



**LAWYERS FOR
LAWYERS**

ANNUAL REPORT

ACTIVITIES 2011

I INTRODUCTION

25th anniversary and L4L-Award



On 15 April 2011, the presentation of the first *Lawyers for Lawyers Award* took place in Amsterdam. Zimbabwean human rights lawyer **Alec**

Muchadehama received the Award for his "perseverance" and his "exceptional courage", according to the report of the jury. Muchadehama was threatened by the Mugabe regime. He was followed, physically threatened, arrested and prosecuted and had to go into hiding in an embassy, after having escaped an attempted kidnapping.

The jury, comprised of jury president Heikelien Verrijn Stuart, Ms Els Swaab, Mr Egbert Myjer and Mr Theo van Boven, praised Muchadehama's work to promote the rule of law and human rights against the background of a longstanding dictatorship in Zimbabwe.

The Award consisted of a small sculpture and an amount of EUR 10.000, made available by Allen & Overy. The *Lawyers for Lawyers Award* was presented on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Lawyers for Lawyers (**L4L**) Foundation.

The presentation of the Award took place at the end of the seminar that **L4L** had organised on the occasion of its 25th anniversary. During this seminar, which was divided into two sub-sessions, around fifteen experts discussed the ways in which lawyers are hindered in the performance of their profession, and which kind of strategies are effective to limit and prevent such hindrances.

During the morning session, the '*Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*' was the central theme. For the morning session seven papers had been drafted by experts, including

UN Special Rapporteur Gabriela Knaul, Professor Theo van Boven, Phillip Tahmindjis on behalf of the *International Bar Association*, and Wilder Tayler on behalf of the *International Commission of Jurists*. The papers discussed different subjects relating to the *Basic Principles*, such as the extent to which lawyers and governments are aware of their existence, how to use them in case of a concrete threat and how (and whether) their legal status should be raised. The results of the expert meeting were compiled in a booklet 'Building on Basic Principles'.

During the afternoon session, lawyers Alirio Uribe Muñoz (Colombia), Arnold Tsunga (Zimbabwe), Iyas Maleh on behalf of his father Al Maleh (Syria), Edre Olalia (Philippines) and Mohammad Mostafaei (Iran) told about how they have been or continue to be hindered personally in their work. They were asked, just as the also present Hans Thoolen (Martin Ennals Foundation), Professor Theo van Boven and Special Rapporteur Gabriela Knaul were, what in their view would be the most effective action in such situations. Other matters discussed included the role of bar associations and the availability of *protective measures*.

At the Dutch embassy in Harare, the presentation of the first *Lawyers for Lawyers Award* to Alec Muchadehama was also the theme at a reception on 8 June 2011. Muchadehama spoke about his trip to the Netherlands in April, when he attended the 25th anniversary of **L4L** in Amsterdam and received the Award. **L4L** expressed its gratitude to the embassy for hosting the reception. It generated publicity for the Award in Zimbabwe, which contributes to its effectiveness.

Lawyers for Lawyers proudly looks back on the presentation of the first **L4L** Award and the celebration of its 25th anniversary. The outcome of the seminar provides many opportunities for further debate about the protection of the independence of lawyers and

the role they play in developing societies, as well as the further development of the work Lawyers for Lawyers has done these past 25 years and will continue to do in the future.

II CAMPAIGNS FOR LAWYERS IN 2011

In 2011, once again, many lawyers were obstructed or threatened whilst carrying out their work. L4L took action for lawyers in Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, China, Colombia, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Nepal, the Philippines, Russia, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.

Overview per country

Bahrain



2011 was the year of the Arab Spring. In Bahrain, massive protests led to arrests on a vast scale. Around 600 people, including many human rights defenders, political leaders, trade unionists and doctors, have been arrested since February 2011.

L4L was also informed of the arrest of a lawyer, **Mohamed Issa al-Tajer**. He has defended many of the protesters in court. The arrest seems to be part of the bigger wave of arrests that has affected many who in one way or another were involved in the peaceful protests in Bahrain. It seems that the Bahraini government intentionally wants to hinder Mohamed al-Tajer in practising his profession. In April 2011 Lawyers for Lawyers organised a letter-writing campaign for Al-Tajer, urging his release.

Belarus

In December 2010, elections in Belarus resulted in a victory for Alexander Lukashenko.

The *Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (OSCE) carried out an investigation and concluded that the elections had been rigged, dashing the hopes in Belarus for democratic progress.

