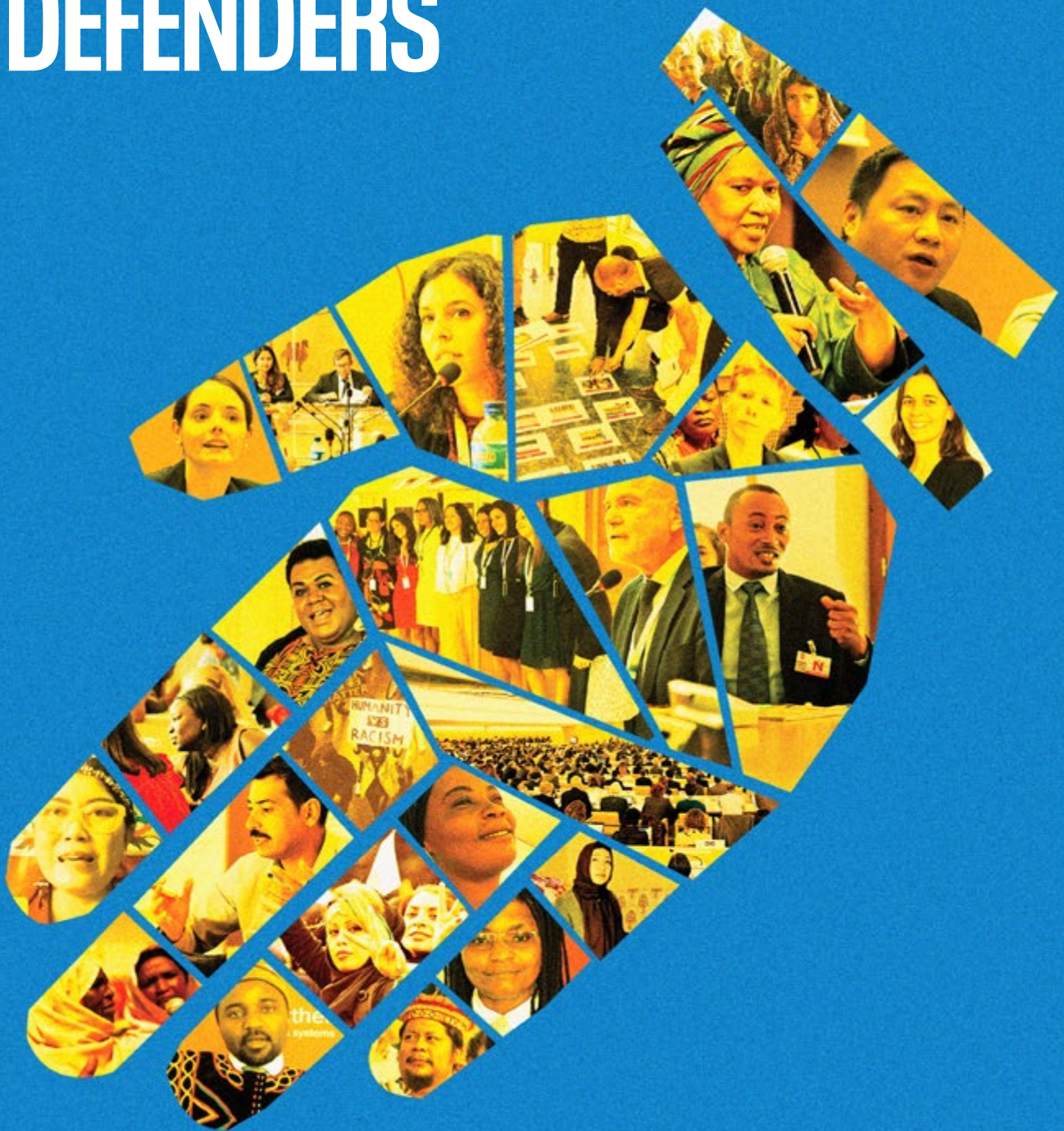


GOAL AND IMPACT SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS





OUR 2021 GOAL:

Human rights defenders are equipped, connected, supported and influential.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED:

Through our human rights defender support programme – which includes practical and expert training both online and offline, advice and advocacy support, facilitating access to high-level policy and decision-makers, and civil society strategisation and coordination – we:

- **provided defenders with the tools, capacities, networks and narratives** necessary to engage and influence international, regional and national mechanisms and actors
- **provided defenders with solidarity** and stronger networks of influence, protection and support
- **helped defenders who were deprived of liberty**, subject to reprisals or other grave violations to seek justice and accountability

SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS



Raphaël Viana
@vdraphael

👉 Our global campaign to [#RepealRSDL](#) in China starts now! You can help us & [#StandWithDefenders](#)

