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Fighting Discrimination p16

The Year in Review

Human Rights First protects people at risk: refugees who flee 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 those targeted for defending the rights of others.



ASHLEY JONATHAN CLEMENTS, WORLD VISION

Lifeline for Iraqi Refugees

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Human Rights First advocates a comprehensive response to the Iraqi refugee crisis, including a much higher level of admissions into the United States.



Pro Bono Representation

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Pro bono attorneys working with Human Rights First dedicated more than 61,000 hours to helping clients seeking asylum last year.



Fighting Discrimination

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Human Rights First documents the rise in hate crimes throughout Europe, and urges governments to combat these crimes.



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Human Rights First provides support to human rights defenders under threat and helps amplify their voices with policymakers.



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Our *H.O.P.E. for Darfur* campaign pushed the U.N. to appoint a Special Envoy for Darfur.



Joining Forces Against Torture

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Working closely with a group of senior retired military leaders, Human Rights First presses policymakers to end the use of torture and official cruelty.



Facing Hollywood Torture

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The *Primetime Torture* project challenges portrayals of interrogation on television, and has sparked a national debate about the portrayal of torture in popular culture.



Michael Posner Interview

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Human Rights First President Michael Posner talks about current challenges for Human Rights First and our plans for the future.



Human Rights Award

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 ART DIRECTOR & DESIGN—SARAH GRAHAM
 PROJECT MANAGER—SHARA KAPLIN
 WRITERS—REAGAN KUHN, ALISSA KAPLAN MICHAELS
 CREATIVE CONSULTANT—SUSAN MAYER
 COVER PHOTO: IRAQI FAMILY, PHOTOGRAPHED IN KIRKUK BY
 STAFF SGT. RUSSELL LEE KLIKA, 118TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS
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2007 Annual Report

Our Charter

Human Rights First was founded in 1978 as the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights to promote laws and policies that advance universal rights and freedoms. We exist to protect and defend the dignity of each individual through respect for human rights and the rule of law.

- We fight for equality and for freedom of thought, expression, and religion;
- We support people who struggle to promote these principles within their own societies;
- We work to hold accountable under the law those who violate these principles;
- We strive to ensure the security of individuals and to protect against the arbitrary exercise of state power;
- We confront human rights challenges with flexible responses that do not compromise our integrity; and
- We are committed to building a global movement of people who share these principles.

Within our organization we value learning, mutual respect, collaboration, and a diversity of viewpoints. We set ambitious goals, achieve measurable results, and make a difference in people's lives.



PHOTOS (clockwise from left): Law and Security Program Director Kevin Lanigan speaks at a press conference in Washington, D.C.; Crimes Against Humanity Program Director Betsy Apple training human rights advocates in Thailand; Human Rights Defenders Program Director Matt Easton with 2006 Human Rights Award recipient Suciwati and Indonesian rights activist Usman Hamid; Human Rights First staff and interns taking part in the "Global Day for Darfur" in Central Park.

A Message from Executive Director, Maureen Byrnes

“To protect and defend the dignity of each individual through respect for human rights and the rule of law.”

As our charter on the opposite page states, that is why Human Rights First exists. That is what guides and inspires all of our work.

Our goal as an organization is not only to take a stand when respect for human rights and the rule of law is challenged or undermined, but to be effective in actually achieving results. To do this we rely on a wide range of advocacy tools and strategies: we build coalitions with likely and unlikely allies, engage with policymakers in Washington, D.C., on both sides of the aisle, and work with leaders in international organizations and foreign governments. We value our long history of working with human rights defenders who put their lives on the line everyday, and we are deeply grateful to the pro bono attorneys who work with us to represent individuals seeking asylum in the United States and help advance our policy goals on many fronts. We view the public as a vital partner in achieving our objectives, and we are committed to growing our public constituency that is currently 100,000 people strong, and growing.

Through our *Elect to End Torture '08* campaign, we are working with the public to put an end to the use of torture in America's name. We are joined in this effort by an extraordinary group of retired military leaders who are speaking out against torture and for a national security policy that upholds fundamental American values. And through our *Lifeline for Iraqi Refugees* project we are working with key partners and the public to urge our government to adopt a comprehensive and effective response to the Iraqi refugee crisis.

At a time when human rights issues are often mired in political confrontation and partisanship, Human Rights First is well positioned to build alliances and get results. We pride ourselves on being focused, strategic and making a difference. This report highlights our work, our dedicated and talented staff, and the many partners who make it all possible. I am deeply grateful to all of you who support our work and share our commitment to making a difference. I look forward to your continued engagement in our efforts and to what we can accomplish working together. ■



“Our goal as an organization is not only to take a stand when respect for human rights and the rule of law is challenged or undermined, but to be effective in actually achieving results.”

Maureen Byrnes,
Executive Director

Lifeline for Iraqi Refugees

Proven experience helping asylum seekers and protecting refugees positioned Human Rights First to advocate a comprehensive policy response to the Iraqi refugee crisis. HRF was at the forefront of efforts this year to secure passage of a new law to help bring thousands of Iraqi refugees to safety in this country.

Since the start of the war in Iraq, sectarian fighting and other violence have forced more than 4 million Iraqis to flee their homes. More than 2 million people are displaced within Iraq; an estimated 2.2 million more are in Jordan, Syria, and other countries in the region. Thousands of Iraqis who have worked alongside Americans now find themselves the targets of insurgents and sectarian militias, prompting many of them to seek refuge in the United States or Europe.

Policy Success—An Important First Step

Human Rights First launched the *Lifeline for Iraqi Refugees* project to push for a comprehensive and effective response to the crisis in the region. Building on our extensive experience in refugee protection, HRF helped win an important victory when the “Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act” passed in December 2007. The act will help bring many Iraqi refugees to this country more quickly. The act also makes

5,000 special visas available for the next five years for Iraqis who have worked for the U.S. government. It also calls for increased humanitarian assistance.

While these 25,000 special visas offer hope for some Iraqis, there are many more Iraqi refugees who are still at risk—including women, children, torture survivors, minorities and others.

“The villages and homes of Iraqi religious and ethnic minorities have been bombed and burned down. Iraqis have been targeted for persecution and have fled in search of safety for virtually every reason imaginable,” said Refugee Protection Program Director Eleanor Acer.

Bringing the Voices of Iraqi Refugees to the Debate

In the fall of 2007, HRF staff member Amelia Templeton traveled to Jordan and Lebanon where she met with dozens of displaced Iraqi refugees and gathered their stories to share with policymakers. We brought Iraqi refugees to Capitol Hill to make sure their voices were heard in the halls of power. These persuasive voices contributed to the passage of the “Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act.”