In the first months of 2011, the Belarus authorities started a campaign of intimidation aimed at human rights activists, political activists, journalists and lawyers. Serious restrictions in respect of the freedom of assembly, of association and of the media continue to exist and the level of repression is unprecedented.

Two lawyers connected to the *Minsk City Lawyers' Association* were put under pressure by the Belarusian Ministry of Justice in 2011. They defended protesters who were arrested after a demonstration on 19 December 2010. **Pavel Sapelka** received a letter warning him that he could be disbarred for having publicly expressed concerns over his client's health. **Tamara Sidenko**, who defended one of the protesters, presidential candidate Uladzimir Nyaklyayeu, was denied access to her client for several weeks while he was incarcerated.

The *Belarusian Helsinki Committee* (BHC) informed the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, Gabriela Knaul, of the above. Because of this, the BHC received an official warning from the Belarusian Ministry of Justice for discrediting the judicial apparatus in the country.

For this reason, L4L organised a letter-writing campaign. Despite this, Pavel Sapelka was disbarred by the Minsk Bar Association in March 2011. In February 2011, the Bar had already taken the same measures against his colleagues **Aleg Ageev**, **Tatiana Ageeva**, **Vladimir Toutsik** and **Tamara Garaeva**. It has been suggested that the Ministry of Justice had repeatedly urged the Minsk City Bar to start disciplinary procedures against various lawyers.

On 21 November 2011, L4L organised a seminar that focused entirely on the *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*. At the invitation of



L4L, Hary Pahaniaila and **Aleh Volcheck** told about their experiences as human rights lawyers in Belarus.

Cambodia

L4L used 2011 mainly to invest in strengthening existing contacts and establishing new ones as sources of information. The political situation in Cambodia has not changed compared to earlier posts. Meanwhile, the President of the Cambodian Bar Association (Ky Tech) has been replaced by Chiv Song Hak, someone with strong ties with the CPP regime, which strongly influences the functioning of the Cambodian Bar. Lawyers who represent members of the opposition (the Sam Rainsy Party) continue to face restrictions imposed by the Bar.

China

In 2011, again, various lawyers in China were hindered from practising law in freedom. **L4L** took action for the lawyers **Jiang Tianyong**, **Tang Jitian** and **Teng Biao**. On 16 February 2011 they met to discuss the situation of their colleague, the blind human rights lawyer **Chen Guangcheng**. Guangcheng's house has been under strict surveillance since he was released from prison in September 2010, after four years. After he had a video published in which they told from their home about their living conditions, he and his wife were severely beaten. Within three days after the lawyers had met to discuss how they could help Guangcheng, they were arrested. **L4L** has called upon the Chinese authorities by letter to give more information, to release the lawyers and to put an end to Guangcheng's house arrest. By the time this annual report was composed, Guangcheng had fled to the United States.

On 7 April 2011, **Ni Yulan** and her husband Dong Jiqin were arrested by the police in Beijing. Ni Yulan worked for 18 years as a lawyer on politically sensitive cases, but for the



past few years she had focused mostly on people losing their homes because of the Olympic Games in 2008. After filming the demolition of one of those

homes she was arrested, and her feet and kneecaps broken. Since then she remains in a wheelchair. Because of her protest against the beatings, she was sentenced to one year in prison. Also, because of the criminal prosecution, her law licence was revoked. After having served the one-year sentence, Ni Yulan was arrested two more times and constantly harassed, because she continued to challenge the illegal expropriation and demolition of homes. Despite this continued harassment, she continues to play an important role for human rights activism in China; she has contact with many human rights lawyers and activists and publishes on threats against them. In May 2011 **L4L** organised a letter-writing campaign for Ni Yulan and her husband.

On 21 December 2011, Ni Yulan received the *Human Rights Defenders Tulip* from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is an award granted by the Dutch government to a person who has shown exceptional courage in protecting or promoting human rights in his or her country. Because Ni Yulan was detained at the time, awaiting her trial, her daughter agreed to receive the award on her behalf. Unfortunately, the Chinese authorities also prevented her from travelling to the Netherlands to receive the Tulip.

Colombia

In 2011, **L4L** organised a letter-writing campaign for five lawyers who acted on behalf of victims of extra-judicial executions. After these cases, they themselves became the targets of threats, too.

In January 2011, **L4L** organised a letter-writing campaign for **Leonardo Jaimes Marín** and **William Cristancho Duarte**.

