

Issue 10: September/October 2007

# IFEX Advocacy Action News

*A bi-monthly bulletin for IFEX members to promote campaigns and share advocacy information*

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## IFEX CAMPAIGNS and ADVOCACY SUPPORT PROGRAMME

### Campaigns/Advocacy at the IFEX General Meeting in Uruguay

The IFEX General Meeting (GM) held in Montevideo, Uruguay, focused in great part on campaigning and advocacy support for member groups. Starting with online campaigning and security-related workshops, member participants at the GM also facilitated campaigns/advocacy sessions concerning China and the Olympics, Nepal, Parallel Powers in Latin America and advocacy networking in Africa. A Burma Action Group was also formed spontaneously during the GM to address the crisis unfolding in that country. See below for more detailed descriptions. During the "strategic directions" part of the IFEX business sessions, campaigning and advocacy efforts were discussed as a central part of IFEX work. A new campaigns committee was formed to discuss key aspects of the programme (for more information or to sign up please write to [campaigns@ifex.org](mailto:campaigns@ifex.org).) Other efforts including those of the Tunisia Monitoring Group, Russian-speaking countries, Latin American countries and others participated in discussions outside the formal GM agenda.

## RAPID AND ORGANISED ACTION RESPONSE (ROAR)

Rapid and Organised Action Response (ROAR) is part of the IFEX Campaigns Programme strategy to support fast, short-term follow-up actions on free expression violations. Write to [campaigns@ifex.org](mailto:campaigns@ifex.org) if your organisation would like more information, or see <http://campaigns.ifex.org/en/about.html>

### INTERNAL APPEALS FOR JOINT ACTION

Your signature is needed!

**Azerbaijan (Institute for Reporter Freedom and Safety):** IRFS seeks IFEX support for creation of a memorial to slain journalist Elmar Huseynov. For a copy of the internal appeal, see: [http://www.ifex.org/download/en/azerbaijan\\_oct07.doc](http://www.ifex.org/download/en/azerbaijan_oct07.doc). Please send your organisational signature by replying to [campaigns@ifex.org](mailto:campaigns@ifex.org) with a copy to [irfs.az@gmail.com](mailto:irfs.az@gmail.com) before 2 November 2007.

**Bahrain (Bahrain Center for Human Rights):** BCHR seeks IFEX members' support for an appeal to authorities to respect freedom of expression. For a copy of the internal appeal, see: [http://www.ifex.org/download/en/bahrain\\_october07.doc](http://www.ifex.org/download/en/bahrain_october07.doc). Please email your signatures to [campaigns@ifex.org](mailto:campaigns@ifex.org) with a copy to [nabeel.rajab@bahrainrights.org](mailto:nabeel.rajab@bahrainrights.org) by 5 November 2007.

## JOINT STATEMENTS FROM THE IFEX GENERAL MEETING

**Latin America (CENCOS):** Montevideo Declaration - Regional Initiative Concerning "Parallel Powers". Thirty-five IFEX members and partners urge governments to take action to address threats to free expression by organized criminal groups that act outside the rule of law, often with complicity of legal political and economic groups. <http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/87007/>

**Africa (JED/NUSOJ):** Twenty-five IFEX members and partners call for release of jailed journalists, reform of oppressive media laws, respect for free expression. <http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/86987/>

**Indonesia (AJI):** Twenty-three IFEX members and partners condemn a Supreme Court ruling in the \$100 million libel case against "Time Magazine". <http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/86975/>

**Egypt (EOHR):** Forty-one IFEX members and other organisations call for an end to imprisonment of journalists. <http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/86921/>

**Burma (Mizzima News):** Twenty-five IFEX members and partners push for a reopening of all lines of communication and media within and into the country. <http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/86965/>

**Sri Lanka (FMM):** Thirty-two IFEX members and partners appeal for action to strengthen media freedom and freedom of expression during period of ongoing violence. <http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/86989/>

**Tunisia (EOHR):** Twenty-three IFEX members and partners call for the right of human rights activist, journalist to move freely. <http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/86971/>

## FOCUS ON MEMBER ADVOCACY

### SUMMARY OF GENERAL MEETING AND POST-GM ACTIVITIES

Campaigns sessions at the IFEX GM were well attended and helped to establish directions for campaigning and advocacy activities at the local, regional and international levels. Organisations from across the IFEX network were involved in designing, facilitating and participating in the following sessions that will continue developing with support from the IFEX Campaigns Programme. Other campaigning efforts are also underway in Azerbaijan –more information coming soon.

