

The Carter Center Human Rights Defenders Forum Washington, DC Trip Delegation, July 25th-27th, 2018



Mary Akrami, *Executive Director of Afghan Women Skills Development Center (AWSDC), Afghanistan.*

Mary Akrami is a civil and women's Right activist who leads to fight for the rights of the women faced with violence from the society. Her organization established the first shelter for women at risk in 2003. Ms. Akrami's organization is engaged in peace building and conflict resolution programs and provided them with trainings and mentoring on mechanisms on women's engagement in political and community based peace building. Ms. Akrami for the first time established a women restaurant in Kabul for the economic empowerment of women by the name of BOST Restaurant. In 2007, she was awarded the first International Women of Courage Award from the Department of State, United States.



Fr. Sohail Bhatti, *Rector of the Cathedral, St. Joseph's Cathedral, Rawalpindi, Pakistan*

Fr. Sohail is an expert trainer on peace, interfaith, human rights and cultural heritage. He is fundamentally a writer, a poet and a musician who introduced arts-based peace-building projects among local communities. For the past 20 years, after completing his priesthood education and training, he worked as peace trainer and peace promoter at grassroots level through policy making forums organized by leading civil society organizations, religious groups, youth conferences, multi-faith and multi ethnic groups across Pakistan.



Jamal Al-jawahiri, *Co-founder and executive director, Iraqi al-Amal Association, Iraq*

Jamal is one of the founders of Iraqi al-Amal Association (IAA) since 1993, initially elected as a member of the Board of Trustees (1995-2014), in January 2015 he was appointed as the Executive Director. He has thirty years of experience in the civil society movements, which started with his initiatives with Student Unions of Iraq until 1992. He had also served a member of the Coordination Bureau of the Arab network NGOs for Development 1995-2012. Jamal also served as the finance manager of IAA (2002-2014), where he supervised some of IAA's important projects, also he contributed actively in drafting of the NGOs law both in Iraq and Kurdistan Region.



Francia Elena Márquez Mina, *Human Rights Defender, Colombia*

Francia is an Afro-Colombian leader and human rights defender, from Yolombó, Cauca, in Colombia, she's studying law at the University of Santiago de Cali. She started her life as an activist when she was 15, when developer intended to divert the Ovejas River, a project that had generated great impacts on her community since the 80s. Márquez has used Afro-Colombian songs and dances as key elements of her cultural and political expression and has worked with farmers in her region on sustainable agricultural techniques. She took up the struggle for environmental, ancestral and territorial rights, fighting incursions in La Toma by multinational mining companies that have tried to displace her community. As a result of Marquez's efforts, in 2010, the Constitutional Court ordered to stop the eviction of their ancestral territory. Francia participated in the Peace Talks in Cuba and supported the Afro-Colombian National Peace Council so that the rights of the Afro-Colombian and indigenous peoples were recognized in the final agreement. Francia is part of the Mobilization of Black Women for the Care of Life and the Ancestral Territories that has denounced how unconstitutional mining and illegal mining are destroying the environment and life in her territory.



Soledad García Muñoz, *Special Rapporteur on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights IACHR, Argentina*

Soledad is Lawyer, with extensive experience in national and international litigation. She has a Diploma in Advanced Studies in Human Rights from the University Carlos III of Madrid with a Research Proficiency obtained in the Doctorate Program of the same house of studies. She has worked as a professor of Public International Law at National University of La Plata (UNLP); as well as numerous courses on the topics related to her specialty. From 2009 until her incorporation to the IACHR, she served as the Representative for South America of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, based in Uruguay. In 2017, she assumed her current role and is the first person to carry out this mandate.



Gimena Sanchez, *Director for the Andes and Leading Columbia Human Rights Advocate at WOLA, United States.*

Gimena is an expert on Colombia's peace process and illegal armed groups, internally displaced persons, human rights and ethnic minority rights. She has worked with Peace Brigades International for the protection of human rights organizations and peace communities in Colombia. Her work has shed light on the situation of Colombia's more than seven million internally displaced persons, and has helped expose the links between Colombia's government and drug-funded paramilitaries. In 2012, the Colombian Senate presented WOLA with a human rights award for making a significant contribution towards advancing labor rights in recognition of Ms. Sánchez's work.



Jorge Santos, Udefegua, Guatemala (*unofficial Bio, waiting for visa*)

Jorge Santos is the General Coordinator of the human rights organization Protection Unit for Human Rights Defenders Guatemala (Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos Guatemala UDEFAGUA). This organization is dedicated to offer support to human rights defenders to empower their work and improve their security. The Unit monitors attacks against human rights defenders, offers legal consultancy, risk analysis, security plans and security equipment for them. Moreover, the Unit works not only in Guatemala, but in other countries of the region like Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and the South of Mexico.