Keeping the Crisis in the Public Eye

The United States has pledged to admit 12,000 Iraqi refugees by September 2008, but progress is slow. In all of 2007, only 2,631 Iraqis were admitted to the United States.

HRF will continue to put pressure on policymakers to ensure that the U.S. government leads the international response to this humanitarian crisis by bringing a greater number of vulnerable refugees to safety within its borders and by increasing humanitarian aid to the region. ■

“Given the size of this refugee crisis—and the thousands and thousands of Iraqis who are at risk because of their work with the United States itself—it is both disappointing and shocking that the U.S. is not willing to bring more Iraqis to safety in this country next year.”

Eleanor Acer, Refugee Protection Program Director, quoted in *The Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 2007

PHOTO: REFUGEE ON THE IRAQ/JORDAN BORDER. ASHLEY JONATHAN CLEMENTS, WORLD VISION

“Nobody is taking responsibility for getting [Iraqi refugees] here in a timely fashion.”

HRF's Amelia Templeton, quoted in *The Washington Post*, October 17, 2007



**Human Rights First's Amelia Templeton
profiled in *The Washington Post***

October 14, 2007



Joining Forces Against Torture

Since 2003 Human Rights First has built a broad and effective network of senior retired U.S. military leaders, including veterans with experience from WWII to the Iraq War. We are working closely with them to end the policy of official cruelty.

Today we are working with more than 50 retired generals and admirals to create effective opportunities for their voices to be heard in the public debate against torture. Their principled opposition to policies of official cruelty has infused the debate with moral and professional authority. Through a series of public letters, opinion articles, congressional testimony and a range of other public appearances, they have conveyed to policymakers and the public that our nation's commitment to human rights strengthens our national security.

"Human Rights First is uniquely positioned to lead the debate on torture, and has facilitated my role in speaking out and making a difference," said Rear Admiral John Hutson, an HRF Board member.

Making the Case to Presidential Candidates

In 2007 Human Rights First organized a series of one-on-one private meetings between a group of these retired generals and admirals from all four branches of the military and presidential candidates from both parties. These meetings were held in Concord, New Hampshire, in April, and Des Moines, Iowa, in December. All presidential candidates of both parties were invited to attend, and the group met with Senators Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards and Obama, Governors Huckabee and Richardson, and Representative Kucinich. Each of these candidates took part in separate, hour-long discussions about the role the next U.S. president will have both in undoing the damage caused by current interrogation and prisoner treatment policies and in guaranteeing humane standards for the future. Several of the candidates publicly credited these meetings with having informed their position opposing torture.

Elect to End Torture '08

In advance of the presidential election, HRF launched our campaign *Elect to End Torture '08* not only to ensure that the next president and members of Congress understand the damage done by current detention and interrogation policies, and are equipped with strong national security arguments for rejecting those policies, but also pledge to change them. This nonpartisan campaign is mobilizing our growing public constituency to express their concerns directly to the candidates. We are also educating the news media covering the campaign and policy advisors to the various candidates. We have created an online petition directed at the candidates and a lively blog that offers up-to-the-minute coverage of this vital issue. Please join this effort: go to www.EndTorture08.org. ■

PHOTO: OUTSIDE ABU GHRAIB PRISON, IRAQ. AP PHOTO/DAMIR SAGOLJ

In 2007, Human Rights First organized a group of senior retired military leaders to meet with presidential candidates in New Hampshire and Iowa.



Sen. Obama (above) speaking with General David M. Maddox, USA (Ret.)



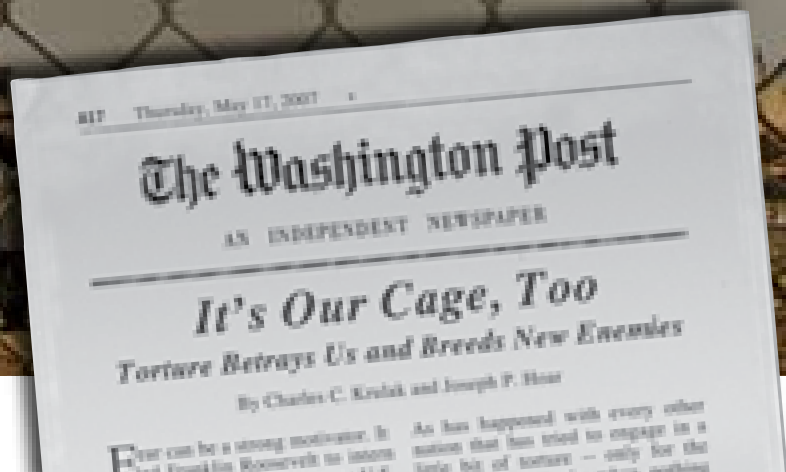
Sen. Clinton (below) greeted by Admiral Lee F. Gunn, USN (Ret.)



Gov. Huckabee (above) meeting General Fred E. Haynes, USMC (Ret.)

“The rules must be firm and absolute; if torture is broached as a possibility, it will become a reality.”

Gen. Charles C. Krulak and Gen. Joseph P. Hoar, both retired, in a *Washington Post* opinion piece, May 17, 2007



Promoting Law and Security

Human Rights First has played a lead role in challenging official cruelty by influencing public policy and changing the way popular culture depicts torture and abuse.

Torture and other forms of official cruelty are patently illegal under U.S. and international law. Nevertheless the administration has continued to promote policies and practices that allow the use of torture. Human Rights First is challenging policies, such as the use of so-called “enhanced interrogation techniques” by the CIA, that are not only illegal but also jeopardize our national security and undermine American leadership in the world.

Bipartisan Advocacy

Our strong working relationships with policymakers on both sides of the aisle have enabled us to play a leadership role in ending torture and official cruelty. And we are making progress. In the fall of 2006 we worked to secure issuance of a new Army Field Manual on interrogations that explicitly prohibits abusive interrogation techniques previously authorized by the administration. And with the help

Facing Hollywood Torture

Television, and the hit FOX program *24* in particular, has distorted the way the public—and especially junior soldiers—view torture. Human Rights First created the *Primetime Torture* project to limit the negative impact that popular culture has on the public debate and on soldiers’ actions in the field.

Since September 11, 2001, the number of torture scenes on television has increased exponentially. In the past, only “villains” used torture; today, it’s “heroic” figures like Jack Bauer who use coercive methods in the name of “patriotism.”

The *Primetime Torture* project works to educate those in the creative community dealing with these issues. HRF organized

“Life is not ‘24’ and Jack Bauer. Life is interrogation techniques which are humane yet effective.”