For more information on any of these efforts, please contact one of the main groups listed as facilitator for the given session, or write to [campaigns@ifex.org](mailto:campaigns@ifex.org)

#### **The Tunisia Monitoring Group (TMG)**

The Tunisia Monitoring Group (TMG), which now numbers 18 IFEX members with the inclusion of Maharat Foundation of Lebanon and the Cartoonists Rights Network, is active on several fronts. To mark the 20th anniversary of President Ben Ali's coup, the TMG is cooperating with other human rights groups in Washington, D.C. to hold an event on 13 November featuring a number of Tunisian activists. IFEX member the Observatoire pour la liberté de presse, d'édition et de création (OLPEC) will be represented. Also, at the IFEX GM, TMG members made plans to contribute to the UN Periodical Review of Tunisia, and other approaches to the UN and the EU. The Arabic Network of Human Rights Information (HRInfo) is launching a report on paid advertising masquerading as newspaper articles across the Middle East and North Africa, in Cairo on 8 November. TMG members are also trying to get the travel ban lifted from recently freed human rights activist Mohamed Abbou, who, on 22 October, was prevented from going to

Cairo at the invitation of HRInfo to monitor the trial of publisher Ibrahim Essa. For more information, see <http://campaigns.ifex.org/tmg>

### **Nepal**

IFEX members CEHURDES (Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Studies) and the Federation of Nepalese Journalists, along with International Media Support, presented successes and current activities of the International Mission for Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression to Nepal. Key points included a return mission planned for early 2008 with the involvement of various IFEX members and other partners, and supportive on-the-ground activities aimed at fostering an improved climate for free expression in the current transitional period in Nepal. IFEX continues to work with its Nepalese members in the areas of advocacy-related capacity building and educational support.

### **Poderes Paralelos**

IFEX member organisations and affiliates representing Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, Paraguay, Brasil, Chile and Uruguay, among others, were present in this session aimed at addressing the dire threats posed by 'parallel power' groups against journalists, media and freedom of expression. These groups include mafias, narco-traffickers and illegal cartels, and economic and political interests linked to them. The regional initiative is being developed by IFEX's Latin American members with support from international member and non-member groups. It currently involves analysing the problem in the various participating countries, developing common definitions and approaches, communicating and exchanging information, and planning strategies for longer term advocacy efforts. This session was introduced by Adriana León of IPYS, the Institute for Press and Society and the IFEX Campaigns Coordinator. Lenina Mesa of Probidad presented a 'case study' context-overview of the problem, focusing on Central America, which was followed by a discussion on strategy development, facilitated by Jacinto Rodríguez Munguía of IPYS and PRENDE Mexico. The coalition created an internal appeal that called for urgent action to address threats to free expression by 'parallel powers'. The joint action was signed by 32 IFEX members. <http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/87007/>

### **Africa**

A session on the Gambia campaign, to be led by the Network of African Free Expression Organizations (NAFEO), was cancelled when a number of African members were unable to attend the GM because of visa issues. Instead, groups from Liberia, Somalia, West Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo, led by Tshivis Tshivuadi of Journaliste en Danger, worked together to produce a joint statement listing issues of concern and supporting regional efforts by NAFEO, the International Federation of Journalists and the World Association of Newspapers, which coordinated the Declaration of Table Mountain. <http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/86987/>

### **China and the Olympics**

Carl Morten Iverson of Norwegian PEN facilitated a session on campaigning and advocacy efforts related to China and the upcoming 2008 Olympics, which drew 14 participants. Norwegian PEN together with International PEN (Writers in Prison Committee), and other PEN affiliates have worked with groups like Amnesty International on advocacy strategies. Norwegian PEN plans to launch a joint newsletter in January and to develop a seminar for sports journalists targeting both student and sports reporters and other journalists by spring 2008. Other groups reported on their activities: the World Association of Newspapers and the World Press Freedom Committee will co-host a conference on China in early 2008; Index on Censorship and Freedom House have engaged in on-the-ground activities in the U.K. and the U.S. respectively; and the Committee to Protect Journalists launched a 79-page report, "*Falling Short*", written by and for journalists going to Beijing ([http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/2007/Falling\\_Short/China/](http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/2007/Falling_Short/China/)). The group emphasised the need to develop coordinated joint actions through IFEX in support of member advocacy activities.

