

SEPTEMBER 2017

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Jana Baldus, Annika Elena Poppe,
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AN OVERVIEW OF GLOBAL INITIATIVES ON COUNTERING CLOSING SPACE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Jana Baldus, Annika Elena Poppe,
and Jonas Wolff (September 2017)

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This document maps institutionalized initiatives—by governments, regional bodies, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—that have been created in response to the global phenomenon of increasing restrictions on civil society space. In varying ways, these initiatives pursue the goal of reclaiming civic space and countering governments’ attempts to close space: spanning from advocacy from afar to financial support as well as legal and technical assistance provided to and by civil society on the ground. This collection has been generated on the basis of references to initiatives in several key works and has been complemented by references in other publications and targeted online searches as well as through feedback from regional experts in the context of the International Consortium on Closing Civic Space (iCon).¹ While it contains governmental and nongovernmental—often multi-stakeholder—initiatives with regional, sometimes even global, reach, it neither contains initiatives that are specific to a particular country nor initiatives that solely focus on *monitoring* restrictions of civil society. The majority of the initiatives listed here have been created in the past couple of years in response to closing space; most of the initiatives are active today, although some are temporarily inactive or have ceased. The following overview is mainly based on the information offered online by the initiatives themselves.

The character of the initiatives in the mapping ranges from actions pursued by single organizations, cooperation between diverse civil society actors, broad alliances and network initiatives, cooperation between governments and civil society organizations, cooperation between various governments, initiatives by international organizations, and, finally, multi-stakeholder initiatives. What is noticeable is that some actors make an appearance in many

1 Thomas Carothers, “The Closing Space Challenge: How Are Funders Responding?,” November 2, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/11/02/closing-space-challenge-how-are-funders-responding-pub-61808>; International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “A Mapping of Existing Initiatives to Address Legal Constraints on Foreign Funding of Civil Society,” July 1, 2014, <http://www.icnl.org/research/resources/foreignfund/A%20Mapping%20of%20Existing%20Initiatives%20to%20Address%20Legal%20Constraints%20on%20Foreign%20Funding%20of%20Civil%20Society,%20July%202014.pdf>.

of the different initiatives mentioned below, including the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, CIVICUS, Article 19, and ACT Alliance on the civil society side, as well as the development agencies of the United States—U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—and Sweden—Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)—on the state level. Furthermore, the United Nations special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association seems to function as a point of intersection between civil society and the state level within many initiatives. Most of the initiatives listed here focus on either advocacy, technical assistance to civil society organizations, or financial support in the form of general or emergency grants. Interestingly, many initiatives that focus on human rights support more generally existed well before 2010, when initiatives with a more concrete focus on closing space were launched. This indicates a growing assertiveness and success of “awareness-raising” strategies/initiatives such as the Stand with Civil Society initiative launched by former U.S. President Barack Obama. Finally, even though most of the initiatives in this overview are coordinated by civil society organizations, many of them are either in cooperation with governments or their respective development agencies or funded by states. Since information on funding is not provided by every initiative, it is not possible to give exact numbers. However, per the given information, only five initiatives are entirely civil society driven as opposed to 12 initiatives that are either state driven, state-civil society cooperation, or entirely/partially funded by states.

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INITIATIVES

- 1 AFRICA PLATFORM
- 2 CIVIC SPACE INITIATIVE (CSI)
- 3 CIVIL SOCIETY INNOVATION INITIATIVE(CSII)—INNOVATION FOR CHANGE
- 4 COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES (COD): CD-UNITED
- 5 COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES (COD): PROTECTING CIVIC SPACE AND THE RIGHT TO ACCESS RESOURCES
- 6 COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES (COD): WORKING GROUP ON ENABLING AND PROTECTING CIVIL SOCIETY
- 7 COUNCIL ON FOUNDATIONS (COF): CLOSING SPACE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY AND PHILANTHROPY
- 8 DONOR WORKING GROUP ON CROSS-BORDER PHILANTHROPY
- 9 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO FRONTLINE ACTIVISTS
- 10 EUROMED RIGHTS / EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK (EMHRN)
- 11 EUROPEAN CENTER FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW
- 12 EUROPEAN ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY (EED)
- 13 EUROPEAN INSTRUMENT FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS (EIDHR)
- 14 FUNDERS' INITIATIVE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY (FICS)
- 15 FUND FOR GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS (FGHR)
- 16 GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY LEGAL ENABLING ENVIRONMENT PROJECT (LEEP II)
- 17 GLOBAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS COALITION ON FATF [FINANCIAL ACTION TASK FORCE]
- 18 HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY NETWORK (HRDN)
- 19 LIFELINE EMBATTLED CSO ASSISTANCE FUND
- 20 MOVEMENTS.ORG
- 21 OBSERVATORY FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (OBS)
- 22 OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (OGP)
- 23 PRAGUE CIVIL SOCIETY CENTRE
- 24 UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPOREUR ON RIGHTS TO FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION
- 25 USAID: CENTER OF EXCELLENCE ON DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE
- 26 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE: HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY FUND (HRDF)
- 27 U.S. WHITE HOUSE: STAND WITH CIVIL SOCIETY
- 28 WORLD MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRACY (WMD)

