

## **PARTICIPANTS BIOGRAPHIES: 2006 HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS FORUM**

**Simia Ahmadi** (FIDH) serves as the International Federation for Human Rights' (FIDH) representative to the UN's web-based NGO information and coordination (NGOIC) steering group that aids NGO networking for the first session of the UN Human Rights Council. Ms. Ahmadi has also served as a Rapporteur for the Martin Ennals Foundation.

**Reine Alapini-Gansou** (African Union) Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa for the Secretariat of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, African Union

**Louise Arbour** (UN) is an internationally renowned judge and lawyer who became the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2004. She previously served as a judge for the Supreme Court of Canada, and gained fame for her role as chief prosecutor during the International Criminal Tribunals relating to war crimes in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Born in Montreal, Arbour obtained a degree in civil law from the University of Montreal and completed post-graduate studies at the University of Ottawa. In the following years she became vice-president of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and then the associate dean at Osgoode Hall Law School. In 1987 she was appointed to the Supreme Court of Ontario, and in 1990 she was named to the Court of Appeal for Ontario. In 1995 she was responsible for an inquiry pertaining to conditions at the Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario. It was in February 1996 that the Security Council of the United Nations selected Louise Arbour as chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals. She then became Supreme Court Justice Louise Arbour.

**Ashley Barr** (The Carter Center) Ashley Barr is the assistant director for human rights at The Carter Center. Ms. Barr also recently served as the Center's country director in Liberia in 2005, and has managed other post-conflict election and human rights projects for the Center in Guatemala and Sierra Leone. Ms. Barr has contributed to additional Carter Center rule-of-law, civil society and election projects in Guyana, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Zambia. Before coming to the Center, Ms. Barr worked with local human rights and governance organizations as a consultant to The Asia Foundation and the International Human Rights Law Group (now Global Rights) in Cambodia, and the National Democratic Institute and PACT in Ethiopia. She taught law at the University of Peshawar for two years as a Fulbright Fellow and worked for local legal aid and human rights organizations in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Ms. Barr earned her J.D. at Harvard Law School.

**Sihem Bensedrine** (Tunisia) is one of the founders of the National Council for Freedoms in Tunisia (CNLT) of which she currently serves as spokesperson. Bensedrine published a human rights newspaper *Kalima* in 1999 for which she was harassed by the Tunisian government and even arrested in June 2001. She also sits on the board of the Tunisian League of Human Rights and founded the Observatory for Freedom of Press, Creation, and Publishing (OLPEC) in the May of 2001. Today Bensedrine serves as OLPEC's general secretary. Bensedrine wants to give her human rights struggle a regional dimension and to develop an Arab network to engage the community in pushing for institutional reforms in the Arab world.

**Joseph Biden** (U.S. Senate) is a U.S. Senator from the state of Delaware currently serving his sixth term in office. Since 1997, Biden has served as either Chairman or Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and is the Democratic party's chief spokesman on national security and foreign policy issues. Through his work on the Foreign Relations Committee, Biden has sought to promote the use of American power to stop dictators who commit crimes against

humanity or genocide. In the mid-1990s, Biden was among the first to call for active American leadership to end Serbian aggression in Bosnia, and likewise urged U.S. action in Kosovo to stop Slobodon Milosevic's genocidal actions there. He has urged strong U.S. and international action to prevent genocide in Darfur. In the late 1990s, he joined with Committee Chairman Jesse Helms on legislation to reorganize the government's foreign policy agencies, and co-authored the landmark "Helms-Biden" legislation authorizing the payment of nearly \$1 billion in back dues owed to the United Nations, provided the U.N. took concrete steps to reform. Senator Biden was also a former chairman of the Judiciary Committee from 1987 to 1995.