Senator John McCain

a series of meetings bringing together Hollywood writers and producers with interrogators and other military experts. In the fall of 2006, for example, HRF organized a meeting between the Dean of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, three interrogators, and writers and producers from *24*, *Lost* and other shows.

HRF also helps military educators respond to the challenges they face in overcoming the treatment of torture in popular culture. We produced a 14-minute training film to educate junior soldiers about the portrayal of torture on television and the dangers of imitating such techniques. We circulated it to more than 1,100 military trainers, many of whom are now using it in their classrooms. This project has also attracted significant media attention, including an article by Jane Mayer in *The New Yorker* in February 2007. We have also created an Excellence in Television award which was presented to the CBS program *Criminal Minds* in the fall of 2007.

Fox’s *24* agent Jack Bauer uses questionable techniques to gain information.



of prominent retired military leaders we successfully worked to convince Congress to support the adoption of these standards for all U.S. agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency.

Challenging CIA Interrogation Practices

Despite these efforts, the Bush Administration continues to seek ways around these laws. The president issued an Executive Order in July 2007 authorizing the CIA’s interrogation program, including the use of so-called “enhanced interrogation techniques.” In short order Human Rights First joined with Physicians for Human Rights to issue *Leave No Marks*,





Human Rights First is determined to advance a rights-respecting approach to national security and to ensure humane treatment for all detainees in U.S. custody.

PHOTO: DETAINEE BEING ESCORTED TO HIS CELL, GUANTÁNAMO BAY. (© PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS SHANE T. MCCOY/EPA/CORBIS)

a report warning that those who engage in such methods risk criminal liability for torture and other war crimes. The report formed the basis for HRF's closed-session testimony before the Senate Select Intelligence Committee.

On a parallel track, Human Rights First led a successful effort to persuade the American Bar Association to adopt a resolution supporting a single U.S. interrogation standard. That resolution was adopted overwhelmingly by the ABA House of Delegates at its annual meeting in August in San Francisco. ■

“No civilized nation permits convictions to rest on coerced evidence, and reliance on such evidence has never been acceptable in military or civilian courts in this country.”

Human Rights First Washington Director Elisa Massimino
quoted in *The Hill*, January 23, 2007



Defending the Defenders

Around the world, Human Rights First seeks to protect human rights defenders, all too often both the champions of progress and the victims of repression.

For 30 years, Human Rights First has defended human rights advocates on the front lines using a range of strategies and finding creative ways to help them carry out their crucial work.

Rapid Intervention

When defenders are imprisoned, threatened, or at imminent risk, Human Rights First uses its access to high-level government officials and the media to galvanize quick action on the defender's behalf. We also mobilize our growing grassroots constituency through the online Defender Alert Network.

In May 2006 an Egyptian blogger named Alaa Ahmed Seif al-Islam was detained while taking part in a peaceful protest in Cairo. Human Rights First quickly reached out to Egyptian government leaders and to the Egyptian ambassador in Washington, demanding Alaa Ahmed's

release. Our staff met with a senior aide to Senator John McCain the day before he traveled to Egypt, prompting him to raise the case with Egyptian officials. Through the Defender Alert Network, we generated more than 1,000 letters and email messages to Egyptian officials. A few weeks later he was released from prison.

After his release, Alaa Ahmed authored a Human Rights First e-alert calling for the release of two other bloggers who remained in detention, one of whom was tortured in prison. This appeal also generated more than 1,000 letters and emails to the Egyptian government. Three weeks later both bloggers were released. All three continue to express their opinions through their blogs.

Continuing Struggles—Enduring Efforts

Human Rights First also invests in long-term efforts on behalf of key defenders such as Munir, a leading Indonesian human rights advocate who was murdered while traveling to the Netherlands in 2004. We have worked closely with Munir's wife, Suciwati, over several years to bring her husband's killers to justice.

“I can testify to the impact of international support, both in providing hope to human rights defenders and in securing their release from prison.”

Alaa Ahmed Seif al-Islam, Egyptian blogger, released from prison with Human Rights First's help

In 2006 Human Rights First presented

its annual human rights award to Munir (posthumously) and arranged meetings for Suciwati with congressional staff, executive branch officials, and a U.N. Special Rapporteur, leading to a congressional letter, U.N. action on the case, and extensive press coverage including a *New York Times* editorial calling for justice in Munir's case.

Amplifying Voices of Change: Iván Cepeda

Motivated into activism by the brutal assassination of his father, Iván Cepeda has endured attacks and threats and has twice

lived in exile to escape them. Dangers notwithstanding, he has continued his work to help document approximately 40,000 cases of

serious human rights violations committed in Colombia since 1966. This last year, Cepeda has been subject to politically motivated charges of slander and libel for implicating government officials in human rights violations.

In June 2007 Human Rights First awarded Cepeda the Roger N. Baldwin Medal of Liberty and brought Cepeda to New York and Washington to meet with officials from Congress, the State Department, the White House, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the United Nations.

On August 8, 2007, Cepeda's criminal investigation was handed over to a new prosecutor from a jurisdiction with a history of respect for due process. In appointing the new prosecutor, the Attorney General cited a letter from 28 members of Congress, which Human Rights First worked hard to bring about.

“Receiving the Baldwin Award helped bring attention to my case,” said Cepeda who continues his work on behalf of human rights in Colombia.



Iván Cepeda, 2007 recipient of the Roger M. Baldwin Medal of Liberty, with HRF's Andrew Hudson.



“Human rights defenders risk their lives to show that change is possible. When they become targets of threats and violence, the international community cannot afford to stay silent.”

Matthew Easton, Human Rights Defenders Program Director

PHOTO: EGYPTIAN RIOT POLICE STAND GUARD AT AN ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTEST IN CAIRO (REUTERS/STRINGER AN/AD)

As a result of this intensified international interest, Indonesian authorities reinvigorated the dormant investigation into Munir’s death. More than three years after Munir was fatally poisoned, an Indonesian Supreme Court ruling sent one man to prison for 20 years and prosecuted two others for helping him. However those who planned and ordered the crime remain free, and Munir’s case tests Indonesia’s commitment to the rule of law and human rights. Human Rights First continues to work on this case to ensure that justice is done. ■

“The truth about who killed Mr. Munir is the only antidote for Indonesia’s poisoned justice system.”

The New York Times editorial, October 15, 2006



Challenging Mass Atrocities

Through our *H.O.P.E. for Darfur* campaign Human Rights First led a successful call for the creation of a high-level diplomatic post to focus attention on what it will really take to reach a lasting peace in one of the world's most troubled regions.

