



human rights *first*

American ideals. Universal values.

2016 Review and the Challenges Ahead



# Together

2016 Review and the Challenges Ahead

human rights *first*

# Together we saved lives

For those who believe that American leadership is essential in the global struggle for human rights, these are challenging times. Here at home and across Europe, narrow-minded populist movements fueled by xenophobic nationalism are on the rise. These forces threaten lives, democracy, and the international order.

Not since World War II has our vision of the world been under assault on so many fronts.

Moments of crisis like this can be daunting. But they are also clarifying. They remind us that the values of democracy and human rights cannot be taken for granted; we must be prepared to fight for them. At Human Rights First we have the privilege of coming to work every day to do just that. It's why we exist.

We pride ourselves on our ability to work with unlikely allies to defend American ideals. And now, as the attacks on those ideals proliferate, we're finding committed and energetic partners from every walk of life—around the country and across the political spectrum.

This report charts our accomplishments and the powerful partnerships that made them possible. Together with American veterans, we are standing up against anti-Muslim bigotry. Alongside national security experts, we're maintaining the lifeline for refugees. Together with interfaith groups, we're combating antisemitism. Partnering with human rights activists, we're protecting the human rights of LGBT people everywhere. And together with American companies and federal law enforcement, we're bankrupting the brutal business of modern slavery.

These partnerships are grounded not in identity or party, but in shared ideals. And they are producing results, even in the most challenging environment.

Thank you for your partnership in this work. With pragmatism and passion we will continue to forge progress—together.

*Elisa Massimino*

Elisa Massimino  
President and CEO  
Human Rights First



Refugee children from Syria hold hands at the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, where more than 80,000 refugees live.  
Photo Bernd von Jutrczenka/  
picture-alliance/dpa/AP Images

## The Miami Herald

### *U.S. must lead on refugee crisis*

We assembled a bipartisan group of national security experts to call for U.S. leadership on the refugee crisis. Two of them—Former CIA director Michael Hayden and former NATO supreme allied commander James Stavridis—penned this op-ed. [7.8.2016]

Together we made headlines

With experts we were cited and quoted often in the news.

# The Washington Post

Sharp spike in anti-Semitic incidents across France, new report finds

**Newsweek**

FORMER INTERROGATORS  
URGE PRESIDENTIAL  
CANDIDATES TO REJECT  
TORTURE



Rights groups urge Obama to help free Gulf activists



With new law, U.S. takes on slavery by banning forced labor imports

The Intercept

**BILL TO BLOCK SYRIAN AND IRAQI REFUGEES STALLS IN THE SENATE**

# The New York Times

*U.S. Has Taken In Less Than a Fifth of Pledged Syrian Refugees*

HOUSTON★CHRONICLE

Houston immigration courts overwhelmed as backlog quintuples

The Star-Ledger

Iraq combat vet to Christie: Policy on Syrian refugees helps ISIS | Opinion

**USA TODAY™**

*First Gitmo commander: Shut it down*

theguardian

Mothers at US immigration center on hunger strike to protest year in custody



# Together we gave hope to the vulnerable

With child health advocates and pro bono lawyers we helped asylum seekers find protection.

IN 2014 LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES from Central America, many fleeing horrific domestic violence and persecution by criminal gangs, began to arrive in the United States. The Obama Administration responded by warehousing thousands of women and young children in jail-like detention centers.

The purpose of this so-called “family detention” was to deter other refugees from coming. Not only is that a violation of international law, it’s also both cruel and

denied licenses to hold children. This means their days are numbered. Meanwhile we’re seeking an official end to this inhumane and inefficient policy.

FOR REFUGEES, getting to the United States is just the first step. Then they have to prove they have a “credible fear” of persecution; if they can’t overcome this hurdle, they’re sent back.

They have to navigate a byzantine process, often from a detention center, and most lack

***In 2016 we accepted 294 new cases, we won legal protection for 117 clients and families, and represented more than 1,700 people from 94 countries.***

unnecessary, compounding the suffering of people who’ve escaped terrible violence, and wasting taxpayer money when there are effective alternatives to detention.

In 2016 we teamed up with legal organizations, religious groups, and physicians to persuade the Obama Administration to end family detention. We made the case that family detention facilities shouldn’t receive childcare operating licenses on the grounds that even short-term detention can be harmful to the long-term health of children.

On this front we succeeded. In 2016, the three major family detention facilities in the country, two in Texas and one in Pennsylvania, were

resources and do not speak English. Without legal representation their chances of receiving life-saving protection are slim.

A lawyer can make the difference between freedom and repression, between life and death.

This is where we step in. For nearly four decades we’ve been recruiting and training lawyers from top firms to provide high quality pro bono legal representation to refugees. We’ve helped thousands receive asylum and leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars worth of legal services.

In 2016 we helped 117 refugees receive legal protections and accepted 294 new cases. All told, together with our pro bono partners, last year we represented more than 1,700 clients from 94 countries.