**Maureen Byrnes** (Human Rights First) is Maureen Byrnes is the Executive Director of Human Rights First. Before joining Human Rights First, Maureen served at The Pew Charitable Trusts in Philadelphia as Director of Policy Initiatives and the Health and Human Services (HHS) program. Before that, Maureen worked in Washington, D.C. for 15 years. She served as Executive Director of the National Commission on AIDS, a 15-member commission established by law to make recommendations to both the President and the Congress on how the country should address the many challenges associated with the HIV epidemic. Maureen served on Capitol Hill as both majority and minority staff director for the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies of the United States Senate Committee on Appropriations, and she served as vice president of the Association of American Universities, where she worked with the presidents and chancellors of more than 60 leading public and private research-intensive universities on a wide variety of federal research policy issues.

**Santiago Canton** (OAS) is the Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS). Previously he was the OAS Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression. Mr. Canton holds a law degree from the University of Buenos Aires and a Master degree in International Law from the Washington College of Law of American University. In 1998 he was Director of Public Information for the OAS. From 1994 to 1998 Dr. Canton was Director for Latin America and the Caribbean for the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), a democratic development institute based in Washington, D.C. Mr. Canton was a political assistant to former President Jimmy Carter in the election processes of El Salvador and Dominican Republic.

**Gabriela Contreras** (Guatemala) is a human rights lawyer with the office of the Human Rights Ombudsman (Procurador de Derechos Humanos). Since 2003, she has led the Subcommission for Security and Justice, a part of the National Commission for the Pursuit, Support, and Fortification of Justice. She is also a consultant to the office of the Human Rights Ombudsman on monitoring the security and justice commitments stemming from the Peace Accords, and a consultant for the Technical Support for Parliament for the Legislative Advancement of Security and Justice Project. Ms. Contreras was awarded the 2003 "Jean Pictet" regional prize for Excellence in Research in International Humanitarian Law by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Ms. Contreras graduated Summa Cum Laude from Rafael Landívar University, where she received a Master's Degree in Human Rights. She received a post-graduate degree in Women's Rights and Gender Theory from the University of San Carlos de Guatemala. She also received a diploma in Poverty Studies and Social Research from the Latin American Faculty for Social Sciences in Guatemala (FLACSO-Guatemala). She received a scholarship from the Regional Scholarship Competition CLASCO/CROP 2004-2005 to study the international relations of poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean. She is a member of the Research Council of the Multidisciplinary Program on Poverty at FLASCO-Guatemala.

**Delphine Djiraibe** (Chad) is the founder and president of the Chadian Association for the Protection and Defense of Human Rights (ATPDDH) and is also the President of the Peace and Reconciliation Initiative Monitoring in her country. Delphine received the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award in 2004 and was a Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) fellow. She is currently a member of the Board of Trustees for CIEL and is a coordinator of the Civil Society Advocacy Network - a coalition of human rights and development non-governmental organizations (NGOs), women and farmers organizations and trade unions, seeking a sustainable development for Chad. She has been an out-spoken advocate for obtaining a thorough environmental impact assessment and an external control board for the World Bank-approved Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline. Ms. Djiraibe has lobbied against government corruption in creating the pipeline and against its negative social and environmental consequences on the people of Chad. She has also worked to eliminate the death penalty and to compensate Chadian citizens for use of their land in government projects like the pipeline.

**Yuri Dzhibladze** (Russia) is President of the Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, a Moscow-based organization that develops mechanisms for public influence in government decision-making and analyzes democratic institution building, human rights, and civil society development. He has worked with and served as a consultant to a number of international NGOs, as well as the State Duma and the United States Agency for International Development. Dr. Dzhibladze is an editor of "Legislative Process in the State Duma: Human Rights Analysis," a monthly newsletter published by his Center and is the author of numerous publications on racism, human rights, and non-governmental organizations. Since the mid-1980s, Dr. Dzhibladze has been actively engaged in social movements starting with his work as an anti-nuclear activist, working in conflict resolution, promoting non-violent social change, developing NGOs, doing human rights work, and later participating in the movement against the war in Chechnya.

**Matt Easton** (Human Rights First) is Senior Associate of Human Rights Defenders Program at Human Rights First. Mr. Easton joined Human Rights First in 2004 and is part of a team that monitors threats against human rights defenders worldwide. He focuses primarily on the countries of Southeast Asia. Although he joined the staff of Human Rights First in September 2004, his relationship with the organization goes back to 1994, when he co-authored a case study on the World Bank and human rights. Mr. Easton has worked in human rights and international development, as both a U.S.-based consultant and while living in Indonesia, East Timor, India, and Zimbabwe. He has an M.A. in International Relations from the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, DC.

