

# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS PROGRAM

The McCain Institute at Arizona State University staunchly upholds the values of freedom, democracy, and universal human rights. Embodying this mission, our Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) program aids human rights defenders facing harassment, threats, or displacement due to their work.



**JAMILA AFGHANI**  
HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER  
AFGHANISTAN

## PROGRAM FEATURES:

The HRD program tailors support to meet the unique needs of each defender or journalist, specifically those who are in exile. Grants range from \$1,000 to \$30,000, with the amount determined by individual case requirements.

## PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS:

Since its inception, the HRD program has:

- Aided dozens of journalists and defenders annually from 50 countries/territories.
- Engaged continuously with beneficiaries, offering ongoing support.

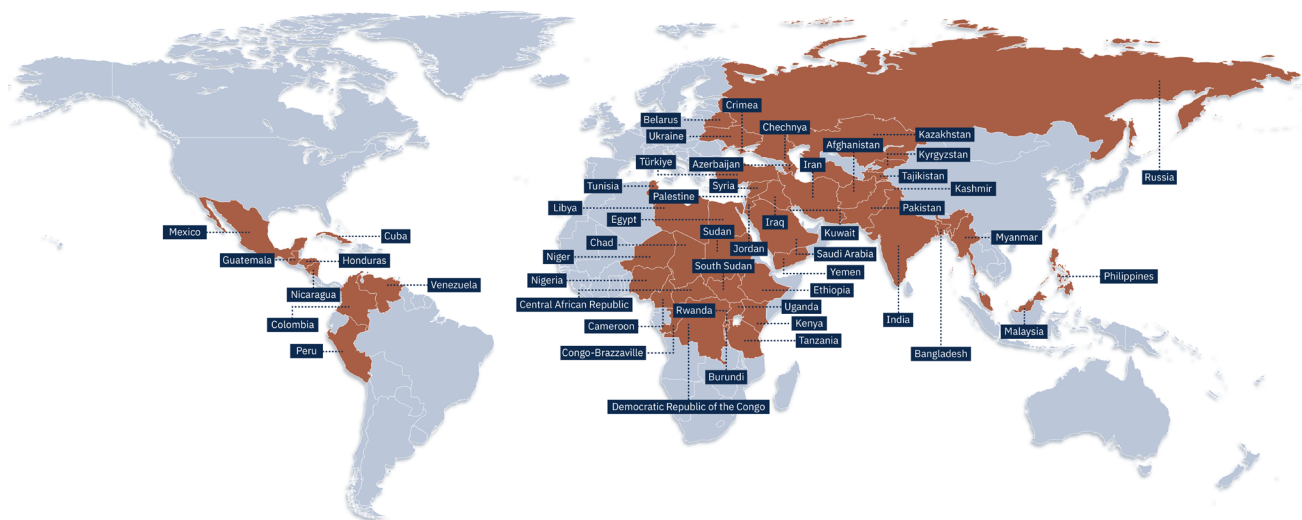
## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

We aim to assist HRDs during their pivotal transition to a new environment, ensuring they continue championing human rights and press freedom. Our program offers:

- Financial assistance
- Logistical support
- Referrals to vital resources

This helps recipients:

- Find and settle in a secure environment.
- Gain access to vital defender-centric support.
- Obtain specialized training in security, networking, and career development.



## COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES WE'VE IMPACTED INCLUDE:

Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chechnya, Colombia, Congo-Brazzaville, Crimea, Cuba, Democratic Republic of The Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kashmir, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Palestine, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.



## IMPACT

Despite escalating threats, our program has been a beacon of hope for resilient activists globally. Our beneficiaries hail from various fields like journalism, research, blogging, and civic activism, highlighting the increasing authoritarian tendencies of governments worldwide.



**JAMILA AFGHANI**

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER, AFGHANISTAN

**JAMILA AFGHANI**, a women's rights and education activist from Afghanistan, was forced to flee Afghanistan in 2017 after narrowly surviving a targeted Taliban bombing attack. The McCain Institute provided her with funds for medical treatment in Lithuania until she decided to return to Kabul three months later, becoming the first human rights defender the McCain Institute supported. The Taliban struck again, killing her niece and several family members. Knowing she was the target, Jamila fled but ultimately returned to her mission in Afghanistan. When the Taliban came to power in 2021, Jamila escaped one more time, with the support of the McCain Institute, as she continued her advocacy work from abroad. Now living in Canada, she received the prestigious global humanitarian award, the Aurora Prize – which came with a one-million-dollar award to continue her activism. She has taken that \$1M and equipped other activists in Afghanistan to fight repression.

## ABOUT THE MCCAIN INSTITUTE

AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

The McCain Institute is a nonpartisan organization inspired by Senator John McCain and his family's dedication to public service. We are part of Arizona State University and based in Washington, D.C. Our programs advance democracy and human rights, empower character-driven leaders, combat human trafficking, and prevent targeted violence. Our unique power to convene leaders across the global political spectrum enables us to make a real impact on the world's most pressing challenges. Our goal is action, not talk, and like Senator McCain, we are fighting to create a free, safe, and just world for all.



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