

# ANNUAL REPORT 2005 2006

## Bringing Hope to Darfur [p6]



# Annual Report

## 2005/06

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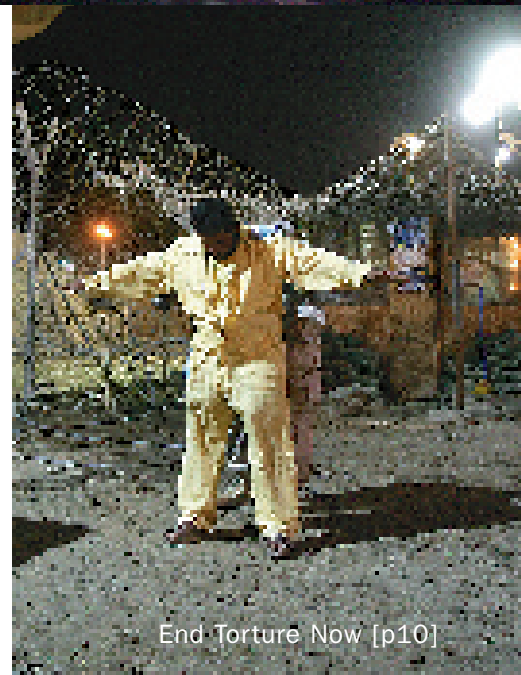
"If we're going to portray ourselves as patriots of the rule of law and democracy, then we must be stewards of it here at home."

Tom Brokaw

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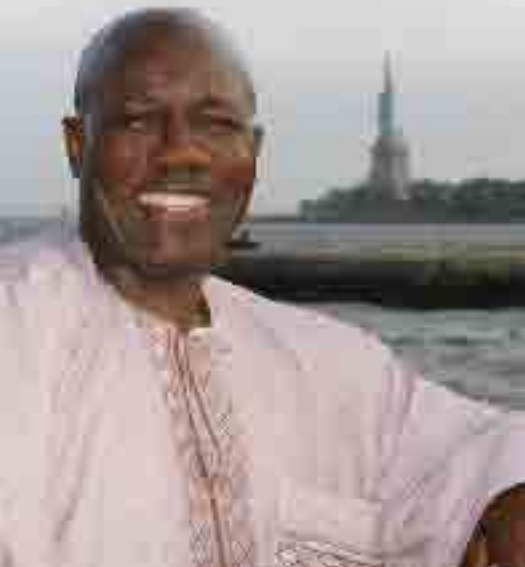


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## human rights *first*

**H**uman Rights First believes that building respect for human rights and the rule of law will help ensure the dignity to which every individual is entitled and will stem tyranny, intolerance and violence.

We work to protect individuals at risk: Refugees fleeing persecution, victims of crimes against humanity or other mass human rights violations, victims of discrimination, those whose rights are eroded in the name of national security, and human rights advocates who are targeted for defending the rights of others. These groups are often the first victims of societal instability and breakdown; their treatment is a harbinger of wider-scale repression. Human Rights First works to prevent violations against such people, and seeks justice and accountability for abuses when they do occur.

Our methods are both practical and effective. We advocate change at the highest levels of national and international policymaking. We seek justice through the courts. We raise awareness and understanding through the media. We build coalitions among those with divergent views. And we mobilize people to act.

*Human Rights First is a nonprofit, nonpartisan international human rights organization based in New York and Washington, D.C. To maintain our independence, we accept no government funding.*

# The Headlines

In 2005/06 Human Rights First helped drive forward and inform pressing public debates on critical policy issues, and was cited numerous times throughout the year in leading news outlets such as the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Washington Post*, among others.

## Ending Abuse and Torture

### *McCain Ban Passes*

Throughout 2005, we played a key role in mobilizing support for the passage of the McCain Amendment, which prohibits the cruel and inhuman treatment of prisoners in U.S. custody. The support notably included a coalition of retired U.S. generals and admirals, an alliance we first brought together to draw greater attention to Alberto Gonzales' record during his confirmation hearings for attorney general. In the fall of 2005, Congress overwhelmingly passed the amendment, a victory Senator McCain's staff credits in no small part to our efforts [see p27].

### *Supreme Court Victory*

In January 2006, we filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, challenging the U.S. government's authority to establish military tribunals at the detention center on Guantanamo Bay. In June, the Court upheld this position in a landmark ruling [see p15].



“Human Rights First has propelled itself to the forefront of the military-detainee issue. Congressional staff members [...] call them ‘detail experts.’ [They] are legal experts and that is a unique aspect,’ a congressional aide said.”

*The Hill*

## Protecting Refugees

### *Safe Haven for Gender-Crime Victims*

We organized a large-scale effort to block a U.S. government policy that would have denied asylum to women victims of such gender-related crimes as forced sterilization and genital mutilation. In January 2005, the government refrained from issuing blanket regulations that would have rejected gender-based persecution as a basis for asylum [see p16].

### *Asylum Proposals Adopted*

We submitted strong recommendations to ensure that refugees fleeing religious persecution were treated fairly in asylum proceedings. In February 2005, our recommendations were adopted by the bipartisan U.S. Commission on Religious Freedom in its report on the U.S. government's treatment of refugees seeking asylum in America [see p16].

### *New Homeland Security Position*

For two years, we led an effort to create a senior policy position to oversee matters of refugee policy at the Department of Homeland Security, a move long rejected by the administration. In February 2006, DHS announced the appointment of Igor Timofeyev as senior advisor for refugee and asylum policy [see p16].

## Working for Peace in Darfur

### *H.O.P.E. for Darfur Campaign*

In 2005, we launched a comprehensive public campaign to help bring an end to the slaughter in Darfur by calling for the appointment by the United Nations of a senior peace envoy of international stature. This call has since been taken up by organizations and leaders around the world [see p7].

### *White House Action*

In 2006, we met with President Bush to urge him to take greater action in the effort to bring peace to Darfur. In the fall of 2006, the president appointed a high level diplomat to work exclusively on bringing peace to Darfur [see p13].

