

# ISHR Strategic Framework | An ambitious agenda for tumultuous times

27.01.2017



We live in tumultuous times. Political and religious extremism, mass migration, rising inequality, increased conflict over scarce resources, and the tide of intolerance and illiberalism all pose grave threats to a fairer, more just world.

Human rights defenders – those brave people who stand up for the rights and freedoms of others – are our best hope. Their work is indispensable. It contributes to good government, combating poverty and sustainable development. It exposes corruption, empowers the marginalised, and provides justice to victims. Sadly, all too often, their work is also imperiled, undertaken at unacceptable risk or cost.

In such challenging times, human rights defenders need a principled and collaborative organisation to stand with them. An organisation that is strong and solid but that is also dynamic and innovative, capable of responding to new and evolving opportunities and threats.

ISHR's [Strategic Framework for 2017-2020](#) will ensure that we are just such an organisation, helping to build defenders' capacity, strengthen their protection, and amplify their impact.

Informed by face-to-face consultations with more than 700 activists and advocates from around the world, the strategy builds on over 30 years of ISHR experience in empowering defenders to use international and regional human rights systems to achieve national-level change.

The strategy also responds to our times, prioritising support to those defenders who work to confront power, privilege, inequality and exclusion – women human rights defenders, defenders promoting corporate accountability, defenders of LGBTI rights, and defenders of the rights of migrants and refugees, among others.

It is an ambitious strategy. It continues 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 with access to a digital training platform and community, establishing an intensive Fellowship programme for defenders at risk, and publishing our tactical handbooks and guides in more languages and formats.

We'll strengthen our partnerships, continuing to collaborate deeply with civil society actors, playing a unique role in NGO coordination and strategisation in Geneva and New York, and building alliances with progressive business enterprises. We'll also explore 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, developing a Global Network of National Human Rights Defender Focal Points, partnering with local actors to enact national protection laws, and developing an 'Implementation Hub' to share resources and lessons learned.

There is a strong emphasis throughout the Strategic Framework on monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptation. The strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains dynamic and responsive in fast-changing times. As a key partner, we would welcome your input at any time.

There is also strong emphasis 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.

We look forward to partnering with you in the implementation of this [Strategic Framework](#) and the achievement of our shared human rights agenda.

Yours sincerely,

**Lucia Nader, Chair of the ISHR Board**

**Phil Lynch, ISHR Executive Director**

Your support for our ambitious agenda during these tumultuous human rights times has never been more important! <https://t.co/8WixneCAPD>

— Phil Lynch (@PhilALynch) [January 30, 2017](#)

ISHR