Leonardo Jaimes Marín supports the family members of three men who disappeared on 28 March 2008. According to the family members, these men were murdered on the instruction of the army. The murders were allegedly committed by ten soldiers. In connection with the court cases against these soldiers, a man approached Leonardo Jaimes Marín on 13 October 2010 telling him an order had been issued to execute him and the family members of the victims. The order was said to be issued by one of the superiors of the charged soldiers.



William Cristancho Duarte worked on the cases of two local farmers who had been killed during a military operation in 2007. Initially, an attempt was made to

make it look as if the two farmers were members of a guerrilla group that had been killed in a shootout. On 26 October 2010 Duarte was threatened shortly after attending a hearing with court officials where the case and possible arrest of persons possibly involved in the killing was heard. Also, on 10 December 2010 two bullets were fired at his car.

On 23 March 2011, the UN Human Rights Council gathered in Geneva to present and discuss the country report on the human rights situation in Colombia. **L4L** was there to make a statement on behalf of itself, *Lawyers Rights Watch Canada* and the *International Commission of Jurists*.

Unfortunately, in June 2011 **L4L** again received news of severe threats against Colombian lawyers. It concerned **Alexander Montaña** and **Sofía Lopez** of *Justicia y Dignidad* and **Julio César Rosero**, a lawyer working for an organisation called *Movice*.

Justicia y Dignidad is a collaboration between Alexander Montaña and Sofía Lopez. In 2010, in the south-west of Colombia, they started helping victims of the armed conflict that has been going on in Colombia for the last 25 years. They assist relatives of victims of extra-judicial executions by paramilitary groups, help people who have been expelled from their lands to regain them, and have been involved

in an investigation carried out by the International Criminal Court into crimes committed by the Colombian government. They also apply for protective measures for human rights defenders before *the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights*. Because of these activities they have regularly been the target of threats. They receive death threats by text messages and email. They are also followed, and suspicious-looking persons have visited Sofía Lopez's house. Their phones are being tapped.

Julio César Rosero received death threats in June because of his representation, on behalf of the *Movice* organisation, of the relatives of victims of extra-judicial executions. Because of the trial against eight people suspected of killing three people, including the husband of a *Movice* employee (Jenny Torres), Julia César Rosero received death threats against him and his family in the form of a text message and two emails in June 2011.

L4L organised a letter-writing campaign for them, too, in June 2011.

On 15 July 2011, **L4L** presented a report on the second "Caravana Internacional de Juristas", an observation mission it participated in during



August 2010, to a representative of the Colombian embassy in The Hague. In a candid meeting **L4L** expressed its concerns to the Colombian authorities over the constant threats against lawyers and the open stigmatising of judges and lawyers.

Iran

The situation of human rights lawyers in Iran deteriorated dramatically in 2011. Peaceful demonstrations in February, March, April and September were broken up forcefully by the security forces of Iran. In April, security forces shot a great number of protesters. There was a sharp increase in the number of death penalties. In July 2011 the Iranian government announced it would not cooperate with or allow

a visit of the UN Special Rapporteur for Iran, who has been appointed specifically in light of the deteriorating human rights situation there. The government continued to arrest human rights defenders, particularly human rights lawyers.

On 27 June 2011, the Iran Committee organised a meeting in The Hague in connection with the UN International Day Against Torture. L4L was also invited to the panel. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the Dutch general public and policy makers how to effectively stop the Iranian human rights violations, from an international, European, Dutch and civil society perspective.

In September 2011, L4L organised a letter-writing campaign for three Iranian lawyers.

Nasrin Sotoudeh acted as lawyer for human rights defenders and juveniles sentenced to death. By the end of August her office was searched and various documents and a computer were taken. A week later she was summoned to appear at the Evin prison, where she was questioned and finally arrested. She went on hunger strike three times, in October, November and December 2010. Her trial started in November 2010 and ended in September 2011 with an 11-year prison sentence and a 20-year work and travel ban.



In 2011, public prosecutors also investigated the founders of the *Defenders of Human Rights Center* (DHRC). **Mohamed Seifzadeh** was sentenced to a nine-year prison term at the end of October 2010. He is also prohibited from practising law for a period of ten years. **Abdolfattah Soltani**, a prominent human rights lawyer and one of the founders of the DHRC, was arrested on 10 September 2011. That same day, the police searched Soltani's home and office, confiscating documents, CDs and a laptop. Soltani was taken to the Evin Prison. In 2012 it became clear that he has been sentenced to an 18-year prison term. The DHRC has meanwhile been closed.