## Defending the Defenders

### *Iranian Activist Freed*

Working with local activists, we mounted a grassroots advocacy campaign to call for the release of Kurdish Iranian and women's rights activist, Dr. Roya Toloui. In October 2005, Dr. Toloui was freed from an Iranian prison [see p19].

### *Impunity Challenged*

Following our sustained effort to call for justice in the fatal poisoning of Indonesian human rights activist Munir, an airline pilot was convicted in 2005 for his role in the murder. The conviction was later overturned by the Indonesian Supreme Court, but our efforts to bring his killers to justice continue [see p19].



### *Global Activists Convene*

Human rights defenders from 20 countries joined us at the 2006 Human Rights Defenders Policy Forum in Atlanta, which we co-sponsored with former President Jimmy Carter, to discuss the central role of activism during transitions to democracy. The policy recommendations that emerged were presented to members of Congress and policymakers from the executive branch. Pictured (left to right) HRF Executive Director Maureen Byrnes, President Jimmy Carter, U.N. Special Representative Hina Jilani and Egyptian human rights defender Saad Eddin Ibrahim at a press conference at the Forum.



Michael Posner, President

**“My new role is in keeping with Human Rights First’s continued evolution into an even more visible, publicly engaged, and results-driven organization, which in turn reflects the new environment in which we conduct our work.”**

## President’s Letter

This has been a productive and eventful year for Human Rights First, and for me personally. In January of this year, I became president of Human Rights First. After 28 years as HRF’s executive director, the time was right for me to step into this new position, which will allow me to engage more publicly to promote our agenda and to build new constituencies for our work.

As you will read more about in this report, my new role is in keeping with Human Rights First’s continued evolution into an even more visible, publicly engaged, results-driven organization, which in turn reflects the new environment in which we conduct our work.

Since our founding, Human Rights First has relied on our legal expertise to engage in impact litigation, to provide quality legal representation to asylum seekers and to offer expert legal commentary and analysis on issues of the day. Our role in the successful challenge of the administration’s detention and interrogation policies at Guantanamo in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* is one recent example of our efforts.

At the same time, our access to policy-makers, our ability to work with political leaders on both sides of the aisle, and our capacity to engage with and work in coalition with unlikely allies are the trademarks of this organization. Our lead role in supporting the McCain Amendment banning abusive interrogations and in galvanizing support among retired military officers illustrates our reputation for effectiveness in the policy arena.

Going forward, we will build on these strengths, while working to develop a larger, more active public constituency for our work. Our new, targeted public advocacy campaigns are a hallmark of this focus.

In 2005/06, our innovative End Torture

Now campaign continued to push for an end to coercive interrogations and secret detentions by U.S. forces in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places. Since the campaign’s launch in 2004, we have recruited more than 75,000 e-activists from all 50 states and around the world, whose active involvement was another critical element in our work to promote the McCain Amendment.

In late 2005, we launched our second public campaign, H.O.P.E. for Darfur, to persuade the United Nations to appoint a senior diplomatic envoy to address the human rights disaster in the Darfur region of Sudan, as a first step to ending the horrific violence there.

Our expanding constituency is a key to our ability to get results. As president of Human Rights First, I will work to drive this process, introducing Human Rights First to new communities and promoting our work in new quarters. It is a role that matters a great deal to me personally and work I am keen to do.

My new role is made possible by the arrival of Human Rights First’s new executive director, Maureen Byrnes. Maureen comes to us with more than 25 years of experience in policymaking, both in government and the philanthropic community. She is a gifted leader, an expert manager, and shares my commitment to the pragmatic, results-focused approach to our work.

I feel very lucky to have found such an ideal partner with whom to continue building Human Rights First in these challenging times, when the struggle to protect human rights is more important than ever. And I look forward to continuing our work together with your support.

Michael Posner,  
President

# At the Helm

## An Interview with Maureen Byrnes

In January 2006, Maureen Byrnes was appointed as Human Rights First's executive director. A seasoned public policy advocate, administrator and change agent, Byrnes' career spans the sectors – from Capitol Hill, to higher education, to health care and the AIDS crisis, to The Pew Charitable Trusts, where she established a strong reputation for solving tough policy problems. She brings that unique perspective to her new role at HRF.

### What drew you to Human Rights First?

I was drawn to Human Rights First because of its mission and its dual commitment to achieving broad policy change and to serving individual people in need, like refugees and human rights defenders. I admired the organization's approach to achieving results – working across party lines, building coalitions, and serving as an important source of information and guidance to lawmakers, opinion leaders and the media.

### How do pressing new concerns regarding national security affect HRF's work?

I joined Human Rights First precisely because so much is at stake right now. There are new challenges, but there are also new opportunities to reaffirm human rights and the rule of law. For example, even before the abuses at Abu Ghraib came to light, HRF led the effort to say that the government can't violate long-standing human rights principles in the name of national security. We worked hard to build public support for this position among a wide range of people, most notably a coalition of retired military leaders. In the end, this approach helped to drive the passage of the McCain Amendment.

### What is the most powerful tool we have in the fight to protect human rights?

To be successful today, we need to use a combination of tools. Our public campaigns are a great example of this approach. We identified two areas – abusive interrogation techniques by

the U.S. government and the crisis in Darfur – where we knew we could make a difference. And we're using all of our capabilities – legal expertise, research, analysis, communications, coalition-building, insider advocacy and public outreach – in an integrated way to inform and support major public policy campaigns in these areas. On any given day we can reach out to thousands of people, who in turn contact members of Congress, the administration and officials at the U.N. The result is that policymakers understand that these issues matter to their constituents, which in turn shapes policy. This is the kind of integrated approach that gets results.

### Human Rights First is approaching its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; what do the next years hold?

We will continue to build upon our reputation for being focused, strategic, and known by many as making a difference on some of the most challenging human rights problems of the day. We're all about picking our battles wisely and directing our resources in a way that's designed to achieve the greatest impact.

We know there will be new challenges and new tools over the next 30 years that we can't even imagine today. But one thing won't change: our commitment to building respect for human rights and our belief in the rule of law. That you can count on for a long time to come.

