

LRWC NEWSLETTER

September 2013 Edition

LRWC ACTION NEWS

Bangladesh

Adilur Rahman Khan denied bail - LRWC sent [another letter](#) on 10 September calling for the release and objecting to the prosecution of Adilur Rahman Khan, Secretary of the prominent human rights NGO Odhikar and a member of OMCT General Assembly. Arrested 10 September 2013, he remains arbitrarily detained in Kashimpur Jail on the outskirts of Dhaka city after the third bail application was denied on 19 September 2013. Following publication by Odhikar of a report implicating government agents in the death of 61 people during a rally on 5-6 May, Mr. Khan was charged with a variety of trumped up charges—distorting images, publishing a false report and disrupting law and order—under the new Information and Communication Technology Act and the Penal Code. The trial is set for 21 October although no prosecutor has been appointed.



Adilur Rahman Khan | frontlinedefenders.org

Bahrain

Complaint against Attorney General of Bahrain rejected by IAP - LRWC wrote again on [20 September](#) to Canadian members of the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP) asking for information on the investigation of the complaint against IAP Executive member Ali bin Fadhel Al-Buainain, the Attorney General of Bahrain. The complaint, filed in April 2013, detailed systemic abuses in Bahrain authorized and overseen by the Attorney General. The complaint was based on extensive reports by Ceartas Irish Lawyers for Human Rights and the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry. LRWC subsequently learned that the complaint had been rejected and the Attorney General of Bahrain re-elected to the Executive Committee of the IAP. LRWC is seeking reasons for this decision.



Dr. Ali bin Fadhel Al-Buainain
(<http://www.bna.bh/>)

Cambodia



Photo courtesy of LICADHO

Violence against people protesting elections - LRWC wrote [a letter](#) expressing grave concern over violence by government forces against demonstrators, bystanders, human rights observers and journalists. During ongoing conflict over irregularities in the 28 July national elections, there has been a military build-up in and around Phnom Penh. Government forces have imposed limits on peaceful public demonstrations and used arbitrary and excessive force, including shooting indiscriminately with live-ammunition. On 15 September, government authorities blocked access to a large peaceful demonstration and used water cannons on some demonstrators

who removed roadblocks. That night, police used excessive force against a group of young men throwing debris at a roadblock, beating already-restrained people with batons and electric prods and using automatic weapons to fire into the crowd, killing one passerby and injuring others. On 20 September 2013, more than 100 military police in riot gear ejected about 28 people conducting a peaceful protest vigil in a public park, Wat Phnom. On 22 September 2013 dozens of masked civilians accompanied by police used sticks, electric prods and slingshots in a violent attack against about 20 land rights activists, human rights observers and journalists conducting a peaceful protest vigil at Wat Phnom. Police present on the scene did not attempt to prevent or stop the violence, and they confiscated or smashed journalists' photography equipment. LRWC called on the government Cambodia to immediately cease all forms of intimidation, harassment and violence against peaceful demonstrators, human rights defenders and journalists.



Photo courtesy of LICADHO

Wrongfully convicted people released - On 25 September 2013 Cambodia's Supreme Court acquitted two men, Born Samnang and Sok Sam Oeun, who had been wrongfully convicted for the 2004 murder of union activist Chea Vichea and had served more than five years in jail. LRWC was among many organizations that conducted advocacy to have them released and urged the Cambodian government to conduct a proper investigation into the murder of human rights defender, and trade union leader, Chea Vichea. A monitor from LRWC attended the Appeals Court hearing of Born Samnang and Sok Sam Oeun on 17 August 2009. LRWC discussed this situation in a [written report](#) to the 12th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in September 2009.



A monk sprays Born Samnang (left) and Sok Sam Oeun (right) with water after release from prison 26 September 2013. Photo courtesy of LICADHO

Canada

Right to legal aid - LRWC prepared a summary of Canada's international law duties to provide legal aid arising from provisions of UN and OAS treaties as interpreted by international tribunals and monitoring bodies. A second report summarized relevant Canadian jurisprudence. These summaries were prepared for an investigation by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

- [International Right to Legal Aid in Relation to the British Columbia Missing Women Commission of Inquiry](#), J. Grant Sinclair, 2 September 2013.
- [Canadian Jurisprudence Regarding the Right to Legal Aid](#), Erika Heinrich, 2 September 2013

Two experts appointed by CEDAW visited Canada from 9 to 13 September 2013 to carry out the investigation. CEDAW will make public a summary of its findings, as provided for by article 12 of the Optional Protocol. LRWC plans to produce a comprehensive guide on international rights to legal aid covering treaty provisions and jurisprudence within the human rights systems of the UN, OAS, African Union and the European Union.

