



**Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human
Rights Defenders (EMHRF)**

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<u>1. INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u>	<u>5</u>
2.1. CRACKDOWN ON DISSIDENTS, DEPRIVATION OF FREEDOM AND ILL TREATMENT	5
2.2. INCREASE IN PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HARASSMENT	5
2.3. POLITICAL SUBVERSION OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM	5
2.4. ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE GROUPS	5
2.5. OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES OF INDEPENDENT NGOS	6
<u>3. ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS NGOS, GROUPS AND DEFENDERS</u>	<u>6</u>
3.1. EMERGENCY ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF DEFENDERS AND ASSOCIATIONS IN DIFFICULTY OR AT RISK	6
3.2. STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS IN SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN PRISON OR FORMER PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE IN SYRIA AND TUNISIA	8
3.3. INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF DEFENDERS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PROGRAMMES DEALING WITH SENSITIVE SUBJECTS IN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT	9
<u>4. FOLLOWING-UP ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS GEARED TO SUPPORTING THEM OVER THE LONG TERM</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>5. THE 2010 INTERVENTIONS IN FIGURES</u>	<u>12</u>
5.1. TYPES OF INTERVENTION	12
5.2. THEMATIC FOCUS	13
5.3. ACTIVITIES OF RECIPIENTS	14
5.4. TYPES OF EXPENDITURE COVERED	15
5.5. TYPES OF FOLLOW-UP	16
5.6. GENDER	17
5.7. COUNTRIES	18
<u>6. ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS</u>	<u>19</u>
6.1. EXTERNAL EVALUATION	19
6.2. FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIPS	19
6.3. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS	19
6.4. RISK ANALYSIS AND SUSTAINABILITY	20
6.5. INTERNAL GOVERNANCE	21
<u>APPENDIX 1: OVERVIEW OF EMHRF INTERVENTIONS 2005-2010</u>	<u>22</u>

1. Introduction

The preparation of this report took place at a time when momentous events were occurring daily in the Arab region. Some of the changes that are occurring are promising and could lead to significant democratic developments; while other situations make it clear that some autocratic, corrupt regimes have the capacity to resist reforms.

Whatever the outcome of these developments, they reveal the potential for initiative and mobilisation that exists in these societies, which were long thought to be stagnant and passive. Recent events have abruptly exposed a human and socio-cultural environment in transformation and reaffirmed 'the relevance of socio-historical studies of the evolution of Arab societies over the past two decades, which have made clear the significant impact of demographic transformations, cultural progress spurred by the acceleration of education, the emergence of new actors – youth and women, in particular – and of new media and means of communication, as well as new approaches to social engagement and protest'.¹

The fundamental geo-strategic transformation that is taking place has also confirmed the relevance of the approach and action of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF), which is congruent with the transformation processes at work in Arab societies.

Over the past five years, the Foundation's role in supporting human rights defenders has steadily expanded, with priority being given to the ethicality, quality, responsiveness and local focus of its activities in the region. The needs expressed by local actors - acting in countries where conditions are especially difficult - have been at the core of the Foundation's interventions which, beyond the financial support provided, have made its partnerships with key actors at the national, regional and international levels a focus of its long-term strategy.

The geographic scope of the transformations that are at work remains open-ended and a number of issues will remain high priorities in the future. First, human rights defenders continue to be at risk, not only in dangerous situations that persist in countries like Syria, Libya, Yemen and Bahrain, but also in societies in transition, where the issue of rehabilitation remains high on the agenda. Gender equality and intergenerational renewal are also crucial to the democratisation process, as are the launching of constitutional, social and institutional reforms, the issue of especially vulnerable groups and communities, pluralism and diversity, and the trilogy formed by history, remembrance and transition.

In this changing environment, in which the international agenda must be redefined along with the actions of human rights non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and defenders, the Foundation is also contemplating changes in the focus of its activities in order to support, in adequate conditions of delivery, closeness and flexibility, the new emerging needs of defenders in order to implement genuine and lasting democratic reforms in the region.

The goal is to maintain urgent interventions in those countries where conditions are especially difficult and strategic assistance to strengthen the ability of defenders to develop sensitive projects in the region. To that end, the Foundation will set up an exploratory regional mission whose main purpose will be to assess the quality of new emerging initiatives and provide strategic, locally based, support to enable defenders to develop a course of action over the long term.

¹ Mohamed Sghir Janjar, Conclusions on the think-tank seminar organised by the EMHRF on the subject of *Democratic Change in the Arab World: State Policy and the Dynamics of Civil Society*, Brussels, 2-3 April 2011.

2. Executive Summary

As has been noted in previous years, the year 2010 confirmed that the Arab region as a whole continues to suffer from a failure to implement major constitutional, legislative and institutional reforms and to suppress *de facto* impunity, with governments often blocking any attempt to investigate human rights violations perpetrated in the past. This situation is all the more disquieting because the region is beset by conflicts with tragic consequences and by a persistent refusal to promote economic, social and political progress.

While the recurring difficulties facing human rights defenders in the region remain closely related to their activities, they are also linked to broad political trends at the national and international levels. The requests for assistance received by the Foundation in 2010 reflected these trends, and they also highlighted the importance of the role played by the Foundation, in cooperation with regional and international bodies active in protecting human rights defenders, in providing the latter with effective support.

These trends, and the positions adopted by the Foundation, revolve around the following areas:

2.1. Crackdown on dissidents, deprivation of freedom and ill treatment: Many defenders in the region have had to face instances of deprivation of freedom in recent years. Often, these measures have been compounded by ill treatment and unfair dismissals, among other things. As a result, a number of defenders have had serious health problems and their families have found themselves in a very precarious situation. The Foundation has come to the assistance of these defenders to help them obtain the medical treatments they need, and to help their families cope with basic living expenses.

2.2. Increase in physical and psychological harassment: The pressures to which defenders have been subjected include physical harassment (body searches, attacks against defenders, their personal and business properties, etc.) as well as psychological harassment (direct and indirect death threats against the families of prisoners in an attempt to pressure them to dismiss their lawyers and to issue public condemnations of international expressions of solidarity, etc.). In most cases, small amounts required to buy equipment or for other vital needs can contribute significantly to the psychological wellbeing of defenders, thus allowing them to continue their activities.

2.3. Political subversion of the judicial system: Another form of pressure consists in blocking or denying the legal recognition of human rights-related activities in countries where conditions are especially difficult. In such cases, human rights defender groups have naturally sought to obtain tangible and discreet financial assistance in order to recast their strategies and continue their activities aimed at strengthening, promoting and defending human rights and democratisation in the region.

2.4. Especially vulnerable groups: The decision by European countries to close their borders, coupled with the continued stalemates in the Israeli-Palestinian and Iraq conflicts, have had serious consequences for migrants and refugees in several countries of the region. The scope of the problem has led to an increase in the number of NGOs dedicated to protecting the rights of migrants and asylum seekers and has also resulted in an increase in the activities of existing organisations. As well, there has been an increase in the number of groups and organisations working on individual rights issues (e.g. the rights of LGBTQs). In some countries, laws and practices remain resolutely hostile to LGBTQs and others. Organisations and defenders seeking to challenge these laws and practices, and to criticise their adverse impact on the rights of the targeted individuals, are very seldom recognised or face many difficulties in pursuing their activities freely and productively. Accordingly, the

Foundation has focused on groups that are especially vulnerable by providing assistance designed to strengthen the actions of civil society in the region that are aimed at these groups.

2.5. Operational challenges of independent NGOs: Organisations in the region have very uneven levels of operational capabilities and access to financial resources. Many independent groups lack the skilled human resources and financial wherewithal needed to perform their work at an adequate level and establish the foundations needed for long-term strategic planning. In several countries where operating conditions are particularly challenging, these associations often have only limited access to outside funding; in addition, many of those wishing to set their activities on a more professional footing have neither the skills nor the support needed to design projects in a way that matches the criteria established by major donors. Providing such groups with small amounts that can strengthen their human resources and operational capabilities was a necessary step, especially since mainstream donors seldom support this aspect of NGO activities.

3. Actions in Support of Human Rights NGOs, Groups and Defenders

In the context of the broad trends outlined above, the Foundation undertook 37 interventions aimed at supporting 138 human rights defenders (19 NGOs and 119 individuals) in the southern Mediterranean region in 2010. The total amount involved reached more than ½ million Euros. The support provided to defenders in the region can be divided into three broad categories, as follows:

3.1. Emergency actions in support of defenders and associations in difficulty or at risk

The Foundation conducted short-term, rapid and tangible interventions aimed at providing emergency assistance to 20 human rights defenders in the region who were at risk or experiencing difficulties, as part of 21 secure consultations².

In these interventions, particular attention was focused on *those countries of the region where the needs were particularly acute because of the difficult conditions in which civil society operates, especially Syria and Tunisia*.

The project made it possible to provide assistance to the following defenders, among others:

- Along with their families, a Tunisian defender and three Syrian defenders whose lives were at risk because of serious health problems and who as a result of this support were able to obtain suitable *medical treatment and medication* in their own countries. The assistance was provided because of serious violations of their rights and/or of their inability to assume the costs involved because of their ongoing activities in favour of human rights.
- Two Tunisian defenders and three Syrian defenders who were the targets of ongoing harassment and/or arbitrary judicial proceedings because they had taken position in favour of respect for human rights, to

² Urgent applications are dealt through a specific procedure. Board members render their decision within a maximum of 10 days after the reception of the request. In exceptional cases – essentially situations involving threats against the health or safety of the applicant – the decision may be made within a shorter time period. The amount of funding requested may not exceed € 5,000.

enable them to meet *basic personal and professional needs* and to overcome their difficulties and pursue their activities in the future.

- Operating and/or rental costs of four human rights organisations in Algeria, Egypt and Morocco facing sudden or unforeseeable administrative, financial and legal obstacles, to enable them to renew their intervention strategies in the defence of human rights and secure the means to pursue their activities.
- Six projects whose success was *essentially time-dependent*, to prevent deterioration in the situation of human rights in Tunisia, Egypt and Israel through the organisation of strategically important meetings or national and international awareness-raising campaigns on human rights violations. The support was provided because the defenders in question were unable to secure funding from other donors in adequate conditions of timeliness and safety.

Since one of the main objectives of interventions is to ensure that defenders in difficulty can be supported over the medium and long term, the Foundation has sought to engage in coordinated actions with partners in order to ensure that a number of defenders and their relatives would receive effective support. More specifically:

- The Foundation coordinated nine of its urgent interventions in support of human rights defenders with several regional and international organisations as part of their solidarity actions (solidarity campaigns, press releases, trial-monitoring missions, field visits, letters to public officials, etc.).
- The Foundation was instrumental in arranging for four international partners to bear the additional costs associated with an urgent project, the cost associated with the attendance of two Tunisian defenders at a strategically important meeting abroad, and the basic expenses of three Syrian defenders and/or their families.
- The Foundation played and/or continues to play an advisory role to two NGOs in difficulty, outlining the steps that need to be taken in project methodology and in raising funds from outside sources, and forwarded a list of potential donors that might be approached to support future projects.