Maureen Byrnes, Executive Director



“We’re all about picking our battles wisely and directing our resources in a way that’s designed to achieve the greatest impact.”

# H.O.P.E. for Darfur

“There is something we can do for Darfur that doesn’t cost money but is vitally important: moral outrage, a sustained and full-throated outcry by all governments and citizens.”

Nicholas Kristof, *New York Times* columnist,  
at the 2005 Human Rights Awards

DARFUR, SUDAN: At a camp for internally displaced persons relatives pray over the shrouded body of an infant girl who died from sickness. Photo AP/James Nachtwey/VII.

**H**undreds of thousands dead, millions displaced. For more than three years, the Sudanese government and its hired militia have swept into the villages of Darfur, murdering hundreds of thousands of men, women and children and forcing millions to flee their homes.

In 2005/06, Human Rights First launched H.O.P.E. [Help Organize a Peace Envoy] for Darfur, a multi-pronged public campaign to bring an end to the savagery.

Working very closely with Sudanese activists like Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam [see Human Rights Awards, p24] and employing a wide range of insider advocacy techniques, media resources and outreach strategies, H.O.P.E. for Darfur has led the effort to keep up the pressure on the United Nations, the U.S. government and the international community to appoint a special peace envoy of international stature and to convene a truly inclusive grassroots peace process that gives a voice to all the people of Darfur. Just as important, the campaign has helped to keep the public's attention focused on the tragedy that continues to unfold daily in Darfur.

Students "Die-in" for Darfur [see next page].



# The Pressure is Rising

## Students Work to Bring Hope to Darfur

In 2005, HRF launched a new student leadership project to galvanize students, educators and families to help carry forward the H.O.P.E. for Darfur campaign. From participating in HRF-sponsored “teach-ins” that present the facts in accessible language and compelling images, to organizing petition drives to call on President Bush and the U.N. secretary-general to appoint a peace envoy, to staging “die-ins” to draw attention to the killing in Darfur, these students are proving that, as one student put it, “we’re not too young to make a difference.”

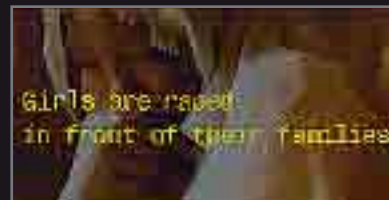
## Stand In for a Victim in Darfur

H.O.P.E. for Darfur’s campaign toolbox includes “Stand In for a Victim in Darfur,” a unique online advocacy initiative that gives supporters who log on to our Web site the chance to “stand in” for victims of murder, rape and displacement. Each participant receives a victim number, and the “stand in” is linked to a petition calling for a special U.N. envoy for peace. In the first month, more than 20,000 people signed up; since then, these people and those who have joined them have worked to urge governments around the world and the United Nations to end the suffering in Darfur.

“What would you do if this were your country?”

Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, Chair, SUDO, and HRF colleague

Scenes from our Darfur campaign’s online movie encouraging supporters to “stand in” for a victim.





DARFUR, SUDAN: Young woman cries because she does not have the food to take care of her niece, who lost both of her parents in an attack by Sudanese government forces and Janjaweed militia. Photo © Tore Bergsaker/Corbis.

# End Torture Now

Reaffirming the Rule of Law

“We’ve got these detainees in custody, and the rhetoric about them for four years now has been so elevated that people want to create a system that will guarantee their conviction. But that’s not worthy of this country. That may be how other countries do it, but that’s never been how we’ve done it.”

Elisa Massimino, quoted in Bob Herbert’s column in the *New York Times*

The United States has long been a leading defender of freedom and human rights around the world. But in its prosecution of the war on terrorism, the United States has disregarded the human rights of military detainees – rights guaranteed by our own Constitution and by the Geneva Convention treaties we have observed since World War II.

Human Rights First shares a belief held by senior military leaders, religious leaders, political leaders and people of conscience: torture is wrong, it is not militarily necessary and it puts our own troops at risk.

In 2005/06, HRF's highly effective public campaign, End Torture Now, continued working to pressure the U.S. government and military to put an end to the unjust detention and abuse of detainees. Since its launch in 2004, the campaign has used new technology and communications tools to mobilize tens of thousands of activists to speak out about torture and abuse.

With the help of these activists, HRF's End Torture Now campaign was instrumental in the passage by the U.S. Congress of the McCain Amendment, banning the military from the use of coercive interrogation techniques and secret detentions. And we continue to be vigilant in calling for full implemen-

tation of the McCain ban, and in keeping our growing constituency informed and motivated to act.

## Torture on Trial: The HRF Blogs

Since HRF launched its first blog during the opening military commission hearings at Guantanamo Bay, this powerful advocacy tool has helped to focus public attention on some of the most pressing issues in the field, including the confirmation hearings of U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, and the trials of military personnel accused of abusing detainees at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo. HRF's blogs are generating attention around the world – hundreds of sites are linked to them and they receive thousands of hits. Traditional news outlets have featured HRF's blog about a dog handler's court martial and *Newsweek* magazine called it a "blog to watch."



Jill Savitt, Director, Campaign Department

**“By using a combination of tools, we achieve a greater impact. Our ability to mobilize thousands of people to take action at key moments has made a real difference in protecting human rights around the world.”**

# How We Work

Human Rights First gets results because our approach to tackling tough challenges is pragmatic, focused and integrated across all our programs. Our core methods are the signature of our success and the basis of our credibility. In 2005/06, we continued to devote resources to strengthening these methods in a way that reflects the challenges of a changing world, while making use of powerful new tools for expanding our reach and increasing our impact.

## Coalition-Building



HRF's effectiveness has been greatly increased by our work with like-minded organizations and individuals. But today, we increasingly reach out to less likely allies to achieve our objectives, from the retired military community on the End Torture Now campaign, to religious conservatives on refugee and immigration issues, to a broad range of U.S. civil rights organizations on antisemitism in Europe.

