

July 18, 2023

Dear Members of the U.S. Congress:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to express our support for the **Global Voices of Freedom Act (S.962)**, which Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez introduced earlier this year along with Senators Ben Cardin, Jeanne Shaheen, Chris Coons, and Chris Murphy.

Our organizations work internationally on a range of issues that contribute to a more just, secure, and democratic world. Our work depends on the ability of our local partners to safely advocate in their home countries for reforms that advance peace, human rights, democracy, development, civic space, religious freedom, and an end to corruption. Yet many of our partners and other local reformers are facing attacks on their personal safety.

As the United States scales up its effort to counter the rise of repressive regimes, it is in its national interest to support the courageous individuals – commonly referred to as human rights defenders – who risk their lives to advocate for reforms in their home countries.

Attacks on human rights defenders have skyrocketed. Sophisticated surveillance technology is being used to identify and target these individuals – including those living in exile – and subject them to coercion, illegal rendition, and even direct attacks. Many are facing harassment, surveillance, arbitrary detention, torture, and threats to their families and friends. Many have paid the ultimate price for speaking truth to power.

Members of the U.S. Congress have a long history of supporting human rights defenders. For more than a decade, Congress has provided funding for emergency grants to help human rights defenders at risk. For years, members of Congress and presidential administrations from both political parties have called for the release of unjustly detained individuals and demanded justice for those killed.

That said, we share Senator Menendez's belief that we can and must do more. U.S. diplomats work under challenging circumstances to defend and promote democracy and human rights. Passage of the **Global Voices of Freedom Act** will require the United States to adopt a strategic, results-driven, and whole-of-government approach to supporting human rights defenders. The Act will give diplomats the monitoring, reporting, and coordination tools they need to support human rights defenders. It will increase protections for human rights defenders at the United Nations and other multilateral spaces. It will also make it easier and safer for defenders to communicate with and request support from U.S. embassies.

Thank you as always for your leadership in the cause of human rights. We hope you will join Senator Menendez in standing with human rights defenders and endorse this important legislation.

Respectfully,

1. Accountability Counsel (USA)
2. Adorers of the Blood of Christ US Region JPIC office (USA)
3. Afghan Canadian Civil Society Forum (Canada)
4. Afghan Civil Society Forum (Afghanistan)
5. Afghanistan Institute for Civil Society (AICS) (Afghanistan)
6. Afghanistan Rehabilitation and Women Education Organization (ARWEO) (Afghanistan)
7. Afrewatch (Democratic Republic of Congo)
8. Africa Child Care Nation (South Sudan)
9. Agency for Turkana Development Initiatives (ATUDIS) (Kenya)
10. Alliance for Vietnam's Democracy (USA)
11. Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) (Philippines)
12. American Jewish World Service (USA)
13. Amnesty International USA (USA)
14. Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (Thailand)
15. AsM Law Office (Indonesia)
16. Bank Information Center (USA)
17. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (MENA region)
18. Campaign for a New Myanmar (USA)
19. CAPNI Christian Aid Program (Kurdistan-Iraq)
20. Center for Democracy and Development (Mozambique)
21. Center for Human Rights and Environment (CEDHA) (USA and Argentina)
22. Center for Human Rights in Iran (USA)
23. Centre for Financial Accountability (India)
24. Church World Service (USA)
25. Civic Response on Environment and Development (Uganda)
26. CIVICUS (South Africa)
27. Civil Society and Human Rights Activists Networks (Afghanistan)
28. Civil Society Development and Growth Organization (CSDGO) (Afghanistan)
29. Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, A.C. (Mexico)
30. Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces (USA)
31. Council for Global Equality (USA)
32. Crane Center for Mass Atrocity Prevention (USA)
33. Delhi Solidarity Group (India)
34. Defenders for Human Rights (Netherlands)
35. Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN) (USA)
36. Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Peru)
37. Due Process of Law Foundation (USA)