On the whole, the outcome of the emergency support provided to these 12 individuals and 8 non-governmental organisations was positive:

- This type of interventions resulted in a significant improvement in the physical and psychological capacities of three Tunisian defenders and six Syrian defenders who were experiencing particularly difficult living conditions as a result of health problems or of ongoing harassment and/or arbitrary judicial proceedings. Six defenders were able to develop new professional prospects in defending human rights thanks to, among others, the emergency support provided by the Foundation. However, despite the psychological and physical impact of assistance received at a given moment, one defender remains in prison to this day and one family member of an imprisoned defender was unfortunately unable to overcome illness over the long term because of a serious immune deficiency.
- This type of interventions allowed four human rights organisations to secure the means to pursue their activities in promoting and defending human rights in Algeria, Egypt and Morocco. Without this bridging support, they would have been unable to do so. In addition to helping three of these organisations to maintain their presence and their activities, the interventions also allowed a human rights organisation operating in a country where conditions are particularly difficult to renew its structure and its programmes.
- Three awareness-raising campaigns in favour of respect for basic rights were launched, along with a programme aimed at supporting the victims of human rights violations in Tunisia, Egypt and Israel. This activity has enabled one Tunisian group to document and publicise human rights violations occurring in remote areas which led to spreading the campaign at the national and international levels. Three defenders attended strategic meetings at the international level to ensure that fundamental human rights are respected in Tunisia and Egypt (the rights of freedom of expression and the rights of migrants and

refugees). At last, the urgent program enabled to alleviate pressure and stress that women and children felt due to house demolitions.

3.2. Strategic interventions in support of human rights defenders in prison or former prisoners of conscience in Syria and Tunisia

Following decisions made at its meetings of March and October 2010, the Board of the Foundation established and renewed **two solidarity funds** (through four decisions) intended to support 107 individual Syrian and Tunisian defenders, current and former prisoners of conscience, as well as their families in 2010.

The main purpose of the two solidarity funds was to sustain the basic needs of human rights defenders who are current or former prisoners of conscience and who, because of their peaceful activities on behalf of human rights and in promoting democratic reforms in their countries, have been arbitrarily imprisoned and/or dismissed from their jobs and thus unable to attend to the basic needs of their families.

The funds have thus succeeded in preventing a further deterioration of the human rights situation in those two countries by supporting the basic living expenses of 107 defenders and their relatives.

In fact, the judicial and security systems in Syria and Tunisia are systematically and arbitrarily bent on crushing the freedoms of expression, information, movement, association and assembly of human rights defenders, and are doing so in total impunity. In Syria, while a vast number of defenders and political activists remained in prison in 2010, a massive crackdown was launched against many journalists and bloggers, lawyers and human rights activists, as well as leading figures of the Kurdish political movement, with enforced disappearances and cases of ill treatment and torture being routinely reported. More than 100 defenders and their dependants are banned from travelling abroad, even for health reasons, and independent human rights groups continue to be targeted by the authorities in the form of legal proceedings taken against them or of arbitrary office closures.

In Tunisia, many journalists and human rights defenders who had denounced the ‘demagoguery’ of the Tunisian government and the plebiscite-like process that marked the presidential election of 2009, were the targets of physical attacks, close surveillance, house arrests, virulent defamation campaigns in pro-government media and unfair trials leading to arbitrary sentences of three to six months of imprisonment. At the same time, even as most international organisations were welcoming the release on parole of the leaders of social protest movement in the mining region, they were still awaiting the restoration of their civil and political rights, their full reintegration into their occupations and independent investigations that had been requested into the ill treatments they had been subjected to while in detention.

With these two solidarity funds, more than 100 defenders and their families have been allowed to meet basic needs and to develop future prospects for their activities, which have been instrumental in bringing about the transformation process that has emerged in Arab societies in early 2011.

3.3. Interventions aimed at strengthening the capacities of defenders to develop and implement programmes dealing with sensitive subjects in the regional context

Through decisions made at its meetings during the course of the year, the Board of the Foundation provided financial support to ***projects undertaken by 12 human rights NGOs in the region in order to enable them to bolster their organisational capabilities***³.

Thanks to these grants, five human rights groups and organisations operating in countries where the environment is hostile (Syria and Algeria) were able to pursue their activities; three newly formed associations (in Egypt, Jordan and Israel) were able to enhance their visibility and their capabilities; and four other groups (in Israel, Palestine and Lebanon) were able to work on issues that are groundbreaking and sensitive in the regional context.

The project contributed strategic support in the following areas, among others:

- ***Increased ability to provide legal aid and represent the victims of human rights violations*** by six human rights groups and organisations, in particular organisations dedicated to defending women's rights and the rights of minorities, of migrants and refugees, of victims of torture and of labour union activists in the region.
- ***Enhanced monitoring of human rights violations through the publication of detailed, factual reports and/or the provision of training*** by four organisations seeking to raise the awareness of civil society and the local authorities about groundbreaking and sensitive issues, related in particular to the rights of *harragas*⁴, stateless persons and women in remote areas.
- ***Strengthened advocacy efforts in favour of respect for human rights*** aimed at national, regional and international bodies, in particular on issues related to the rights of women, minorities and refugees by four associations in the region. The advocacy activities of three of these organisations were made possible, in particular, thanks to the publication of detailed reports and the provision of legal aid to victims of violations.

In pursuing these objectives, the Foundation subsidised the following costs, among others: the rent and operating costs (including physical and human resources) of five organisations; the legal costs of four organisations; the cost of translating and publishing the reports of three organisations, and the travel costs incurred by three organisations attending meetings at the local or international level.

In the Board's review of regular funding requests, greater emphasis was placed on projects targeting groups seen as particularly vulnerable or needing special assistance, as well as projects focusing on subjects that are particularly relevant and sensitive in the regional context. These subjects included the following:

- Protecting the rights of minorities (three projects in Syria, Lebanon and Israel)
- Protecting the rights of migrants and refugees (three projects in Algeria, Jordan and Israel)
- Protecting the rights of women and strengthening her leadership (two projects in Israel and Egypt)
- Protecting economic and social rights (two projects in Palestine and Algeria)
- Combating impunity (two projects in Syria and Israel)

³ Interventions aimed at helping to strengthen the capacities of sensitive human rights activities are decided at the EMHRF Board's regular meetings. This support provided by the Foundation to human rights defenders may not exceed € 40,000. It usually falls between € 1,000 and € 20,000 and is generally allocated for a period of 6 months to 1 year.

⁴ Word used in Arab dialect to designate clandestine migrants: *harragas* are the 'burners', those who burn their identity papers as they prepare to cross borders.

In its role as intermediary and advisor to the beneficiaries of its grants, the Foundation:

- Encouraged five organisations to establish or maintain contact with networks at the regional and international level. The purpose of these contacts is to enable the organisations to share information on their experiences, to examine the potential for synergies and coordinated action, and as a result to benefit from non-financial support that contributes to the resonance and sustainability of their activities.
- Encouraged and assisted two associations – one of them recently created, the other operating outside the capital city – in developing annual or multiyear action plans, backed by a fundraising strategy, to enable the Foundation, in consultation with partners, to respond strategically to the needs of these organisations by helping them to sustain their activities over the longer term.
- In five cases, facilitated contact, acted as intermediary, forwarded a list of potential donors and/or helped in the submission of funding requests.

It is difficult, at the moment, to measure the results of all the reinforcement grants provided to defenders by the Foundation, mainly because most of the partnerships established between the Foundation and the recipients are still ongoing.

Nonetheless, seven of the Foundation's interventions that have reached an advanced stage have made it possible:

- For three human rights organisations to maintain a physical presence on the ground, which would not have been possible without the Foundation's assistance, thus enabling them to renew their structures and their human rights programmes in two countries where conditions are particularly difficult;
- For two women's rights organisations to publish detailed studies on subjects that had not been addressed previously in the country, and to raise the awareness of local civil society about human rights violations through meetings, conferences and training;
- For one organisation to prepare the ground for a first network focusing on support to and the protection of the economic and social rights of women in the private sector in one country in the region;
- For several regional and international actors to receive detailed information on the human rights situations and violations, thanks to the press releases and publications issued by seven groups and NGOs receiving support from the Foundation, among others.

4. Following-up on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders and Strengthening Partnerships geared to supporting them over the long term

In 2010, monitoring the situation of defenders and strengthening the coordination in favour of long-term support for them was conducted primarily by establishing and maintaining regular contact with recipients of funding and other partners at the national, regional and international levels.

The purpose of this activity is to assess the impact of the assistance provided and, if appropriate, to consider ongoing, longer-term support. Two activities were devoted to achieving this goal during the year:

1. ***A visit to a country where conditions in which civil society operates are difficult.*** The purpose of the Foundation's visit was mainly to meet defenders who had received its support, as well as major institutional partners, to discuss the situation of these defenders and explore opportunities for joint support. The visit also made it possible to meet other defenders and take stock of their situation and current projects. The report on the visit, along with recommendations on the actions and follow-up to be

undertaken, were discussed by the Board at its October meeting and distributed to a number of partners working on the country. As a result, a follow-up on the situation of six defenders was carried out in partnership with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, the International Commission of Jurists and Amnesty International.

2. ***Several follow-up meetings, in particular with Syrian, Algerian and Tunisian defenders, held in France and Morocco.*** Representatives of the Foundation and, at times, some of its partners held six follow-up meetings with defenders in difficulty and/or recipients of EMHRF assistance in Paris and Casablanca during 2010. In addition to providing an opportunity for a regular follow-up on changes in the situation of defenders in those countries, where they face many difficulties, the meetings helped to foster cooperation and coordinate activities with other regional and international partners of the Foundation in providing support of a non-financial nature to human rights defenders. The results of these discussions and of the coordinated activities of several partners have been particularly encouraging, and the Foundation has undertaken a further follow-up on four cases.

At the same time, the Foundation has expanded its membership and involvement in networks of foundations that are active in Europe, North America and the Middle East, in an attempt to facilitate greater sharing of experiences and enhance cooperation in support of human rights defenders in the region.

To that end, the Foundation established closer cooperation with organisations and foundations in the United States that support human rights defenders through its participation in semi-annual conferences of the International Human Rights Funders Group (IHRFG)⁵ in San Francisco (25-26 January 2010) and New York (13-14 July 2010). At the latter meeting, the Foundation, in partnership with the Fund for Global Human Rights (FGHR) and the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (UAF), organised an information session to launch a dialogue with IHRFG members on the innovative mechanisms that have been put in place to support human rights defenders who find themselves in urgent situations. The outcome of these meetings was very positive, and the Foundation's presentation and its implementation of recommendations following the information session were received very favourably by IHRFG members.

The first meeting of a new working group on human/woman rights defenders is scheduled to take place over the course of 2011. In addition to becoming a forum for dialogue among IHRFG members on issues related to human rights defenders, the working group is expected to contribute to cooperation, information sharing and networking, including interactive exchanges and learning, on strategies to support defenders.

The Foundation has also been given fellow-member status in the Arab Foundations Forum (AFF), a recently created platform fostering dialogue among Arab foundations.⁶ Joining the AFF will help to enhance the visibility and profile of the Foundation as a Euro-Arab donor, facilitate networking and raise awareness about human rights issues. The Foundation also continued to benefit in 2010 from its associate membership in the European Foundation Centre (EFC)⁷, an international association of foundations which seeks, among other things, to promote exchanges of information and cooperation among foundations in Europe and beyond.

⁵ IHRFG is an international foundation network with over 650 members representing approximately 275 human rights funding agencies operating around the world.