1. Africa Platform

NAME OF INITIATIVE: Africa Platform (formerly: African Civil Society Organization Platform on Principled Partnership)

PARTICIPANT: Network of over 20 CSOs²

PERIOD: Since 2010

FUNDING: [not further specified – information only available upon request]

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy, technical assistance

The Africa Platform is an Africa-based initiative that focuses on national and regional threats to an enabling environment for civil society organizations (CSOs).³ The Africa Platform works mainly on state-society relations in postconflict countries by strengthening the relations between civil society and governments (dialogue, negotiations) and giving active technical support to civil society (by engaging with international partners and governments, mobilizing society, capacity building and strategic capacity support). The Platform initially concentrated on postwar countries in Africa, but has expanded its work to include countries outside Africa (e.g., Sri Lanka and East Timor).⁴

The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) describes the Africa Platform as “the only Africa-based platform focused exclusively on rallying African CSOs to collectively respond to national and regional threats to development space of CSOs and CSAs in any country.” However, the Platform itself has backed away from this core engagement

and instead increasingly focuses on social contracts between state and society.⁵ There are currently no projects/programs dedicated *directly* to the closing space phenomenon.

More information on the Africa Platform, its impact, and on its precursor the African Civil Society Organization Platform on Principled Partnership (ACPPP) can be located on the Africa Platform website.⁶

2. Civic Space Initiative (CSI)

PARTNER: International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (European Center for Not-for-Profit Law), Article 19, CIVICUS, World Movement for Democracy

PERIOD: 2012–2016

FUNDING: Swedish Government⁷

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy, technical assistance

The Civic Space Initiative (CSI) was a large-scale program that brought together four global partners (see above) aimed at expanding and protecting civic space at the country, regional, and international level [it was active between 2012 and 2016: there is currently no information on its continuation].⁸ The initiative, among others, engaged with the UN special rapporteur on the rights to peaceful assembly and association (e.g., on the Universal Periodic Review) (initiative number 25 in this document) as well as with other global/multilateral initiatives. It provided support to local CSOs to help them engage with their governments on legal threats to the freedom

2 More information on participating CSOs can be found at Africa Platform, <https://africapatform.org/>.

3 International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “A Mapping of Existing Initiatives to Address Legal Constraints on Foreign Funding of Civil Society,” 14.

4 Africa Platform, <https://africapatform.org/>.

5 Ibid.; International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “A Mapping of Existing Initiatives to Address Legal Constraints on Foreign Funding of Civil Society,” 14.

6 Africa Platform, <https://africapatform.org/>.

7 More information on the Swedish government’s civil society engagement is provided by Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sweden, n.d., <http://www.regeringskansliet.se/contentassets/916c6405ef0c41a39b688ca7f28fda14/stand-with-civil-society---swe-den>.

8 CIVICUS, “CIVICUS Civic Space Initiative,” <http://www.civicus.org/index.php/what-we-do/knowledge-analysis/civic-space-initiative>.

of association and to advance legal reforms.⁹ The Civic Space Initiative thus had a special focus on legal initiatives by civil society actors at the global, regional, and national level. To create enabling environments (in terms of the freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, and expression), the initiative provided technical and advocacy assistance in over 35 countries. The country assistance program of the CSI is aimed at:

- (1) Promoting an enabling legal environment;
- (2) Preventing restrictive laws;
- (3) Empowering local actors in their work.¹⁰

More information on the Civic Space Initiative (CSI) provided by CIVICUS and ICNL—especially information on the work and impact of the CSI as well as its country assistance program—can be found on the CSI website.¹¹

3. Civil Society Innovation Initiative (CSII) – Innovation for Change

PARTNER: Counterpart International, CIVICUS, Tides Center

PERIOD: Since September 2015

FUNDING: USAID, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Aga Khan Foundation

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Financial support, technical assistance, communication platform