This lifesaving work is central to our mission and helps shape our advocacy effort to make the asylum system more just, humane, and efficient. ■



SYRIA (top): Sana applied for asylum after the Assad regime abducted her father. We helped her win her case. She hopes to reunite with her mother and sisters, who fled to Turkey. Her father’s fate remains unknown.

RUSSIA (bottom): After being badly beaten because he’s gay, Artem fled to the United States—only to be put in a detention center. We helped him receive asylum. He works as a clothing designer. “I’ve been dreaming about it all my life and now I’m doing it,” he says.



EL SALVADOR: Human Rights First team—Jenna Gilbert (far left), Lori Adams, and Jessica Gorelick (far right)—with clients after winning their asylum case at the New York Immigration Court. They are now applying for permanent residence based on that asylum grant.



COLOMBIA (left): Lawyers from Sheppard Mullin with their client, an LGBT rights activist (center), after they successfully won his asylum case at the New York Immigration Court.

## The New York Times

***Deluged immigration courts, where cases stall for years, begin to buckle***

*The New York Times* cites our research on the immigration court backlog, which leads to years of delays for asylum seekers and exacerbates the broader refugee crisis. [12.1.16]

***“ Thank you Sheppard Mullin and Human Rights First! I am grateful that you reunited me with my family. ”***

—Mr. R from Nigeria, granted asylum based on religious persecution

# Together we formed powerful alliances

With veterans we fought to protect our allies at risk.



AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE OF partnership with retired generals and admirals, we broadened our outreach to the military community by launching Veterans for American Ideals. Our mission: to raise veterans' voices as trusted, nonpartisan advocates on behalf of the ideals that inspired them to serve in the first place.

With thousands of members across the country, Veterans for American Ideals is standing up for refugees and against anti-Muslim bigotry. In 2016 they fought on Capitol Hill to save the Special Immigrant Visa program, a lifeline for Afghans under threat from the Taliban because of their work with the U.S. military. Even in the midst of a contentious election cycle that featured anti-Muslim hostility, together we secured congressional reauthorization for this essential program.

Published in major media outlets and profiled on *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee*, our fast-growing group of vets is becoming a force to be reckoned with. We'll keep amplifying the voices of vets, providing them a platform for continued service to our country, even after they take off the uniform. ■



## *Despite Bombings, Advocates Still Hope for More Afghan Interpreters*

Our Jennifer Quigley stresses the importance of preserving and expanding the special visa program for Afghans, a lifeline for people who worked with the U.S. military. [9.20.16]

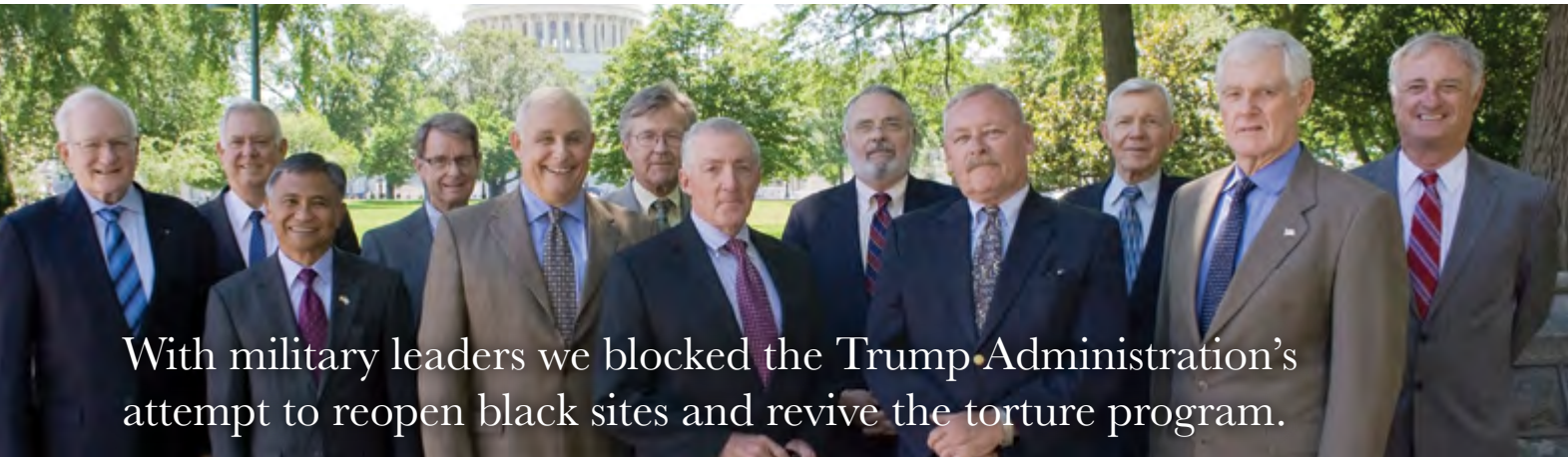


ABOVE: Veterans for American Ideals leaders and Syrian refugees are featured in an episode of *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee*.  
FACING PAGE: Veterans for American Ideals leader Andy Slivka in Afghanistan with his platoon and interpreter, Zia, whom they helped bring to the United States under the Special Immigrant Visa program.