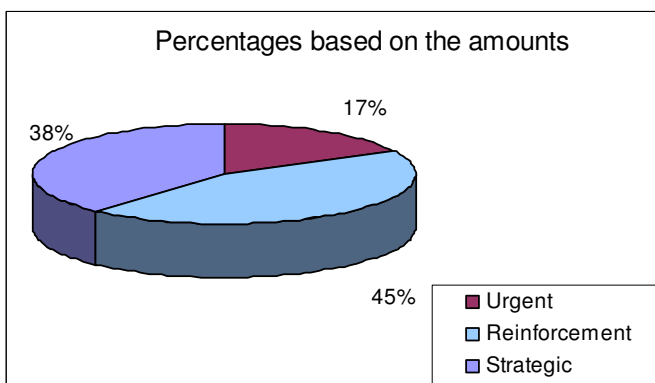
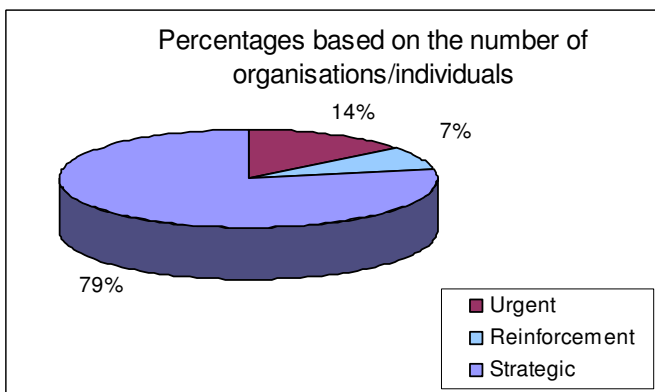
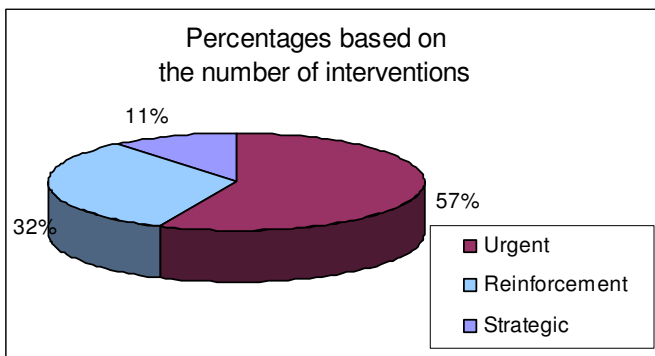
⁶ The Arab Foundations Forum is a pan-Arab grouping of foundations that seeks to strengthen dialogue, networking, training and cooperation among its members and with partners, with a view to bolstering the ability of Arab philanthropy to implement its vision. At the moment, the Forum serves as a platform for dialogue for 16 foundations in the region and beyond.

⁷ EFC is an international association of foundations and corporate funds that is dedicated to creating a foundation-friendly legal and taxation environment, documenting their areas of intervention, shore up the infrastructure of the sector and promote cooperation between foundations and various other actors in Europe and elsewhere.

5. The 2010 interventions in figures

The following graphs are aimed at facilitating understanding of the Foundation's support to human rights defenders in 2010.

5.1. Types of intervention

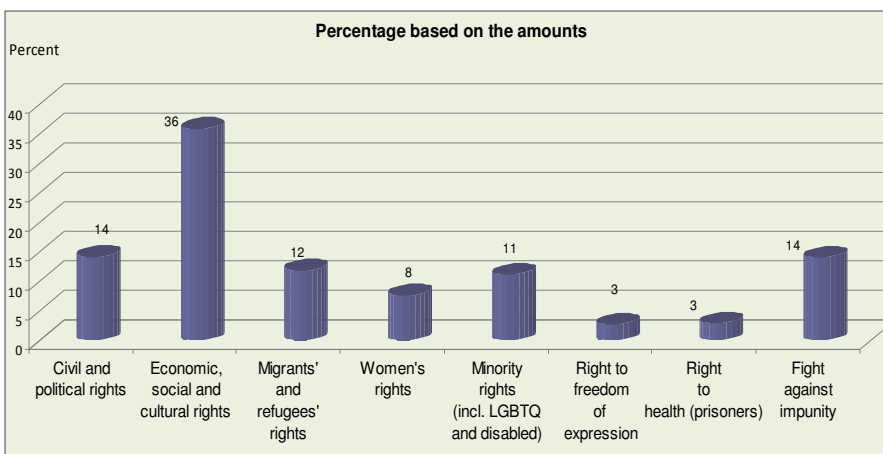
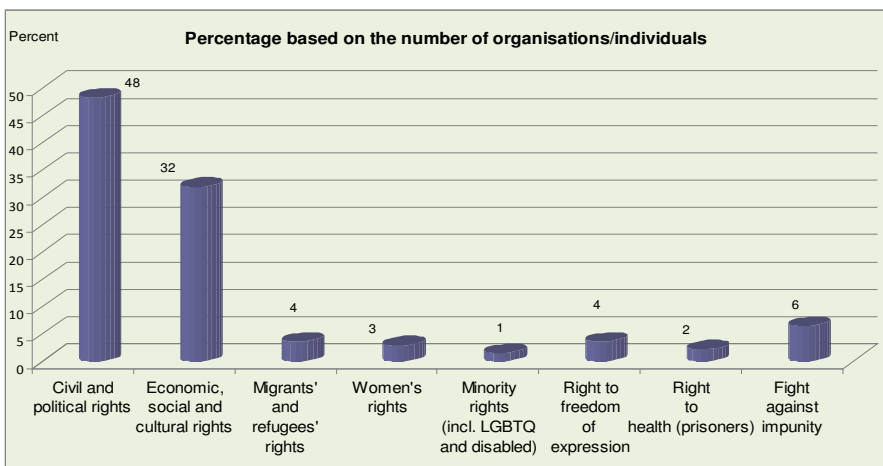
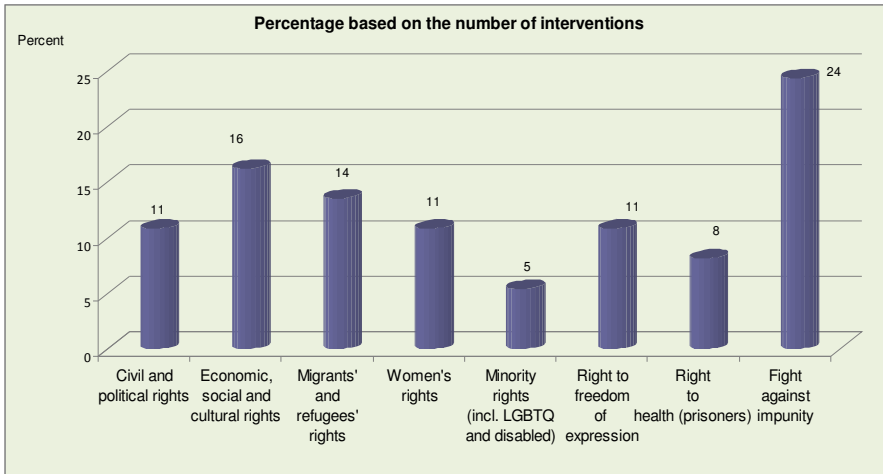


The proportion of urgent interventions increased relative to 2009 because of the deteriorating human rights situation in a number of countries, especially Syria and Tunisia, over the course of 2010.

The Foundation's reinforcement and strategic grants, which are generally higher than emergency grants, benefited a larger number of people, mainly as a result of the establishment of the two solidarity funds for Syrian and Tunisian defenders. This support proved to be crucial in light of the events that took place in early 2011, and of the fact that few donors give priority to the subsistence costs of human rights defenders (basic expenses, material, operating and administrative expenses of independent NGOs, etc.), even though such support has proved to be decisive to enable them to continue their activities in recent years.

The average amount of grants provided in 2010 was EUR 3914 per defender. This figure reflects the importance the Foundation attaches to the support itself rather than to the amount: the funding has an impact not only on the material situation of the defender but also and primarily on his or her morale.

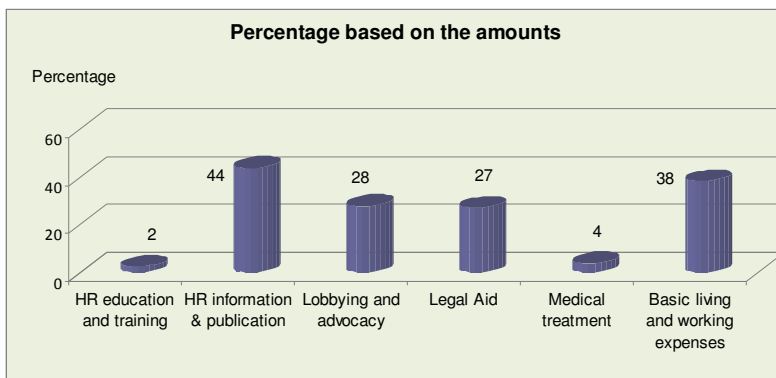
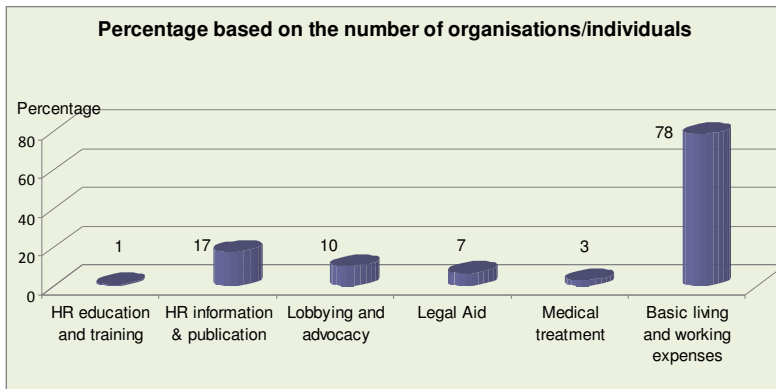
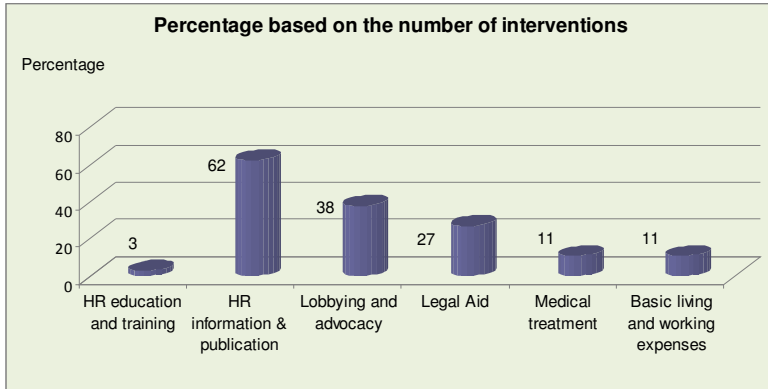
5.2. Thematic focus



In its 2010 interventions, the Foundation was particularly concerned with strengthening the fight against impunity and the rights of especially vulnerable groups in the region - in particular, women, current and former prisoners, minorities, as well as migrants and refugees - without neglecting the promotion and protection of all human rights (civil, political, economic, social and cultural) in countries of the region where conditions are particularly difficult.

The number of interventions related to the promotion of the right to freedom of expression show an increase relative to previous years because of the large number of journalists and writers who received arbitrary prison sentences in 2010 because they had expressed support for democratisation and respect for human rights in their respective countries.

5.3. Activities of recipients⁸



The activities undertaken by recipients of the Foundation's financial assistance cover a broad range; only the more representative categories of activities supported are illustrated here and below.

