

Project Title: Supporting Human Rights Defenders

Date: October 2008 – April 2009

Location: Nottingham

Core Staff: Emilie Hunter; David Harris

Student Research Assistants: Tom Bewick, Chloe Cheeseman, Sabrina Gilani, Lydia Geny, Anna Johanasson, Olha Melen

Project Summary:

This project was prompted by a 2-year exercise investigating opportunities to support At-Risk Scholars in the University environment (funded by the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics), and a visit by Ms Hina Jilani, UN Special Representative for Human Rights Defenders, to the HRLC in Spring 2008. Project activities included mapping the activities of relevant actors in support of human rights defenders, and the creation of three fellowships for human rights defenders to take part in the International Human Rights Law Short Courses in Autumn 2008 and Spring 2009.

Aims

The project was prompted by a 2-year research exercise (funded by the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics) investigating opportunities to support At-Risk Scholars in the University environment, and the visit by Ms Hina Jilani, UN Special Representative for Human Rights Defenders, to deliver the Centre's Spring Lecture on the topic of *Protecting Human Rights Defenders* in February 2008.

The project aimed to explore the means by which the HRLC could use its capacity as a world-class human rights research, capacity building and training centre to support the activities of human rights defenders, particularly through pursuing the following objectives:

- To map current activities by relevant actors related to the support of human rights defenders, including NGO's, international and regional organisations and mechanisms and universities.
- To provide training and research opportunities to human rights defenders.
- To promote wider awareness of the challenges facing human rights defenders

Activities

Research

Led by Emilie Hunter, and assisted by a team of LL.M students, HRLC engaged in a mapping exercise to create an overview of current support, development and capacity building activities for human rights defenders by relevant actors, including NGO's, international and regional organisations and universities.

Training

HRLC was able to offer three fellowships for human rights defenders to participate in the October-December 2008 and January-March 2009 sessions of the Centre's renowned International Human Rights Law Short Course

Conference

In April 2009, Emilie Hunter participated in the 2009 International Conference on Security and Protection of Human Rights Defenders at London Metropolitan University, alongside former Chevening Fellow Usman Hamid, Executive Director of KONTRAS.

Outcomes

The project engaged students and staff at the University with the important work of human rights defenders, and served as a useful platform to extend the training and research opportunities made available to them.