Join the campaign:
[中文活动](#)
[En español:](#)
[En français:](#)



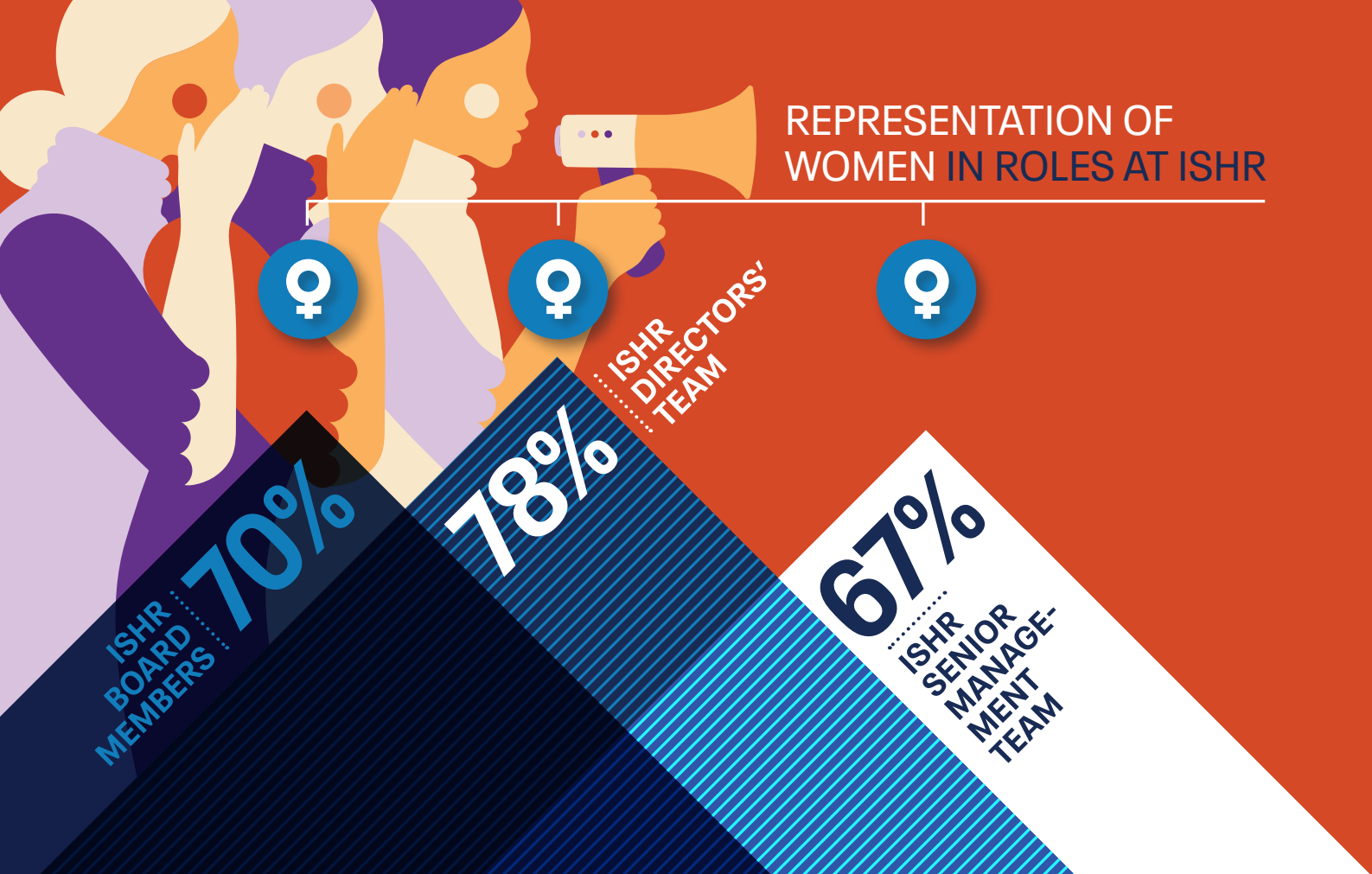
Following sustained advocacy by ISHR – together with public statements and solidarity actions by civil society partners, UN experts and senior government officials – **human rights defenders including Loujain Al-Hathloul and Nouf Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia, and Germain Rukuki of Burundi, were released from arbitrary detention.** We will continue to advocate for their unconditional freedom and safety, as well as that of many other unjustly imprisoned human rights defenders.