## Insider Advocacy



One of HRF's greatest strengths has always been our access to senior officials in Washington, at intergovernmental institutions like the United Nations, and within key foreign governments. This ability to reach decision makers at the highest levels is tied to the respect with which our Board and staff are regarded, objectivity in our analysis and reporting, and the fact that we can be counted on for moderation in the tone of our advocacy, reaching out in a bipartisan manner to get results.

## Litigation



As an organization founded by lawyers and committed to advancing the rule of law worldwide, engaging in key court battles is an important element of our mission. Our multi-faceted approach to litigation includes pro bono counsel training and support, coordinating and drafting amicus briefs in key cases, litigation on our own behalf, and direct representation of outside clients in high-profile cases in partnership with law firms, law clinics, and other organizations.

## Public Advocacy



HRF is working to recruit an active constituency as a means of achieving greater, more sustainable real-world results. Our new public campaigns draw on a range of new communications tools, including online petitioning, affinity outreach, web-based movies and blogs, in addition to more traditional media outreach. Through these and other methods, we are reaching out to a new generation of human rights activists and to all people who want a more humane, rights-respecting world. In turn, this expanding public constituency amplifies our advocacy positions with key decision makers, thus enhancing our effectiveness across all our programs.

## Research & Reporting



HRF is known for the quality and relevance of our research and reporting. For more than 25 years, it has been a foundation of our work and one of the chief means by which we frame issues, build public support and influence policy makers. In 2005/06, we continued the process of integrating our research and reporting operation with our expanding public advocacy and public education efforts, drawing on a variety of more innovative forms to complement our traditional written work, such as Web movies and videos.



Elisa Massimino, Washington Director

**“There is really something much bigger than Guantanamo at stake here. There is a risk that this system of international human rights standards, which has been built up over the last 50 years with U.S. leadership, could crumble.”**

**“Monitors of Torture Treaty Rebuke U.S.,” the *Boston Globe*, May 20, 2006**

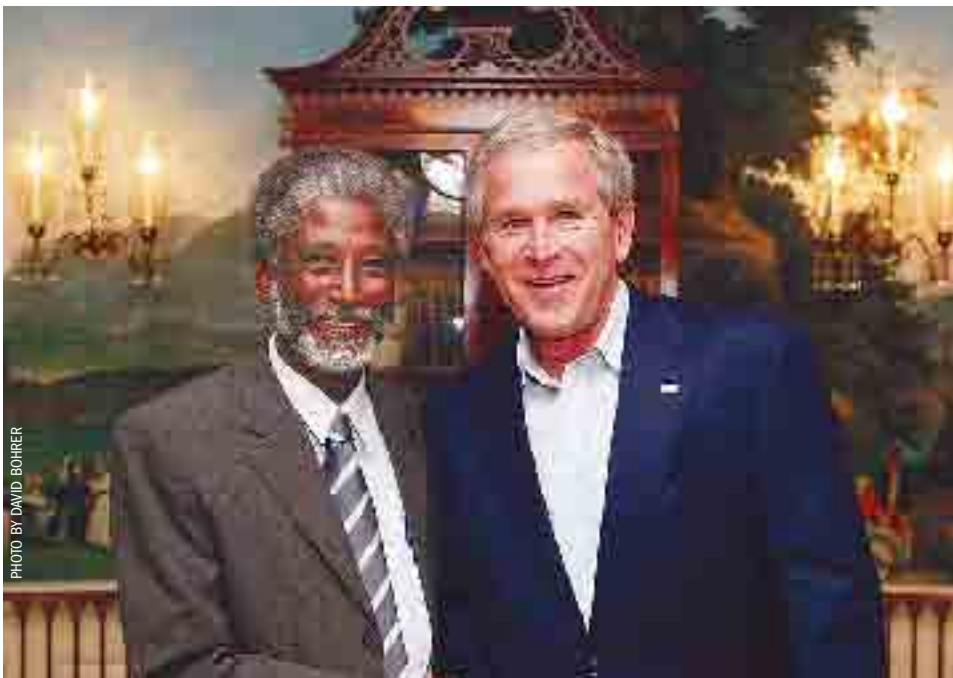


PHOTO BY DAVID BOHRER

## Insider Advocacy

As part of our effort to have a high level U.N. envoy appointed to push forward the peace process in Darfur we arranged for Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, a leading human rights advocate in Sudan, to meet with President George W. Bush in Washington [see H.O.P.E. for Darfur p6].



Michael McClintock, Director, Research

**“The most widespread racist violence in Europe and North America is also perhaps the most banal and unorganized: the pushes, and kicks, delivered to the passerby on the sidewalk. The likelihood of a blow becoming a beating, or shooting, adds to a pervasive terror.”**

# Fighting Discrimination

## Changing the Climate of Hatred

Antisemitic and other hate crimes are on the rise across North America, Europe and the Russian Federation, from the desecration of cemeteries and places of worship, to violent attacks on members of minority groups. These crimes are not individual acts. They reflect a mounting environment of intolerance and violence that, in the aggregate, constitutes a serious assault on basic human rights.

In 2005/06, Human Rights First's Fighting Discrimination program continued its highly focused work to reduce the incidence of violent hate crimes, and to help dissipate the climate of xenophobia and prejudice that generates them.

Having led the successful effort to establish three special representatives to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to combat antisemitism and other forms of discrimination, in 2005, we released the first in-depth “report card” examining

antibias and nondiscrimination laws in all 55 OSCE countries.

In 2005, HRF also released *Everyday Fears*, an unflinching exposé of rising bias crimes and what can be done to combat them. The book describes the increasing atmosphere of fear among minorities in Europe and North America and recommends a clear path for reducing the incidence of these crimes, including better monitoring and reporting, stricter criminal law and enforcement procedures and stronger national antidiscrimination bodies.

Going forward, HRF will continue to work in close collaboration with a broad coalition of groups, including the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the Anti-Defamation League, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to bring hate crimes to light.

## Everyday Fears: Facts & Findings

### EASTERN EUROPE

Violent attacks on Roma (Gypsy) communities are an everyday occurrence in most countries. Police are said to have stood by as attacks were carried out, or even to have taken part in the attacks.