USAID, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and the Aga Khan Founda-

tion in cooperation with Counterpart International, CIVICUS, and the Tides Center launched different Regional Civil Society Innovation Centers (namely, six regional platforms in Latin America and the Caribbean, East and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, Central and South Asia, Asia-Pacific, and the Middle East and Northern Africa) as peer-to-peer platforms. The purpose was to exchange ideas and experiences to, among other things, reverse the negative trend of restrictive laws for civil society.¹² To stop the continuing backlash against civil society work, the initiative seeks to establish regional civil society hubs to “facilitate and convene various actors, match resources to needs, and advise on key issues to civil society.”¹³

The civil society innovation hubs aim at “connecting CSOs regionally and globally; encouraging peer-to-peer learning; providing civil society organizations and their networks with virtual and physical platforms to access tools and technologies that will bolster their work; amplifying civil society voices around the world.”¹⁴ Recently, the initiative launched an interactive platform—Innovation for Change—in order to “help power campaign and program development by offering advisory services, education and training, convening and network building, fundraising, free online tools and support with technology product development.” The virtual and physical working spaces are only available upon registration as a civil society member at the Innovation for Change website.¹⁵

9 International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “A Mapping of Existing Initiatives to Address Legal Constraints on Foreign Funding of Civil Society.”

10 Ibid.

11 CIVICUS, “CIVICUS Civic Space Initiative”; International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “A Mapping of Existing Initiatives to Address Legal Constraints on Foreign Funding of Civil Society.”

12 Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, “Stand with Civil Society—Sweden,” <http://www.regeringskansliet.se/contentassets/916c6405ef0c41a39b688ca7f28fda14/stand-with-civil-society---sweden>.

13 Sida, “About the Cooperation with the Civil Society: Innovative Support to the Civil Society,” July 23, 2014, <http://www.sida.se/English/partners/our-partners/Civil-society-organisations/How-to-cooperate/civil-society-innovation-program/>.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

More information on the Civil Society Innovation Initiative can be found in the Concept Note, on the CSII Process website, as well as the Innovation for Change website.¹⁶

4. Community of Democracies (CoD): CD-United

PROGRAM: CD-United Initiative 2016: Democracy in Action: Expanding Civil Society Space

ADMINISTERED BY: Community of Democracies (CoD)¹⁷

PERIOD: Yearly initiative, first launched in 2013

FUNDING: [unclear – most likely by the member states]

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Financial support

CD-United is the Community of Democracies' initiative that funds projects, initiatives, organizations, and campaigns “that support and strengthen democracy, promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, and build civil society around the globe.”¹⁸ CD-United was launched after President Obama's call to action (initiative number 28 in this document) and aimed at matching funding from the United States with other donors of the Community of Democracies. The 2016 initiative administers a total budget of \$272,000 and allocates single grants up to \$60,000. The topic for 2016 was “Democracy in Action: Expanding Civil Society Space” and the Community offers co-funding of proposals that fo-

cus on the “worrying trend of shrinking civic space that is contributing to the rising threat of a global democratic recession.”¹⁹

More information on the Community of Democracies, on CD-United (including former projects), and more information by the U.S. government, can be found on the CD-United website and on the Obama White House archives pages.²⁰

5. Community of Democracies (CoD): Protecting Civic Space and the Right to Access Resources

INITIATIVE OF: Community of Democracies (CoD)

PARTNER: United Nations special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

PERIOD: Since 2014

FUNDING: [no information – most likely by the member states]

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy

In coordination with the UN special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association Maina Kiai, and with the participation of local and regional civil society representatives from Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Northern Africa, and Latin America, the Community of Democracies launched a set of Regional

16 Ibid.; Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, “Stand with Civil Society—Sweden”; The White House: Office of the Press Secretary, “Fact Sheet: U.S. Support for Civil Society,” September 23, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/23/fact-sheet-us-support-civil-society>; U.S. Agency for International Development, “Co-Creating the Civil Society Innovation Initiative: Process Journey from Idea to Design,” http://reboot.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/USAID_CivSocInno_ProcessNote_%C6%92.pdf; CSII, “The Value of CSII: An Experimental, Collaborative Approach Becomes a Viable Model for Donors and Partners to Work Together to Solve Complex Challenges,” http://csiilearn.org/#/analysis?_k=bh9048.

17 In total, 106 countries took part in the founding meeting of the Community of Democracies, 29 of which form the Governing Council of the Community of Democracies, namely: Argentina, Cape Verde, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, South Africa, Sweden, United States of America, and Uruguay.

18 Community of Democracies, “CD-UNITED,” <http://www.community-democracies.org/global-activities/emerging-democracy-support/cd-united/>.

