, Uganda. This event will provide the opportunity to present the obstacles and acts of harassment suffered by human rights defenders in Africa.

Press Conference in Kampala
December 6, 2011 at 2 pm
Human Rights House, Nsambya,
Plot 1853 Lulume Road, Kampala, Uganda

With the participation of:

- **Livingstone Sewanyana**, Executive Director, Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) - Uganda
- **Pelagia Razemba Semakweli**, National Acting Chairperson, Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights) - Zimbabwe
- **Pepe Julian Onziema**, Programme Coordinator, Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) - Uganda
- **Joseph Bikanda**, Human Rights Officer, East and Horn Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP)
- **Margaret Sekaggya**, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders.

with the symbolic presence of **Ales Bialiatski**, President of the Centre for Human Rights "Viasna" (Belarus) and FIDH Vice President, arbitrarily detained since August 4, 2011.

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While the revolutions that took place in the Arab world in 2011 reminded the international community of the emergency to put the issue of human rights back at the top of its political agenda, utmost attention must be paid to the alerts made by human rights defenders worldwide, and no compromise must be made towards the harassment they face.

The report and the media kit are available on the following links:

Report: http://www.omct.org/files/2011/10/21443/obs_2011_uk_complet.pdf or
http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/obs_2011_uk-complet.pdf

Media Kit: http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/dpobs2011_final-eng-ldb.pdf or
http://www.omct.org/files/2011/10/21443/eng_press_kit_obs_2011_final.pdf

The release of the Annual Report is a key momentum of the daily activity of the Observatory. This report tells of the struggle of human rights defenders in about 70 countries - civil society activists, journalists, trade-unionists, lawyers or simple citizens "indignant" at injustice, arbitrariness, or horror.

The document highlights the universality of the claims raised by the “Arab Spring”. As pointed out by Stéphane Hessel and Aung San Suu Kyi in the foreword to the report, *“everywhere, respect for human rights was at the heart of the peoples’ claims, (...) These movements did not feed on identity, religious or cultural politics, but were rather founded on the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (...)”*.

“At the same time”, FIDH President Souhayr Belhassen says, “human rights defenders are more than ever at risk. As the Report is being published, the blood bath continues in Syria, in Libya and in Yemen. In Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Americas, Asia, human rights defenders are harassed, imprisoned, sometimes tortured”.

For OMCT Secretary General Gerald Staberock, *“far from being recognised for what they are - vital protagonists for change, the guarantors of a free society - human rights defenders are, on the contrary, subjected daily to repression by regimes that are all the harsher for having understood the force and the legitimacy of their claims”*. *“The present report calls for stronger protection for those involved in human rights and democracy”*, he concludes.

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders accompanies, follows and protects human rights defenders at risk throughout the year.



SIGRID RAUSING TRUST

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