**“American ideals—that’s what we fought for overseas and that’s what we should be fighting for at home.”**

—Sarah Feinberg, U.S. Marine veteran and member of Veterans for American Ideals

# Together we turned back torture



With military leaders we blocked the Trump Administration's attempt to reopen black sites and revive the torture program.

DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL campaign Donald Trump pledged to “bring back waterboarding, and a hell of a lot worse.” That was a red line for us, and we were determined that we would not let him cross it.

Immediately after the election we rallied the largest group of retired military leaders we have ever assembled: 176 retired flag officers—including 33 four-star generals and admirals. Together they represented more than six thousand years of experience, and they had a clear message: the United States will not return to torture. As they said in their letter to President-elect Trump, “Our greatest strength is our commitment to the rule of law and to the principles embedded in our Constitution. Our servicemen and women need to know that our leaders do not condone torture or detainee abuse of any kind.”

We worked behind the scenes to provide that letter to the president-elect, cabinet nominees, top aides, and congressional leaders. Our strategy was to set the expectation that to win confirmation, cabinet nominees would have to pledge not to authorize or implement a return to torture.

We succeeded. All five national security nominees—for secretary of defense, secretary of state, CIA director, secretary of homeland security, and attorney general—stated during their confirmation hearings that waterboarding and other so-called “enhanced interrogation” techniques are unlawful and inappropriate. CIA Director Mike Pompeo, previously a supporter of the torture program while serving in Congress, went so far as to say that if the president ordered him to restart the torture program, he would refuse.

Later, when a draft executive order circulated that included language suggesting a return to torture and CIA black sites, it was quickly denounced and revised—abandoning all provisions that would have paved the way for a revival of the torture program. In large part because of our success in getting a strong bipartisan vote so recently on the McCain-Feinstein anti-torture statute, senators from both parties were primed to reaffirm their recent votes in opposition to torture.

There are many challenges to come, and we will be vigilant to ensure that there is no back door to the dark side. ■

ABOVE: Just a few of the retired military leaders who have joined our Never Torture campaign.

“I would absolutely authorize something beyond waterboarding.”

– President Donald Trump on the 2016 presidential campaign trail



Photo of Abu Ghraib prison detainee that surfaced in 2004.

**USA TODAY**

*Keep torture off limits:  
Our View*

*USA Today* condemns President Donald Trump's pro-torture rhetoric, citing the law we helped pass and quoting retired U.S. Army General Harry Soyster, a member of the military coalition we formed. [2.15.16]

# Together we protected Pride

With high-level U.S. government support that we secured, we were able to protect the right of LGBT communities to march for equality.

IN RECENT YEARS LGBT PEOPLE HAVE MADE ENORMOUS STRIDES TOWARD full equality in the United States and elsewhere. Yet in many countries they still face brutal persecution, violence, and discrimination.

Pride celebrations have become essential milestones for LGBT communities worldwide. An occasion for solidarity, they signal acceptance, however grudging, from societies and can help usher in a new era. For that very reason, repressive governments seek to quash them, sometimes under cover of the law.

In 2016 we worked with local activists and U.S. government officials to help enable two important pride celebrations to go forward. When our activist-partners in Ukraine expressed concern over threats to Pride marches, we worked alongside the co-chairs of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus to urge Ukrainian leaders to protect parade participants. We also worked with



Kiev, Ukraine

Viachaslau Bortnik



Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt  
@GeoffPyatt



[1/4] Appreciate @humanrights1st bringing to our attention the concerns about the possible cancellation of Kiev's Equality Festival

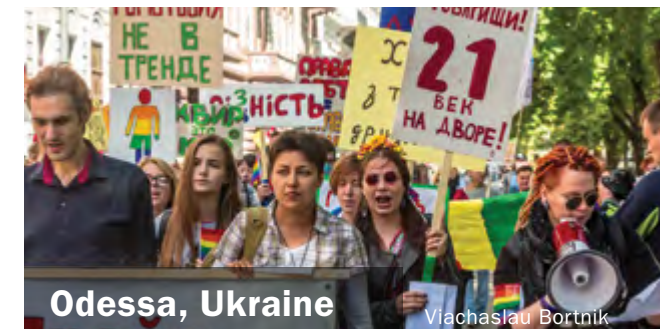
[2/4] We welcome Kiev authorities' assurance that they will take steps to allow the Equality Festival to take place safely and securely

7:35 AM - 17 Mar 2016

U.S. Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt, who pressed Ukrainian officials to uphold the rights of LGBT Ukrainians. Although local authorities tried to block the event through court order, thanks to international pressure the historic march took place with police protection and without incident.

In Jamaica we partnered with LGBT organization J-FLAG to garner high-profile international support for the country's second-annual Jamaica Pride celebration. We secured messages from U.S. leaders, including National Security Advisor Susan Rice and U.N. Ambassador Samantha Power, and the celebration was a major success.