With a significantly increased demand for online training and strategic advocacy support, we continued to **scale up the ISHR Academy**, adding new modules and language functionalities, as well as a dedicated platform for participants and alumni of our Human Rights Defender Advocacy Programme (HRDAP). The Academy is an interactive online platform to build the capacity and skills of defenders to leverage the UN human rights system to contribute to national level change. During 2021, the Academy received over 10,000 visits from defenders from all regions of the world, and almost 2,000 resources were downloaded. 92% of HRDAP21 participants surveyed indicated that the HRDAP Platform and ISHR Academy were ‘easy to access and easy to navigate’.



In total, **ISHR provided training and advocacy support to 1,019 human rights defenders from all regions** online and offline, an increase of 191% compared with 2020.

We worked to ensure that international bodies and processes are accessible and responsive to human rights defenders and that they have the tools, resources and networks necessary to **tell their own stories** and articulate their own demands. In 2021, we **supported more than 25 human rights defenders in addressing the UN Human Rights Council directly.**



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Among many others, ISHR was privileged to work with defenders from **France** and the **United Kingdom** to demand an **end to systemic racism in policing**; defenders from **Niger** to call for respect for freedom of expression online and offline; defenders from **Sudan** and **Nicaragua** to push for the establishment of international accountability mechanisms; and partners from **Mozambique**, **the DRC** and **Namibia** to call for **enhanced protection for defenders of the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ persons**.

Addressing the Council directly using the platform provided by ISHR, **Alphonsus Gbanie of Sierra Leone** demanded **accountability for the killing of environmental defenders**, **Denis Ndayishemeza from Burundi** called for an end to the arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killing of defenders, Meudy Osio – the **widow of Venezuelan defender Fernando Alban** – articulated her demands for justice, and **Abdullah al Jureiwi** implored the Council to establish an **international monitoring mechanism on Saudi Arabia**.

In Namibia, ISHR worked with a national coalition of LGBTIQ+ organisations to develop and implement **a strategy to decriminalise same-sex consensual sexual conduct**. The strategy integrates international and regional advocacy – including engagement with the Universal Periodic Review, the UN women's rights committee and the African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights – with a range of national level activities. We also worked with the African Intersex Movement to finalise its strategic framework and further build governance and fundraising skills essential for the movement's functioning and sustainability.




PhilALynch 
@PhilALynch

THREAD


The stories we tell about human rights and those who defend them can contribute to their protection. Check out @ISHRglobal's guide & download the awesome new visuals on human rights defender narratives! <https://ishr.ch/defenders-toolbox/resources/>

@the_hope_guy
@TomClarkeTweets
@anatosaurus



 In partnership with the **Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions**, ISHR provided online **training to staff of national human rights institutions (NHRIs)** from across the region to strengthen their capacities to support and protect defenders. Staff from the NHRIs of **Bahrain, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Palestine, Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand** and **Timor Leste** participated in the programme, which also established a community of practice to enable collaboration on the protection of defenders beyond the course. The training will aid the effective implementation of the Asia Pacific Forum's **Regional Action Plan on Human Rights Defenders**, to which ISHR contributed significantly as an expert reference group member.

 As an aspect of our unique role in and contribution to civil society coordination and strategisation at the international level, ISHR continued to **host and substantially support the secretariat of HRCnet**, a coalition of leading national, regional and international human rights organisations engaged in advocacy at the UN Human Rights Council. HRCnet members made their voices heard in the three regular sessions and five special sessions in 2021, both individually and collectively; calling for more oversight, accountability and better responses from the international community on thematic and country-specific situations. Network members led and joined more than 20 joint statements and collaborated on almost 40 letters, submissions and campaigns. Among other achievements, this led to the convening of a special session and **establishment of an International Commission of Inquiry on Israel/OPT** mandated to investigate violations and abuses of international humanitarian and human rights law, and all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions. HRCnet members also collaborated to **strengthen human rights monitoring mechanisms on Sudan** and on **Belarus**, although tragically failed to prevent the termination of a vital international mechanism on Yemen.

 With the stories told by and about human rights defenders being a crucial element contributing to their protection, we published a **groundbreaking guide on crafting effective narratives** about human rights and those who defend them. In addition to a widely attended public launch, we also provided targeted narratives training to civil society actors engaged at the UN, as well as to human rights defenders in Kenya and Colombia.