**Felice Gaer** (Jacob Blaustein Institute) is the Director of the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights of the American Jewish Committee. She is a member of the Committee Against Torture, a 10-person United Nations supervisory body that reviews reports by governments on their compliance with the Convention Against Torture. Elected in 1999, she is the first American to serve on the Committee. Gaer also serves as the Vice Chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom and Vice President of the International League for Human Rights. She has also been appointed as a member of nine U.S. delegations to UN human rights negotiations between 1993 and 1999, including the UN Commission on Human Rights, the World Conference on Women (1995), and the World Conference on Human Rights (1993).

**Gustavo Gallon** (Colombia) has been the Director of the Colombia Commission of Jurists since its creation in 1988. From 1999 to 2002 he was also the Special Representative for Equatorial

Guinea in the United Nations' Human Rights Commission. Gallon was a visiting fellow at the Kellogg Institute at the University of Notre Dame from 1998 to 1999 and has been a professor of human rights and constitutional law at universities in Bogota since 1979. He is also the author of several publications on the rule of law and human rights.

**Musa Gassama** (ISHR) is the current Deputy Director and Manager of the Human Rights Defenders Office in Geneva of the International Service for Human Rights. His organization is dedicated to the mission of enhancing the protection of human rights defenders and their work world-wide by developing appropriate preventive initiatives, promoting the development and effective implementation of regional and universal protection mechanisms, and empowering the full and active participation of human rights defenders and their organizations in advancing a culture of full respect for human rights. In the past, Gassama has also served as the West Africa Human Rights Defenders Coordinator for Amnesty International.

**Fatemeh Haghghatjoo** (Iran) a Visiting Scholar at MIT's Center for International Studies (CIS), is a leading advocate of human rights and democracy in Iran. Ms. Haghghatjoo resigned from Iran's Parliament in February 2004 following a crackdown on reformers. Called fearless and outspoken, Ms. Haghghatjoo was a member of the 6th Majlis, Iran's reform parliament, and was the first to resign when the anti-reform measures of the Supreme Leader began to take shape. Ms. Haghghatjoo, a staunch advocate of women's rights and a psychologist with a PhD in counseling, was president of the student movement faction in the Majlis and a deputy in the Mosharekat Party. Ms. Haghghatjoo was sentenced in 2001 by Iran's judiciary to 20 months in prison, for "inciting public opinion and insulting the judiciary"; she had criticized the arrest of a female journalist and had claimed that Iran's government tortured prisoners. Her sentence—which she terms illegitimate and undemocratic, and which she has not served—was later reduced to 10 months. Ms. Haghghatjoo writes about human rights and democratization in Iran and the Middle East.

**Neil Hicks** (Human Rights First) is the Director of International Programs & Human Rights Defenders Program at Human Rights First. Hicks supervises defender campaigns that include overseas missions, diplomatic advocacy, public education, and grassroots lobbying. Before joining Human Rights First, he worked as a researcher for the Middle East Department of Amnesty International in London from 1985 to 1991. He has also served as human rights project officer of Birzeit University in the West Bank. In 2000-2001, Hicks was a Senior Fellow in the Jennings Randolph Fellowship Program of the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C. He is the author of many reports and scholarly articles. Hicks has taught Human Rights in the Middle East at Fordham Law School.

**Somchai Homlaor** (Thailand) is the Secretary General of the Thai NGO Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM - ASIA) focused on bringing about human rights and criminal justice reform in Thailand. Mr. Homlaor also serves on the Steering Committee of the Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (Altsean Burma) and the ASEAN Network for Free Elections (ANFREL). He was the former president of the Union for Civil Liberty in Thailand from 1995 to 1997. Mr. Homlaor remains an active participant in Thailand's Environment Lawyer Association and has published and edited a collection of environmental law selections for the Green World Foundation & Lawyer Council of Thailand. He also currently serves as the Chair of the Human Rights Committee of the Lawyer Council of Thailand (LCT). Mr. Homlaor received his LL.B from Thammasat University's School of Law.