We also won a victory at the United Nations with the appointment of the first-ever LGBT rights watchdog. Going forward, we're working with activists and allies in Congress to protect and expand on the progress on LGBT equality made under the Obama Administration. ■



Odessa, Ukraine

Viachaslau Bortnik



Kingston, Jamaica

Suelle Anglin

## The Washington Post

### UN council creates watchdog for LGBT rights

The Washington Post quotes Human Rights First's Shawn Gaylord on the creation of a U.N. monitor to protect LGBT people—an advocacy goal of ours. "It makes clear that LGBT rights are human rights," he said. [6.30.16]



# Together we drove out fear

With tech companies and European activists we tackled online hate and built coalitions to combat extremism and bigotry.

## HATRED IS SURGING IN EUROPE.

Antisemitic, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant groups and parties are gaining influence. It's long been in the interest of the United States to help its European allies combat this threat—all the more so now that America faces its own rising tide of populist nationalism and xenophobia.

Having monitored hate crime in Europe for fourteen years, we're uniquely positioned to respond with effective solutions. In 2016

we focused on France, where the far right is ascendant and extremists have launched horrific attacks on Jews and others.

Increasingly, extremists are using the Internet to gain supporters and sow division, so we teamed up with the French NGO Coexister to target online hatred. We organized a summit that brought together civil society, the tech sector, and French and American government leaders. This first-of-its-kind event gave rise to a unique coalition with the capacity and knowledge to counter online hatred while safeguarding free speech.

We also produced a major report, "Breaking the Cycle of Violence: Countering Antisemitism and Extremism in France." We promoted its recommendations at a meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, where the French government said it was making significant progress on one of our recommendations—improving hate crime reporting—and thanked us for our advocacy.

Building on our success in France, we've produced a major report on Germany that examines extremism and antisemitism against the backdrop of the refugee crisis. We're urging the German and U.S. governments to work together to combat hate crime and promote inclusion. ■

# TIME

## *Global Crises are Overshadowing Hate Crimes*

Our Elisa Massimino and the Anti-Defamation League's Jonathan Greenblatt shine a light on the E.U. governments' poor response to hate crime and call on them to do better. [ 5.5.16 ]



Muslims formed a human shield around Oslo's synagogue, offering symbolic protection for the city's Jewish community and condemning an attack on a synagogue in neighboring Denmark. Photo REUTERS/Hakon Mosvold Larsen

*U.S. to Release Data of Casualties from Drone Strikes*

*Newsweek* takes note of our effort to secure transparency in U.S. counterterrorism operations: “The administration must provide more than numbers,” Human Rights First said. [3.7.16]

# Together we secured greater transparency

With legal experts we moved counterterrorism operations onto firmer legal ground—helping to protect civilians.

THE DANGEROUSLY UNBOUNDED scope of U.S. military operations and layers of secrecy surrounding lethal drone strike operations raise doubts about their legality, set a dangerous precedent for other nations, and put civilians at risk.

In 2016 we knew that, absent a dramatic shift, a new president would take over an ill-defined war without sufficient constraints on the use of

wartime detention, military commissions, and drone strikes. So we intensified our efforts by working with top legal and national security experts to persuade key government officials to better define the scope of the war, increase protections for civilians, and improve transparency.

Over the summer we achieved one of our goals when President Obama signed an executive order that institutes measures to reduce harm to civilians. We also made significant gains on

transparency when the administration released formerly classified standards and procedures for lethal strikes outside war zones along with data we’d long sought on the number of civilians killed in such strikes.

And we won a major victory in December when the president released a report that set clear parameters on the scope of U.S. wars and disclosed the legal and policy rules governing the targeting, capture, detention, interrogation, transfer, and prosecution of terrorism suspects. The president’s orders also require annual

reporting on civilian casualties and the rules governing counterterrorism operations.

These gains will help ensure that the U.S. government’s counterterrorism effort enables democratic accountability, protects civilians, and sets rights-respecting precedents for other nations. We’re continuing to press for even greater compliance with the rule of law in the fight against terrorism. ■



Members of the Abida tribe point to the sky as they look for a drone aircraft flying at very high altitude over eastern Yemen. Photo REUTERS/Khaled Abdullah

# Together we took aim at the global slave trade

With Yazidi activists we pressed the international community to protect victims of conflict.

MODERN SLAVERY THRIVES WHEN institutions break down and the rule of law dissipates. That's why we turned our attention to the intersection of human trafficking and armed conflict. As the wars in Syria and Iraq rage on, many of the victims—those who are captured and those forced to flee—are vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers.

We partnered with Khaleel Aldakhi and Ameena Saeed Hasan, a married couple from Iraq who together received our 2016 Human Rights First Award for their heroic work to rescue Yazidi women and girls kidnapped and sold as sex slaves by ISIS. Together we helped secure unanimous passage of a U.N. Security Council resolution that draws an explicit link between trafficking and security. Placing anti-trafficking work within a comprehensive counterterrorism framework, the measure puts pressure on governments to crack down on traffickers.

We also took Congress to task for pledging to fight trafficking at the same time it turned its back on refugees, who face acute danger from traffickers. Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee alongside actor Ashton Kutcher—founder of Thorn, a tech-based anti-trafficking group—President and CEO Elisa Massimino argued that refugee protection is an essential component of anti-trafficking efforts.