In November 2011 L4L spoke with the Iranian Nobel Peace Prize winner **Shirin Ebadi**. Ebadi, another founder of the DHRC, fled from Iran in 2009. In the Netherlands she met Uri Rosenthal, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs. Shirin Ebadi told him at this meeting that since June 2009, at least 42 lawyers have been prosecuted by the government.



L4L regularly consults other non-governmental organisations on the strategy they should pursue to help lawyers in Iran.

Kyrgyzstan

In 2011, Kyrgyzstan continued to suffer from the aftermath of violence that broke out in June 2010 between the ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in the country. During this outbreak, more than 400 people lost their lives. In 2011, thousands of criminal investigations were conducted into the outbreak.

Tatiana Tomina is a lawyer from the *Human Rights Advocacy Center* in Osh who represents an ethnic Uzbek who became the victim of violence by the government in 2010. Tomina has been the victim of threats and verbal and physical violence. In November there were at least four such incidents, one of which occurred in court. The most recent incidents took place early August 2011. Neither the police nor the judge responded adequately, even though they personally witnessed the verbal and physical violence.

L4L called upon the Kyrgyz authorities to guarantee the safety of Tomina.

Mexico

On 11 January 2011, **Alba Cruz Ramos** received threats because of her work as a lawyer of victims of torture in prisons and of people involved in the large uprising in Oaxaca in 2006. Because of Alba's work, many political prisoners in the Oaxaca region have been released. In a case initiated by Alba and her "Comité 25 Noviembre", the Mexican Supreme Court held that the governor of Oaxaca and eight others were to be held responsible for torturing political prisoners. However, no prosecution was started. Alba and her family are constantly and seriously threatened because of her work. The *Inter-American Commission on Human Rights* has ordered the Mexican government to provide for protective measures, but it has so far failed to do so. In 2011, Alba again became the target of threats. **L4L** has organised a letter-writing campaign to call upon the Mexican authorities to take action and guarantee Alba's safety.



make the reforming and strengthening of the legal system a government priority. The extra-judicial killings are a major problem, and one to which lawyers also fall victim. In 2011 President Aquino again announced that the government was doing 'double shifts' to combat new human rights violations and to prosecute earlier violations. To date, however, the government of President Aquino has been unable to realise these ambitions.

L4L has provided information to the member states of the United Nations for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Philippines by the United Nations Human Rights Council. The situation for human rights lawyers in the Philippines still leaves much to be desired. **L4L** was also able to make detailed recommendations on the basis of knowledge acquired during the *International Verification and Fact Finding Missions* (VFFM) in the Philippines that we participated in during 2006 and 2008. The actual review of the Philippines took place in May 2012.

Russian Federation

Despite repeated statements from the Kremlin about the importance of proper working conditions for non-governmental organisations, human rights defenders continued to be intimidated and physically attacked in 2011.

L4L has taken action for **Sapiyat Magomedova**, a criminal lawyer who stands up for victims of human rights violations allegedly committed by law



enforcers in Dagestan. On 17 June 2010 Sapiyat Magomedova became a victim herself. When she wanted to visit a client detained at the police station in Khasavyurt, she was stopped by a number of police officers who forcibly removed her from the police station. In July 2010 she filed an official complaint against members of the police. Investigators repeatedly tried to pressure her into withdrawing her complaint, and threatened that she would face criminal

Nepal



By the end of 2011, the tenth session of the working group *Universal Period Review* (UPR) of the United Nations Human Rights Council was held.

One of the countries discussed was Nepal. On 25 January 2011 Marnix de Planque, a **L4L** volunteer, attended the plenary meeting of the Human Rights Council where the results of the UPR were discussed. In response to the UPR, Nepal has announced that it will take concrete measures to improve the safety of human rights defenders, including lawyers.

Philippines

On 30 June 2010, Benigno Aquino III succeeded Arroyo as President. President Aquino promised not to tolerate extra-judicial killings and forced disappearances, and to

charges herself. After repeatedly refusing to withdraw her complaint, Sapiyat Magomedova herself was charged in August 2011 for the alleged "use of violence" and "publicly insulting representatives of the State while on duty".

L4L has organised a letter-writing campaign to call upon the authorities in Dagestan to ensure an independent and impartial trial for Magomedova.

Syria

The Arab Spring also came to Syria in 2011. By mid-March, large-scale protests broke out against the regime headed by President Assad. Security forces used brute force to beat down those protests. More than 5.000 have reportedly been killed.

