The Advocates for Human Rights

“We will always push back—and push forward—to defend human rights.”

UN Secretary-General António Guterres

2022
HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS DINNER
Wednesday, June 22
Nicollet Island Pavilion
Thank you to the members of the 2022 Human Rights Awards Dinner planning committee who provided inspiration, ideas, and imagination throughout the process. We envisioned a virtually connected, global, and forward-looking event for our in-person return. You delivered at every step of the way. Thank you!

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Mary Kariuki Ries
Kathy Lenzmeier
Kelly McLain
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Refugee & Immigrant Program Attorney
Executive Administrative Associate
Communications & Outreach Coordinator
Women’s Human Rights Program Director
Executive Director
Development Consultant
Deputy Director
Development Director
Refugee & Immigrant Program Staff Attorney
Refugee & Immigrant Program Associate
Refugee & Immigrant Program Coordinator
Women’s Human Rights Program Attorney
Welcome to the 2022 Human Rights Awards Dinner. We are celebrating in-person here in Minneapolis and welcoming friends from all over the world who are joining us virtually. We look forward to sharing the powerful human rights work that is happening every day, here in Minnesota and around the world.

This year’s award recipients exemplify the inspiring people at the heart of the human rights movement. From fearless commitment to investigating and exposing the forces fueling the backlash to human rights in Europe and beyond, to expanding access to immigrant justice in Minnesota, our award recipients inspire us. Congratulations to all the award winners!

We face perilous times, when our most fundamental human rights are under attack.

Together we must work to end the racist, misogynistic, xenophobic, and homophobic concepts that today are being used to dehumanize and foment violence in the United States and around the world.

Together we must work toward a future where people can move with dignity, free from violence, exploitation, or detention, and are free to seek asylum to rebuild their lives in safety.

Together we must work toward a world without the death penalty and with accountability for human rights violations.

Together we must work toward legal systems that protect women and members of the LGBTIQ+ community from gender-based violence.

We believe that each one of us has a part to play in defending human rights and building a world where everyone lives with dignity, equality, and justice. Thank you for being part of the human rights movement.

In solidarity,

Robin Phillips
Executive Director

Karen Evans
Chair, Board of Directors
EVENT PROGRAM & AUCTION BIDDING

5:00 - 6:30 p.m.  Reception
6:30 - 7:00 p.m.  Dinner
7:00 p.m.  Silent auction closes
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.  Program (virtual livestream available)

Participating in the Online Auction

To participate in the auction, go to www.fundraiser.bid/hrad22 or scan the QR code.

You will find exceptional experiences, delicious dinners, international items, and more. All proceeds support the mission of The Advocates. The auction closes on Wednesday, June 22 at 7:00 p.m. CDT.

Register on the auction website to start bidding. You will receive a text message when another guest outbids you. Happy bidding!

Claiming Your Auction Winnings

You will receive a text message notifying you of any items won. Make sure to claim your items as you leave the event tonight. For virtual attendees, we will contact you to arrange pick-up or delivery of any items won.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Pat Brenna, auctioneer
Bill Cameron, photographer
Thomson Reuters, printing
Bob Vaaler, videography

Silent Auction Donors

Thank you to the more than 100 interns and work study students who accomplished critical research and advocacy.
NEIL DATTA

Neil Datta is a founder of the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights. We selected Neil as our 2022 Don & Arvonne Fraser Human Rights Award recipient because of his fearless commitment to investigating and exposing the far-right movement to roll back advancements in human rights. In the face of lawsuits and personal threats, Neil has persevered in his efforts to protect fundamental rights. His work aligns with The Advocates’ efforts to investigate the far right’s strategies and support our NGO partners in countries around the world as they counter the backlash to human rights.

Neil has conducted in-depth research on anti-choice activity in Europe, publishing a report in 2018 that drew worldwide attention. We at The Advocates for Human Rights are inspired by Neil’s research and advocacy for human rights. By revealing and explaining the strategies of the ultra-conservative anti-gender movement, Neil provides hope to women, LGBTIQ+ people, and human rights defenders worldwide. We are honored to present Neil with the 2022 Don & Arvonne Fraser Human Rights Award.
The Advocates is honored to present this year’s Special Recognition Award to Fe y Justicia. Fe y Justicia is a Latinx-led organization that strives to bring justice and provide kindness and compassion to the Central Minnesotan community. They have been an important partner in our efforts to provide legal services to rural asylum seekers in Greater Minnesota. Fe y Justicia promotes education, trains leaders, registers voters, and provides many important resources to an underserved population.