As the humanitarian situation has continued to deteriorate in Darfur, efforts to reach a political settlement have been thwarted by all sides, most notably by the intransigence of the Sudanese government. Human Rights First helped focus global attention on the need for the United Nations and the U.S. government to take a more active role in ending the violence in Sudan, and we led the call in 2006 to create a new position—a U.N. Special Envoy for Darfur.

Mobilizing *H.O.P.E. for Darfur*

Thousands of people around the world joined HRF's campaign to Help Organize a Peace Envoy, also known as *H.O.P.E. for Darfur*. To ensure that the call for peace in Darfur was heard around the world, Human Rights First helped spearhead

the effort to hold "Global Day for Darfur" events in 40 countries.

Our New Advocates Program worked with middle and high school students, raising awareness and developing new leadership committed to ending the crisis in Darfur.

Annan Appoints Envoy

In November 2006, Human Rights First officials presented a petition to then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan and had

an in-depth conversation with him about possible appointees. In December, in one of his last official acts, Secretary Annan appointed Jan Eliasson, former Foreign Secretary of Sweden as the U.N.'s Special Envoy to Darfur.

"The lives of the 2.5 million people who had to flee Darfur depend on a real commitment to peace from all those involved—as well as the international community."

Betsy Apple, Crimes Against Humanity Program Director



"Stand-in" for a Victim in Darfur



Committed constituents played an important role in our *H.O.P.E. for Darfur* campaign. By taking action and raising their voices they helped us urge the United Nations to appoint a Special Envoy for Darfur. Our campaign toolbox included the "Stand-in for a Victim in Darfur" initiative, which gave supporters who visited our website the chance to "stand-in" for victims of murder, rape and displacement.

Each participant received a victim number, and the "Stand-in" was linked to a petition calling for a special U.N. envoy for peace. Over the course of the campaign, we collected more than 32,000 signatures supporting the appointment of an envoy, and generated media attention to the need for such an envoy to be appointed.

HRF Executive Director Maureen Byrnes outside the United Nations before delivering a petition—with more than 32,000 signatures—calling on the U.N. to appoint a high-level peace envoy to Darfur.

Most observers estimate that more than 200,000 people have died and that more than 2 million have been forcibly displaced from their homes in Darfur.



PHOTO: SUDANESE WOMEN AND CHILDREN FLEE DARFUR REGION AS THEY HEAD TO REFUGEE CAMPS IN NEIGHBORING CHAD (SCOTT NELSON/GETTY IMAGES)

Mr. Eliasson has engaged in political and diplomatic efforts to secure a lasting peace. He is working with African Union officials and other international leaders to seek a political solution in this troubled region.

Accountability for Mass Atrocities in Darfur and Elsewhere

Human Rights First has turned its principal attention to the role that China is playing to enable human rights violations in Darfur and also in other trouble spots like Burma. Through outreach to the public, advocacy with officials in the U.S. government, and the U.N., Human Rights First is working to hold China accountable for its actions and demand that it use its influence to enhance respect for human rights and hold accountable those that violate them. ■

Human Rights First initiated the effort to mobilize human rights advocates around the world to stand together against violence in Darfur. The Global Day for Darfur that we launched grew to include events in 40 countries.



Protecting Refugees

Since 1980, Human Rights First has helped thousands of persecuted individuals from more than 80 countries begin new lives. We train and supervise attorneys from top law firms who take on asylum seekers as clients, and who contributed more than 61,000 hours of their time worth more than \$21 million last year. Once again this year we won approximately 90 percent of our cases.

The right to asylum is enshrined in U.S. and international law, but it has become more and more difficult for refugees to receive the protection they deserve, and those who seek asylum without the help of an attorney face a bewildering process and slim chance of gaining asylum. We have a two-fold approach to helping refugees: in addition to direct representation, we also seek policy change. These two aspects of our program support each other: our advocacy produces changes that help our clients, and our work with clients informs our advocacy.

Changing Lives

One of these asylum seekers, Aung Khent, pictured at right, was targeted for his political activism in Burma. He began his advocacy work with the party of Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi in 1988, the year that a severe government crackdown resulted in thousands

of deaths. Mr. Khent continued his work over the years in spite of being arrested and beaten by military forces. Eventually he managed to flee Burma, and sought refuge in the United States. With the help of HRF and our pro bono attorneys, he was granted asylum, and his attorneys are now helping to bring his wife to join him in the United States.

“Every year tens of thousands of people in the United States apply for asylum, a legal status available to those trying to escape persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political beliefs, and membership in a social group,” said Refugee Protection Program Director Eleanor Acer. “After receiving asylum, a refugee can start life anew by bringing his or her spouse and children to safety in the United States.”

Asylum seekers have fled persecution—leaving behind their families, their

homes and their livelihoods. Many do not speak English and are not familiar with the U.S. legal system. Some are held in mandatory detention and face deportation procedures. They are in urgent need of legal representation, and through our pro bono partnership Human Rights First provides it.

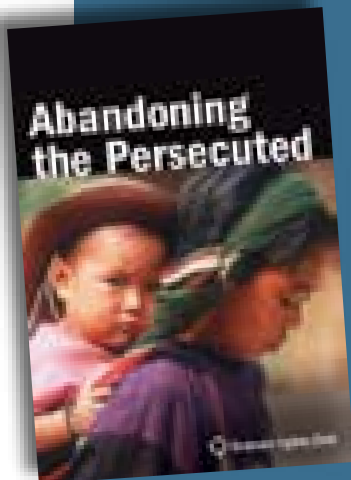
Changing Policy

Drawing on our reputation as a respected advocate, Human Rights First helps to shape the U.S. government’s policies for asylum seekers. Years of immigration “enforcement” measures have built hurdles so formidable that many asylum seekers have little chance of finding safe haven in the United States.

Human Rights First has focused its advocacy on immigration laws that bar anyone who has provided “material support” to organizations that have used armed

90%
success rate

Report: *Abandoning the Persecuted*



Thousands of vulnerable refugees have been prevented from receiving asylum in the United States due to an overly broad application of laws intended to keep out “terrorists”. The so-called “material support” bar is tragically affecting refugees who do not support terrorism at all.

Human Rights First’s critical report *Abandoning the Persecuted* focused the attention of the media and Congress on the plight of asylum seekers who had been affected by the sweeping immigration law provisions. A few months later,

the U.S. government announced it would take steps to exempt some asylum seekers from these provisions.

