

[Supporting defenders, achieving change | 2017 Annual Report](#)

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We're delighted to announce the release of our latest annual report, highlighting key impacts during 2016 and our bold vision for 2017 and the years ahead.



[Download our 2017 Annual Report!](#)

Human rights defenders – those brave people who stand up for the rights and freedoms of others – are our best hope for a fair and just world. Their work contributes to good government, sustainable development and the rule of law. It exposes corruption, empowers the marginalised, and provides justice to victims. It is an antidote to political and religious extremism, and to the rising tide of intolerance and illiberalism. Their work is also imperiled – frequently threatened by the powerful, privileged or prejudiced individuals and institutions they challenge.

Our impact in 2016

2016 was an especially tough year for defenders. They faced what the UN Special Rapporteur has described as 'unprecedented attack'; from defamation, to detention, and even to death.

2016 was also a challenging year for ISHR, but through a combination of powerful partnerships and strategic advocacy we managed to defy the trend and contribute to some significant positive developments.

- The appointment of high-level UN officials to [combat reprisals](#) and [counter homophobic and transphobic violence and discrimination](#).
- The development of an influential [Model National Law on Human Rights Defenders](#).
- The adoption of the first ever [corporate policy on human rights defenders](#) by a multinational company.
- The mobilisation of high-ranking officials and experts to speak out and intervene in relation to attacks on human rights defenders in States including China, Egypt and Bahrain.
- The development of [groundbreaking international jurisprudence](#) on the legal obligation of States to protect defenders of economic, social and cultural rights.
- And the provision of intensive training and advocacy support to more than 200 defenders in Geneva and the field, like [Natasha Latiff](#) who works to defend women's rights in Afghanistan, or [Ivette Gonzalez](#) who works to promote corporate accountability and sustainable development in Mexico.

Thanks for [supporting ISHR](#) and making this change!

Our bold and ambitious vision for 2017

Despite these wins, however, the years ahead will likely be tumultuous for human rights defenders. It is in this context that we have developed a bold new [Strategic Framework for 2017-2020](#).

Informed by face-to-face consultations with more than 700 defenders and experts, and building on over 30 years of ISHR experience and success, the Strategy will ensure that we provide defenders with the capacity, protection, partnerships and impact that they desperately need.

It is an ambitious strategy. It commits to continuing what ISHR does best – providing training and advocacy support to defenders and lobbying for better laws and mechanisms for their protection – while also committing to expand our reach, strengthen our partnerships, and deepen our impact on the ground.

We'll expand our reach both online and offline, providing defenders for whom it is too risky or costly to come to Geneva with access to a sophisticated digital training and advocacy platform, and establishing an intensive Fellowship programme for defenders at risk. We'll also secure civil society access to officials at the highest political levels, including the UN Secretary General, the High Commissioner, Ministers and Ambassadors.

We'll strengthen our partnerships, continuing to collaborate deeply with civil society actors and building alliances with progressive business enterprises. We're already exploring new venues to advance the protection of human rights defenders - like the World Economic Forum - while retaining our commitment to provide expert support to defenders to engage with the UN, African and Inter-American human rights systems.

And we'll deepen our impact on the ground. We'll partner with civil society to push for human rights defender laws and protection mechanisms and with governments to establish a Global Network of Human Rights Defender Focal Points. We'll second our staff to national organisations to build local capacity while simultaneously ensuring that ISHR's work remains closely informed by the situation and protection needs of defenders. We'll also leverage pro bono support from the world's leading law firms, helping defenders pursue accountability and enabling ISHR to conduct strategic litigation to push for defenders' effective recognition and protection in national law.

Achieving our shared agenda

There is a strong emphasis throughout the strategy on collaboration. In the face of such complex and powerful challenges, strategic alliances between State, non-governmental and private actors with a shared interest in upholding human rights and the rule of law has never been more important.

Thank you for standing with us in 2016. We look forward to partnering with you in the implementation of our new Strategic Framework and the achievement of our shared human rights agenda in 2017 and beyond.

Phil Lynch - Executive Director

Lucia Nader - Chair of the ISHR Board

PS. We'd love you to share our [annual report](#) with friends and colleagues who share your passion for human rights and who might be interested to [support ISHR](#) to achieve human rights impact and change!