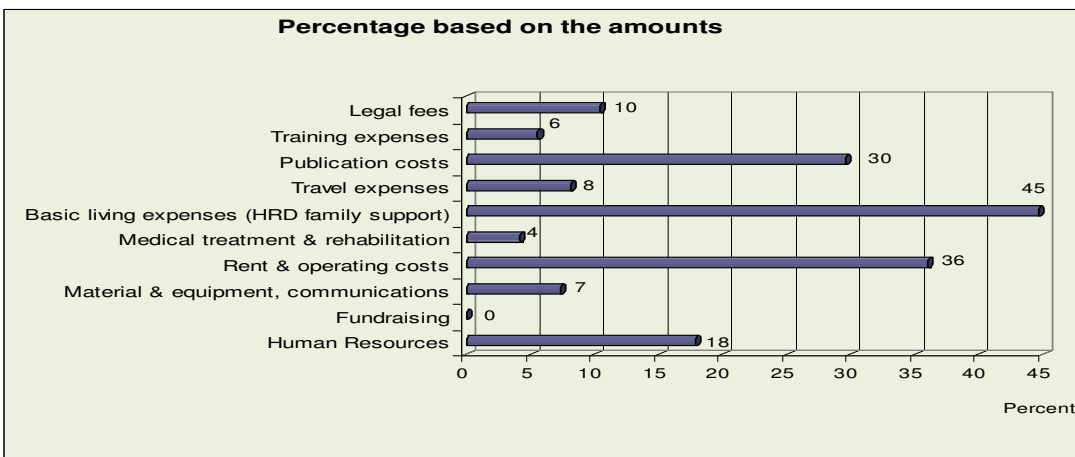
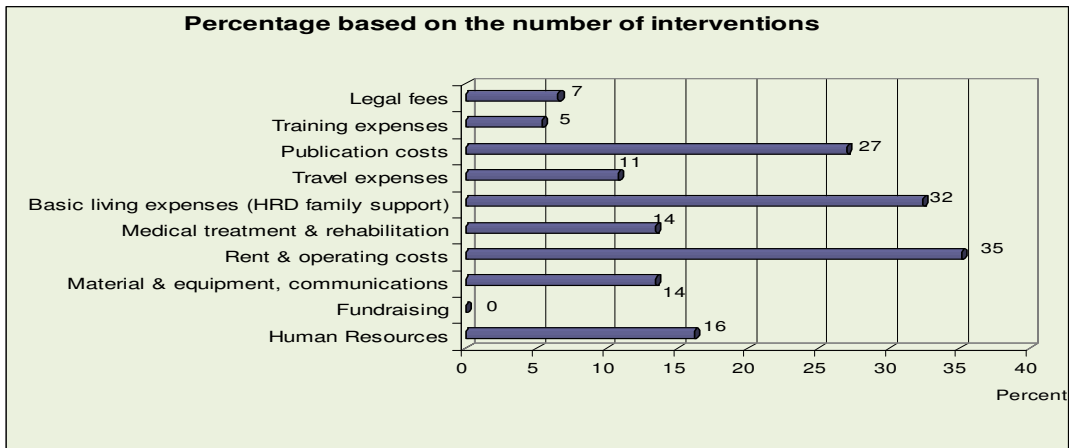
Information and publication activities, as well as lobbying/advocacy campaigns and legal aid to the victims of human rights violations are the main categories of activities carried out by beneficiaries in terms of both the number of interventions and the amounts provided.

Basic living and work expenses are the single most important category with regard to the number of beneficiaries because of the large number of defenders (110) who received funding under emergency requests and the two solidarity funds set up by the Foundation in 2010.

To enable independent NGOs to build up their capabilities and heighten the visibility of their activities over the medium and long term, the Foundation essentially financed their operating expenses, including rent and overhead, human resources, equipment and supplies, as well as the cost of publishing detailed reports on the human rights situation in countries of the region.

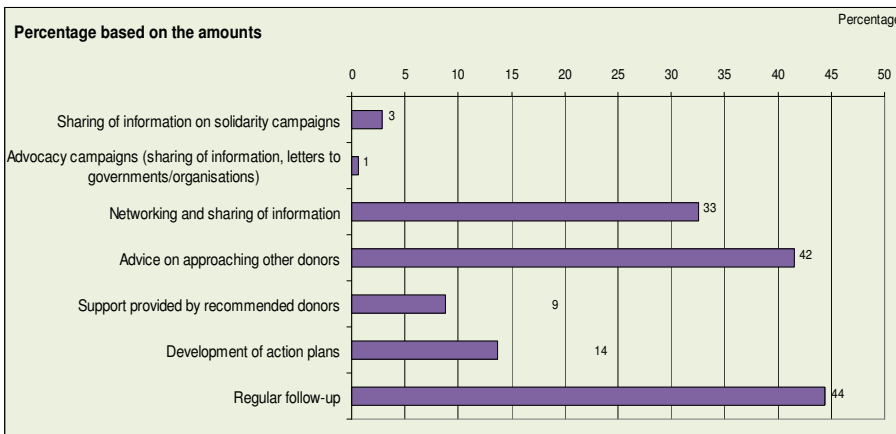
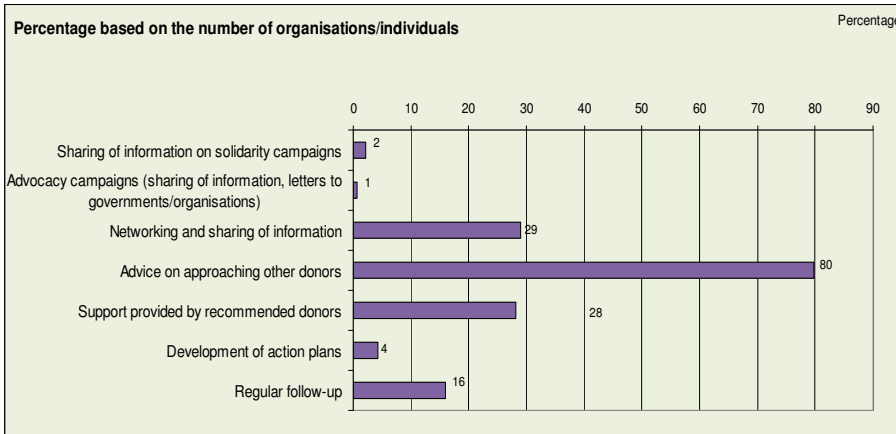
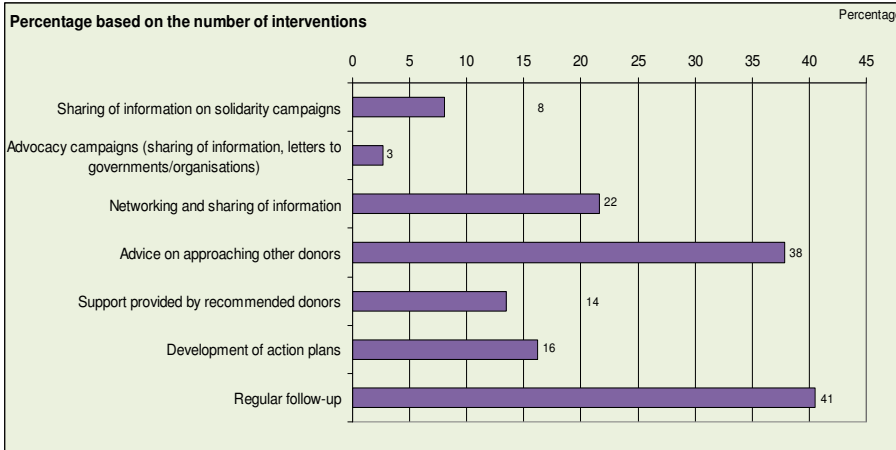
⁸ Some interventions, by their nature, fall under more than one activity category. Thus an intervention may have been allocated to different categories as appropriate, in order to generate a comprehensive and relevant overview. As a result, the total for all categories may exceed 100 percent.

5.4. Types of expenditure covered⁹



⁹ Some interventions, by their nature, may have served to meet more than one type of expenses. Thus an intervention may have been allocated to different categories as appropriate, in order to generate a comprehensive and relevant overview. As a result, the total for all categories may exceed 100 percent.

5.5. Types of follow-up¹⁰



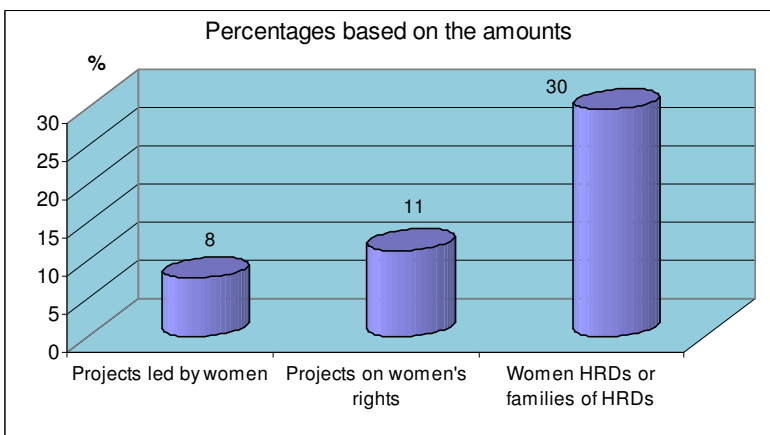
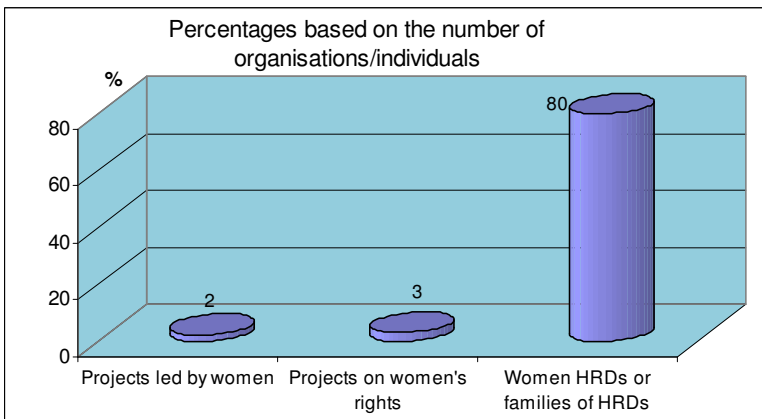
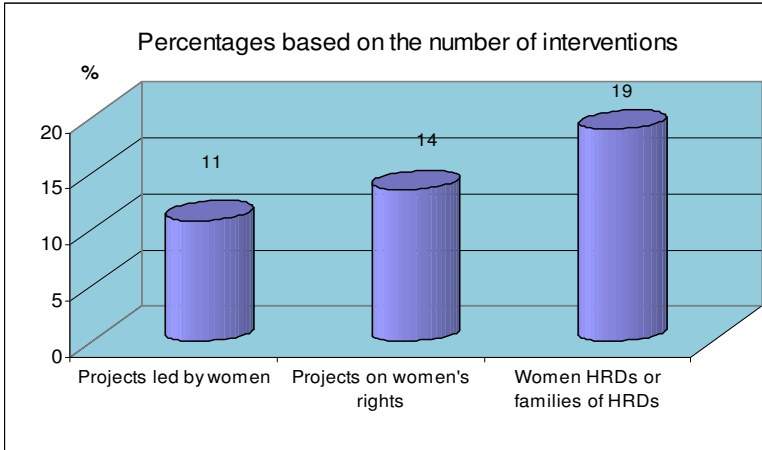
One of the main goals of the Foundation is to help defenders in the region pursue their activities in the medium and long term. To that end, the Foundation has put in place a mechanism allowing for an active follow-up with beneficiaries.

This follow-up activity consists mainly in providing advice on how to approach other funding agencies (project submission, contacts with potential donors), how to share information and create partnerships with key actors at the national, regional and international levels, and how to develop action plans and coordinated strategies to secure additional, non-financial support to strengthen the activities of defenders over the long term.

The results of this activity are positive since 28% of EMHRF recipients have developed prospects for pursuing their activities either through concluding new partnerships or through securing additional funding by recommended donors.

¹⁰ More than one type of follow-up may have taken place in the context of the Foundation's interventions. Thus an intervention may have been allocated to different types as appropriate, in order to generate as comprehensive and as relevant as possible an overview. As a result, the total for all types may exceed 100 percent.

