

# MAHADINE

Human Rights Defender, Chad



## **Facing a life sentence for a Facebook post**

He's an online activist and father of seven. In September 2016, Tadjadine Mahamat Babouri, commonly known as Mahadine, posted videos on Facebook. In them, he accused the Chadian government and people close to it of corruption and misusing public money. He also complained about the economic crisis gripping this oildependent nation which is suffering from falling oil prices worldwide.

Within days after Mahadine had put his protest online, he was snatched from the street in broad daylight by a group of men believed to be intelligence officers. He's been behind bars since, and moved from one prison to another. His wife and children were told nothing of his whereabouts. He says he was beaten and electrocuted and during three days in detention he was not given water nor food. He was also not granted access to his lawyer.

Mahadine now faces a life sentence, and faces charges including threatening national security. He is gravely ill, having caught tuberculosis in prison. He needs urgent medical attention. He should not have to spend the rest of his life locked up for courageously expressing his opinion.

**Tell him his courage inspires you.**

# SAKRIS KUPILA

Human Rights Defender, Finland



## **Demanding the right to be who he is**

Sakris Kupila has never identified as a woman. Yet the 21-year-old medical student must endure daily embarrassment because his identity documents say he is female.

Sakris was a teenager when he realised that the gender he was given at birth didn't express who he is. He chose a new name – which is considered male – but under Finnish law people are not allowed names of another gender. Sakris had to be diagnosed with a “mental disorder” to keep his name.

This was Sakris' first step towards legal recognition of who he is. But to have your gender reassigned in Finland, you must be diagnosed with a “mental disorder” and sterilised. Such requirements are a stain on Finland's reputation for openness and tolerance.

For Sakris, the choice is clear. He opposes this humiliating treatment and is demanding a change to the law. “The basic human rights of transgender people are currently violated in Finland,” he says. “Not only do we face discrimination within society itself, but also by the state”.

Sakris' struggle has earned him threats and open hostility. But he won't give in. “I'll stop when the fight is over,” he says.

**Show Sakris you're with him. Send him your messages of love & support.**

# SHACKELIA JACKSON

Human Rights Defender, Jamaica



## **Refusing to let police get away with murder**

Shackelia Jackson will not give up. When her brother was gunned down by police in 2014, she made sure that Jamaica's independent investigators secured the crime scene.

The police had been pursuing a "Rastafarianlooking" suspect in a robbery, and Nakiea (Shackelia's brother) fitted that description. They found him in his small restaurant and shot him dead. Police killings of mainly young and mostly poor men is all too common in Jamaica, with some 2,000 killed in the past decade.

Shackelia was determined not to let Nakiea's story end there. She has battled a badly underfunded, sluggish court system to lead a bold fight for justice. In doing so, she has rallied dozens of families whose loved ones have been similarly killed, amplifying their cries for justice. The police have responded by raiding her community, timing the raids to coincide with court dates. They have also intimidated Shackelia and her family.

But Shackelia refuses to be silenced. She says their attempts only reinforce her belief in what's right. "I fight because I have no other choice," she says. "To stop would mean I am giving another police officer permission to kill another of my brothers".

**Show Shackelia you're with her and send her a message of support.**

# NI YULAN

Human Rights Defender, China



## **Made homeless for defending housing rights**

Ni Yulan has braved years of violent harassment for standing up for those evicted from their homes. The former lawyer has supported scores of people forced from their homes by lucrative construction projects. She was among thousands whose dwellings were demolished in the lead-up to the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

The government's response to her activism has been to harass her and her family, hoping to put an end to her work. They have repeatedly arrested her and, during detention, beat her so badly that she now uses a wheelchair. They have pursued her for nearly 20 years, putting her and her family under surveillance, threatening them, and evicting them from home after home.

In March 2016, the authorities refused her a passport to travel to the USA to accept an international prize celebrating her courage.

In April 2017, men descended on her rented apartment, grabbed Ni Yulan, her husband and daughter, and threw them out of their home. After being forced to sleep on the streets, the couple now live in temporary housing within constant sight of the police. Still, Ni Yulan has no plans to stop helping people stand up for their rights.

**Show Ni Yulan that you support her work.**

# FARID & ISSA

Human Rights Defenders, Israel /  
Occupied Palestinian Territories



## **Facing charges for protesting war crimes**

Farid al-Atrash and Issa Amro want an end to Israeli settlements – a war crime stemming from Israel’s 50-year occupation of Palestinian land. Israel has made many parts of the occupied territories no-go zones for Palestinians, making it impossible for them to move about freely. By contrast, Jewish Israeli settlers are free to go where they wish.

Dedicated to non-violence, Farid and Issa brave constant threats and attacks by Israeli soldiers and settlers. Issa encourages Palestinian youths to find non-violent ways to oppose Israel’s occupation and discriminatory laws in Hebron. For this, Israeli forces have arrested him more than once. They have beaten, blindfolded and interrogated him. “The Israeli occupation forces target us to silence us,” he says. Farid, a lawyer who exposes abuses by the Palestinian and Israeli authorities, faces similar harassment.

In February 2016, Farid and Issa joined a peaceful protest in the city of Hebron marking 22 years since Israel first closed one of its streets, al-Shuhada, to Palestinians. Hebron’s 200,000 Palestinians are effectively held hostage by the 800 Israeli settlers who live in its centre. The men now face ludicrous charges clearly designed to obstruct their human rights work.

**Stand with Farid and Issa.**

# MILPAH INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT

Human Rights Defenders, Honduras



## **Risking their lives to save their land**

For the Indigenous Lenca people in Honduras, the land is their life. But huge hydroelectric, mining and other interests are out to exploit that land. MILPAH, the Independent Lenca Indigenous Movement of La Paz, is at the forefront of the struggle against them. They brave smear campaigns, death threats and physical assault to protect their environment, yet their attackers are rarely brought to justice.

Their experience is typical for activists in Honduras, one of the most dangerous places on Earth to be an Indigenous and environmental defender.

Some are lucky enough to survive. Others are not: Berta Cáceres, from a partner organization, campaigned against a hydroelectric dam and was murdered in 2016.

In October 2015, MILPAH's Ana Miriam Romero was 24 weeks pregnant when armed men stormed her house looking for her husband, and beat her up. The following January, her house was torched. In July 2016, two men threatened to kill her colleague, Martín Gómez.

Still, MILPAH vow to keep up their struggle. "We have no weapons, we have no money," says Martín. "But we do have a voice and ... that has enabled us to make real progress."

**Send your letters or drawings to show your support.**