19 TripleFunds, “CD-UNITED Call for Proposals: Democracy in Action,” <https://triple-funds.com/tf-entry/cd-united-call-for-proposals-democracy-in-action/>.

20 The White House: Office of the Press Secretary, “Fact Sheet: U.S. Support for Civil Society”; Community of Democracies, “CD-UNITED.”

Dialogues (led by Maina Kiai) that focus on foreign funding restrictions of civil society. The first Regional Dialogues took place in Warsaw (May/October 2014), Pretoria (November 2014), Santiago de Chile (April 2015), and Seoul (November 2015/January 2016). The next Regional Dialogue (for Middle East and North Africa) is yet to be planned. A final conference will later discuss the results of the dialogues—in particular the actual situation of civil society space and the evaluation of states' engagement in creating an enabling environment especially in terms of foreign funding.

More information on the Protecting Civic Space and the Right to Access Resources initiative by the Community of Democracies and the UN special rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association can be located on the website of the UN special rapporteur.²¹

6. Community of Democracies (CoD): Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society

INITIATIVE BY: Community of Democracies (CoD)²²

PARTICIPANTS: Thirteen governments (Botswana, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Tanzania, and the United States), the EU, five CSOs (Article19, CIVICUS, ICNL, World Movement for Democracy, ACT Alliance), three advisory organizations (UNDO, UK Charity Commission, UN special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association).

PERIOD: Since 2009

FUNDING: Member states

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy, technical assistance

The Community of Democracies' Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society promotes the collaboration among its member states, civil society, and international organizations to counter “the growing global trend towards constraining civil society organizations and restricting in which they can operate through legal means.”²³ The Working Group provides a space to share information and coordinate responses to restrictive legislation for civil society. It furthermore promotes diplomatic responses, and provides technical assistance for CSOs to advocate against the adoption of restrictive laws. The most visible diplomatic activities of the Working Group are the so-called “Calls for Action.” Resorted to if restrictive legislation is drafted, the calls for action are an early warning mechanism that include advocacy toward the respective country with the aim of encouraging the government either to repeal legislation in its entirety or to amend restrictive elements. Apart from that, the Working Group offers governments technical assistance—legal and constitutional drafting know-how—to ensure that “their laws create a positive, enabling environment for civil society.”²⁴

More information on the Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society can be found on the website of the Community of Democracies.²⁵

7. Council on Foundations (COF): Closing Space for Civil Society and Philanthropy

PROGRAMS: Global Philanthropy section: Closing Space for Civil Society and Philanthropy

21 UN Special Rapporteur, “Special Project: Protecting Civic Space and the Right to Access Resources—A Joint Project with the Community of Democracies,” <http://freeassembly.net/civic-space/>.

22 Africa Platform, <https://africapplatform.org/>.

23 Community of Democracies, “Enabling & Protecting Civil Society,” <http://www.community-democracies.org/enabling-civil-society/>.

24 Community of Democracies, “Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society,” <http://www.community-democracies.org/app/uploads/2016/10/WG-EPCS-.pdf>.

25 Community of Democracies, “Working Group on Enabling and Protecting Civil Society,” <http://www.community-democracies.org/global-activities/convening/working-groups/working-group-on-enabling-and-protecting-civil-society/>.

PERIOD: [the Council itself was founded in 1994 – no further information on when the Global Philanthropy section or the Closing Space projects were established]

FUNDING: [the Council is funded by a number of organizations].²⁶

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy

The Council on Foundations (COF) is a U.S.-based nonprofit association dedicated to the creation of a philanthropic network through the provision of tools “needed by philanthropic organizations to expand, enhance and sustain their ability to advance the common good.”²⁷ Within its Global Philanthropy section, the COF developed a specific project on Closing Space for Civil Society and Philanthropy. It mainly provides U.S. foundations and grant makers with resources to understand the closing space trend by providing reports, summaries, and analyses of foreign civil society laws (in cooperation with the ICNL), as well as hosting briefings and webinars on foreign civil society laws.²⁸ In addition, the COF advocates the reduction of barriers to cross-border philanthropy both on behalf of foundations in the United States and around the world.²⁹

More information can be located on the Council of Foundations, on the Closing Space for Civil Society and Philanthropy project and on the Global Philanthropy section.³⁰

8. Donor Working Group on Cross-Border Philanthropy

PARTNER: Ariadne: European Funders for Social

Change and Human Rights, Human Rights Funders Network, European Foundation Centre

PARTICIPANTS: Group of private funders (including the Sigrid Rausing Trust, Fund for Global Human Rights, the International Human Rights Funders Group, the European Foundations Centre, and the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders)