In January 2011, **L4L** organised a letter-writing campaign for **Radeef Moustafa**. In addition, **L4L** representatives went to Syria in February 2011. On behalf of the Amsterdam and Dutch Bar Associations, they went to observe the disciplinary hearings against Radeef Moustafa and **Abdel-Rahman Najjar**. Moustafa, arrested in December 2010, ran the risk of being disbarred for life for leading, without permission from the Bar Association, a human rights organisation (*Al-Raseed*) and publishing on human rights violations. Najjar, too, faced disbarment because of his work defending political activists and standing up for the rights of the Kurdish minority in the country. The hearings were suddenly postponed to 2 March and 20 March 2011 respectively, to everyone's belief because of the presence of the international observers.

The disciplinary procedure against Radeef Moustafa in the end resulted in merely a warning, which was issued on 2 April 2011. **L4L** could not send observers to this hearing but it did send a letter to the Bar Association of Aleppo to make clear that it would be closely monitoring the case.

In 2011, **L4L** welcomed two Syrian lawyers in the Netherlands, **Haitham al-Maleh** and

Muhanad al-Hasani, who had both been released from prison early.



Haitham al-Maleh was arrested on 14 October 2009 after giving an interview in which he had made critical comments on the continued suppression

of the right to free speech in Syria. On 4 July 2010, at 80 years old, he was convicted to a three-year prison sentence for "spreading false information", "weakening the national sentiment" and "slandering a government institution". On 8 March 2011 Haitham al-Maleh was released from prison after eighteen months and went into hiding immediately. By the end of July 2011 his travel ban was lifted. In August 2011 Al-Maleh visited the Netherlands. On 5 August 2011 he visited, accompanied by **L4L**, the International Criminal Court in The Hague, and one week later he was received by Uri Rosenthal, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs.

At the Annual Congress of the Dutch Bar Association, Al-Maleh, interviewed via Skype by Dean of the Dutch Bar Association Jan Loorbach, spoke to hundreds of Dutch lawyers.

Muhanad al-Hasani, too, was sentenced to three-years' imprisonment on 23 June 2010 for offences like spreading information that weakens national morale



and the dissemination of false information about Syria abroad. Also, the local bar association commenced proceedings to disbar him for life. He was released on 3 June 2011 but has as yet been unable to take up his work because of a disciplinary procedure that is still pending. To resolve this, **L4L** – in collaboration with *Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada* (LRWC) – in July 2011 sent a letter to the Syrian Bar Association, urging it to conform to the policy of the authorities, which granted him amnesty, and to put an end to the disciplinary procedure.

After his release Al-Hasani fled Syria. In October 2011 he paid a visit to the Netherlands. On 22 October 2010, Al-Hasani

had been awarded the Amsterdam Dean Award. At the time he was unable to receive the Award himself because he was still in prison. In October 2011, in the presence of the Amsterdam Dean, we celebrated that Al-Hasani could finally receive the Award in person.

During his trip, Al-Hasani also visited the Dutch human rights ambassador and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to ask for attention for the difficult circumstances for human rights lawyers in Syria. L4L had arranged these visits for him, and offered assistance.

In November 2011, L4L participated in a meeting on Syria of the European Mediterranean Human Rights Network in Paris. Here we met Muhanad al-Hasani again. Also, for the first time after observing the hearing in February, we met Radeef Moustafa.

Thailand



On 12 March 2011, the Thai human rights lawyer **Somchai Neelapaijit** was missing for seven years. Neelapaijit disappeared on 12 March 2004, one day

after he had publicly accused the police of torturing his clients, who were in detention. Since then, he has not been heard of. Despite pressure from Neelapaijit's family, Thai society and the international community, those responsible have still not been held accountable. L4L asked attention for his case on its website.

Turkey

In light of the Arab Spring, the *Justice and Development Party* (AKO) promised in 2011 that it would implement reforms granting more rights to the Kurdish minorities. Unfortunately, the number of human rights violations in Turkey has not decreased. Since 2005, the government no longer prioritises human rights reforms, and the right to free speech and freedom of association have been seriously trampled on by the continued persecution and

imprisonment of lawyers, journalists, writers and hundreds of Kurdish political activists.

On 22 November 2011, hundreds of police officers made an illegal search in a number of law firms. They arrested 70 people, including 47 lawyers, during this search. Of these, 35 were still detained by the end of November. Also, an unknown number of files were seized, despite the objections of the lawyers present at these searches.

The searches and arrests were reportedly carried out in the context of the *Kurdish Communities Union* (KCK) trial, a very controversial mass trial taking place in several cities concurrently since October 2010. Democratically elected mayors, city council members and local members of the BDP party as well as many people who have openly been promoting Kurdish cultural and political rights, were among those arrested. They are accused of being members of an illegal organisation, spreading terrorist propaganda and undermining the state's unity.