“ ISHR calls on the UAE to release all of those human rights defenders like **Ahmed Mansoor who have been arbitrarily detained solely for their work to promote human rights, equality and justice. **The UAE should also guarantee a safe and enabling environment** for the work of human rights defenders, and repeal all laws providing for male guardian authority over female family members. ”**

ISHR DIRECTOR PHIL LYNCH QUOTED IN CYCLING WEEKLY, 15 OCTOBER 2021

IN DEPTH:

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ADVOCACY PROGRAMME

Each year, ISHR's flagship Human Rights Defender Advocacy Programme (HRDAP) **provides activists with the tools they need to navigate the UN to achieve even greater impact on the ground.** Running from 5 April to 25 June 2021, HRDAP21 brought together 19 inspiring activists from around the globe through the brand-new **HRDAP Platform** on the ISHR Academy. Over a 12-week period, the defenders engaged with one another through peer check-in sessions, with human rights experts and advocates through live Q&As and discussions, received individual and group coaching sessions, and developed advocacy strategies to effect change back home.

This truly global HRDAP21 cohort comprised defenders from 17 countries, including **Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, South Africa, Spain** and other countries with restrictive environments.

The defenders work on a wide range of topics, including the advancement of **women's rights**, the **rights of LGBTIQ+ persons**, and **migrant and refugee rights**, as well as **combating racism** and police violence, **countering repression and authoritarianism**, and protecting the **environment and indigenous peoples' rights**.

Despite continued restrictions due to the global pandemic which meant that HRDAP21 took place fully online for its second consecutive year, the dynamic group of defenders remained more committed than ever, engaging actively in the programme and forming a virtual global community of solidarity and support, all while continuing their vital human rights work in their respective countries.

Three months after the end of the programme, HRDAP21 alumni had continued their engagement at the international level. They had submitted reports and met with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, engaged with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association and with the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, and delivered evidence and testimony at the 47th Session of the Human Rights Council.

“ Being part of **HRDAP 2021** is a unique experience. Firstly, because the platform they offer us to improve our knowledge about international advocacy is very useful, accessible and practical, besides having many resources and tools that allow us to amplify our work as human rights defenders. Secondly, having the opportunity to **connect and meet defenders** from all over the world makes me feel very motivated, not only to learn about their experiences but also because it makes me more aware that **in every corner of the world actions are being taken to transform our reality and to live in fairer societies.** ”

DONOVAN JIMÉNEZ ORTEGA, FRAY FRANCISCO
DE VITORIA HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER, MEXICO

INCREASE IN ISHR ONLINE MEDIA ACTIVITY SINCE 2020

SESSIONS ON WWW.ISHR.CH

↑ **44%**

212,212

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

↑ **36%**

994

YOUTUBE VIEWS

↑ **32%**

21,731

FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

↑ **10%**

23,407

TWITTER FOLLOWERS

CHINESE

↑ **19%**

5,356

FRENCH

↑ **15%**

533

SPANISH

↑ **19%**

770

ENGLISH

↑ **10%**

27,413



IN DEPTH:

EFFECTIVE NARRATIVES TO ENHANCE PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The stories and narratives that are told about human rights defenders at the UN have a major impact on how they are understood and supported on the ground. According to Media Cloud – an open-source platform that tracks the contents of online news – between 1 January 2019 and 3 June 2020 forty percent of news stories which referenced human rights defenders also referred to the UN.

During the course of 2021, together with a team of communications experts and researchers, ISHR explored perceptions and views that diplomats working at the UN have about human rights and people who defend them. Our objective was to understand the messages that best increase support for human rights defenders at the UN and to craft more effective human rights narratives to increase support for defenders both at the international level and on the ground.

In June 2021, ISHR published a guide with our key findings and recommendations, named **A Seat at the Table**. The guide is for anyone working within or engaging with the UN system to promote and protect human rights and the people who defend them.

With growing evidence that hope-based and values-led narratives are most effective in changing people's hearts and minds and motivating action, the guide provides practical advice and tips on how to craft and implement an effective human rights defender narrative in general and in particular at the UN.

In a nutshell, the guide recommends that:

1. Narratives about people who defend human rights primarily focus on their motivations, achievements and objectives, rather than the dangers and risks they face. Yes, too many of us face risks and a grim reality today, but we mustn't lose sight of our desired destination – the reason we push on and ask others to join us: a better tomorrow.
2. We give frequent reminders that we can all contribute to fulfil the promise of human rights – that creating a world in which everyone enjoys freedom, justice, equality and dignity requires a collective effort.
3. Our stories show what human rights defenders having a seat at the table looks like, whether that's a corporate board table, a conflict resolution and peacebuilding roundtable, or the speakers' table in Room XX at the Palais des Nations. The participation and inputs of defenders are essential to identify problems and ensure that solutions are informed and influenced by the communities concerned.

We can all help cultivate narratives that are beneficial to human rights and the people who defend them. We want to create a picture that showcases the impact achieved and improvements delivered when people promote human rights, that demonstrates the benefits of ensuring these people's essential voices are heard, and encourages everyone to play their part in creating a fairer world.