



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

For more information please contact:

Robin Phillips
Executive Director
(612) 746-4679
rphillips@advrights.org

Cheryl Thomas
Women's Program Director
(612) 746-4672
cthomas@advrights.org

The Advocates travels to Latvia to assist with domestic violence legal reform

Minneapolis / St. Paul, MN (9/30/2011) At the invitation of the United States Embassy in Latvia and in partnership with the Latvian organization, Marta, Women's Program director Cheryl Thomas and the Honorable Kathryn Quaintance will travel to Latvia from October 1st – 12th to conduct trainings on domestic violence legal reform. The multi-day sessions will train police, prosecutors, judges, and local direct service providers/non-governmental organizations. Each session will be tailored to its audience and use a wide range of training techniques, including role playing and hypothetical situations developed with Latvian partners. Training sessions will also include background information on international domestic violence reform; theories of violence; government intervention and prevention or protection order remedies; tools to identify cases of domestic violence; best practices cooperating and coordinating with multiple agencies; other country-specific forms of intervention; and legal review.

From Latvia, Ms. Thomas and Judge Quaintance will travel to Lithuania to follow-up with advocates there regarding a recently passed domestic violence law. The initial legislation for this law was developed in Lithuania last spring, with assistance from The Advocates. Ms. Thomas and Judge Quaintance will present at a conference focusing on implementing the new law. They will report on best practices in domestic violence laws in the United States and internationally. This will be The Advocates' first follow-up trip since the law passed. All workshop materials and training agendas will be posted to www.stopvaw.org after the workshops have been completed. A sponsor of the spring visit to Lithuania said:

"The seminars you led with police, judges and prosecutors in Lithuania were the first training of this sort for law enforcement there. You played a key role in changing their mindsets about domestic violence and empowering them to take action to prevent it. How exciting that, in just over a month after you left, the Lithuanian Seimas passed the new domestic violence law that you helped participants pore over!"

The Women's Human Rights Program applies international human rights standards to advocate for women's rights in the United States and around the world. The Women's Program works with local organizations to document abuses against women, such as domestic violence, rape, employment discrimination, sexual harassment, and sex trafficking. The Women's Program also provides training on legal reform related to violence against women and consultation on new laws for legal professionals and women's organizations in the United States and overseas.

###

The Advocates for Human Rights is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and protection of internationally recognized human rights. With the help of hundreds of volunteers each year, The

Advocates investigates and exposes human rights violations; provides representation to immigrants and refugees who have suffered human rights abuses; trains and assists groups that protect human rights; and works through education and advocacy to engage the public, policymakers, and children in human rights work. The Advocates for Human Rights holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations.
www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org.