Examples of asylum seekers who have been affected include:

- A journalist from Nepal who was beaten, threatened and forced to pay Maoists;
- A Colombian nurse who was kidnapped, assaulted and forced to treat terrorists; and
- A teacher from Burma jailed after letting three men affiliated with a resistance group speak in favor of democracy.

A refugee who has legal representation is three times more likely to win asylum than a refugee without an attorney. Human Rights First's pro bono program provides this expertise.



PHOTO: AUNG KHENT (2ND FROM RIGHT), WITH HIS ATTORNEYS FROM DEWEY & LEOEUF LLP; AUTUMN KATZ, BOAZ GREEN, AND MARK NOFERI.

force. The broad language of these provisions—coupled with the way U.S. officials have interpreted them—has affected many victims of human rights abuses themselves, including Burmese religious minorities, and Iraqi and Columbian refugees who were forced to pay ransom to kidnappers to free their relatives.

We have taken a leadership role in litigating key cases, and in building a broad coalition of groups across the political spectrum to work with policymakers to secure exemptions for some of the refugees affected by these policies. These exceptions should help some refugees; Human Rights First continues to press for policy advances to ensure a fairer and more humane asylum system. ■

“Recent legislation [...], intended to bar perpetrators of human rights violations, has been used to prevent victims of serious human rights abuses from gaining protection in the United States.”

HRF Senior Counsel Anwen Hughes, opinion piece in the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, July 15, 2007



Fighting Discrimination

Human Rights First's groundbreaking survey revealed a spike in violent hate crimes across Europe and North America, sending a chill throughout the human rights community.

History provides ample evidence that "ordinary" acts of hate violence can quickly escalate to mass campaigns of brutality. The international community must take a firm stand against any hate crime against anyone, anywhere. No one community under threat should be left to stand alone in the face of violent hatred and bigotry.

Human Rights First has both examined the reality of bias-driven violence as a serious human rights violation and developed concrete recommendations for governments to combat it.

Original Research

Our 2007 *Hate Crime Survey* documented scores of hate crimes, analyzed trends, and presented causes and consequences of the violence that occurred in 2006 in the 56 member states

Extremist nationalist movements find much to despise in anyone who does not fit their brutally narrow worldview, and international events can spark racist, antisemitic, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim violence.

comprising the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We also issued detailed country-by-country report cards which show that governments are not doing enough to monitor, report and prosecute crimes of violence motivated by prejudice and hatred.

Targeted Advocacy

Human Rights First presented the survey findings in June 2007 at a high-level diplomatic conference in Bucharest on discrimination and intolerance. In concert with our research findings, we have continued to combat hate crimes and the environments from which they arise in North America, Europe and the Russian Federation. Human Rights First has promoted the creation of tough hate crime laws, effective monitoring systems and improved government enforcement.



Report: Hate Crimes on the Rise

While a handful of governments engage in systematic monitoring of hate crimes, most governments do not even collect baseline data on the problem. Human Rights First has filled the data gap by issuing comprehensive reports that provide governments with the information they need to initiate change.

The 2007 *Hate Crime Survey* documents dozens of hate crime cases, analyzes trends, and discusses the causes and consequences of hate crime violence. It also offers a ten-point plan for reducing hate crimes by adopting hate crime laws, strengthening law enforcement, and enhancing systems to monitor hate crimes. Separate companion reports examine violence driven by antisemitism, homophobia, and Islamophobia.

The 2007 *Hate Crime Report Card* examines monitoring and reporting systems as well as the enforcement of hate crime laws, in Europe, Russia, and North America.

Worldwide Reaction

Our survey, covered by mainstream and specialty media around the world, received praise from leaders of prominent non-governmental organizations. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency, a wire service, named our report one of the top stories of the year, underscoring that "European governments are woefully inept at measuring and thus prosecuting hate crimes."

In addition, leaders of prominent American and European non-governmental organizations, many of them participants in the June OSCE Conference, expressed strong support for our survey.



“The 2007 Hate Crime Survey is nothing short of a wake up call both to law enforcement as well as policymakers that hate crimes are on the rise around the world and deserve to be taken seriously... failure to act now will only bring more of the same in the future.”

Professor Jack Levin, Director of the Brudnick Center on Violence and Conflict, Northeastern University



PHOTO: FRENCH MUSLIMS PRAY IN FRONT OF VANDALIZED GRAVESTONES IN THE MUSLIM SECTION OF A WWI MILITARY CEMETERY IN NORTHERN FRANCE (AP PHOTO/MICHEL SPINGLER)

Ambassador Ömür Orhun, the OSCE Representative on Combating Discrimination Against Muslims, said, “I especially found the ten-point plan for reducing hate crimes most appropriate and useful ... Most governments in Europe still do not track and record anti-Muslim incidents through official state mechanisms.”

Kenneth Jacobson, Anti-Defamation League deputy national director, said, “Human Rights First report is a model for how antisemitism needs to be addressed by non-governmental bodies around the world.” ■

“Governments must come to understand that whether the victim is an Israeli Jew, an immigrant from Africa, a Muslim or a gay man, hate crimes are nothing less than human rights violations.”

Op-Ed by Michael Posner, *The Jerusalem Post*, December 25, 2007



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A Message from our Chairman, William D. Zabel

Since the beginning, the primary work of Human Rights First has been to challenge governments that engage in torture, disappearances and arbitrary detentions without due process of law. Unfortunately, as basic human rights continue to be violated—from Zimbabwe to Burma, from Russia to Colombia, from China to Iran—our country’s credibility and standing have been substantially diminished around the world.

Not so long ago, Chinese students carried replicas of the statue of liberty to inspire them as they faced down the tanks in Tiananmen Square. Around the world, our nation was a shining example of a society dedicated to human rights and respect for the rule of law. But today, images of Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo are haunting symbols of what can happen when we lose touch with those values.

We are better than this, and the vast majority of Americans believe it. Fortunately, we are blessed to live in a great country where groups like ours can fight back—and where our protests can lead to meaningful change. So it’s up to all of us to keep up this fight to reaffirm our fundamental values. Many good people around the world are rooting for this country to reclaim its moral leadership and the people at Human Rights First are leading the way to ensure that this great country is able to reestablish its moral compass.

Thirty years ago a group of ambitious and dedicated young lawyers came together to form the organization that has now evolved into Human Rights First. We believed then, and we believe just as strongly today, that respect for the rule of law is the precondition for peace and security, and the only foundation from which civil society can rise and flourish. That is the principle at the heart of Human Rights First. The work we do has never been more necessary.