### NETHERLANDS

Nearly as many attacks on Muslims and immigrants occurred in a one month period as were recorded in all of the preceding year, following the murder of a well known filmmaker.

### RUSSIA

Roaming gangs of extremists routinely attack ethnic Chechens, Dagesanis and Tajiks in a climate that has become increasingly xenophobic, especially since the well-publicized atrocities committed by terrorists at the Beslan School in 2004.





Deborah Pearlstein, Director, Law and Security

# Law and Security

## Ensuring Core Human Rights Safeguards in National Security Policy

Founded in the wake of September 11, 2001, Human Rights First's Law and Security program challenges U.S. national security policies and practices that undermine the rule of law. Through research, advocacy in the courts and Congress, and engagement of the broader public, the program tracks such pressing issues as detention and interrogation practices, military justice, and command responsibility for illegal actions in places like Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay.

In 2005/06, our work has helped bring about important victories for human rights – from the December 2005 passage by Congress of the McCain Amendment banning cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, to the Supreme Court's rejection in 2005 of indefinite detention of foreign nationals, to the high court's landmark 2006 ruling in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* that the military commissions at Guantanamo Bay violated American military law and the laws of war.

Human Rights First continues to push for the enforcement of human rights laws at the highest levels of government, keeping up the pressure on the Pentagon to abide by and implement the protections of the Geneva Conventions, and pursuing a groundbreaking federal law suit on the abuse and mistreatment of detainees in U.S. custody.

Since 2002, nearly 100 detainees have died in military custody in Iraq and Afghanistan – including at least 12 who were tortured to death. To date, no senior military officer has been held accountable. In 2006 HRF published

*Command's Responsibility*, a report that documents these deaths in what the *Washington Post* called “devastating detail,” and calls on the administration to dismantle this atmosphere of impunity. The report has won praise from military leaders and generated widespread attention in U.S. and international media for its stark depiction of the civilian and military command's failure to enforce laws against torture.

**“The Court's decision [*Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*] confirms as a matter of law what had long since become apparent as a matter of policy: the United States can do better than this in bringing accused terrorists to justice, and it has a clear obligation to do so.”**

**“Advantage, Rule of Law,”  
the *American Prospect*, June 30, 2006**

## *Command's Responsibility:* Facts & Findings

- 98 detainee deaths in U.S. custody.
- 45 suspected or confirmed homicides. Thirty-four of these deaths were homicides under the U.S. military's definition. Human Rights First found 11 additional cases where the facts suggest death as a result of physical abuse or harsh conditions of detention.
- Certainly eight, and as many as 12, people were tortured to death.
- Only 12 deaths have resulted in any kind of punishment.
- The highest punishment for a torture-related death: five months confinement.





Eleanor Acer, Director, Refugee Protection

# Refugee Protection

## Preserving Fundamental Values

**Indefinite detention. Summary deportation. Lack of access to counsel.** These are just a few of the hurdles encountered by refugees who arrive in America after fleeing persecution and even death in their native lands. Since September 11, 2001, the rights of refugees and asylum seekers have in many cases become collateral damage in the effort to increase security.

**“The United States has long stood as a beacon of hope for those fleeing persecution and repression. Current U.S. policy puts asylum seekers at grave risk of being deported back into the hands of their persecutors.”**

In 2005/06 Human Rights First's Refugee Protection program continued its work to protect the rights of refugees and advocate for fair immigration policies that reflect our nation's heritage as a haven for the persecuted. Our program has long been the gold standard in refugee protection initiatives, encompassing the best known and most effective pro bono representation program in the country, elite advocacy at the highest levels of government, and both highly public and behind-the-scenes activism. Highlights of our recent work include:

### Protecting Refugees

In 2005/06, attorneys from law firms in New York, New Jersey and the Washington, D.C. area contributed nearly 70,000 hours of their time to HRF's pro bono asylum legal representation efforts [see Pro Bono Support, p22]. The attorneys represented clients from more than 80 countries seeking asylum in the United States and won 90 percent of their cases.

### Asylum Advocacy

Following a concerted and organized effort by Human Rights First to persuade the Department of Homeland Security to create a senior-level position to oversee refugee protection, in 2006, DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff created the position of senior advisor for refugee and asylum policy.

### Immigration Policy

HRF has been a leading voice for refugee rights in the ongoing debate over proposed changes to U.S. immigration policy. Our staff has worked tirelessly, partnering with faith-based groups and others to press lawmakers to reject provisions in proposed legislation that would endanger refugees by putting them at risk of increased detention, mistaken deportations, and criminal prosecutions.

## Taking Action on Asylum

HRF regularly reaches out to an increasing constituency who cares about the rights of refugees and who are willing to take action to protect them. For example, in 2005, more than 20,000 people responded to an HRF "Take Action" alert that enabled them to protest provisions in the Real ID Act that would make it much harder for refugees to gain asylum in the United States. We also launched "Save Asylum - Save Lives," a Web-based video created



to draw further attention to the ramifications of the Real ID Act.

**“I always felt America was a great nation of justice and freedom... and that the United States would celebrate people like us who risk everything for freedom.”**

Rev. Edward Neepaye,  
Pentecostal minister,  
at the 2005 Human Rights  
Award Dinner

## Refugee Story: Reverend Edward Neepaye

Reverend Edward Neepaye's efforts to bring what he calls mercy and grace to children forced into military service in Liberia did not go unnoticed by the government. In fact, his work put his own life in peril. He fled his native land to seek asylum in the United States. Despite his heroism and fight for human rights, upon his arrival in the United States he was handcuffed, detained and in danger of summary deportation. With the help of HRF volunteer lawyers from Lowenstein Sandler PC, Reverend Neepaye was granted asylum, but his case illustrates the increasing difficulties faced by all legitimate refugees in today's atmosphere of heightened security.