The fight against modern slavery has drawn broad bipartisan support, yet Congress's

actions often belie its stated commitments. We'll keep pressing the U.S. government to make sure the reality of the fight against trafficking is as tough as the rhetoric.

## THE BEACON PRIZE

Each year we award our Beacon Prize to an individual or organization whose work embodies the best in the tradition of American leadership on human rights. In 2016 we recognized for the first time a leader in the corporate sector. Marilyn Carlson Nelson, former chairwoman and CEO of the global travel and hospitality company Carlson Inc., was honored for her pioneering leadership in the fight to end modern slavery. Thanks to her leadership, Carlson was the first major North American travel and hospitality company to take a public stand against the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children and was an early signatory to the Tourism Child-Protection Code of Conduct. ■



LEFT: Workers protest after filing class action lawsuits against Signal, where they were forced to work and live in overcrowded, unsanitary and heavily guarded "man camps."



ABOVE: Yazidi Kurdish women protest against ISIS's abduction of thousands of Yazidi women and girls who were then sold into sexual slavery.



ABOVE: Alongside actor Ashton Kutcher, Elisa Massimino testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on human trafficking. She discussed the link between the refugee crisis and trafficking. "If we want to end modern slavery, we should be doing everything we can to reduce the vulnerability of refugees," she said.

THE HILL

*Congress should stand united against human trafficking*

Ambassadors for our campaign to bankrupt modern slavery, retired Marine General Charles C. Krulak and former Congressman Dan Lungren call on the government to tackle this horrific problem "with full force." [1.23.17]



IN THE LATE 1970s, A HUMAN RIGHTS MISSION ASKED US TO INVESTIGATE ABUSES committed by Argentina's U.S.-backed military dictatorship as it carried out its reign of terror.

Our report—which exposed widespread abuses, including torture and summary executions—prompted the U.S. government to impose conditions on companies doing business in Argentina. It also led the Organization of American States to denounce the junta, contributing to its demise in 1983.

The junta killed or disappeared an estimated 30,000 people. Over the years, Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, a group of grandmothers of abducted children, and other Argentinian human rights groups have tried to locate their loved ones and, more broadly, sought justice for the victims. As part of this effort, they've called on the U.S. government to declassify documents detailing the junta's actions—and America's complicity.

With other human rights groups we brought to light U.S. complicity in Argentina's reign of terror.

# Together we exposed the truth

When President Obama announced he would be traveling to Argentina in 2016, we saw the opportunity to act. We urged the Obama Administration to declassify and release these documents as part of his trip, arguing it would send a signal that a mature democracy faces up to its mistakes.

We succeeded. During his controversial visit to Argentina that coincided with the 40th anniversary of the coup that brought the junta to power, President Obama announced that he would open up the files on the U.S. role in the reign of terror. The move gave Argentinian activists access to important information and evidence as they continue their fight for justice and accountability. ■

PHOTO: Nora Cortinaz, the leader of the human rights group Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo at Buenos Aires's Memorial Park which commemorates the International Day of the Disappeared. REUTERS/Marcos Brindicci

## The Miami Herald

### *Ending U.S. complicity in Argentina's Dirty War*

Our Elisa Massimino urges President Obama to release documents detailing U.S. support for the brutal military dictatorship. During a trip to Argentina, he did just that. [3.21.16]



# Together we helped those in need

With pro bono partners we increased our impact exponentially.  
Thank you.

## Firms & Corporations

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP  
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Allen Matkins Leck Gamble Mallory & Natsis LLP  
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Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP  
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Dorsey & Whitney LLP  
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Friedman Kaplan Seiler & Adelman LLP  
Gibbons PC.  
Gibney, Anthony & Flaherty, LLP  
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP  
Goodwin Procter LLP  
Greenberg Traurig LLP  
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McCarter & English, LLP  
McDermott Will & Emery LLP  
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McGuireWoods LLP  
Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP  
Miller & Chevalier Chartered  
Miller & Wrubel PC.  
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, PC.  
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP  
Morrison & Foerster LLP  
Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP  
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Paul Hastings LLP  
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Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP  
Reed Smith LLP  
Ropes & Gray LLP  
Schenck, Price, Smith & King LLP  
Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP  
Seward & Kissel LLP  
Seyfarth Shaw LLP  
Shearman & Sterling LLP

## 2016 Marvin Frankel Award

The Frankel Award honors law firms that exemplify Judge Frankel's extraordinary dedication to human rights and commitment to pro bono service. From direct representation to policy advocacy, these firms have been leaders in the effort to help our country live up to its ideals.