We are grateful to have the support of partners around the world who aid our causes and share our victories. ■



A Model for Future Generations

Human Rights First Board Chairman William D. Zabel was honored with the American Lawyer Lifetime Achievement Award, which honors individuals who have made significant contributions to public life while building outstanding private or public interest law practices. Leading careers that exemplify the profession’s values, these senior lawyers serve as models for future generations. The award committee commends William D. Zabel, a leading expert on trust and estates law, for his passionate work for human and civil rights in the United States and around the world.

Pro Bono Support

Every year, hundreds of dedicated attorneys give their time and talent to support Human Rights First in critical ways—from representing refugees in asylum proceedings, to preparing amicus curiae briefs, to providing invaluable support to our staff in all our endeavors. We could not fulfill our mission without their help.

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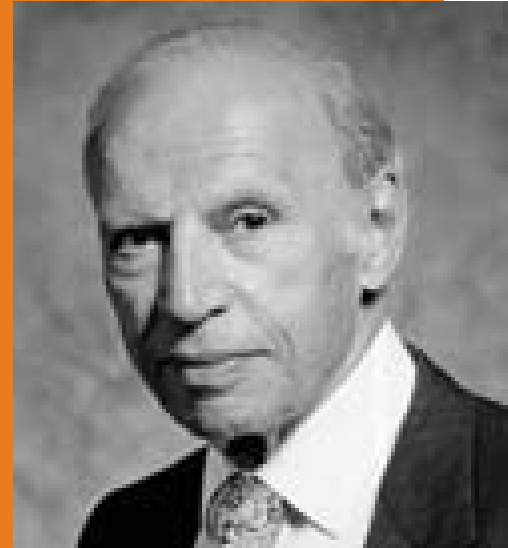
Marvin Frankel Award Winners

2007

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
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2006

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Human Rights First annually honors the memory of the late Judge Marvin Frankel, one of the country's leading advocates for human rights and an active member of our board for more than two decades. Since 2002, the Marvin Frankel Award pays tribute to lawyers and law firms that have carried on his dedication to human rights by demonstrating extraordinary commitment to pro bono service. We are deeply appreciative for the meaningful work of the most recent award recipients.

2007 Awardees

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, Washington, D.C., for outstanding legal representation for asylum seekers through the pro bono representation program at Human Rights First. The firm took on a particularly challenging case of a refugee who was unfairly subjected to the sweeping "material support" bar to asylum, marshaling resources at all levels to advocate successfully on his behalf. The firm has also supported Human Rights First by providing legal advice and hosting seminars on asylum law and working with victims of torture.

Lowenstein Sandler PC, New York, for its key role in helping Human Rights First build a pro bono representation network for asylum seekers in New Jersey and, in particular, for those detained at the Elizabeth Detention Center. The firm's lawyers have also handled federal appeals as well as the cases of children seeking asylum in the United States. The firm's excellent work with Human Rights First reflects its deep commitment to pro bono cases.

2006 Awardee

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, New York and Washington, D.C., for its pro bono representation of more than 100 refugees and their families in New York, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C. The firm, which has partnered for 15 years with Human Rights First's pro bono asylum legal representation program, has secured protection for asylum seekers from Colombia, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Iran, China, and Sierra Leone. Skadden Arps also has contributed to the growth of the HRF representation program by hosting our spring Asylum Law Training. In addition, Steven Kolleeny, special counsel, has played a critical role in overseeing the firm's pro bono asylum representation work in New York and New Jersey. Donald Salzman, pro bono counsel at Skadden Arps, has shared his expertise with attorneys handling asylum cases in Washington, D.C.

Our Donors

Human Rights First is and always has been entirely supported in our work by foundations and individuals from every walk of life and political persuasion, never by government grants. We are enormously grateful to our many contributors, who make our work possible and whose passion for justice, human dignity and the rule of law energize and inspire us every day.

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2007 Human Rights Award Dinner

Human Rights First presented the 2007 Human Rights Award to Fariba Davoodi Mohajer for her leading role in advancing the women's rights movement in Iran. Pictured (left to right) HRF Board member Sigourney Weaver, Fariba Davoodi Mohajer, and guest presenter Sam Waterston.



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2006 Human Rights Award Dinner

Human Rights First presented the 2006 Human Rights Award to leading Indonesian human rights activists Munir (posthumously) and his widow Suciwati for their work exposing human rights abuses and also to the Damas de Blanco from Cuba who have carried out peaceful protests over the arrest of more than 75 rights activists, independent journalists and librarians in 2003. Pictured (left to right) Suciwati, guest presenter Gloria Estefan, and Yolanda Huerga Cedeño, accepting on behalf of the Damas.