Last year, The Advocates worked with Fe y Justicia to run multiple legal clinics for asylum seekers in Greater Minnesota. At the first of those clinics, partly thanks to Fe y Justicia’s incredible outreach efforts, we met with three times as many people as expected. Fe y Justicia members worked tirelessly to make our clients welcome—serving warm coffee, organizing the sign-in, and making copies in the church office. Since then, we have worked with Fe y Justicia to organize several more Central Minnesota clinics. These clinics allow a small number of staff and volunteers to help a large number of people. They put the power in the hands of immigrants to file their asylum applications. We look forward to further collaboration on asylum, labor rights, and more. We thank Fe y Justicia for their work advocating for human rights.
The team at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP was instrumental in our work to investigate and expose the backlash to human rights. Theresa Perkins, Nicholas Antonas, Anna Anisimova, and Sahar Abas led a multi-office global team to conduct fact-finding on the anti-gender movement and its tactics in 14 countries in Europe and the Former Soviet Union. The firm supported an in-person mission to Croatia to pilot fact-finding on the anti-gender movement and thanks to the team, we completed 100 interviews for our report. Akin Gump lawyers contributed numerous hours and their talent to the report; for example, Anna Anisimova alone contributed more than 200 pro bono hours to this project. We could not have done this work without them.

The team helped us draft our report, A Rollback for Human Rights: The Istanbul Convention under Attack. As one of the strategies of the anti-gender movement is to use lawsuits to intimidate human rights defenders, Akin Gump stepped in again, with attorney Katherine Porter painstakingly reviewing our report to minimize our risks upon publication.

This work is crucial. Addressing the anti-gender movement is a burden for our partners whose primary work is serving victims of violence. Often, countering far-right tactics also creates significant risks for human rights defenders. We are grateful for Akin Gump’s tireless commitment to help us expose these hate groups and their tactics.
VOLUNTEER AWARD

Ava was accepted into law school while she was volunteering, and soon she returned as a legal intern and was helping write asylum briefs, preparing country conditions reports, and supporting clients during hearings. In April 2022, she gave her first closing argument at an immigration hearing for a client. Most recently, the first client Ava completed a work permit for was granted asylum. Thank you, Ava, for your remarkable legal advocacy for your clients and for helping our team assist asylum seekers more efficiently than ever.

AVA KELLEY

On an annual basis, more than 100 interns work throughout the organization and contribute their time and skills to The Advocates’ work. We are proud to recognize one of those interns (and former volunteer), Ava Kelley, for her contributions to the Refugee and Immigrant Program. Ava first started volunteering with The Advocates by assisting clients with work permits. When she realized the team needed assistance in optimizing our new case management system, she used her software development background to save us hours of work every week by organizing and automating tasks.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do at The Advocates. Each year, we honor a select number of outstanding volunteers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty with a Volunteer Award.
The Advocates creates opportunities for survivors of human rights violations to participate in global advocacy efforts, including at the United Nations, to hold governments accountable. In the past three years, more than 71 current and former clients have shared their experiences of human rights abuses in reports to the UN Human Rights Council and treaty-monitoring bodies such as the Committee Against Torture, Human Rights Committee, Committee on Enforced Disappearances, Committee on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights, and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

A number of courageous activists have volunteered to directly advocate with UN human rights mechanisms to change human rights conditions in their countries of origin. They have conducted human rights fact-finding and research, helped draft written reports documenting human rights problems, participated in briefings with UN human rights experts, and spoken at several of The Advocates’ events targeting Human Rights Council delegates. These activists have had the courage to speak truth to power, sharing their lived experiences with the international community and bringing our reports to life by putting a human face on otherwise impersonal data. Their voices are particularly important when human rights defenders in their countries of origin are not able to safely speak out.
DAVID & MARY PARKER

David and Mary Parker have supported The Advocates for more than 20 years. Both have served on the Board of The Advocates and have been deeply involved with the Sankhu-Palubari Community School (SPCS) since its inception.