In November 2011, L4L organised a letter-writing campaign for these lawyers.

Vietnam

The Vietnamese lawyer and activist **Cù Huy Hà Vũ** was sentenced to a seven-year prison term and an additional three-year house arrest on 4 April 2011. He was charged with "propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam" under section 88 of the Criminal Code, an offence he allegedly committed by giving interviews to foreign media. In those interviews he advocated democratic reforms and called for a multi-party system in Vietnam.



L4L organised a letter-writing campaign to make clear to the authorities that the arrest and house arrests contradict internationally recognised rights as well as the ambition of the

Vietnamese government to increase the respect for human rights.

Zimbabwe

In 2011, the human rights situation in Zimbabwe also left much to be desired. Since January 2011, the intimidation and arbitrary arrests of human rights defenders have intensified.



On 15 April 2011, the presentation of the first *Lawyers for Lawyers Award* took place in Amsterdam. Zimbabwean human rights lawyer **Alec Muchadehama**

received the Award for his "perseverance" and his "exceptional courage", according to the report of the jury. For more information about the Award, see the Introduction of this report.

III WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

Annual Congress Dutch Bar Association

At the Annual Congress of the Dutch Bar Association on 23 September 2011, Zimbabwean human rights lawyer **Alec Muchadehama** discussed his work in Zimbabwe in relation to the main theme of the congress, "Ethical dilemmas, without borders".



In a dialogue with **L4L** President Phon van der Biesen, Muchadehama talked about the legal profession in Zimbabwe and legal work in times of

crisis and severe suppression by the government. Subjects discussed were the 'law society', the Bar Association of Zimbabwe and the role of lawyers in Zimbabwe against the

background of the *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*.

The congress also discussed how receiving the *Lawyers for Lawyers Award* in April has had positive effects on his working conditions in Zimbabwe. Muchadehama: "Receiving the L4L Award was a dream come true, I am so grateful. To this very day, the impact of the Award can be felt."

The Award generated much media attention in Zimbabwe for Muchadehama and it once again placed the human rights situation in Zimbabwe on the agenda. Because of the considerable (international) attention and the fact that Muchadehama received an international prize, his prestige has risen considerably and as such also the respect he encounters from judges, public prosecutors and the police. Muchadehama noted that not only has his own prestige been enhanced, but also respect for other human rights lawyers in Zimbabwean society. Commercial clients Muchadehama had lost over the years are slowly finding their way to his office again, now that they have regained their trust in him thanks to the Award.

The suppression and dangers faced by human rights lawyers in Zimbabwe are still considerable, but Muchadehama said he will continue his work and he will not flee. Because of the fact that various organisations like **L4L** closely follow Muchadehama, he is less likely to get arrested.

L4L Basic Principles Event

On 21 November 2011, **L4L**, in collaboration with *De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek*, organised a seminar with as its central theme the 'Basic Principles



on the Role of Lawyers', a United Nations document which sets out the key values for an independent legal profession. Lawyers must be able to practise their profession independently and freely, which is the essence of the "Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers". However, contrary to these Basic Principles, there are many lawyers around the world that are

hindered in practising their profession.

Database Basic Principles

Information about the *Basic Principles*, like professional literature and case law, is scattered and not always easily accessible. **L4L** wanted to change this and has therefore, in collaboration with the law firm *De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek*, set up a Basic Principles database. It contains more than 500 documents that refer to the Basic Principles, such as documents from the UN, the UN special rapporteurs, non-governmental organisations, (regional) courts, etc. **L4L** hopes that the availability of this information will contribute to raising the legal status and reputation of the Basic Principles.

The database was presented at the seminar on 21 November. On the occasion **Hary Pahaniaila** and **Aleh Volcheck** spoke about their experiences as human rights lawyers in Belarus. Pahaniaila is the co-founder of the *Union of Lawyers of Belarus*. His law licence has been revoked since 1998. Volcheck, who represents people in distress due to government actions, is also hindered in practising law.

Miscellaneous

On 27 June, the Dutch *Iran Committee* organised a meeting in The Hague in connection with the UN International Day Against Torture. **L4L** President Phon van der Biesen was one of the members of the panel, as were Professor Cees Flinterman (member of the UN human rights committee) and Member of Parliament Frans Timmermans (Dutch Labour Party). According to the website of the Iran Committee, the purpose of the meeting was to inform the Dutch general public and policy makers how to effectively stop Iranian human rights violations, from an international, European, Dutch and civil society perspective.