5.6. Gender¹¹



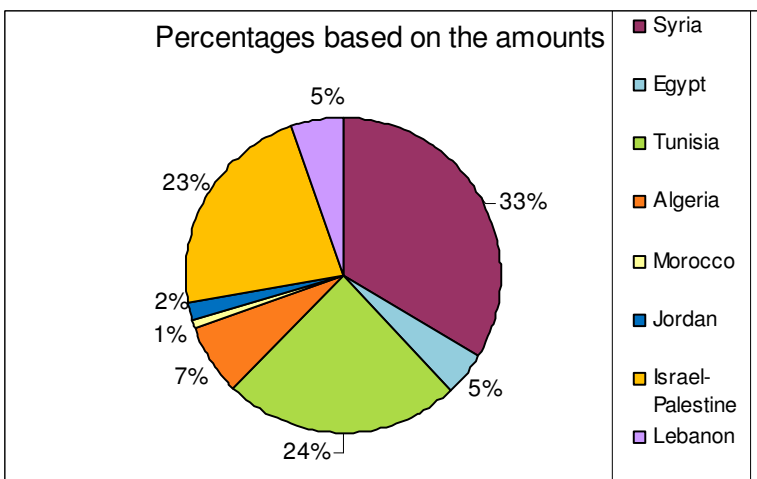
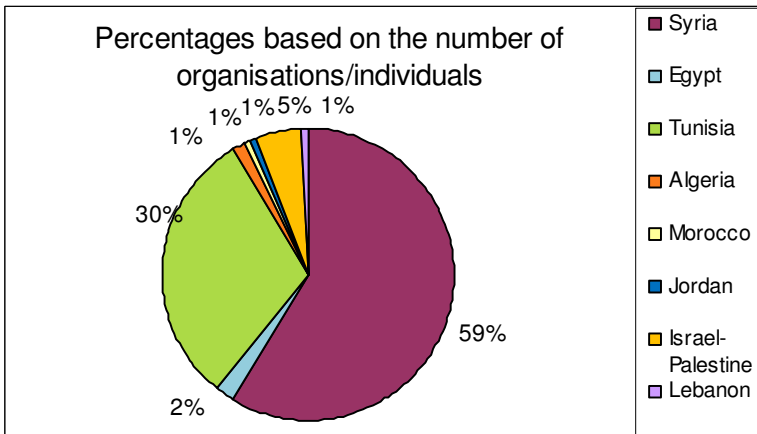
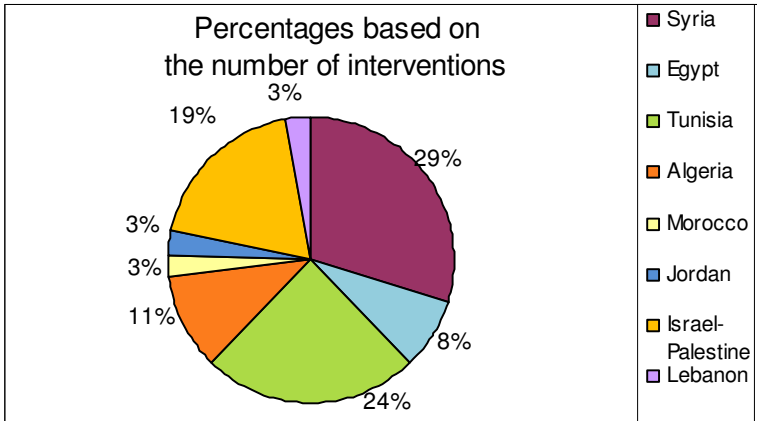
The gender dimension is an integral part of the Foundation's intervention strategy.

The situation and specific role of women in the protection of human rights require special attention, and the Foundation accordingly attaches great importance to projects that are specifically intended to deal with gender issues and strengthen the involvement and leadership of women defenders. The percentage of interventions dealing with gender remains unchanged from previous years and it approximately reaches 20% of all interventions annually.

The rapid increase in grants to the families of defenders – consisting mostly of women and children – compared to 2009 is mainly due to the renewal of the solidarity funds for Syrian and Tunisian human rights defenders in 2010.

¹¹ More than one intervention may have been intended both to strengthen the leadership of women defenders and support a project on women's rights. The interventions were allocated between these two categories as appropriate in order to generate a comprehensive and relevant overview.

5.7. Countries



Against the background of the broad trends that prevailed at the national and international levels, the year 2010 highlighted once again the existence of important needs expressed by defenders active in Syria and Tunisia.

Defenders in those two countries were subjected to constant pressures and repression, which explains that they remained the main recipients of EMHRF funding in 2010. At the same time, independent NGOs are often unable – or are able only with great difficulty – to register legally and as a result have only limited access to national or international funding. This has an impact on their level of operations and on their long-term prospects. For these reasons, the Foundation has continued to treat these countries as priority intervention areas in 2010.

The increase in support to Palestinian and Israeli defenders in the past two years is due mainly to the deteriorating environment and human rights situation, with the organisations defending the human rights of Palestinians being the targets of arbitrary and repressive legislative measures.

6. Organisational Matters

6.1. External Evaluation

In 2010, the European Commission conducted an evaluation of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) in its support for human rights defenders. The overall goal of the study was to measure the *quality of the actions* intended to benefit defenders that were funded under the EIDHR between October 2008 and February 2010, and to recommend *measures aimed at improving this support* in order more effectively to meet the protection needs of defenders in third countries and to strengthen their situation and their capabilities¹².

The results of the evaluation were particularly positive for - among others - the Foundation, as the consultant mentioned in her final report: *“The strategic relevance of this Project [the activities of the EMHRF] for the EU and its tangible relevance for defenders and for CSOs [civil society organisations] are self-evident. Most of the activities and funding grants are directly focused on the protection of and support for defenders... and the files are subjected to a rigorous qualitative follow-up. As a result, the Project is among the most effective and best targeted of all those conducted under the HRD programme of EIDHR at the moment”*.

With regard to the recommendation that mentoring and administrative support services be developed further within the Foundation, a number of decisions and concrete steps were made in 2010, and an amendment to funding contract was signed with the European Commission in March.

6.2. Financial Partnerships

In 2010, the Foundation enjoyed the trust of, and received generous contributions from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the European Commission through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Open Society Institute (OSI) Foundations and the Sigrid Rausing Trust (SRT), as well as other Danish private foundations.

At the same time, the Foundation sought to diversify its funding sources in an effort to bolster its prospects for pursuing and expanding its activities in light of the changes taking place in the region. With that purpose in mind, the Foundation held a number of meetings with representatives of the French Foreign Ministry during the year.

6.3. Information and Communications

In 2010, the Foundation maintained its policy of confidentiality regarding most of the information related to beneficiaries of its funding. This policy was adopted and implemented because of the serious risks to which the

¹² The EMHRF - together with eleven recipients - benefits from the support from the European Commission within the framework of the EIDHR for its project aimed at supporting and reinforcing the capacities of human rights defenders in the Euromed region for 2009-2011.

activities and persons applying for funding, the recipients of funds or other human rights defenders in the region could be exposed. At the same time, the Foundation ensures that its activities are transparent by providing detailed information to its main donors about its interventions and activities in support of organisations, groups and individual defenders in the region.

The Foundation has also updated and developed its website on a regular basis, with clear explanations about the rules governing the presentation of emergency and regular funding requests, as well as deadlines for submissions, in the three working languages of the Foundation (English, French and Arabic), so as to make this information and these basic documents easily accessible: <http://www.emhrf.org/>.

And finally, the Foundation has developed a secure forum designed to protect the safety and security of communications and consultations between the Secretariat and the Board members as well as secure access to its archives, which could be extended in the future to other partners operating in hostile environments.

6.4. Risk Analysis and Sustainability

The following are the major risks that have been identified by the Foundation with respect to the granting of financial assistance to human rights defenders in countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean:

- ***A risk of increased repression of recipients of funding from the Foundation.*** Assistance received from the Foundation has not, until now, led to physical, legal or psychological repression against defenders because the principle of secrecy has been strictly enforced in the review of applications, in the decisions to grant support and in the transfer of funding to recipients. Secrecy rules govern all documents that are made public. These documents mention neither names nor any amounts¹³. Communications are made secure through encryption. At the same time, the Foundation informs its main donors about all of its activities and applies the principle of transparency with extreme vigilance.
- ***A risk associated with the freezing or interception of funds by someone other than the beneficiary defender.*** The outcomes have been relatively satisfactory until now, the only exception being the funding granted to the Association tunisienne de femmes démocrates (ATFD) to support its training and documentation project within the Ilhem Marzouki Women's University, which was arbitrarily seized from the association's bank account in early 2010. The Foundation immediately raised this matter with several bodies, including the European Parliament and the European Commission. The Board and the Secretariat also requested assistance from the Foundation's bank in Denmark, and a partly favourable outcome was finally reached in January 2011. Vigilance in this area is ongoing. Precautionary steps are taken and various types of information are collected from the recipient before, during and after the transfer.
- ***A risk that funding could have an unintentional destabilising impact on civil society (a worsening of rivalries, disinformation), and the potential consequences of misuse or fraudulent use of the funding (diversion, corruption).*** These risks have been avoided until now, but vigilance remains constant in this area. The amounts granted as part of the Project represent a significant limit on the risks of misuse. A strict assessment made prior to the decision and the recipient's commitment tend to limit the risks. Recipients must meet a number of accountability rules and the Foundation monitors them on a regular

¹³ With one exception, mentioned below, where publication was made necessary because of the need to raise the issue at the state level.

basis. The Foundation also reserves the right to request that the funds be reimbursed when the purpose of the contract has not been met.

The sustainability of the Foundation's actions is based on the following elements:

- Access to flexible, quick and localised assistance is necessary; it also bolsters significantly the ability of human rights defenders to work in the region.
- Thanks to the composition of its Board, which includes officials from several international (FIDH, ICTJ) and regional (EMHRN, CIHRS) organisations as well as acknowledged experts in affairs of the region, the Foundation has direct access to NGOs and defenders, which enables it to benefit from a unique and highly qualified source of knowledge and to obtain quickly reliable and detailed information needed for its work, thus improving the quality and targeting of its activities.
- The Foundation remains attentive to its partners and to civil society on an ongoing basis through its monitoring activities and its regular visits to the region, which enable it to react to changes in local and regional conditions and to respond to the needs that are expressed.
- The Foundation concentrates its work on a region that is clearly circumscribed, which means that it can develop a specific image and be a preferred partner in its field of activity.
- The Foundation encourages, as needed, the participation and mobilisation of other national, regional or international organisations in efforts to provide long-term political and institutional support to defenders.
- The Foundation takes a rigorously calculated risk by granting modest levels of funding to defenders at risk, small emerging organisations and groundbreaking activities.
- Thanks to the close contacts it maintains with civil society actors and organisations, the Foundation is in a position to offer advice and act as an intermediary between defenders and international donors in those cases where a funding request is a clear candidate for support by another organisation.
- The Foundation actively seeks to secure funding and diversify sources of funding in support of its activities aimed at providing assistance to human rights defenders in the region.
- Last but not least, the Foundation grounds its intervention strategy in the right and freedom of association.

6.5. Internal Governance

The composition of the Foundation's Board remained unchanged in 2010. The Board is made up of nine members who fulfil their mandate on a volunteer basis.