**Saad Eddin Ibrahim** (Egypt) is a human rights activist and professor of sociology at the American University of Cairo. In 1988, Dr. Ibrahim founded the Ibn Khaldun Center for

Development Studies, a research and advocacy institute in Cairo, concerned with issues of democratization and political and social development. He remains the director and chairman of the center's board of trustees. In the summer of 2000 he and 27 of his colleagues were arrested and tried before a state security court on several charges allegedly connected to their work. All 28 defendants were found guilty on some of these charges and several were sent to jail. Dr. Ibrahim was sentenced to a seven year term. He was ultimately acquitted of all charges and released in March 2003.

**Hina Jilani** (Pakistan/UN) is the United Nations Special Representative to the Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders. She has practiced law since 1979 and opened the first women's law firm in Pakistan in 1980. She specializes in human rights litigation, and is especially concerned with the human rights of women, children, minorities, and prisoners. She has conducted several cases that have become landmarks in setting human rights standards in Pakistan. As an avid social activist, she was a founding member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the Women's Action Forum. Over the past two decades, she has been involved with the United Nations Center for Human Rights, the Carter Center, and the UN Conference on Women. She has received several awards for her human rights work from organizations such as the American Bar Association and Human Rights Watch.

**Nozima Kamalova** (Uzbekistan) is the founding chair of the Legal Aid Society of Uzbekistan (LAS), a leading nongovernmental organization that safeguards and promotes the rule of law and human rights in Uzbekistan by investigating high-profile human rights abuses and providing free legal services to the poor. Under Ms. Kamalova's direction, the Legal Aid Society also works with a number of respected international human rights organizations, such as Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First and Amnesty International. A highly respected human rights attorney who has been on the frontlines of the struggle for human rights and democracy in Uzbekistan, Ms. Kamalova has been instrumental in the revision of several Uzbek laws related to torture and human rights. Her lobbying activities have influenced a large number of policies and legislation adopted both internationally and in Uzbekistan.

**Mary Lawlor** (Ireland) is the Director of Front Line, the international foundation for the protection of human rights defenders. She has a background of 30 years experience in human rights. Lawlor set up Front Line in 2001 to focus solely on supporting and defending human rights defenders at risk. As director, she represents the organization and has a key role in its development. Prior to Front Line, she was director of the Irish section of Amnesty International for 12 years and before that was a board member for 15 years, during which she served as chair from 1983-1987. She took the Irish section of Amnesty from a membership of less than a hundred with no staff to 14,000 members and 13 staff. She has a bachelor's degree in philosophy and psychology and postgraduate degrees in personnel management and Montessori teaching.

**Tanya Lokshina** (Russia) is the Chairperson of a recently founded human rights think-tank, DEMOS Center for Information and Research, based in Moscow, Russia. DEMOS helps Russian civic society solve the most pressing problems in the fields of human rights and democracy. Additionally, DEMOS monitors the status of human rights and democracy across Russia, conducts research on particularly relevant problems, tests and disseminates advanced strategies and methods of analytical work, and develops recommendations that are distributed to states agencies, public organizations, and expert bodies. In addition to her work at DEMOS, Lokshina is a Chechnya/North Caucasus researcher for the International Helsinki Federation on human rights. Lokshina is the author of numerous publications on topics including the role of international organizations in the Chechen conflict, the effects of the fight against terror on human rights in Russia, and hate speech in Russian media.