### **Burma Action Group (BAG)**

Twenty IFEX members and partners formed the Burma Action Group to respond to the unfolding humanitarian crisis. As a network focused on press freedom, freedom of expression, and access to information, the Burma Action Group is particularly concerned about violations that took place during the recent crackdown, such as the arrest and continued detention of members of the Burmese media and other activists, the reported suspension of private journals and newspapers in Rangoon, the Burmese government's cutting of Internet access, and the plight of media forced into exile. Special attention is being paid to the murder of Japanese journalist Kenji Nagai at the hands of Burmese soldiers. IFEX's regional member the Southeast Asian Press Alliance is facilitating the group with support from IFEX staff. Since the GM, new members have joined the group, bringing the total number to 24 member and non-member groups. The group aspires to put free expression and the need for an investigative mission into the death of Nagai onto the UN mission agenda during its Burma visit in early November.

## **OTHER IFEX CAMPAIGNS AND ADVOCACY RELATED ACTIVITIES**

### **South East Asia**

The Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA) is holding a regional editorial/campaigns meeting in Bangkok, Thailand (31 October - 2 November). Supported by the IFEX Clearing House, representatives from members of SEAPA will attend workshops on alerts preparation and campaigning at national, regional and international levels. Participants will exchange experiences in advocacy and campaigning and develop ideas for future collaboration. Regional SEAPA members in attendance include Mizzima News, the Cambodian Association for the Protection of Journalists, Timor Lorosae Journalists Association, the Alliance of Independent Journalists (Indonesia), the Centre for Independent Journalism (Malaysia) and the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (Philippines).

### **Tajikistan**

Local media organisations in Tajikistan are campaigning to reform national media legislation. The National Association of Independent Mass Media (NANSMIT), Union of Journalists of Tajikistan, Human Rights Bureau, Foundation for Journalists Protection and Memory, Media Alliance of Tajikistan and Public Association "HOMA" are actively involved in campaigning to change the operating law "on the press and other media outlets." The groups have formed a working group to bring the law in line with international standards and to better reflect public interest. Sessions involve officials from government ministries and parliament as well as media representatives. By the end of the campaign, the groups are expected to have draft amendments and additions to the law submitted to parliament. "The given campaign is aimed at consolidating efforts of all media organisations and media outlets of the country, in order to analyse and reveal gaps and discrepancies of legal provisions," said the head of NANSMIT, Knuriddin Karshiboyev. The campaign is supported by Kazakh media advocacy organisation Adil Soz with support from IFEX through the Central Asia Programme.

## **TOPICS and TOOLS**

### **WEBSITES OF INTEREST**

#### **The Road to Justice**

A CPJ special report: how advocates won a rare conviction in slaying of a Philippine journalist  
<http://www.cpj.org/roadtojustice/road.html>

#### **Non-violence in Burma**

What we can do to support genuine democratisation and peaceful transition in Burma.  
<http://www.patrir.ro/burma/nonviolent.shtml>

### **Break the Burmese Blackout**

A website on campaigning for Burma by Avaaz.

[https://secure.avaaz.org/en/end\\_the\\_burmese\\_blackout/1.php?cl=32804585](https://secure.avaaz.org/en/end_the_burmese_blackout/1.php?cl=32804585)

### **RSF Beijing Olympics 2008 Campaign**

Reporters Without Borders has dedicated a website to campaigning for free expression in China in advance of the 2008 Olympics. [http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id\\_rubrique=174](http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=174)

### **Human Rights and the 2008 Olympics in Beijing**

This Human Rights Watch website provides tools for activists concerned with rights violations in China. <http://hrw.org/campaigns/china/beijing08/toolkit.htm>

## **ADVOCACY TOOLS**

### **Psiphon**

Psiphon is a censorship circumvention tool that allows users to access blocked sites in countries where the Internet is censored. Psiphon turns a regular home computer into a personal, encrypted server capable of retrieving and displaying web pages anywhere.

<http://psiphon.civisec.org/faq.html>

### **Campaigning Tutorial on YouTube**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjaSxIC3UbY>

### **Campaigning Strategy Website**

Twelve basic guidelines for campaigning are outlined on this website aimed at providing an overview of the basics of campaigning even if you have no experience. For the introduction, see:

[http://www.campaignstrategy.org/cr12\\_intro.html](http://www.campaignstrategy.org/cr12_intro.html)

## **CALL TO IFEX MEMBERS**

- **Want to start a campaign and need advice or support?**
- **Tell us about your organisation's campaigns and advocacy efforts**
- **Share articles, websites and campaigns tools**

Contact the IFEX Campaigns Coordinator at [campaigns@ifex.org](mailto:campaigns@ifex.org) or see <http://campaigns.ifex.org/en/index.html>