Accepting the 2016 award were Liza Velazquez for Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP (photo left), Michael Joseph for Blank Rome LLP (center), and Alicia Handy for Latham & Watkins LLP

“*Human Rights First was my angel from heaven.*”

—Sandra, from Colombia, gained asylum, represented by Human Rights First



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Sidley Austin LLP  
Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP  
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP  
Southern California Edison Company  
Steptoe & Johnson LLP  
Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP  
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Randall O. Sorrels Legal Clinics, South Texas College of Law  
UDC - Immigration & Human Rights Clinic  
University of Baltimore School of Law  
University of Texas LBJ Washington Center  
USC International Human Rights Clinic

# Together we put human rights first

With diverse and accomplished leadership we fought for what's right.



William D. Zabel  
Human Rights First  
Board Chair

Since its inception, Human Rights First has been guided by an abiding belief in the rule of law as the ultimate guarantor of human rights. This conviction is central to our mission. It drives everything we do. As an organization founded by lawyers, we understand the pivotal role they play in the struggle to protect individual liberty and the rights of all.

And in this challenging time, when threats to human rights and human dignity seem to come from every direction, the importance of lawyers has never been clearer.

The Trump Administration's effort to shut out refugees from Syria and all travelers from several Muslim-majority nations has gotten snagged on the rule of law. The fate of President Trump's executive order is now in doubt because lawyers representing states and numerous civil society groups—including Human Rights First—have turned to the law and the courts to block it.

Lawyers are also stepping up to provide direct assistance to refugees and other immigrants who face threats both new and longstanding. Showing up at airports to assist migrants detained because of the travel ban, at detention centers to support refugee families, and

in court to help asylum seekers receive protection, these lawyers are challenging our government to live up to America's historical commitment to "the huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

For nearly forty years, Human Rights First has been recruiting and training lawyers from the nation's leading law firms to provide pro bono legal representation to refugees. Last year, amid mounting threats to the rights of refugees and immigrants, our lawyer-partners volunteered legal services worth an eye-popping \$56 million—the most in our history.

This powerful partnership with the private bar has helped hundreds of refugees gain protection, enabling them to start new lives here, in safety and freedom.

Some have questioned whether our country's institutions are strong enough to withstand this multifaceted assault on human rights. But early signs suggest that the rule of law, in conjunction with the work of smart and passionate lawyers, will be a formidable barrier. As always, Human Rights First will be at the forefront of this effort.

Thank you for supporting our work.

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Steven H. Schulman  
Greg Segal  
Robert D. Sloan  
Mary Ann Stein  
Samuel M. Witten  
James D. Zirin



## 2016 Human Rights First Award Dinner

Actress Helen Mirren (far left) joined us to present the Sidney Lumet Award for Integrity in Entertainment to *Eye in the Sky* director Gavin Hood (second from left and Human Rights First board member as of May 2017). The film raises essential ethical questions about the use of drones and "targeted killing," prompting much-needed reflection and public debate about the effect of technological advances on modern warfare.

Elisa Massimino (far right) presented the 2016 Human Rights First Award to Aameena Saeed (center) and Khaleel Aldakhi, an Iraqi couple who risk their lives to rescue Yazidi women and girls abducted and forced into sexual slavery by ISIS. They also help the victims recover and seek international support for Yazidis.