**Barry Lowenkron** (U.S. Department of State) is the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL). Prior to this appointment, Mr. Lowenkron served as Principal Deputy Director of Policy Planning for the Department of State. From 1993 to 2002 he held a variety of positions in the Intelligence Community, including National Intelligence Officer for Europe, Director of the National Intelligence Council's Analytic Staff, and Special Assistant to the Director of Central Intelligence. Mr. Lowenkron served two tours as Director of European Security Affairs on the National Security Council (1988-89, 1991-93), and as Civilian Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff where he received the Secretary of Defense Meritorious Civilian Service medal. He spent 5 years as a member of the Policy Planning Staff under Secretary of State George Shultz. He received his M.A. with distinction in 1977 from the Nitze School of Advanced International studies, and has been a Ford Foundation Fellow on Arms Control and Eastern Europe and a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow. Mr. Lowenkron is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

**Sofia Macher** (Peru) was a Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Peru. Today she is a member of the Legal Defense Institute. She was a member of the Working Group representing the National Coordinator for Human Rights, a coalition of 65 human rights organizations in the country. As a part of the Working Group, Macher helped design the blueprint for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established by transition government on December 29, 2000. From 1997 to 2001, she was the Executive Secretary for the National Coordinator for Human Rights. She was also the Civil Society representative for the Dialogue Table of the Organization of American States, the body that negotiated the return of democracy to the country. From 1987 to 1993, Macher was the Vice President of the International Executive Committee of Amnesty International.

**Dzmitry Markusheuski** (Belarus) is the Press Secretary of the Belarusian Helsinki Committee (BHC), the leading local human-rights-NGO. He also serves as a Human Rights Consultant for the United Nations Office in Belarus and assists the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus in collecting and verifying relevant data. Mr. Markusheuski also has published numerous articles on human rights and democratization as a freelance correspondent of "Transitions Online", an online magazine covering Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the former Soviet Union. He has also participated in various fact finding missions of the International Helsinki Federation and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (ODIHR/OSCE).

**Kaari Betty Murungi** (Kenya) has served as Director of Urgent Action Fund-Africa since its formation in 2001. Since 1998, she has also served as legal advisor to the Women's Human Rights Program at Rights and Democracy, Montreal, Canada. As a member of the International Coalition for an International Criminal Court, Ms. Murungi and others advocated extensively for the inclusion of a gender perspective in the establishment of the International Criminal Court and in the work of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. She serves on the board of the Kenya Human Rights Commission, the Women's Initiative for Gender Justice at the International Criminal Court (Den Haag) and is a past board member of The Federation of Women Lawyers-Kenya. Ms. Murungi is a lawyer by profession and has extensive experience in the human rights of women; gender and governance. In December 2003, the President of Kenya awarded her the National honor: The Moran of the Order of the Burning Spear (MBS) for her work in Human Rights.

**Clement Nwankwo** (Nigeria) is a lawyer and one of Nigeria's foremost human rights advocates. He created the idea of, and co-founded Nigeria's first human rights group in 1987 – the Civil

Liberties Organization, of which he was its first executive director. In 1990, Mr. Nwankwo founded and worked as Executive Director of the Constitutional Rights Project, CRP, until February 2003. He led CRP to prominence and leadership in the Nigerian NGO community. Mr. Nwankwo has won several national and international honors and awards the Martin Ennals Award. As director of CRP, Mr. Nwankwo took initiatives in promoting human rights awareness and protection in Nigeria. Under his leadership, CRP organized several training workshops, seminars and conferences for lawyers, judges, law students and teachers and police personnel, as well as members and staff of Nigeria's National Assembly. Nwankwo also co-founded and was Chairman of the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) in 1998, which observed the 1998/99 Nigerian elections and deployed more than 11,000 observers across Nigeria's 36 states and Abuja, the capital city. Mr. Nwankwo now serves as Principal Counsel for Law Rights Associates, a firm of lawyers and consultants working in the field of constitutional law, political economy, and institution and capacity building.

**Antonio Pradjasto** (Indonesia) is the Deputy Director of Demos' Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies. Mr. Pradjasto was formerly the Head of the Research Bureau at the National Commission of Human Rights in Indonesia. He has also served as the head of Legal Aid at The Social Institute of Jakarta from 1991 to 1999 and as Assistant to the Secretary General at the International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID) from 1989 to 1991. Mr. Pradjasto received his LL. M from the University of Essex in 1999.

**Jonathan Prentice** (UN) is the Executive Assistant to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. He has worked for the United Nations since 1994 in the Department of Political Affairs in New York and in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. Mr. Prentice has also worked on UN assignments in Cambodia, East Timor (now Timor-Leste) and Iraq.