In 2010, the Secretariat of the Foundation included the following staff members:

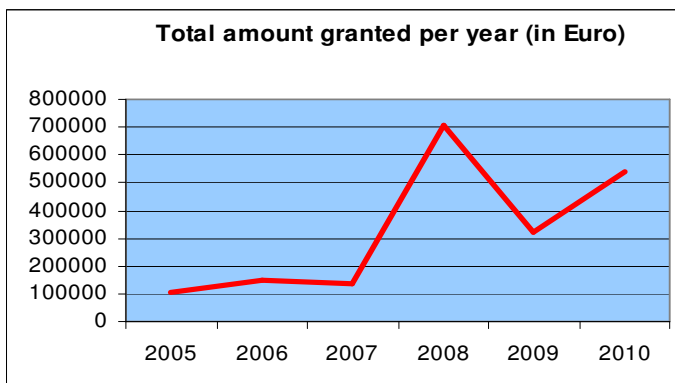
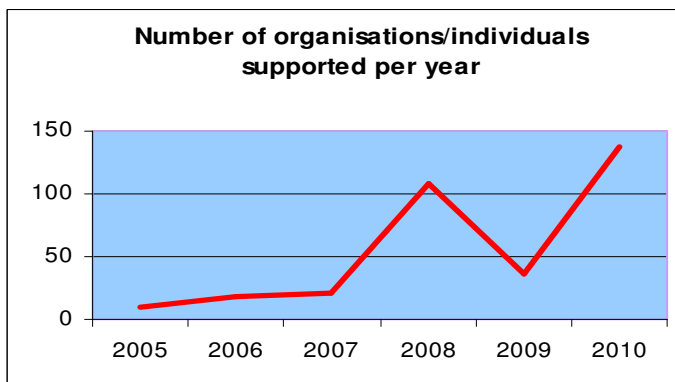
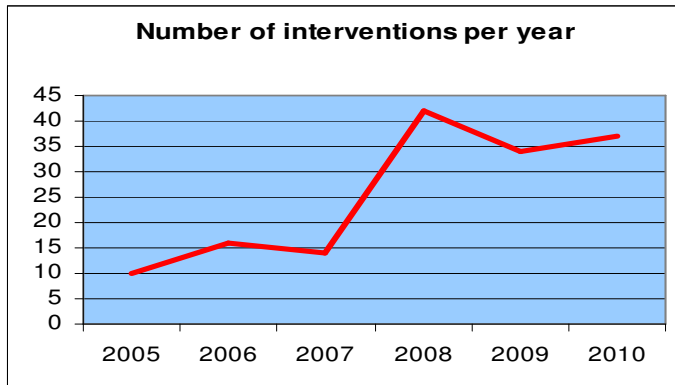
- Anne-Sophie Schaeffer (graduate in international public law), employed full-time as program manager in Copenhagen;
- Katrine Høybye Frederiksen (graduate in foreign languages), employed part-time as administrative secretary in Copenhagen, beginning in April 2010;
- Roger Jalkh (graduate in communications), employed full-time as project assistant in Copenhagen, beginning in July 2010;
- Chrysoula Galanaki and Nadine Morgan were employed as interns in Copenhagen during the year 2010, both for a six-month period.

The Foundation also hired accounting and IT services on a part-time basis during the year. The audit of its accounts was performed by the Copenhagen office of *Deloitte*.

Appendix 1: Overview of EMHRF Interventions 2005-2010

Over the past six years, the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF) allocated 170 grants in support of 300 individual defenders and organisations in the South-Mediterranean region. The total amount of financial assistance provided by the Foundation almost reached 2 millions Euros¹⁴.

The evolution of the Foundation's grants is illustrated in the following graphs:



These graphs show substantial increase in the Foundation's support since 2008 - an increase that is explained mainly by a worsening of the human rights situation in the region, especially in the countries targeted for priority intervention by the Foundation.

The increase in the distribution of support is also associated with the specific profile developed by the Foundation in the past six years. Thanks to that profile, the Foundation is now recognised as a major source of support by human rights defenders in this region.

A reduction in the total amount of support and in the number of recipients can be noted in 2009. This reduction is mainly due to the fact that many grants that were made in late 2008 were still in effect in 2009. Most of these grants have been renewed in 2010.

In light of the changes occurring in some countries and of the critical situations for human rights defenders in others, such as Libya and Syria, the Foundation anticipates increasing its interventions in the future in order to be able to respond to the needs expressed by human rights defenders at this crucial juncture.

¹⁴ Of approximately 800 information and funding requests received by the Foundation during the period 2005-2010, about 20 percent received financial assistance. Note that members of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) represent only 22 percent of the ultimate recipients of EMHRF support because they generally have greater scope for networking and fundraising.

1. Narrative Overview

The support provided by the Foundation to defenders in the southern Mediterranean region can be divided into four broad categories.

a) Emergency financial assistance to defenders and NGOs in difficulty or at risk

43 percent of the Foundation's interventions consisted of short-term grants provided in a quick, tangible, and discreet manner, at critical junctures, to 93 human rights defenders to enable them to overcome difficult circumstances and/or reinforce the visibility of their action and strengthen their long-term prospects for pursuing their activities.

1. The Foundation supported defenders and their families who were the target of psychological harassment and arbitrary prosecutions, in order to help them overcome these difficulties.
2. The Foundation supported defenders whose lives were at risk because of serious health problems, in order to allow them to receive, in their own country or abroad, the medical treatment and medications they needed. This support was granted because they were the victims of egregious violations of their human rights and/or because they were unable to afford the cost of treatment as a result of their ongoing commitment to defending human rights.
3. The Foundation supported human rights organisations that were targeted by the authorities (by denying or withholding legal recognition, freezing bank accounts, etc.) or suddenly faced with unforeseen financial or administrative difficulties, in order to enable them to adjust their strategies in the time required to stabilise their status.
4. Finally, the Foundation supported projects whose success depended closely on a timely intervention in order to increase the visibility of the recipients' activities and enhance their prospects for pursuing these activities. The grants were made because the applicants could not easily obtain the needed funding from other donors in adequate conditions of timeliness and safety.

b) Strategic assistance to human rights defenders in prison or former prisoners of conscience in Syria and Tunisia

The setting up in 2008 and renewal in 2010 of two solidarity funds represents 4% of all interventions made by the Foundation. However, these funds aimed at supporting more than 100 hundred Syrian and Tunisian defenders, current and former prisoners of conscience, as well as their families and thus prevented a further deterioration of the human rights situation in those two countries.

The two solidarity funds allowed human rights defenders who are current or former prisoners of conscience and who, because of their peaceful activities on behalf of human rights and in promoting democratic reforms in their countries, have been arbitrarily imprisoned and/or dismissed from their jobs to attend to the basic needs of their families. This support has had a crucial impact not only on the material situation of the defenders and their families but also and primarily on their morale to pursue their actions over the long term.

c) Assistance aimed at reinforcing the capacities of defenders and independent NGOs to implement programmes dealing with subjects that are sensitive, given the regional context

These interventions, which form the bulk of the Foundation's support (53 percent), were essentially aimed at strengthening the visibility, human resources, and management capabilities of 91 recipients, to allow them to develop structures or implement innovative and sensitive activities aimed at the protection and promotion of human rights in the region.

The Foundation paid particular attention to strengthening:

- The provision of legal aid and representation of victims of human rights violations in the region.
- The monitoring of human rights violations through the publication of detailed and factual reports.
- The advocacy efforts in favour of respect for human rights aimed at national, regional and international bodies.
- The training of young NGO actors on relevant human rights protection instruments and mechanisms, on the development of communications tools, and on project management.

In pursuing these objectives, the Foundation subsidised the following costs, among others: the rent and operating costs, the legal fees, the cost associated to the publication of reports and the essential human resources to strengthen the effective management of human rights associations (legal advisor, development officer, accountant, etc.).

In particular, the Foundation provided support to defenders who wished to establish and expand projects dealing with priority and sensitive issues within the regional context, or targeting groups that are seen as being particularly vulnerable or needing special assistance.

In the Board's review of regular funding requests, greater emphasis was placed on projects targeting groups seen as particularly vulnerable or needing special assistance, as well as projects focusing on subjects that are particularly relevant and sensitive in the regional context, such as:

- Protecting civil and political rights;
- Protecting economic, social and cultural rights;
- Protecting the rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers;
- Protecting the rights of women and enhancing their leadership;
- Protecting the rights of minorities;
- Fighting homophobia and protecting LGBTQ rights;
- Fighting impunity.

d) Non-financial support as a follow-up to the situation of defenders to enable them to improve their long-term prospects for pursuing their activities

One of the main goals sought by the Foundation in its interventions is to ensure that defenders in the region can improve their prospects for continuing their work over the medium and long term. To that end, it has acted as an advisor to its recipients and encouraged them to coordinate their activities with a number of regional and international partners in order to ensure that defenders and their families receive effective support.

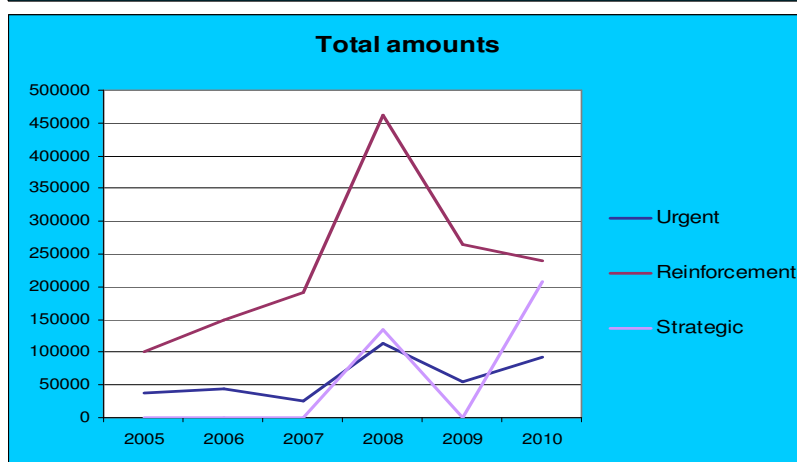
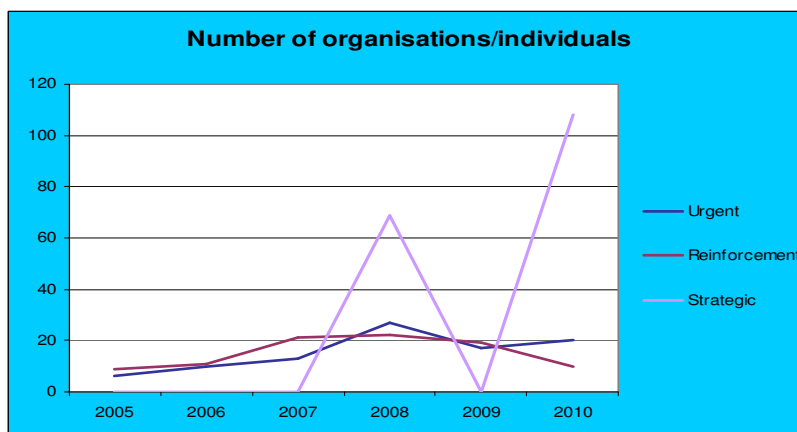
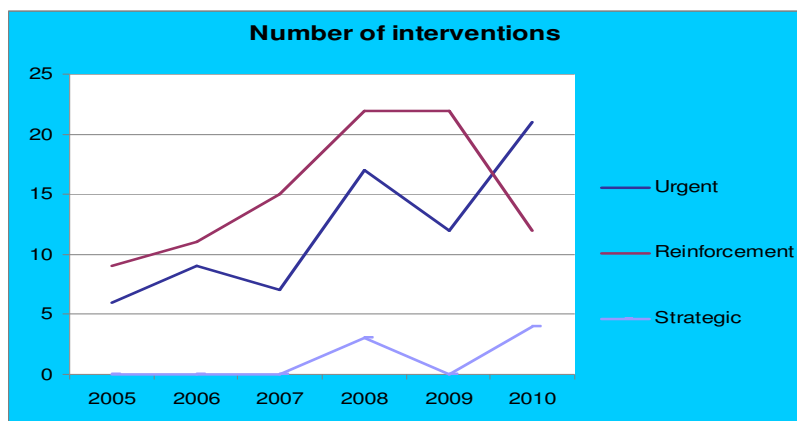
Here are some major aspects of the Foundation's follow-up activities:

- Helping to ensure that other national, regional, or international organisations or foundations whose mandates complement that of the EMHRF will assume additional costs associated with the needs expressed by defenders.
- Coordinating its activities with a number of regional and international organisations in the context of their solidarity interventions.
- Advising organisations on the appropriate approaches that should be adopted in the context of project methodology and fundraising from outside sources. As part of this role, the Foundation has, in a number of cases, provided a list of potential donors and assisted in the presentation of funding requests. The Foundation has also encouraged the development of intervention strategies backed by a plan of action in the area of fundraising.
- Encouraging contacts between a number of groups and organisations and other national organisations involved in similar projects in the same country or in other countries of the region, or with networks that are active at the national, regional, or international level. Such contacts are intended to enable them to share information and experiences, to explore the potential for synergies and coordinated action, and thus to benefit from non-financial support that will enhance the impact and sustainability of their activities.