Mary and David have worked for decades to raise awareness and funds for The Advocates’ work. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Mary has participated in dozens of virtual galas, auctions, and fundraisers to find out what works and report back to our team. Her professional research skills were instrumental in the success of The Advocates’ virtual events these past two years. A skilled photographer, David has shown thousands of people what child labor looks like—and what free education at SPCS looks like as an alternative. David and Mary have hosted countless house parties to support the school, inviting new and old friends alike to learn about the right to education in Nepal. The Parkers’ investments in the school have changed the lives of several students who graduated from SPCS and pursued professional careers.

Thank you, David and Mary, for your generous and creative support through the years.
IN MEMORIAM

DAVID WEISSBRODT

International human rights expert, advocate, law professor, mentor, and friend, David Weissbrodt had an extraordinary impact on the international human rights movement.

David was instrumental in the creation of The Advocates for Human Rights. He served as general counsel for more than twenty years, actively helping to lead the organization. David spurred us to develop the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death. The groundbreaking international guidelines for investigations of suspected unlawful deaths were adopted by the UN in 1991 and are in use worldwide today. His work on the rights of non-citizens, monitoring of prison conditions, and trial monitoring continues to guide our work.

David made an indelible impact at the United Nations. The first U.S. citizen to chair a UN human rights body since Eleanor Roosevelt, he served on and chaired the UN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. He later served as UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of non-citizens and as a trustee for the UN Trust Fund against Contemporary Forms of Slavery. David had a huge impact on the development of international human rights law, from developing human rights standards for businesses to training UN staff on best practices for human rights.

The Advocates for Human Rights honored David with our Human Rights Award in 2003 in recognition of his singular leadership and borderless dedication to human rights.
The Sankhu-Palubari Community School (SPCS) is a pre-Kindergarten through 10th grade school located in the rural Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. The Advocates partners with the local nonprofit Educate the Children–Nepal and the local community to run the school as a genuine alternative to child labor. By providing a completely free, high-quality education, as well as a daily meal, SPCS makes the right to education a reality for hundreds of Nepali children.

The 375 students at SPCS recently returned to in-person learning after extended lockdowns. SPCS students continue to excel academically, receiving high scores on recent national standardized tests. Girls make up 53% of the SPCS student body. The return to the school building also brought back a variety of fun extracurricular activities. Students competed in a spelling contest, singing competition, and a sports meet featuring soccer, badminton, chess, a sack race, and more.

Ashmita Shrestha, a graduate from 2011, fondly remembers the extracurricular activities at SPCS. “I loved taking part in dancing and singing competitions,” she recalls. Ashmita is still part of the SPCS family. After completing her master’s in finance, she returned to SPCS as a teacher. Ashmita is dedicated to ensuring that today’s students receive the same great education and opportunities that she did.

Exciting Enrichments at the Sankhu-Palubari Community School in Nepal
As a global community, we have a duty to one another — to work together and protect human rights around the world.
Meeting the Legal Needs of Afghan Allies

As thousands of Afghan evacuees began arriving in the United States with temporary immigration status and no clear path to stay permanently, The Advocates knew that immigration legal help would be a critical part of the welcome effort. In partnership with the State of Minnesota, we launched free legal clinics, with a commitment to providing universal access to information about the legal options to stay permanently in the United States. Each case is unique and complex. For the majority, applying for asylum currently is the only path to permanent legal status.

Earlier this year, we began the second phase, connecting hundreds of clients with volunteers to begin the asylum process. Within two months, nearly 100 attorneys have committed to work with an Afghan individual or family through this process. Together, we can help each become a permanent member of our community.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION LEADS TO IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR DETAINED IMMIGRANTS

Detained immigrants who have the help of a lawyer are 11x more likely to seek relief from deportation.

Detained immigrants with legal representation are 5x more likely to be granted relief from deportation.