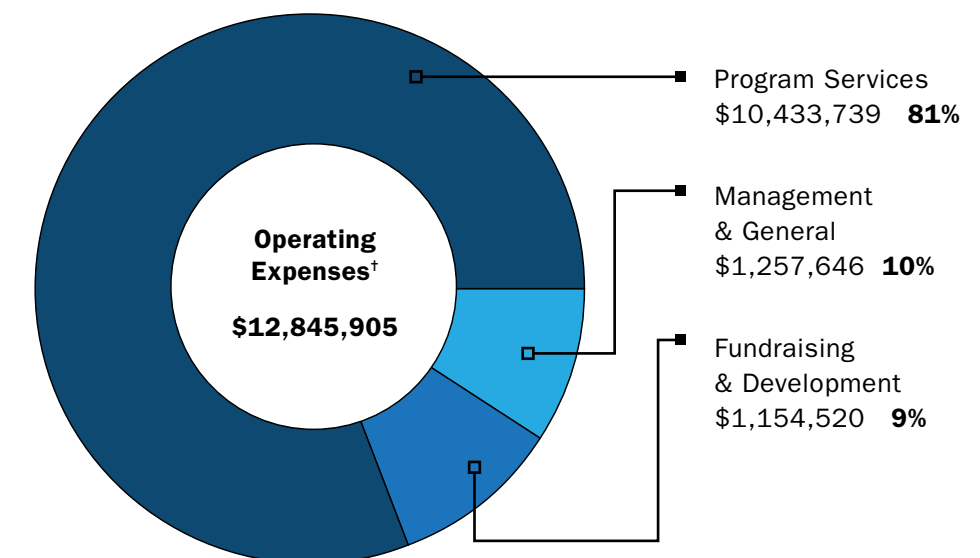
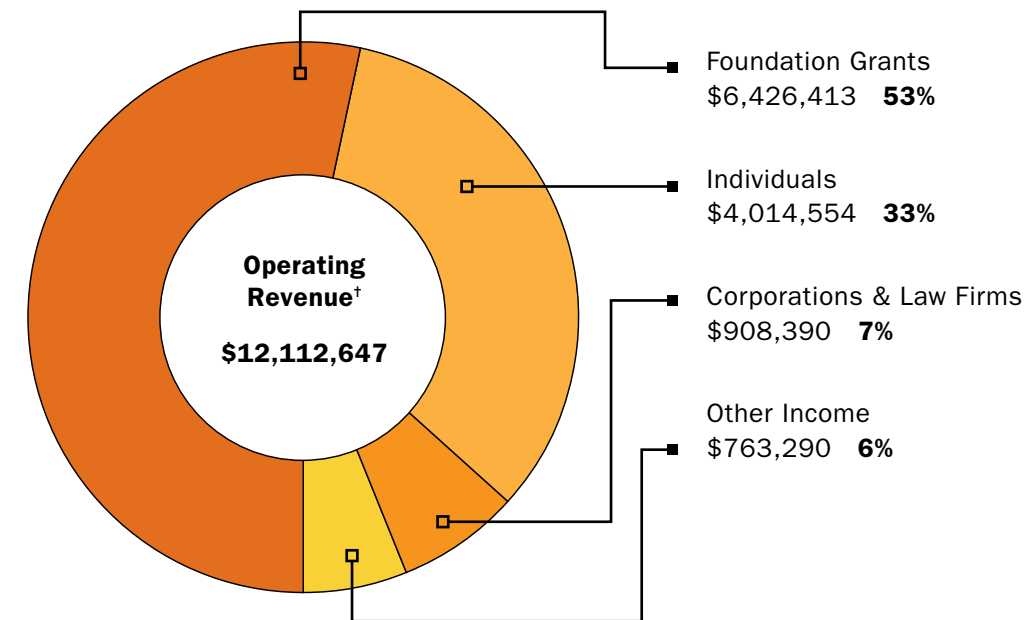
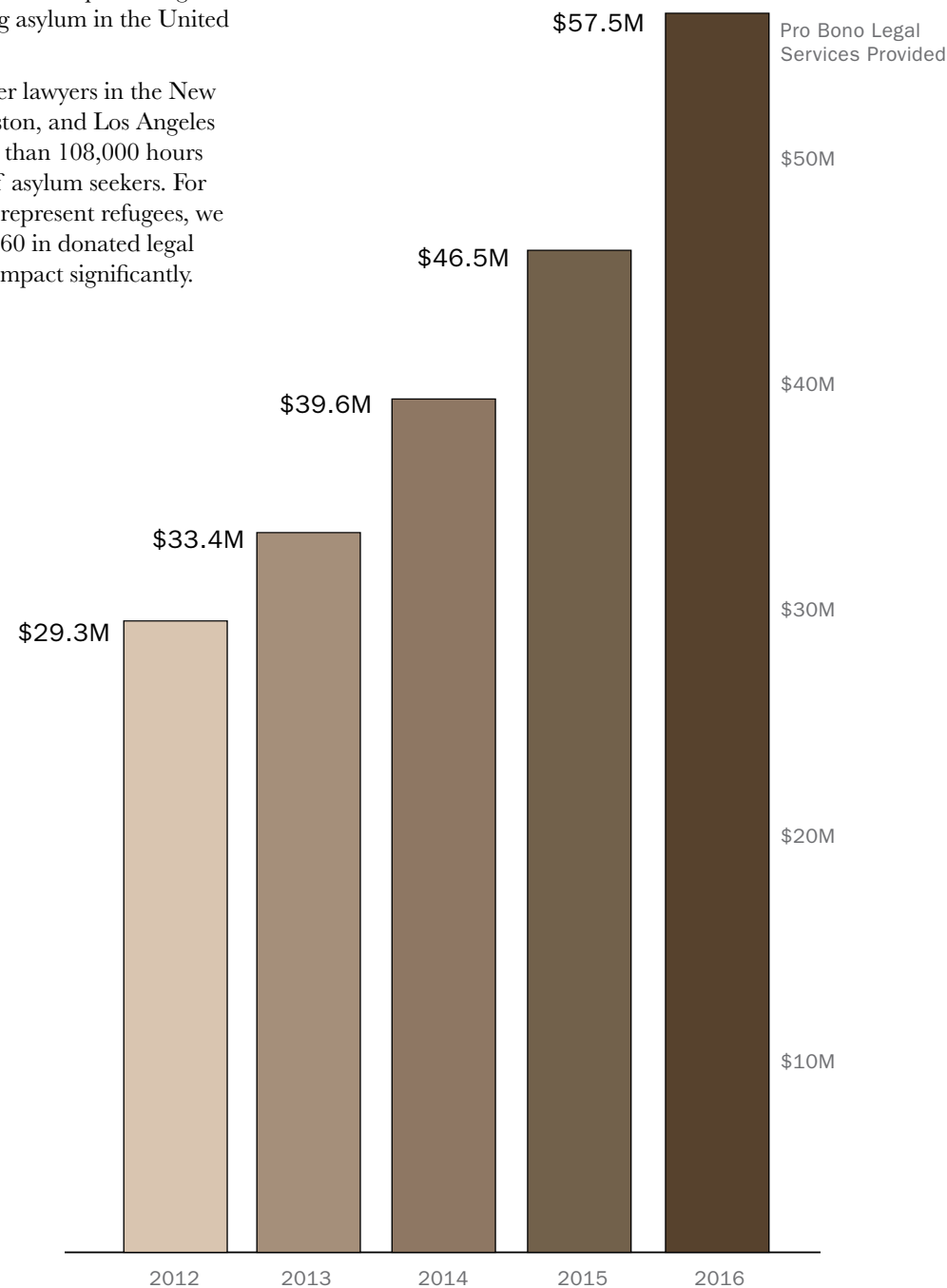
# Together we made a \$70M impact