2. Quantitative Overview

To facilitate an understanding of the Foundation's actions during the period 2005-2010, please find in the next few pages a series of graphs dealing with the following subjects: types of support, thematic focus, activities of recipients, types of expenditures, gender, and countries.

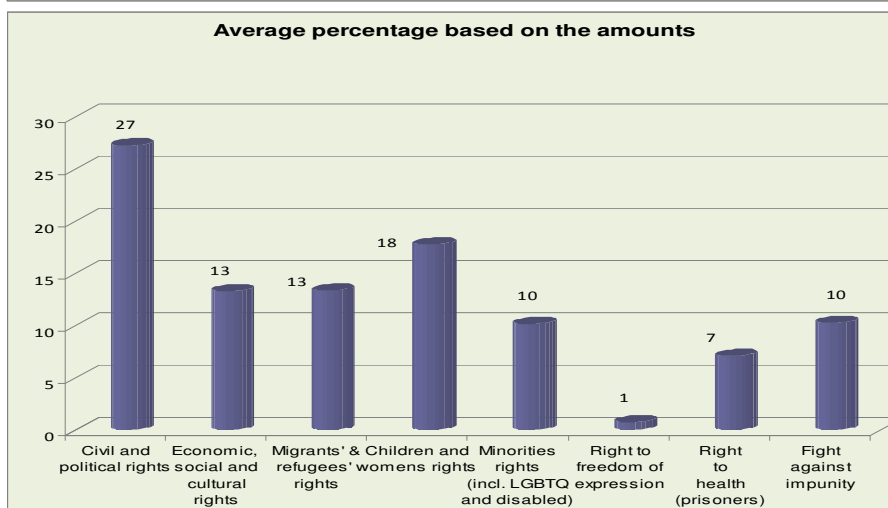
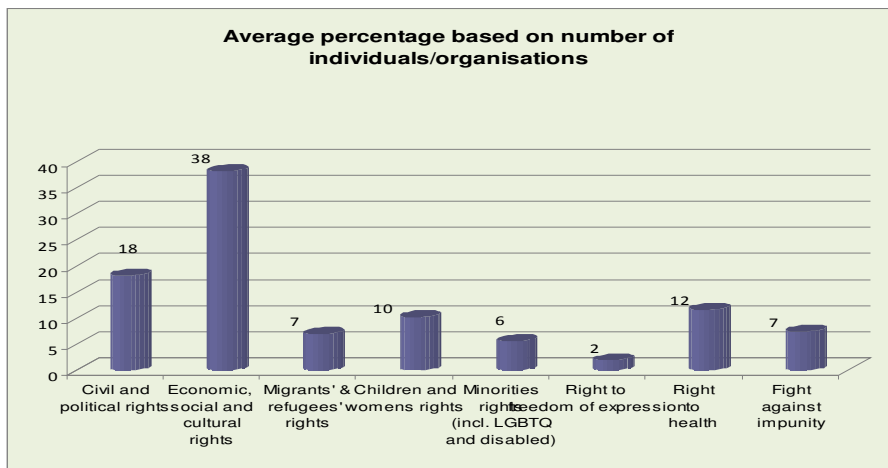
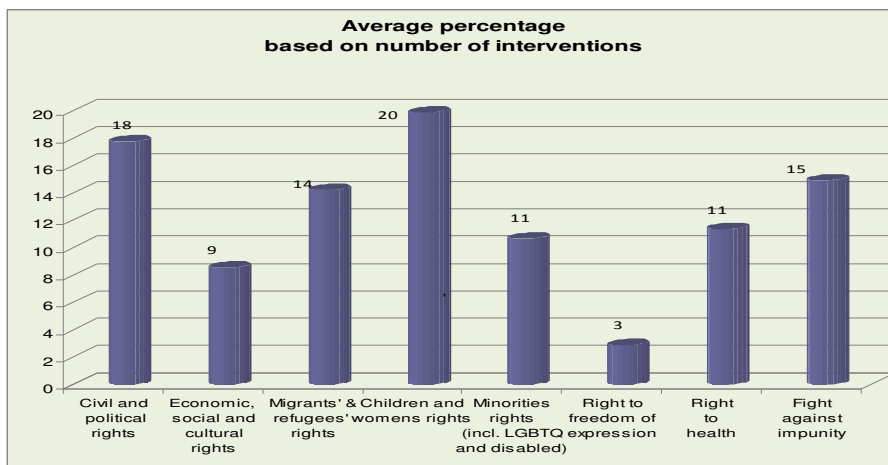
2.1. Types of Support



These graphs illustrate the importance the Foundation attaches to support aimed at strengthening the human and physical resources of independent civil society organisations. Most defenders work on a volunteer basis, although a few receive ad hoc funding for specific projects. However, the requests received by the Foundation reveal a crucial lack of the resources that would enable defenders to put the independent organisations within which they work on a more professional and sustainable footing in order to enhance their visibility and their longer-term prospects.

The substantial increase in the number of defenders receiving emergency and strategic support in 2008 was mainly due to the severe repression targeting groups that called for the establishment of democratic reforms that respects the rights of citizens, guarantees the freedoms of expression and association, and eliminate discrimination, in countries as Syria and Tunisia. Despite this trend, the overall amount of these interventions remains low. Small amounts that can be made available quickly are nonetheless essential, because they can have a considerable impact on the defender's physical and psychological ability to pursue his or her work.

2.2. Thematic areas¹⁵



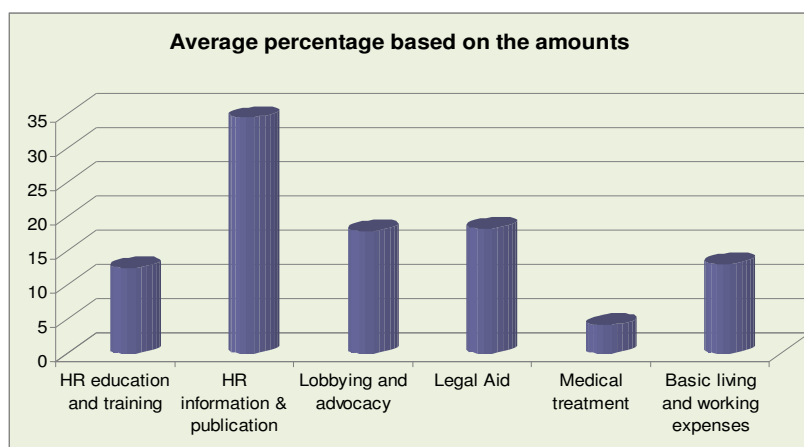
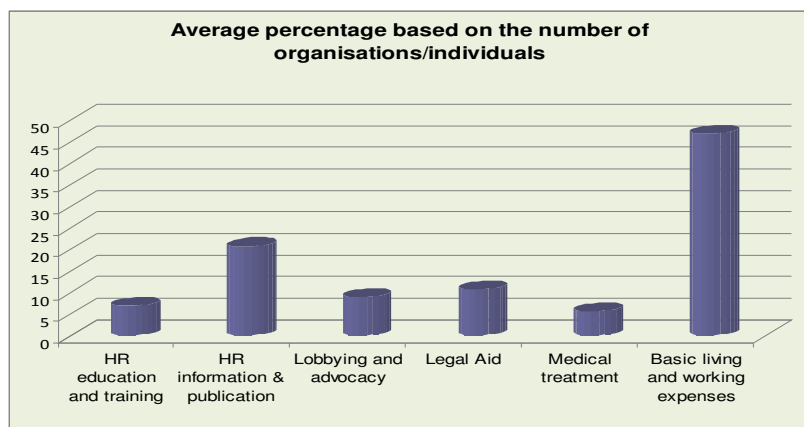
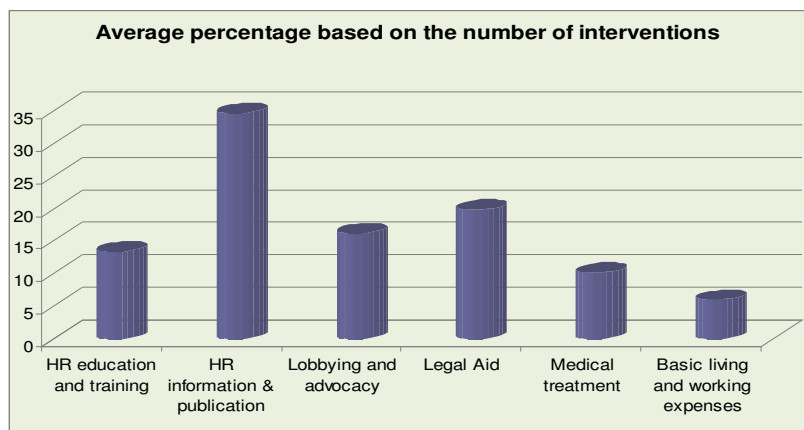
During the past six years, the Foundation placed special emphasis on greater protection of the rights of groups that are seen as particularly vulnerable because of their specific nature and of their environment (women, migrants and refugees, prisoners of conscience minorities).

That is not to say that the Foundation has given less importance to more traditional activities associated with supporting and promoting civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in the region and fighting impunity, given the context in the region.

Compared to previous years, one can note that the right to freedom of expression has been added to the thematic areas, despite its low status in the graphs. This is to emphasise the increasing numbers of requests received by journalists and writers facing difficulties over the course of 2010.

¹⁵ Some grants essentially belong to several thematic areas at once, and these grants are included under all the respective thematic areas, in order to keep the overall picture as appropriate and relevant as possible. This approach means that the total percentage of all thematic areas might exceed 100 during the period 2005-2010.

2.3. Activities of Recipients¹⁶



The activities engaged in by recipients of the Foundation's financial assistance are highly diversified. The graphs presented here show only a representative sample of those activities.