38. EarthRights International (USA)
39. Ecumenical Advocacy Network on the Philippines (USA)
40. Education Defenders Network- EDN (Canada)
41. Environmental Defender Law Center (USA)
42. Environmental Investigation Agency (USA)
43. Equitable Cambodia (Cambodia)
44. Fair Law Organization for Women (FLOW) (Afghanistan)
45. Foreign Policy for America (USA)
46. Fortify Rights (Thailand)
47. Free Election Transparency Watch Organization (FETWO) (Afghanistan)
48. Free Russia Foundation (USA)
49. Freedom Now (USA)
50. Friends Committee on National Legislation (USA)
51. Front Line Defenders (Ireland)
52. Fund for Global Human Rights (USA)
53. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (USA)
54. Global Citizen (USA)
55. Global Witness (USA)
56. Green Advocates International (Liberia)
57. Guatemala Human Rights Commission (USA)
58. Hammurabi Human Rights Organization (HHRO) (Iraq)
59. Harikar NGO (Iraq)
60. Hong Kong Watch (United Kingdom)
61. Human Rights First (USA)
62. Human Rights Online Philippines (HRonlinePH) (Philippines)
63. Human Rights Watch (USA)
64. Humanity Organization for Development (Cambodia)
65. IMPACT Kenya (Kenya)
66. In Defense of Human Rights and Dignity Movement (iDEFEND) (Philippines)
67. Institute for International Law and Human Rights (USA)
68. Interfaith Council of Vietnam, Overseas Office (USA)
69. International Campaign for the Rohingya (USA)
70. International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (USA)
71. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) (Switzerland)
72. The Iraqi Institution for Development (Iraq)
73. Isiolo Gender Watch (Kenya)
74. Jamaa Resource Initiatives (Kenya)
75. Jiyan Foundation for Human Rights US (USA)
76. Justice for All (USA)
77. Land, Environment, Advocacy and Research Net (LEARN) - Waso (Kenya)

78. Latinoamerica Sustentable (USA)
79. Latin America Working Group (USA)
80. Livestock Direct Concern CBO (Kenya)
81. Manushya Foundation (Thailand)
82. Marsabit Women Advocacy and Development Organization (Kenya)
83. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (USA)
84. Medical Action Group (Philippines)
85. MoveOn (USA)
86. National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd (USA)
87. National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Kenya (Kenya)
88. National Institute for Human Rights (Iraq)
89. National Peace Corps Association (USA)
90. Natural Justice (South Africa)
91. New Society Reconstruction and Development Organization (NSRDO) (Afghanistan)
92. No Business With Genocide (USA)
93. Odhikar (Bangladesh)
94. Ogiek Peoples Development Program (OPDP) (Kenya)
95. Oil Refinery Residents Association-Uganda (Uganda)
96. Oil-Workers' Rights Protection Organization PU (Azerbaijan)
97. OT Watch (Mongolia)
98. Oxfam America (USA)
99. Pakistan India Peoples' Forum for Peace & Democracy (India)
100. Peace and Freedom Organization (Iraq)
101. Peace Brigades International (USA)
102. Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA) (Philippines)
103. Philippine Human Rights Information Center (PhilRights) (Philippines)
104. Project on Organizing, Development, Education, and Research (PODER) (Mexico)
105. Protection International (Belgium)
106. Rahnoward Social and Civil Association (Afghanistan)
107. Republic of Vietnam Next Generations Organization (USA)
108. Rivers Without Boundaries Coalition (Mongolia)
109. Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights (USA)
110. Sierra Leone Land Alliance (Sierra Leone)
111. Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team (USA)
112. St. Columban Mission for Justice, Peace and Ecology (USA)
113. Strategy for Humanity (USA)
114. Students for Free Burma (USA)
115. Thang Nghia Society (USA)
116. The Freedom Initiative (USA)
117. The Greater Philadelphia Vietnamese American Community (USA)

118. The New Dawn Pacesetter (Kenya)
119. The Sentry (USA)
120. Transparency International US (USA)
121. Tsikini (Mexico)
122. Turkmen Rescue Foundation (Iraq)
123. Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (USA)
124. United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries (USA)
125. Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (USA)
126. US Advocacy Coalition for Myanmar -USACM (USA)
127. Vietnam Human Rights Day – May 11 Organization (USA)
128. Vietnamese American Community of Pennsylvania (USA)
129. Vietnamese Association Jacksonville, Florida (USA)
130. Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI, Indonesian Forum for the Environment) (Indonesia)
131. Win Without War (USA)
132. Witness Radio - Uganda (Uganda)
133. Women Like-minded Association - Afghanistan (Afghanistan)
134. Women's Capacity Building & Development Organization (WCBDO) (Afghanistan)
135. Worthy Association for Tackling Environmental Ruins (WATER) (Nigeria)
136. Youth Alliance Working Group of the Children's Policy and Funding Initiative (USA)

** Headquarters of organizations are listed in parentheses. Many of the listed organizations work in multiple countries.*