IV OTHER ACTIVITIES

Book 'Building on Basic Principles, 25 years Lawyers for Lawyers'

In collaboration with the *Dutch Legal Committee for Human Rights*, **L4L** published the book 'Building on Basic Principles, 25 years Lawyers for Lawyers'. One of **L4L**'s most important goals is to increase the effectiveness of the *Basic Principles*. One way to achieve this is to examine how to give a higher legal status to the Basic Principles. To investigate how this could be realised we asked experts of bodies such as the *International Commission of Jurists*, the *Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Lawyers and Judges* and the *Human Rights Institute of the International Bar Association* (HRI IBA) to contribute to the book. The results of the expert meeting during the 25th anniversary have been compiled in the booklet 'Building on Basic Principles'.

L4L hopes that the book will offer support and inspiration to our colleagues, many of whom still risk their position, income, health and that of their families by carrying out their professional duties as a lawyer. **L4L** also hopes that the book will inspire lawyers and scholars to further develop the rule of law by protecting the independence of the legal profession.

The book was presented on 21 November 2011 during the Basic Principles Event.

Volunteer meetings

In 2011, **L4L** again organised a meeting for its volunteers. A *UN Human Rights Machinery Training* was given on 10 October 2011 in collaboration with 'stichting Opleiding Advocaten Amsterdam', the lawyers' education foundation.



The course was developed by the *Solicitors International Human Rights Group* (SIHRG) and has already been given a number of times

to British lawyers. Because of the success in England, L4L decided to bring the course to the Netherlands to be given to lawyers who actively work for L4L. The course was given by Professor Nazila Ghanea, who had come from London for the occasion.

The course offers a broad overview of the UN-Charter-based Bodies, the special procedures under the UN and the UN treaty bodies. The course is a combination of a lecture and group assignments. The course helped volunteers to gain more knowledge about the United Nations Human Rights Machinery, which can be helpful in their work for L4L. The course was a success: Nazila Ghanea had a clear and appealing style of lecturing and the volunteers were all very enthusiastic.

The aim of these volunteer meetings is to exchange information and to mobilise the volunteers further into monitoring groups. These monitoring groups are responsible for monitoring the situation of lawyers in certain countries by maintaining contacts and actively looking for information themselves. They also provide support to concrete actions for lawyers. In 2011 the following focus groups have been active: China, Middle and South America, North Africa, Zimbabwe, the Philippines, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan/Sri Lanka, South-East Asia and Eurasia.

Each monitoring group is assigned to one member of the board. This way, L4L's work can be better allocated, and the increasing quantity of information better processed. In addition, volunteers are actively involved in maintaining the website and translating material submitted for this.

Financial support medical treatment

The Azerbaijani lawyer **Isakhan Ashurov** mainly represents people who speak in critical terms of the government of President Ilham Aliyev. He takes cases other lawyers do not dare to take. In 2010 he was diagnosed with bowel cancer. He was operated in May 2011 in Germany, and his doctors advised after-

surgery rehabilitation in the United States. The cost of this treatment amounted to USD 29,000, an amount Ashurov could not possibly pay on his own. L4L made an appeal for financial support for Ashurov. In all, an amount of EUR 3,750 was gathered for Ashurov's treatment.

V LAWYERS FOR LAWYERS (L4L)

Background

Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L) is an independent Dutch foundation with the status of an Institution for the Promotion of the Public Interest. L4L was established in 1986 on the initiative of the Professional Lawyers of Amnesty International Netherlands with the support from the Dutch Bar Association, the Dutch Legal Committee for Human Rights (NJCM) and the Study and Information Center Human Rights (SIM).

Objectives

In conformity with international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers and the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders of the United Nations, L4L has committed itself to enable lawyers to practise law freely and independently.

Approach

L4L provides financial, moral and legal support to oppressed lawyers and lawyers' organisations. We provide such support by bringing the position of threatened lawyers throughout the world to the attention of international legal and political institutions, civil society organisations and the relevant authorities of the country in which the particular lawyer is based. Doing this, we put special

emphasis on the importance of compliance with the *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*. We also organise fact-finding or observation missions and letter-writing campaigns. Whenever appropriate, we mobilise lawyers to provide legal assistance to oppressed lawyers. We try to tailor this support as much as possible to the specific need(s) of the lawyer or lawyers' organisations concerned. We also organise or participate in workshops, seminars and conferences regarding the position of threatened and obstructed lawyers, or we support the organising thereof. In addition, we write a regular column in *Advocatenblad* and publish in other legal magazines in the Netherlands.