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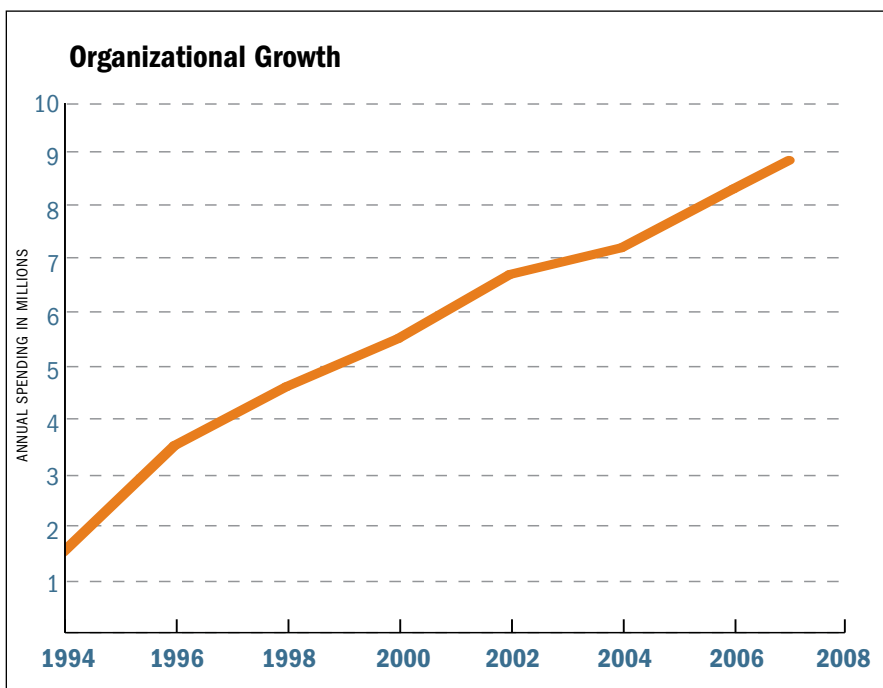
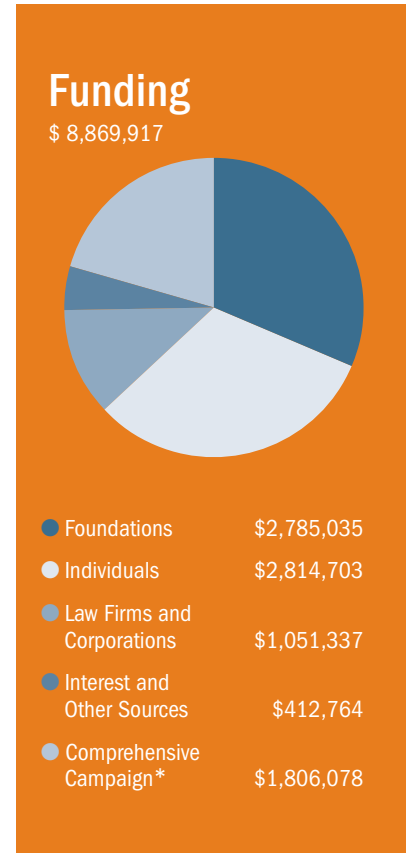
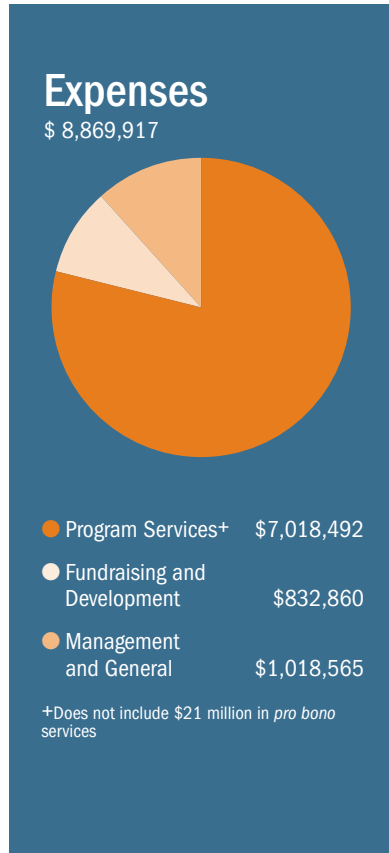
Human Rights First continued to maintain a strong financial position in the fiscal year ended May 31, 2007 thanks to generous support from individuals, law firms, corporations, and foundations who share our goal of building respect for human rights and the rule of law.

In-Kind Contributions of more than \$21 Million

Human Rights First works with a committed cadre of pro bono attorneys who dedicate their time to protecting the rights of refugees seeking asylum in the United States. In the past year volunteer attorneys in New York, New Jersey, and the Washington, D.C. area put in more than 61,000 hours to represent hundreds of asylum seekers. Their participation—worth more than \$21 million—triples the value of each dollar we expend in these areas.

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

* A portion of monies raised through Human Rights First's Comprehensive Campaign, designated for program expansion and organizational capacity building.

⊕ \$21 million in pro bono legal services.

† GAAP accounting principles require that non-profits report multi-year grants and pledges in their entirety as revenue in the year that the pledge is made. During the 2006 fiscal year, Human Rights First received a number of significant multi-year grants and pledges that ranged from two to five years in duration.

Financial Position

Assets	2007	2006
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$4,551,118	\$1,120,294
Investments at fair value	1,340,110	4,462,795
Grants and pledges receivable, net, current portion	1,914,388	3,519,905
Prepaid expenses and other assets	135,740	251,498
Total current assets	7,941,356	9,354,492
Grants and pledges receivable, less current portion	2,587,478	2,927,091
Security deposit	5,991	5,991
Fixed assets, net	441,444	408,968
Assets	\$10,976,269	\$12,696,542
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable, accrued expenses and other liabilities	\$579,470	\$497,165
Deferred event revenue, current portion	132,000	128,500
Total current liabilities	711,470	625,665
Net assets		
Unrestricted	3,382,933	3,123,881
Unrestricted—Board designated fund for future operations	2,500,000	2,500,000
Total unrestricted net assets	5,882,933	5,623,881
Temporarily restricted	4,381,866	6,446,996
Total net assets	10,264,799	12,070,877
Liabilities and Net Assets	\$10,976,269	\$12,696,542

Statement of Activities

	Unrestricted	Temporarily restricted	2007	Total	2006
Revenues and Other Support					
Grants, pledges and contributions	\$5,976,075	\$675,000	\$6,651,075	\$10,116,207 [†]	
Contributed program services [Ⓞ]	21,640,397	—	21,640,397	23,100,803	
Investment and other income	412,764	—	412,764	141,278	
Net assets released from restrictions	2,740,130	(2,740,130)	—	—	
Total revenues and other support	30,769,366	(2,065,130)	28,704,236	33,358,288	
Expenses					
Program services	28,658,889	—	28,658,889	29,542,304	
Supporting Services					
Management and general	1,018,565	—	1,018,565	924,186	
Fundraising and development	832,860	—	832,860	1,014,396	
Total supporting services	1,851,425	—	1,851,425	1,938,582	
Total expenses	30,510,314	—	30,510,314	31,480,886	
Change in net assets	(259,052)	(2,065,130)	(1,806,078)	1,877,402	
Net assets, beginning of year, restated	5,623,881	6,446,996	12,070,877	10,193,475	
Net assets, end of year	\$5,882,933	\$4,381,866	\$10,264,799	\$12,070,877	

Our Staff

Michael Posner
President

Maureen Byrnes
Executive Director

Elisa Massimino
Washington Director

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Eleanor Acer
Director, Refugee Protection Program

Lori Adams
Staff Attorney, Refugee Protection Program

Jorge Aguilar
Program Assistant, Government Affairs

Jamila Amarshi
Development Assistant

Heather Apollonio
Foundations Coordinator

Betsy Apple
Director, Crimes Against Humanity Program

Troi D. Bailey
Network and Systems Administrator

Jordan Bailey-Hoover
Public Programs Assistant

Noah Baird
Desktop Support Analyst

Kelly Bassett
Special Events Manager

Lisa Besa
Chief Information Officer

Ron Bigler
Senior Strategist for Online Advocacy and Technology

Stephen Brownell
Web and Multi-Media Designer

Nicolas Burniat
Pennoyer Fellow, Crimes Against Humanity Program

Cynthia Burns
Director, Office and Program Services

Livia Calvet
Front Desk Receptionist

Catherine Carpentieri
Director, Development and Marketing

Elisabeth Centeno
John Gardner Fellow, Executive Office

Devon Chaffee
Associate Attorney

Jessica Chicco
Helton Fellow, Refugee Protection Program

Deborah Colson
Senior Associate, Law and Security Program

Lillian Dalke
Program Associate/Legal Assistant, Refugee Protection Program

David Danzig
Campaign Manager, Public Programs Department and Primetime Torture Project Director