Gabor Rona, International Legal Director

**“Governments and individuals alike must be held accountable for violations of human rights and no justification should be permitted to excuse violations of international law that strike at the heart of individual dignity.”**

# Crimes Against Humanity

## Stopping Genocide and Other Gross Abuses

**Cambodia. Uganda. Rwanda. Bosnia. The names of these countries have become synonymous with catastrophic violations of human rights, all the more tragic because they might have been prevented or brought to a much earlier end had the international community taken appropriate action.**

In 2005/06, Human Rights First's Crimes Against Humanity program worked across many fronts to create and support an international system of prevention, protection and accountability for gross violations of human rights. Through public education and advocacy, diplomatic and political interventions, and research and reporting, HRF has been a leader in the effort to stop crimes against humanity as they are occurring and to ensure that those responsible for these crimes are brought to justice.

Currently, the program is actively engaged in supporting HRF's most

recent public campaign, H.O.P.E. for Darfur, in its call for the appointment of a senior U.N. Peace Envoy to bring an end to the savagery in Darfur [see H.O.P.E. for Darfur, p6.]

In recent years, HRF has advocated and strongly supported a number of steps taken by the international community to prevent gross human rights violations, including the May 2006 establishment of a U.N. Advisory Committee on Genocide Prevention; the September 2005 recognition by the member states of the United Nations of the international responsibility to protect people from crimes against humanity; and the July 2004 appointment of a U.N. special adviser to the secretary-general on the prevention of genocide.

## Justice and Accountability

HRF is an active proponent of an integrated and effective international justice system, capable of providing justice and accountability for genocide and other crimes against humanity. To that end, we have played a leading role in the establishment and recognition of international tribunals and courts with jurisdiction over war crimes and crimes against humanity. We were early and active supporters of the creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and we continue to work closely with the ICC and other international courts to ensure that they are able to conduct successful investigations and prosecutions in the cases they undertake.

# Human Rights Defenders

## On the Frontlines of Advocacy

A popular singer is jailed for writing a song about a government massacre of civilians in Uzbekistan. An Indonesian attorney is murdered for challenging human rights abuses by his government. A Buddhist monk is abducted and killed for protesting a land grab by powerfully connected business interests in Thailand. Stories like these are a growing concern in countries around the world, as those who dare to defend human rights find themselves increasingly under fire.

In 2005/06, Human Rights First's Defenders program continued to protect and support frontline activists.

We worked with individual activists under threat, collaborated with local and regional human rights groups, and pressured individual governments to reaffirm the rights of defenders to do their critically important work.

Our work with defenders is integrated across all of HRF's core programs, where the active engagement of defenders on the ground is an invaluable asset. Increasingly, we are using the Internet and other tools to engage a broad constituency to help us "defend the defenders." In fact, since June 2005, our Defender Alert Network has more than doubled the number of activists who have signed up for our action alerts, making it one of the largest networks supporting human rights activists under threat in the world. And, through the Human Rights Defenders Policy Forum, in partnership with former President Jimmy Carter and the Carter Center, we are increasing the participation and influence of frontline activists from all over the world in high-level policy debates in Washington.

## Recent Reports

*Karimov's War* (Uzbekistan) and *Losing Ground* (Thailand) are part of our ongoing "Human Rights Defenders & Counterterrorism" series of reports.



## Reverend Gerard Jean-Juste

For decades, Father Gerard Jean-Juste worked with Human Rights First as an activist and advocate for the rights of Haitian refugees living in the United States. But when he returned to Haiti and began criticizing human rights abuses committed by the interim regime of Prime Minister Latortue, he became not only a colleague, but also a client. HRF worked around the clock to secure Father Jean-Juste's release from prison on humanitarian grounds after he was diagnosed with leukemia. Today, he is free, but the murky charges against him have not been dropped.



Neil Hicks, Director, Human Rights Defenders

**"Human rights activists often tell us how important it is to know that when they take a stand for human rights they are not standing alone."**

Reverend Jean-Juste in prison in Haiti, January 2006.



PHOTO REUTERS/EDUARDO MUNOZ

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“I want to thank all the good folks at Human Rights First for providing us with their guidance and expertise. We feel strongly about the damage caused to the military we have served and the nation we love by political arrogance and expediency, [but] we are without the political sophistication and contacts needed to express effectively [our] concerns. Human Rights First enabled us to speak so that our collective voices have been heard.”

Brig. Gen. James Cullen  
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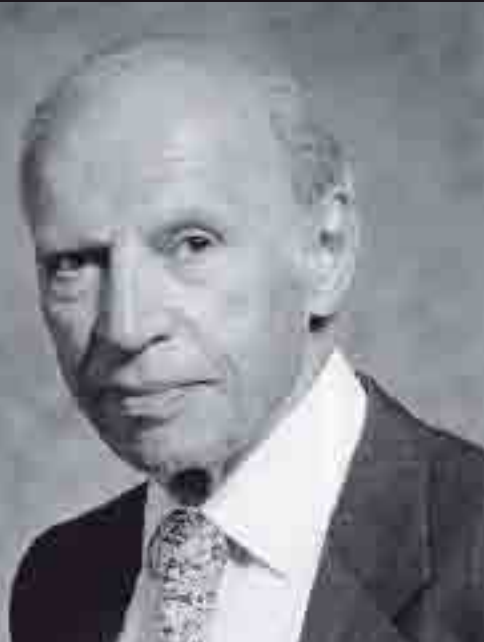
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Judge Marvin E. Frankel (1920-2002)



## 2005 Marvin Frankel Award

Every year, Human Rights First honors the memory of one of our founders and a former Chairman of our Board of Directors, the late Judge Marvin E. Frankel. Judge Frankel was a passionate believer in the power of pro bono representation, and he leveraged the strength of the legal community and his law firm, Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP, in service of those seeking asylum in the United States. Under his leadership, Human Rights First

developed our nationally recognized pro bono program, which has provided assistance to thousands of refugees. The Award recognizes law firms and lawyers who share Judge Frankel's vision and commitment to the pro bono representation of asylum seekers. The 2005 awardees are:

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Asylee Joe Dugbo (center) and two of his pro bono lawyers, Keren Tal (left) and Elena Tsaneva (right), from Davis Polk & Wardwell, at the Summer Associate Reception on Ellis Island. Mr. Dugbo was granted asylum with the help of Human Rights First. His lawyers are now working to bring his wife and children to the United States.