**Archi Pyati** (Human Rights First) is Senior Associate for the Human Rights Defenders Program at Human Rights First. As a Senior Associate in the Human Rights Defenders program, Pyati assists human rights advocates who have come under attack for defending human rights. Pyati contributes to defender campaigns that include overseas missions, diplomatic advocacy, public education, and grassroots lobbying. Before joining the Human Rights Defenders program, Pyati was an Equal Justice Works Fellow with the Asylum Program of Human Rights First. She provided legal counseling and rights information to detained asylum seekers. As part of advocacy efforts against the detention of asylum seekers, she also engaged in public education and outreach, worked closely with attorneys around the country, monitored changes in US policy, liaised with government officials, and supported media efforts. As a University of Michigan fellow at ADHOC, a Cambodian human rights organization, Pyati helped advocate for the basic human rights of prisoners and trafficked women. Through the University of Michigan Program in Refugee and Asylum Law, Pyati received a fellowship to work with Jesuit Refugee Services in Zambia, helping to develop a comprehensive legal approach to safeguarding refugees' rights.

**Aisling Reidy** (Human Rights Watch) is currently a Senior Legal Advisor at Human Rights Watch in New York. From October 2002 to December 2005 she was Director of the Irish Council on Civil Liberties. She is a barrister and was called to the Irish Bar in July 1996. She has many years experience working on Kurdish cases and has appeared before the European Commission and the Court of Human Rights as co-counsel. Along with Kevin Boyle and Françoise Hampson she has advanced human rights in Europe and on the international plane. From 1998-1999 she was Senior Research Fellow at the Constitution Unit, University College London researching aspects of the ECHR and the UK Human Rights Act, and developing training

programs for public bodies on the ECHR. She worked as the Senior Human Rights Policy Advisor for the Council of Europe in Kosovo. Aisling recently worked as a Legal Officer in the Office of the Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague / the Netherlands.

**Karin Ryan** (The Carter Center) was formerly the Assistant Director for Human Rights at The Carter Center until 2000 and is now Senior Advisor for Human Rights. She represented the Center in negotiations to draft the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court, the UN Declaration of Human Rights Defenders, and the General Assembly resolution creating the Human Rights Council, and was an expert member of the U.S. delegation to the Commission on Human Rights in 2000 where she represented the United States in negotiations to create the mandate for the Special Representative to the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders.

**Sima Samar** (Afghanistan) is the Chair of the Independent Afghanistan Human Rights Commission, required by the Bonn Agreement. From December 2001, to June 2002, Dr. Sima Samar served as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Women's Affairs for the Interim Administration of Afghanistan. Dr. Samar was one of only two women cabinet ministers in the transition government. In June 2002, Dr. Samar was elected as the vice-chair of the Loya Jirga Assembly. During the Interim Administration Dr. Samar established the first-ever Afghanistan Ministry of Women's Affairs. Among other accomplishments, the Ministry won the right of women government employees to return to their jobs and to keep their seniority, secured the representation of women as 11% of the Loya Jirga delegates, oversaw the re-entry of girls to schools, launched a women's rights legal department, and opened schools. Dr. Samar fled to Pakistan in 1984 where she founded the Shuhada Organization and Shuhada Clinic dedicated to the health and education of Afghan refugee women and children in the city of Quetta. It is the oldest Afghan NGO working in the region, and the largest Afghan woman-led organization. In 2005, the UN appointed Dr. Samar as the United Nation's Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights for Sudan.

**Johann Sattler** (European Union) is Counselor for Political Affairs & Public Diplomacy for the Embassy of Austria, currently holding presidency of the European Union.

**Melinda Simon** (UN) Assistant to Special Representative to the Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders, Ms. Hina Jilani.