Organisation

L4L has a board consisting of (former) lawyers and human rights specialists. An executive director is responsible for the day-to-day work. Regions that require special attention are monitored by groups of volunteers that may take action in consultation with the board. Where appropriate, **L4L** also engages working students.

Financing

Being a foundation, **L4L** does not have any members. For its income, the foundation depends entirely on donations. Our sponsors are mostly individual lawyers, law firms and lawyers' organisations.

VI MANAGING BOARD

In 2011 the board of **L4L** consisted of the following members:

Mr. Phon van den Biesen, Van den Biesen Boesveld Advocaten, president;
Mr. Joost Italianer, NautaDutilh, secretary;
Ms. Judith Lichtenberg, former lawyer;

Ms. Irma van den Berg, Six Advocaten;
Ms. Marina Brillman, de Brauw Blackstone Advocaten;
Mr. Ed van Liere, Simmons&Simmons, treasurer;

Ms. Adrie van de Streek is the executive director of **L4L**.

In 2011 ten board meetings were held, on 21 January, 25 February, 1 April, 13 May, 17 June, 11 July, 2 September, 7 October, 11 November and 16 December.

VII CONTACTS & COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

In 2011 **L4L** collaborated and/or kept in touch with representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs including the Human Rights Ambassador, various members of Parliament, the Dutch Bar Association, local bar associations including the Amsterdam Bar, the *Human Rights Institute of the International Bar Association* and many other national and international political and legal institutions and human rights organisations, such as *Amnesty International*, the *International Commission of Jurists*, *Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada*, the European Union and the United Nations.

In 2011 **L4L** met on various occasions with Ms Gabriela Knaul, the UN *Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Lawyers and Judges*. **L4L**, in those meetings and through letters, informed her of threats against lawyers.

VIII PUBLICATIONS

In 2011 **L4L** published 13 issues of the digital newsletter 'L4L Newsflash', with the latest news and information about current activities of

L4L. Those who wish to receive the Newsflash can subscribe via our website.

L4L also writes a regular column in lawyers' magazine *Advocatenblad*. It usually features a lawyer currently under threat, who urgently needs our support. The columns are written by Tatiana Scheltema (a freelance journalist).

In 2011 fifteen columns appeared, that can also be read on our website.

VIII FINANCING

Total income generated in 2011 amounted to EUR 153,608.

The reserves are around the level deemed the maximum acceptable by the *Herkströter Committee* (Committee on Capital Requirements for Charities) (in summary: a continuity reserve of one and a half times the annual turnover maximum).

In 2011 **L4L** revamped its website. The database on *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers* has also been placed on the website.

In 2011, lawyers' organisations such as a number of local bar associations and individual lawyers all over the Netherlands have supported **L4L** in making our work possible by providing financial and/or other kinds of supports, such as making available IT facilities, legal and marketing expertise, meeting rooms and other logistics and by bringing our work to the attention of various lawyers' meetings or in publications. Thanks to this support, **L4L** was able to, for instance, grant the *L4L Award* and realise the new website.

Fee attendance money and expenses

Fee attendance money

Board members receive no fee attendance money or other allowances for the work they perform for **L4L**, other than the expenses referred to below.

Expenses

If an employee of **L4L** carries out work at the request of the board and travel or accommodation expenses have to be incurred, these costs are reimbursed within reason.

If a board member or another volunteer of **L4L** carries out work at the request of the board and travel or accommodation expenses have to be incurred, these costs are reimbursed within reason. If the board decides that the above-mentioned activities need to be undertaken, it also determines the number of participants.

Becoming a donor

To be able to continue the work of **L4L**, we appeal to all lawyers, (Young) Bar Associations and law firms to continue supporting the work financially. **L4L** is a public benefit institution and as such all donations qualify as tax deductible.

Please support Lawyers for *Lawyers* by making a donation to account number 489 938 655 in the name of 'Stichting Advocaten voor Advocaten', Amsterdam.

Making a donation by notarial deed

You can support the work of **L4L** in a tax-advantageous manner by making a donation by notarial deed. With a periodic contribution by notarial deed you support us – and your colleague-lawyers under threat – for a period of five years with a fixed annual amount. The tax terms are favourable, as you can enter your contribution (at least EUR 100 per year) as a tax-deductible item without threshold. **L4L** will pay the notarial fee.

CONTACT

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