Iran

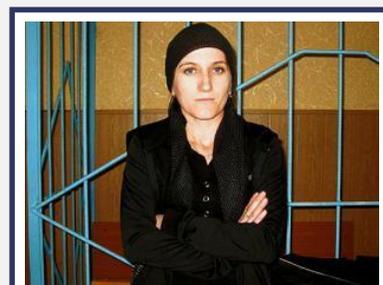
Lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh released - Nasrin Sotoudeh was released from Evin Prison in Tehran, Iran on 18 September with other political prisoners. Nasrin Sotoudeh had been arrested, charged and jailed for her work as a human rights lawyer representing cases and causes unpopular with the government of Iran. She was arrested 4 September 2010 and ultimately charged with “acting against national security,” “collusion and assembly against the regime,” “membership in the Defenders of Human Rights Centre,” and “failing to wear an Islamic headscarf.” In January 2011 she was convicted and sentenced to a total of 11 years: 1 year prison term for “propaganda against the regime”; a 5 year prison term for “acting against national security”; a 5 year prison term for not wearing a hijab during a videotaped message; and a 20 year ban on practicing law and leaving the Islamic Republic of Iran after her release. Nasrin Sotoudeh is married with two children who were 10 and 3 at the time of her arrest. LRWC wrote letters calling for her release in [September 2010](#) and in [January 2011](#). Ms Sotoudeh was a recipient of the European Parliament's Sakharov human rights prize in 2012.



Nasrin Sotoudeh

Russia

Death Threats against lawyers – Russian authorities replied to LRWC's letter ([June](#)) requesting investigation of death threats against lawyers acting for the families of victims, stating enigmatically, “Your petition is sent to the inter-regional investigation commission for consideration. We will inform you about the results.”



Ms Sapiyat Magomedova |
<http://www.frontlinedefenders.org>

Turkey

Mass trial of lawyers delayed again - Another day in court for the mass trial of 46 lawyers, three law office employees and one journalist in Turkey took place in 17 September. Trial observers from the Amsterdam-based Lawyers for Lawyers also represented LRWC. Of the 46 people arrested in November 2011, fifteen lawyers and the journalist remain in jail with no end to the trial in sight. Applications for bail were again refused on 17 September and the proceedings adjourned to 19 December 2013. LRWC is working with other groups to prepare a petition to the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention seeking a declaration that the detention of those remaining in jail is arbitrary and constitutes a violation by Turkey of duties under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to ensure rights to liberty, the presumption of innocence, pre-trial release, a fair trial and a trial within a reasonable time. To read other LRWC work on this file go to the [Turkey section](#) of the campaign page on the [LRWC website](#).



Vietnam



Trial of lawyer Le Quoc Quan rescheduled - The trial of Le Quoc Quan originally scheduled for 9 July, has been re-set to 2 October. The Canadian Embassy in Vietnam has applied for permission to attend the proceedings as has the European Union delegation. Le Quoc Quan's brother, Le Quoc Quyet was arrested on 25 September at the home of blogger Nguyen Tuang Thuy along with 7 others including the host, his wife and daughter. Five of those arrested were released later the same day. Le Quoc Quyet and two others remain in custody. One of those arrested is the ex-wife of lawyer and blogger Nguyen Van Hai (Dieu Cay), currently serving a 12-year sentence for "conducting propaganda against the

state." To view LRWC communications regarding Dieu Cay, Le Quoc Quan and other human rights defenders in Vietnam see the [Vietnam section](#) of the Campaign page on the LRWC website.

Zimbabwe

Trial of Beatrice Mtetwa adjourned - The trial of well-known human rights lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa resumed on 24 September 2013 and was adjourned to 4 October when prosecution witnesses failed to appear. In March Ms Mtetwa was arrested and charged with obstructing justice after asking police to produce a warrant authorizing their search of her client, outgoing Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and the offices of opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change. Detective Assistant Inspector Wilfred Chibage testified that Mtetwa could not have interfered with the police search of outgoing Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's research and communications office as she was under arrest and detained in a police vehicle and at the same time handcuffed. LRWC has objected to the prosecution and is following the proceedings. LRWC letters on this case [are available here](#).



THE 23RD SESSION OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Three LRWC representatives attended the 24th session of the Human Rights Council from 9 - 27 September 2013, Gary Anandasangaree, Vani Selvarajah and Paulo de Tarso Lugon Arantes. LRWC made two oral statements at the 24th Session:

- [Re: Untimely Passing of Human Rights Defender Sunila Abeyasekara](#) – Delivered by Gary Anandasangaree on 9 September 2013
- [Re: Independent Civil Society Organizations and Democracy: Thailand, Cambodia](#) – Chapter 13 - Delivered by Vani Selvarajah on 16 September 2013

Several reports were presented, including ones of special interest to LRWC

- [A/HRC/24/42](#) - Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence
- [A/HRC/24/41](#) - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya - Extractive industries and indigenous peoples
- [A/HRC/24/49](#) - Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on its sixth session
- [A/HRC/24/6](#) - Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Colombia
- [A/HRC/24/11](#) - Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Canada
- [A/HRC/24/12](#) - Report of the Working Group on the UPR of Bangladesh
- [A/HRC/24/15](#) - Report of the Working Group on the UPR of Cameroon
- [A/HRC/24/36](#) - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia
- [A/HRC/24/31](#) - Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan

NEW: DONATE OR COLLECT AIRMILES FOR LRWC

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- Ask us for a LRWC Airmiles card and use it to collect miles from participating vendors.
- Contact us to receive YOUR card today (lrwc@portal.org, 604-738-0338).
- Ask for our barcode and scan it at participating vendors.

Ways to Donate:

- Transfer Airmiles from your account to LRWC by calling 1-888-247-6453.
- LRWC's account is 8008-979-6800.



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