**Eric Sottas** (OMCT) is the Executive Director of the OMCT International Secretariat (World Organization Against Torture) based in Geneva. He was also appointed as one of two "Personalidades" (foreign experts) in the Columbian Working group dealing with the Union Patriotic case. Mr. Sottas holds a degree in law from Geneva University and was awarded the French Prize for Human Rights in 1986. He has also served as a consultant of the General Secretary of UNCTAD from 1980 to 1985, the Secretary-General of the International Movement of Catholic Intellectuals (Pax Romana) from 1975 to 1980, and as the Vice-President of the Conference of International Organizations for Catholics from 1976 to 1980.

**Hans Thoolen** (Martin Ennals Foundation) is the current Chairman of the Martin Ennals Foundation which gives out the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders. Thoolen is also one of the founding members of HURIDOCS, Human Rights Information and Documentation Systems International, established in 1982, of which he served as Executive Board Secretary. HURIDOCS is a global network of human rights organizations concerned with sharing human rights information all over the globe. It was the HURIDOCS' International Advisory Council in 1992 which voted into existence the first Board of the Martin Ennals

Foundation, named after Martin Ennals, the former Secretary General of Amnesty International. Thoolen also served as the Executive Secretary of the International Commission of Jurists in the seventies.

**J. Aloysius Toe** (Liberia) has advocated for human rights since his teenage years. From 1996 to 1999, Aloysius directed the Movement for the Defense of Human Rights, organizing 110 human rights clubs, raising awareness of the abuses of the Taylor government, and promoting human rights education within the Liberian school system. He also organized a network of 245 community-based human rights volunteers in rural communities to monitor and report violations. When he spoke out against Taylor's son, he was arrested and imprisoned. In 2003 he established the Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy, Liberia's first nongovernmental organization concerned with social, cultural, and economic justice. He now works on transitional justice issues and is involved in a campaign to bring former president Taylor to trial in a special court in Sierra Leone.

**Guillermo Vilela Diez de Medina** (Bolivia) has concentrated his professional life on the defense and promotion of human rights. Mr. Vilela is the president of the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights in Bolivia (APDH). In his eighteen years at APDH, he has occupied different executive positions within the organization, including Secretary General and Vice-President. He is the national signatory representative for the "Quito Declaration: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" Quito, Ecuador. Mr. Vilela has two diplomas and a master's degree in economics, and is currently studying for a doctorate degree in human rights. Mr. Vilela has been a consultant to various international institutions, and representative or director of well-known organizations, including the Defense for Children International and the Julio Tumiri Javier Foundation.

**Marcel Wetsh'okonda** (DRC) is the Legislative Advocacy Program Officer of the NGO Global Rights dedicated to social justice and the protection of human rights. He has worked diligently to call for the referral of war crimes perpetrators to the ICC, and is an advocate for judicial reforms within the Congo itself. He has also served as the executive director of the Campagne pour les droits de l'homme au Congo (CDHC-ASBL).

## **World Bank**

**Leyla Yunusova** (Azerbaijan) was one of the founders of the Azerbaijan Popular Front (1989-1991) and also the founder of the first NGO for the protection of human rights in Soviet Azerbaijan in 1988. A Doctor of Historical Sciences, she has served as the Director for the Institute of Peace and Democracy since 1995. She also serves as the Co-chairwoman of the Society of Women of Azerbaijan for Peace and Democracy in Transcaucasus and the chairperson of the International Coalition for Human Rights—uniting human rights defenders from Russia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. Yunusova is also the Chief of the one and only Women's Crisis Center in Azerbaijan. Recently, she helped monitor her country's parliamentary elections in November of 2005 and is dedicated to ensuring democratic freedoms in Azerbaijan.

**Yevgeniy Zhovtis** (Kazakhstan) is Director of the Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (KIBHR), which he founded in 1993. KIBHR has produced over 100 publications on the problems of democratization and economic transformation in relation to the human rights situation and rule of law in Kazakhstan. Zhovtis, the former Vice President of the Independent Trade Union Center of Kazakhstan from 1992-1996, is also a licensed defense lawyer and has served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the "Soros-Kazakhstan" Foundation (1999-2003). Recently, the International Helsinki Federation (IHF) awarded him the

2005 IHF Recognition Award. He has also previously co-chaired the Forum for Democratic Forces of Kazakhstan (2002-2003).