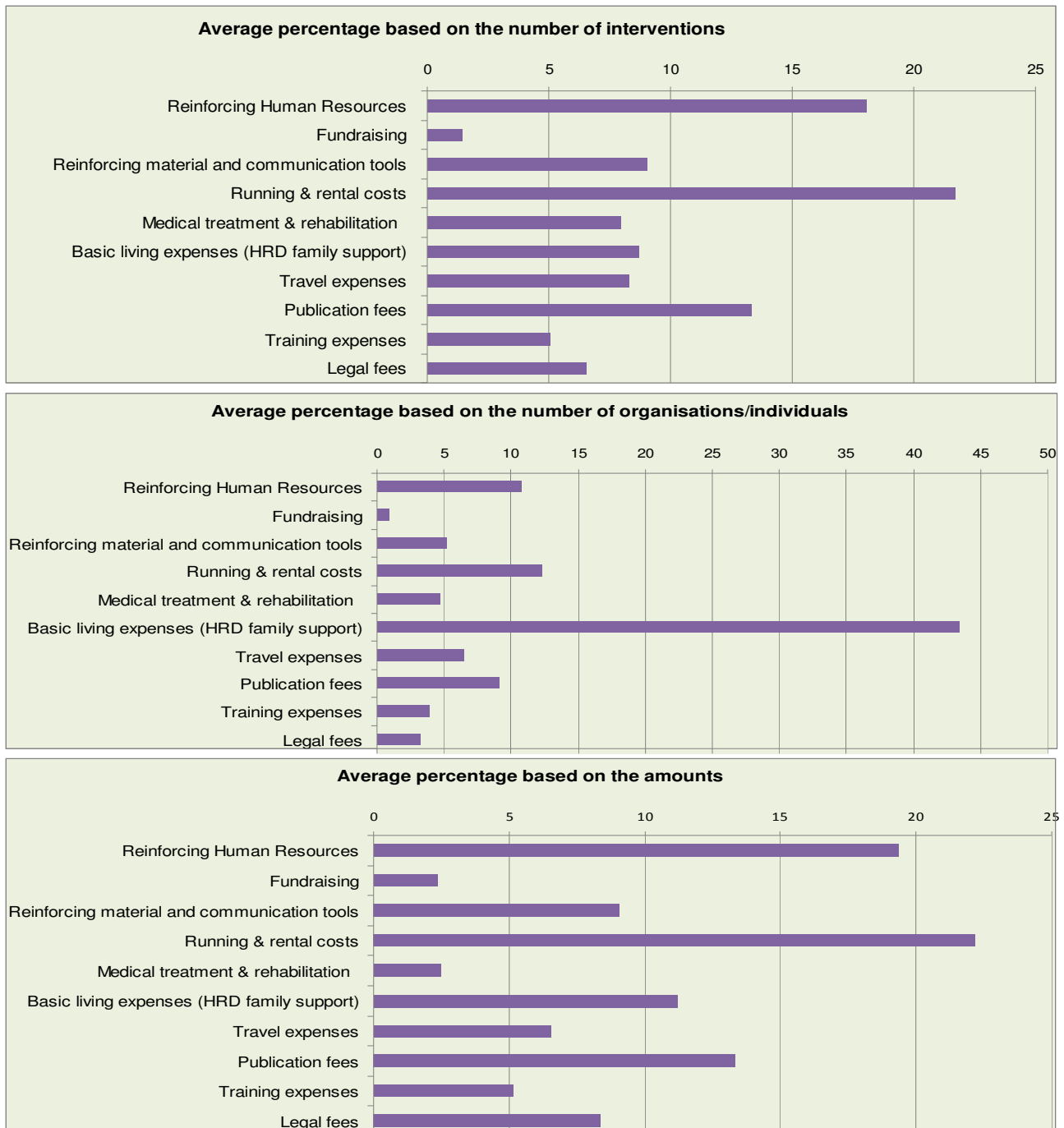
The information and publication of detailed reports on human rights violations are the main activities conducted by recipients, whether measured by the number or the amounts of the Foundation's grants.

To help independent NGOs engage in capacity-building and enhance the medium- and long-term visibility of their activities, the Foundation essentially funded their overhead costs, including those associated with office and equipment rentals as well as human and physical resources.

The differences in the percentages for basic expenses are mainly due to the fact that while the number of beneficiaries is high, the amounts involved represent a relatively small proportion of the total interventions over the period 2005-2010.

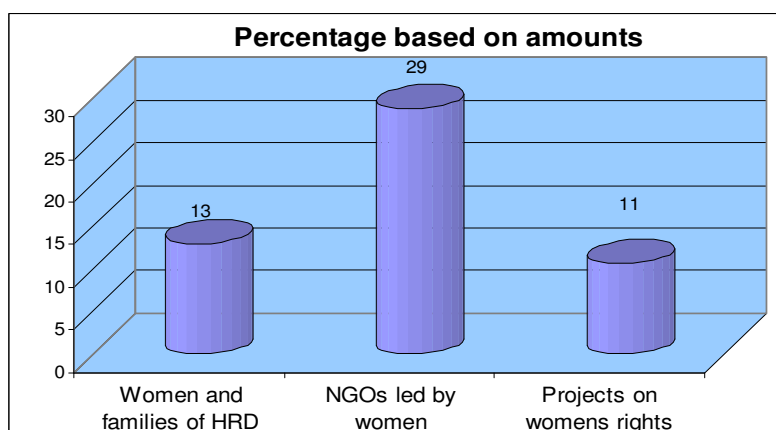
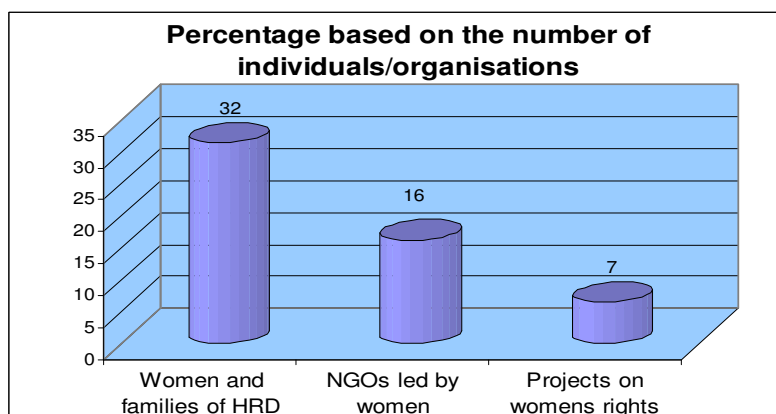
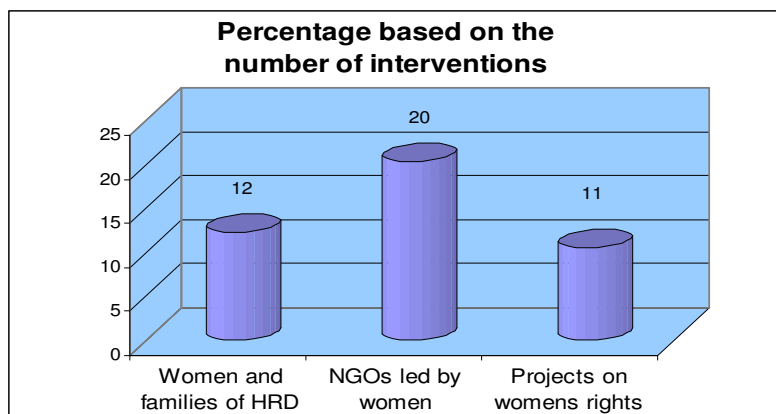
¹⁶ Some grants essentially cover several activities implemented by the recipients at once, and these grants are included under all the respective activities, in order to keep the overall picture as appropriate and relevant as possible. This approach means that the total percentage of all activities might exceed 100 during the period 2005-2010.

2.4. Types of Expenditures¹⁷



¹⁷ Some grants essentially aim at reimbursing several types of expenditure at once, and these grants are included under all the respective types of expenditure in order to keep the overall picture as appropriate and relevant as possible. This approach means that the total percentage of all types of expenditure might exceed 100 during the period 2005-2010.

2.5. Gender¹⁸



The rights and roles of women defenders are an issue that occupies a central place in the Foundation's intervention strategy.

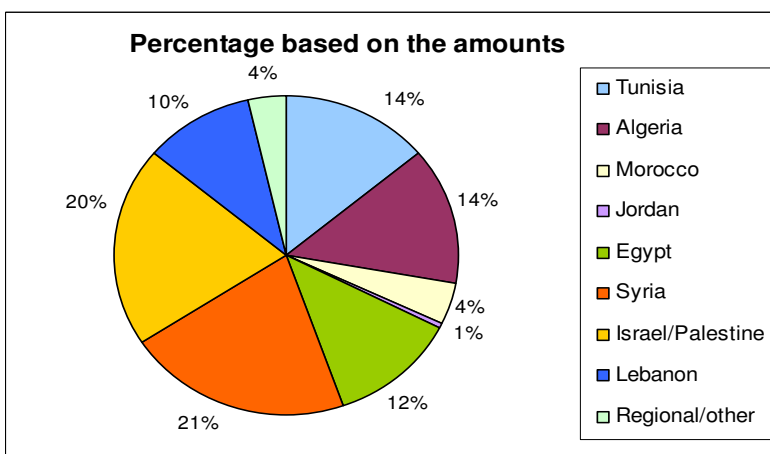
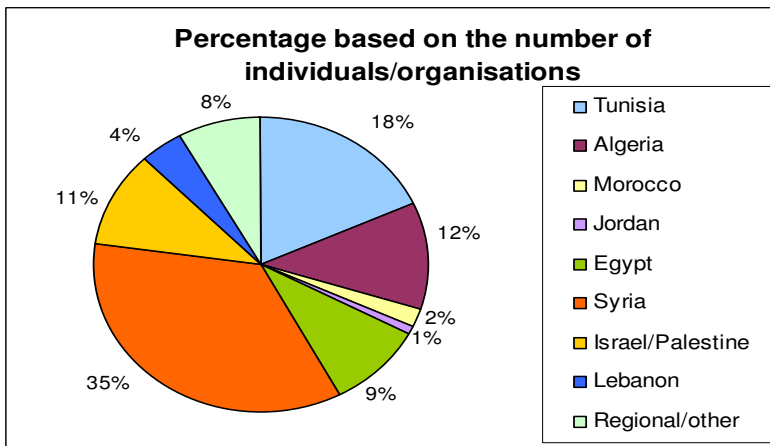
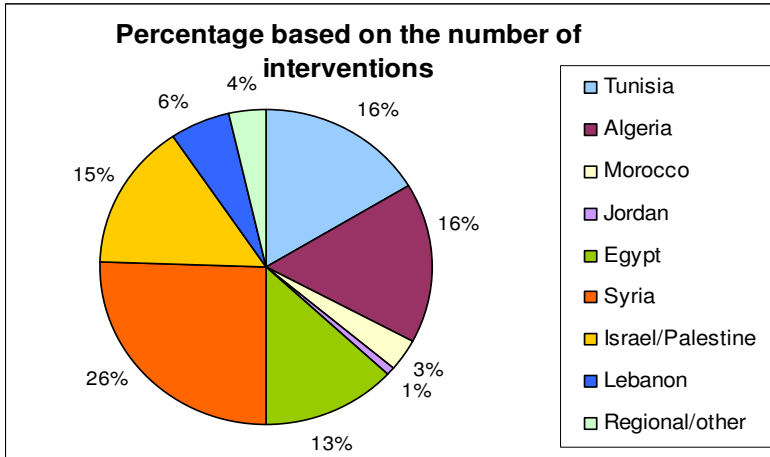
During the period 2005-2010, the Foundation placed special emphasis on reinforcing the involvement of women defenders as essential agents of change in the region. Their enhanced participation and leadership play a critical role in the promotion of social justice, the prevention of violence and respect for women's rights, as well as the systematic gender mainstreaming of programmes focused on the promotion and defence of human rights.

While several countries in the region have improved their respective family codes thanks particularly to continuous efforts by women's rights groups, concerns remain because of the Islamist tendency.

Thus, the enhanced involvement of women defenders is intimately linked with the challenge of strengthening democracy and human rights in the region.

¹⁸ Several grants aimed at reinforcing both the leadership of women defenders and projects on women's rights at the same time. Therefore, these grants are included under both categories in order to keep the overall picture as appropriate and relevant as possible for the period 2005-2010.

2.6. Countries



The funding requests received by the Foundation over the period 2005-2010 reflect broad political trends with regards to respect for human rights at the national and international level.

Defenders and independent NGOs faced several difficulties and challenges to be able to continue their important work, especially in Syria, in Tunisia and in Algeria. The NGOs are seldom, if ever, allowed to register their activities, and as a result have only limited access to sources of funding. At the same time, the lack of progress in the Middle East peace process, intra-Palestinian conflicts, and the Israeli blockade and war in the Gaza strip have caused an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the population, which is exacerbated by a context in which human rights violations have become commonplace and remain unpunished.

The Foundation thus gave a high level of priority to its response to the needs expressed by defenders operating in those environments, based on the level of living standards in those countries (which explains, in particular, the higher volume of grants in favour of defenders active in Palestine and Israel).

The relatively lower number of funding grants given to Jordanian, Moroccan and Lebanese defenders is due to the fact that human rights groups and defenders in those countries have access to other sources of funding available and that civil society organisations relatively have greater scope for action.