Matthew Easton
Director, Human Rights Defenders Program

Ruthie Epstein
Project Coordinator, Lifeline for Iraqi Refugees

Lillian Evans
Executive Assistant to the President

Julia Fromholz
Advocacy Counsel

Niamh Gibbons
Program Associate, Crimes Against Humanity Program

Carly Beth Goodman
Executive Assistant to the Executive Director

Sarah Graham
Production and Design Supervisor

Michael Greenberg
Chief Financial Officer

Neil Hicks
International Policy Advisor

Andrew Hudson
Associate Attorney, Human Rights Defenders Program

Anwen Hughes
Senior Counsel, Refugee Protection Program

Kathy Jones
Executive Coordinator, Special Projects

Elizabeth Jordan
Program Assistant, Human Rights Defenders Program

Shara Kaplin
Deputy to the Executive Director

Sharon Kelly
Campaign Manager, Elect to End Torture '08

Melissa Koven
Legal Assistant, Law and Security Program

Kevin Lanigan
Director, Law and Security Program

Paul LeGendre
Senior Associate, Fighting Discrimination Program

Nathalie Maréchal
Office and Program Services Associate

Lisa McClain-Freeney
Employee Services Manager

Krista Minter
Communications Associate

Sahr MuhammedAlly
Senior Associate, Law and Security Program

Gabriel Nichols
Database and Systems Manager

Brittany Nuttall
Development Systems Associate

Katharina Obser
Program Associate/Legal Assistant, Refugee Protection Program

Nancy Ozeas
Director, Communications

Kurt Pacquette
Financial Controller, Finance and Administration

Sofia Rahman
Program Assistant, Law and Security Program

William Rice
Web Assistant

Gabor Rona
International Legal Director

David Rosen
Foundations Director, Development

Eric Sears
Program Officer, Crimes Against Humanity

Bobbie Silvera
Director, Human Resources

Amy Sobel
Deputy to the Washington Director

Tad Stahnke
Director, Fighting Discrimination Program

Deborah Stewart
Information Services Analyst

Amelia Templeton
Research and Advocacy Associate, Lifeline for Iraqi Refugees

Andrew Thomas
Program Associate/Legal Assistant, Refugee Protection Program

Elijah Wilson
Office Services Manager

Alexandra Wisotsky
Staff Attorney, Refugee Protection Program

Aaron Zisser
Kroll Human Rights Fellow, Government Affairs

An Interview with our President, Michael Posner

For 30 years you have helped guide Human Rights First, how have things changed in the field?

This year we will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As we do so the human rights movement stands at a crossroads. Though collectively we have made great strides over the last six decades in building a strong legal rights framework, and in giving human rights issues much greater public prominence, there also has been a recent retreat on core human rights principles, in this country and elsewhere. This makes our work more important than ever, but also more challenging.

How would you describe the new role that HRF has taken on in recent years?

The erosion in U.S. compliance with rights-respecting principles after the 9/11 attacks has undermined the United States' proud leadership tradition on human rights and diminished its global prestige. Sadly, one consequence has been the muting of the U.S. government's important voice on these issues. Historically, the U.S. government has been an important ally to many human rights defenders around the world, both setting an example through our constitutional system of government and using our influence abroad to increase respect for human rights by foreign governments. Part of our role now will be to help the United States get back on track as a leader in the global human rights struggle. In answering this challenge, we need to generate a much broader and deeper U.S. public engagement on these issues in ways that resonate with U.S. interests and values.

In the last several years we have spent considerable organizational time and energy countering this erosion of support for core human rights principles in this country, most centrally through our work challenging torture and official cruelty. While we have, at last, begun to make a tangible difference on those issues, the struggle to do so has underscored a fundamental gap—namely the absence of a powerful, effective, broad-based human rights social movement in the United States.

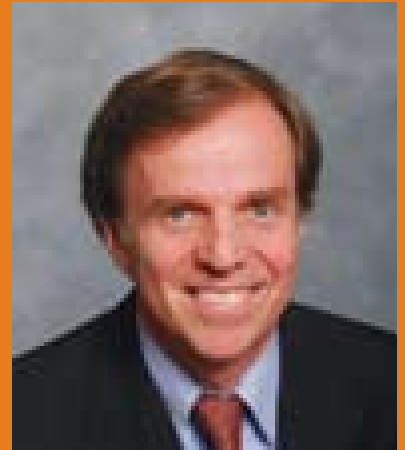
How can the human rights movement adapt to these challenges?

Whether challenging official cruelty in Iraq or forging effective U.S. policy responses to genocide in Darfur, we need to build greater mainstream, bipartisan support for human rights and the rule of law. Internally we are working to enhance our program capacity and rapid response capability, to strengthen the tools through which we engage in these efforts and advocacy.

Building on our work with retired U.S. military leaders, we are extending into other sectors of the national security community, including experienced interrogators and seasoned intelligence officials who tell us that humane treatment contributes to effective interrogation. On a parallel track we are forging stronger ties with the religious community on refugee protection and other issues of mutual concern.

How do you address the threat of terrorism?

We are constantly mindful of the very real threats people in this country and in other parts of the world face from terrorism and targeted political violence. We recognize that governments have the right, indeed the obligation to ensure security. But we also must work to prevent excessive and ineffectual governmental



“At Human Rights First we work not just to make a point, but to make a difference. Over the long term we will only be able to promote a sustainable U.S. government commitment to human rights if it is responsive to broader public concerns and demands.”

**Michael Posner,
President**

responses. In our view, concerns about national security and civil liberties are not at odds, they actually reinforce each other. The time has come for us to help shape a forward-looking agenda. It should draw lessons from the post-9/11 experiences, but also map out a blueprint for U.S. leadership well into the 21st century, one that is consistent with this country's history, values and traditions. We firmly believe that Human Rights First is poised to play a strong leadership role in this effort. ■



Headquarters
333 Seventh Avenue
13th Floor
New York, NY 10001

Tel: 212.845.5200
Fax: 212.845.5299

www.humanrightsfirst.org

Washington D.C. Office
100 Maryland Avenue, N.E.
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002

Tel: 202.547.5692
Fax: 202.543.5999