
FUNDING HUMAN RIGHTS, INVESTING IN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS



With human rights, democracy and the rule of law around the world increasingly under attack, those who stand up to defend them have an ever-more central role to play in sustainable development and conflict resolution. As civil society space closes around them, and governments use repressive tactics to impede their work, human rights defenders (HRDs) often put their lives, liberty, and safety at risk, and require support and protection in order to go on.

However, HRDs in fact are receiving declining support. At a time of increasing backlash, the level of funding and support provided by the EU and its Member States no longer matches the magnitude of the needs of HRDs, as seen in the upcoming [ProtectDefenders.eu](#) on report on funding on support for HRDs.

It is clear that if the EU is to tackle to tackle the instability in the region, and advance the Sustainable Development Goals, it must address the root causes of forced migration, conflict, and radicalisation, and environmental destruction.

Investing more in support for human rights, and human rights defenders must be a key strategic priority for the EU and its Member States in the coming years, as the only way of truly rising up to these challenges. This increase in funding must be reflected in the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights programming 2018, as well as the upcoming Multi-annual Financial Framework, and in the long term future of human rights funding.

**European Parliament,
ASP 3H1
Tuesday 23 January
11:00-13:00**

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

Opening: Hilde Vautmans MEP (ALDE, BE) – ALDE Group Deputy Coordinator for the Foreign Affairs Committee and Security and Defence Subcommittee

Panel 1

The Work of Human Rights Defenders – risks, challenges, and achievements

Moderator: Barbara Lochbihler MEP (Greens, DE) – Green Group Coordinator at the Human Right Subcommittee

- Ed O'Donovan – Head of Protection at Front Line Defenders
- Faika Deniz Pasha – lawyer and a member of the Platform for Struggle for Women Held in Captivity, an organisation supporting Yazidi women
- Ahmed Samih – Director of Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Anti-Violence Studies in Egypt (AITAS)

Questions and Answers session

Panel 2

Investing in support and protection – making a difference on the ground

Moderator: Soraya Post MEP (S&D, SE) – S&D Group Coordinator for the Human Right Subcommittee

- Antoine Madelin - Director, International Advocacy, FIDH / International Federation for Human Rights
- Gustavo Castro – Director of Otros Mundos, an environmental organisation in Chiapas (Mexico), and the sole witness to the murder of Honduran activist Berta Cáceres
- Anastasia Bondarenko – Ukrainian disability activist from Crimea

Questions and Answers session

Closing remarks: Soraya Post MEP and Barbara Lochbihler MEP