# Summer Associate Reception at Ellis Island

Every summer, more than 700 summer associates from more than 60 law firms attend our Ellis Island event, which includes a private viewing of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum and an introduction to Human Rights First. Many of New York's top firms feature this event in their summer recruitment schedules because it demonstrates to prospective associates a commitment to providing meaningful pro bono opportunities. It also introduces summer associates to pro bono projects in the field of human rights and asylum representation.

Guests of the Summer Associate Reception enjoy the historic Ellis Island Museum setting.





Ludmilla Alexeeva, honoree, accepting the award.

**“There is an unbroken chain that binds together all of us who fight the misuse of power to repress human rights and to stifle the human spirit. It is unbroken because that precious spirit is unbroken.”**

# 2005 Human Rights Awards

A Tribute to Those on the Front Lines

The 2005 Human Rights Awards dinner drew international attention to the work of two activists under immediate threat in their native countries: Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam and Ludmilla Alexeeva.

Mudawi, the chair of the Sudan Social Development Organization, is a leader in the effort to monitor and report on the savagery in Darfur and to expose the involvement of the Sudanese government in the abuses there. Ludmilla Alexeeva, the chair of the Helsinki Group, was a leader of the battle against repression in the Soviet

Union and continues to raise her voice in the renewed fight for human rights, as repression and discrimination increase in the Russian Federation.

Hosted by NBC’s Tom Brokaw, the evening gave Human Rights First’s supporters an opportunity to pay tribute to these activists and to support the work of human rights defenders everywhere.

Tom Brokaw, host of the 2005 Human Rights Award Dinner.



**“How I wish we could take this room and spread it around the world to the dark recesses of those places where human rights are abused every day.”**

# Looking Ahead

William D. Zabel, Board Chair

According to a Sudanese proverb, the world we live in is the world we create. Nothing implies more passionately the commitment at the heart of all human rights work: to create a more humane and peaceful world for all people. In 2005/06, Human Rights First continued to make important contributions to that overarching purpose in a way that reflects the changing circumstances of our times and the challenges and opportunities they present.

It has been a busy and successful year. Human Rights First is poised to strengthen and expand its leadership both internally and in the larger sphere of human rights work. This is so for a number of reasons. With the appointment of Mike Posner to his new, more public role as President of Human Rights First, and the equally exciting arrival of Maureen Byrnes as our new Executive Director, we have achieved a remarkable balance of strong leadership, integrity and influence.

In 2005/06, Human Rights First also undertook a thorough review of its programs and priorities, emerging from the process with a dynamic strategic plan that will guide our efforts going forward. In the coming months and years, we will build on all of Human Rights First's unique strengths –

litigation expertise, groundbreaking research and reporting, access to government leaders, public outreach and education – and greatly expand their capacity across all our programs. In our core areas – refugee protection, asylum representation, law and security, crimes against humanity, human rights defenders, and anti-discrimination initiatives – we are deepening our reputation as an organization that takes a practical, results-driven approach to compelling policy matters.

At the same time, we are redoubling our commitment to launch effective public campaigns in discrete areas, like Darfur, where we believe the problem is substantial and where we hope to have the ability to make a real difference in bringing about a solution. In this way, we are broadening the circle of people who share our concerns and who are willing to take action in support of human dignity and the rule of law.

We look forward to the road ahead, knowing we stand together with people who understand that we live in the world we create, and who make this profoundly important work possible.



William D. Zabel, Board Chair

**“We are broadening the circle of people who share our concerns and who are willing to take action in support of human dignity and the rule of law.”**

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**From a letter to Human Rights First, “We cannot thank you enough for all you did to get the detainee legislation passed. Your assistance made a huge difference – from interpreting arcane legal points to political tactics to organizing the letter from the retired military leaders that changed the debate. It illustrated most powerfully that the men and women who have been in the line of duty wish to see American values prevail on this matter. That was new, it was dramatic, and it was successful. And we have you to thank for it.”**

**Senior Legislative Aide  
to Senator John McCain**

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Terry Lynn Karl  
David Karnovsky and Sue A. Kaplan  
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Kauff McClain & McGuire LLP  
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Sukhan Kim  
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Jay L. Kriegel and Kathryn McAuliffe  
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Noel and Harriette Levine  
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Jeffrey S. Weiss  
David A. and Shoshanna Wingate  
Robert and Blaikie Worth  
Youseph Yazdi

# Financials

Human Rights First's growth has been made possible by generous support from committed individuals, law firms, corporations and foundations who share our goal of building respect for human rights and the rule of law. In the past year our budget rose by 16 percent to \$8.38 million in total organizational expenditures.

## Multi-Year Commitments

Multi-year grants and pledges have become key to Human Rights First's ability to expand our programs. In fiscal year 2006 we received a total of \$10 million in grants and pledges with nearly \$3 million in gifts designated for use in future years. Two of the largest grants in fiscal 2006 were made for three- and five-year commitments demonstrating strong long-term confidence in the organization.

## Support from 2002 Comprehensive Campaign

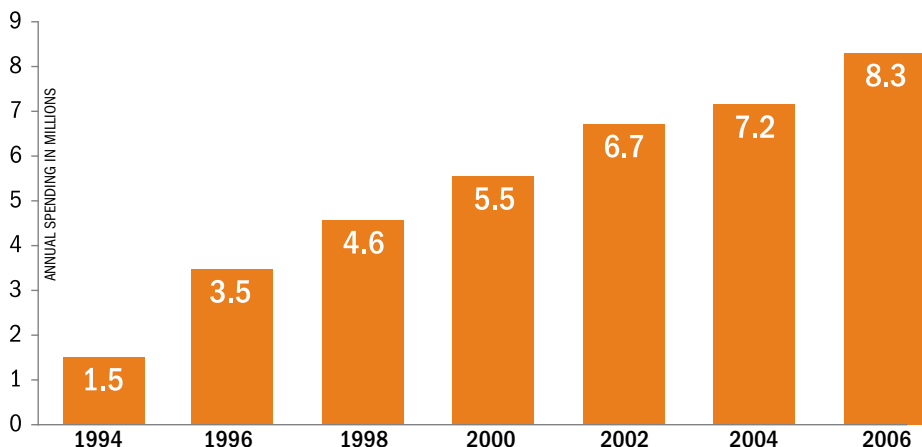
Human Rights First launched a fundraising initiative in 2001 that resulted in \$12.7 million to be paid over a multi-year period for a "comprehensive" institution-building campaign. These funds were earmarked to grow Human Rights

First in the areas of program development and expansion, enhanced fundraising and development capabilities, and significantly modernized and expanded information systems.