Detained immigrants have a 4x better chance of being released from detention with the help of a lawyer.
We are The Advocates for Human Rights

1,183 IMMIGRATION HEARINGS OBSERVED
113 LEGAL, GRADUATE & UNDERGRADUATE INTERNS
1,122 PRO BONO LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

1,739 DONORS

21 LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY STAFF
49 INSTITUTIONAL FUNDERS

20 NEPAL SCHOOL TEACHERS
375 NEPAL SCHOOL STUDENTS

65 COUNTRIES OF CLIENTS’ ORIGIN
36 TEAM MEMBERS

41 REPORTS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

34 ORAL STATEMENTS TO UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

5,874 ATTENDED EVENTS

1,500+ VOLUNTEERS

12 ADVO-CANINES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
14 ADVO-CATS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

VALUE OF PRO BONO VOLUNTEER WORK

*Figures are from 2021 unless otherwise noted.
The Advocates has worked for decades with women’s human rights defenders in Ukraine, equipping them with effective strategies for advocacy. Now, many of our partners are focused on survival, whether they have remained in Ukraine or fled as refugees.

Those who can are sharing their stories with us. In addition to amplifying their voices publicly, we are gathering testimony of human rights violations and documenting potential war crimes. We will send these accounts to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, who has opened an investigation into war crimes in Ukraine. We are giving voice to the people of Ukraine to ensure their experiences are heard, documented, and matter.

Photo: Activist Diana Berg stands for Ukraine in 2022.
“Kidnapping of LGBTIQ+ people is a regular phenomenon in Nigeria,” says Harry, a client of The Advocates who faced persecution on account of his sexual orientation. Harry is seeking asylum in the U.S. with the help of our volunteer attorneys. Harry had been an activist in Nigeria and wanted to continue fighting for human rights there, so we invited him to be part of our international advocacy to change the conditions that forced him to flee.

The Advocates holds Special Consultative Status at the United Nations, allowing direct access to international human rights mechanisms. Our clients’ and partners’ lived experiences bring our reports to life by putting a human face on otherwise impersonal data. Harry documented the experiences of LGBTIQ+ Nigerians who had been abducted, beaten, and held for ransom because of their sexual orientation. He said, “This was my first way to do any form of advocacy work or be a part of something [in the U.S.]. It helps.”
Thank You, Donors

Individual supporters like you are the most important supporters of The Advocates’ mission. They provided the biggest portion of our revenue last fiscal year. Thank you!

- Grants & Contracts: 42.2%
- Law Firm Contributions: 9.1%
- Earned Income: 2.9%
- Corporate Contributions: 2.1%
- Other Income: 1.2%
- Individual Donations: 42.4%

THE IMMIGRATION COURT OBSERVATION PROJECT: CELEBRATING

5 years of trial monitoring to bring visibility to systemic human rights violations in immigration proceedings.

WATCH COURT MONITORING: CELEBRATING

30 years of court monitoring and documentation to change and implement laws to end violence against women.
Momentum Builds for Abolition of the Death Penalty

Last year, The Advocates lobbied UN delegates with evidence of human rights violations inherent to capital punishment. So when Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Zambia appeared at the United Nations for Universal Periodic Reviews of their human rights records, multiple countries called on them to abolish the death penalty. In October 2021, Sierra Leone did just that, and Papua New Guinea followed suit in January 2022. In May, the presidents of Zambia and Liberia (Sierra Leone’s neighbor) launched initiatives to abolish the death penalty in those countries.
We are proud to sponsor the Human Rights Awards Dinner and the work of The Advocates for Human Rights.
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We are proud to support The Advocates for Human Rights and their mission to implement international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law.
SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS WITH A DONATION

$10,000 supports an international convening to fight organized attacks on human rights.

$5,000 brings client activists to the United Nations to hold their governments accountable for human rights violations.

$2,500 ensures asylum seekers have an advocate by their side on their legal journeys.

$1,000 trains court observers to advance justice in Minnesota.

$300 provides life-changing education for a child in rural Nepal for one year.

$100 brings a human rights speaker into a classroom to inspire the next generation of advocates.

Please give whatever you can to promote and protect human rights. This year, we have a special challenge: When 350 people donate, we will unlock an extra $5,000 for human rights!

Scan the QR code or text HRAD to 44-321 to donate.