With our pro bono partners' help our impact was over five times larger than our operating budget.



**HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST WORKS WITH** hundreds of committed pro bono lawyers who dedicate their time and talent to protecting the rights of refugees seeking asylum in the United States.

In the past year, volunteer lawyers in the New York, Washington, Houston, and Los Angeles metro areas put in more than 108,000 hours to represent hundreds of asylum seekers. For every dollar we spent to represent refugees, we received more than \$10.60 in donated legal services, increasing our impact significantly.



Human Rights First is a 501(c)(3) registered charity, has an annual independent audit performed, and files informational returns with various governmental agencies. Audited financial statements and annual 990 returns are available at [humanrightsfirst.org](http://humanrightsfirst.org).

† Reflects cash receipts and disbursements in 2016; does not include \$57.5 million in pro bono services.

# Together we can make a difference

With your support we can continue fighting for human rights.  
Thank you.

## Make a monetary donation

The impact highlighted in this report is made possible by generous individuals and institutions. Please make a gift to Human Rights First today by visiting [humanrightsfirst.org/donate](http://humanrightsfirst.org/donate) or by calling 212.845.5276.

## Consider planned giving

We are deeply grateful to donors who have included Human Rights First in their estate planning. Planned gifts help us ensure future generations will benefit from our mission to make sure the United States is a global leader on human rights. Please contact our donor relations team to let us know if you have included Human Rights First in your estate plans or would like more information: [development@humanrightsfirst.org](mailto:development@humanrightsfirst.org) or 212.845.5252.

## Represent an asylum seeker

Refugees seeking asylum in the United States need legal representation. Interested lawyers should contact us at any of our four locations:

New York:  
[NYprobono@humanrightsfirst.org](mailto:NYprobono@humanrightsfirst.org)

Washington:  
[DCprobono@humanrightsfirst.org](mailto:DCprobono@humanrightsfirst.org)

Houston:  
[TXprobono@humanrightsfirst.org](mailto:TXprobono@humanrightsfirst.org)

Los Angeles:  
[LAprobono@humanrightsfirst.org](mailto:LAprobono@humanrightsfirst.org)

## Join Veterans for American Ideals

Human Rights First's new project, Veterans for American Ideals, provides opportunities for veterans to advocate for human rights. Find out more at [vfai.org](http://vfai.org).

## Contact your member of Congress

Elected representatives need to hear that we will not tolerate policies that scapegoat refugees or threaten anyone's human rights.

## Sign up for information

Sign up at [humanrightsfirst.org](http://humanrightsfirst.org) so we can let you know the key moments when Congress and other decision makers need to hear about your support for human rights.

## Talk to people about refugees

Don't stay silent in the face of racist, anti-Muslim, antisemitic, or xenophobic talk or actions. Instead, educate others about refugees, and counter the spread of misinformation. Refugees are already extremely vetted before they arrive in the United States, and assisting them enhances our nation's security. For resources visit [humanrightsfirst.org](http://humanrightsfirst.org).

## Organize an event

If you'd like to demonstrate support for refugees by organizing an event, or joining an event already being planned, please visit [refugeesarewelcome.org](http://refugeesarewelcome.org).

*“Human Rights First has been a clarion voice in defense of human dignity and the rights and freedom of people everywhere.”*

—Ambassador Susan E. Rice, former National Security Advisor

*“Human Rights First is a premier institution devoted to the noblest of all causes.”*

—Senator John McCain (R-AZ)

*“I'm very grateful to Human Rights First for the opportunity and the terrific support and advice they provided throughout our case.”*

—Pro bono lawyer, Munger Tolles & Olson LLP, Los Angeles

*“You have been playing such a lead role. Human Rights First has pushed so many businesses to step up to this challenge of eradicating human trafficking.”*

—Thomas E. Perez, former Secretary of Labor

*“Words can say very little, when someone does so much for me. Thank you.”*

—Human Rights First asylum client from Sri Lanka

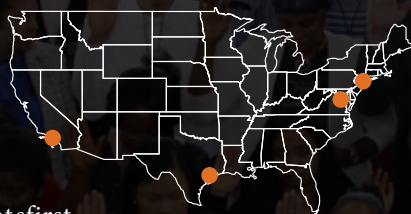






Our mission is to ensure that the United States is a global leader on human rights.

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washington  
houston  
los angeles



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Cover photo Getty / John Moore