## In-Kind Contributions of More than \$23 Million

To help protect the rights of refugees who seek asylum in the United States, Human Rights First works with pro bono attorneys in New York, New Jersey and the Washington, DC area to provide needed legal assistance to individuals fleeing persecution abroad. In the past year volunteer lawyers put in more than 70,000 hours representing hundreds of asylum seekers. Their participation – worth more than \$23 million – triples the value of each dollar we expend in these areas.

## Organizational Growth



# 2005/06 Financials

Year Ended May 31, 2006

## Activities

	Unrestricted	Temporarily restricted	Total
<b>Revenues and Other Support</b>			
Grants, pledges and contributions	\$6,198,700	\$3,917,507	\$10,116,207
Contributed program services*	23,100,803	—	23,100,803
Investment and other income	141,278	—	141,278
Net assets released from restrictions	1,679,623	(1,679,623)	—
<b>Total revenues and other support</b>	<b>31,120,404</b>	<b>2,237,884</b>	<b>33,358,288</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Program services	29,542,304	—	29,542,304
<b>Supporting services</b>			
Management and general	924,186	—	924,186
Fundraising and development	1,014,396	—	1,014,396
Total supporting services	1,938,582	—	1,938,582
Total expenses	31,480,886	—	31,480,886
Change in net assets	(360,482)	2,237,884	1,877,402
Net assets, beginning of year, restated	5,984,363	4,209,112	10,193,475
<b>Net assets, end of year</b>	<b>\$5,623,881</b>	<b>\$6,446,996</b>	<b>\$12,070,877</b>

## Additional Financial Information

Human Rights First is a 501(c)3 registered charity, has an annual independent audit performed and files informational returns with various governmental regulatory agencies. A copy of the full audited financial statements by BDO Seidman LLP is available upon request.

### NOTES

\* \$23.1 MILLION IN PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES

\*\* A PORTION OF MONIES RAISED FOR HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST'S COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN, DESIGNATED FOR PROGRAM EXPANSION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING.

## Position

### Assets

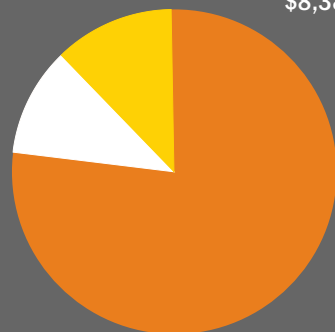
<b>Current assets</b>	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,120,294
Investments at fair value	4,462,795
Grants and pledges receivable, net, current portion	3,519,905
Prepaid expenses and other assets	251,498
Total current assets	9,354,492
Grants and pledges receivable, less current portion	2,927,091
Security deposit	5,991
Fixed assets, net	408,968
<b>Assets</b>	<b>\$12,696,542</b>

### Liabilities and Net Assets

<b>Current liabilities</b>	
Accounts payable, accrued expenses and other liabilities	\$497,165
Deferred event revenue, current portion	128,500
Total current liabilities	625,665
<b>Net assets</b>	
Unrestricted	3,123,881
Unrestricted – Board designated fund for future operations	2,500,000
Total unrestricted net assets	5,623,881
Temporarily restricted	6,446,996
Total net assets	12,070,877
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$12,696,542</b>

### Expenses

\$8,380,083

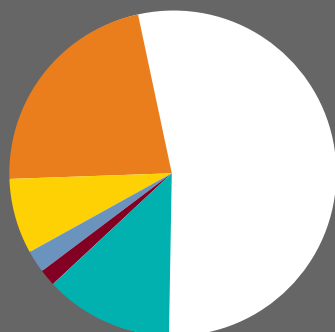


● Program Services†	\$6,441,501
● Fundraising & Development	\$1,014,396
● Management & General	\$924,186

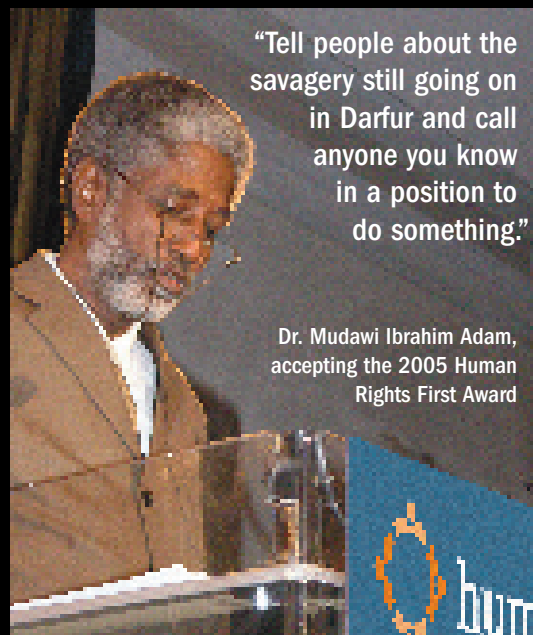
† Does not include \$23.1 million in pro bono services

### Funding

\$8,380,083



● Foundations	\$4,470,733
● Individuals	\$1,871,485
● Law Firms	\$624,241
● Corporations	\$178,200
● Interest & Other Income	\$141,278
● Comprehensive Campaign**	\$1,094,147



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