PERIOD: Since 2014

FUNDING: [no specific information]

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Communication platform

The Donor Working Group on Cross-Border Philanthropy (renamed as Donor Community on the Enabling Environment for Civil Society in July 2017) was set up in response to the “alarming increase in the number of jurisdictions restricting funding for civil society organizations.”³¹ Just like the Funders’ Initiative for Civil Society (FICS, initiative number 15 in this document), it is dedicated to the establishment of communication links between international human rights funders. It is a communication platform rather than an advocacy tool; still the Donor Working Group convened a number of workshops and related activities on the topic of closing space. The Donor Working Group now serves as a private discussion forum for its members to exchange information and strategies for pushing back against closing space.³² The initiative works closely with FICS, and activities and ideas coming up will at times be supported by/integrated with FICS.

More information on the Donor Working Group

26 Council on Foundations, “Our Supporters,” <http://www.cof.org/page/our-supporters>.

27 Council on Foundations, “Closing Space for Civil Society & Philanthropy,” <https://www.cof.org/taxonomy/term/716>.

28 Council on Foundations, “Shrinking Space for Civil Society and Philanthropy—New Reports and Trends,” <https://www.cof.org/event/shrinking-space-civil-society-and-philanthropy-new-reports-and-trends>.

29 Council on Foundations, “Global Philanthropy,” <https://www.cof.org/program/global-philanthropy>.

30 Ibid.

31 International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “Introduction to the Donor Working Group on Cross-Border Philanthropy,” July 7, 2014, <http://www.icnl.org/globalforum2015/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Introduction-to-the-Donor-working-group-on-cross-border-philanthropy.pdf>.

32 Ibid.

on Cross-Border Philanthropy can be located on the ICNL website.³³

9. Emergency Assistance to Frontline Activists

ADMINISTERED BY: Freedom House

PERIOD: Since 2007

FUNDING: Freedom House

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Financial support

Freedom House offers emergency assistance to human rights defenders and human rights organizations worldwide to survive attacks and be able to resume their critical work.³⁴ In comparison to the Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund (initiative number 20 in this document), the Emergency Assistance to Frontline Activists focuses more on responses to physical threats than on the working environment of civil society organizations in general. The grants embrace the funding of legal defense for human rights defenders and organizations, support to families of human rights activists, help for political prisoners, etc. The Emergency Assistance project covers 110 countries and territories and “provided emergency assistance to more than 3,500 human rights defenders, civil society organizations, and survivors of religious persecution” since 2007.³⁵

Since religious groups are often the target of attacks, support tends to focus on “survivors of religious persecution and defenders of religious freedom from many different faiths.” In the recent past, grants “provided emergency assistance to a moderate Muslim in Nigeria targeted by Boko Haram, a Shia Muslim in Pakistan charged with blasphemy, an atheist in Indonesia imprisoned for defamation,

a Sunni Muslim charged with extremism in Uzbekistan, and a Christian pastor in Burma targeted by extremists.”³⁶

More information on the Emergency Assistance to Frontline Activists can be located on the Freedom House website.³⁷

10. EuroMed Rights / Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)

PARTNER/FUNDING: Danish-Arab Partnership Program, Open Society Foundations, Sida, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Commission, Svenska Kyrkan Internationellt Arbete, Sigrid Rausing Trust, Ford Foundation, Svenska PostkodStiftelsen, CCFD Terre Solidaire

PROJECT: Shrinking Space for Civil Society

PERIOD: Since 1997

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy, technical assistance

EuroMed Rights (also: Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, EMHRN) was founded in 1997 as a network of human rights organizations in the Euro-Mediterranean region. In 2012 EuroMed Rights adopted the topic of Shrinking Space for Civil Society as one of its main thematic priorities between 2012 and 2018 as well as one of the core regional thematic projects in its work program 2015–2017. To this end, EuroMed Rights monitors the situation for CSOs in the EuroMed region; it engages in advocacy for an enabling environment toward international organizations like European institutions and the UN human rights system; and it assists and coordinates the efforts of its members and supports the creation of new and autonomous NGOs as well as capacity building. More specifically, EuroMed

33 Ibid.; Carothers, “The Closing Space Challenge: How Are Funders Responding?”

34 Freedom House, “Emergency Assistance Programs,” <https://freedomhouse.org/program/emergency-assistance-programs>.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

Rights created a Working Group on Freedom of Association and Assembly to provide a “forum for exchange of experience and information.”³⁸

More information on EuroMed Rights (including its funding) can be obtained on the websites for the Working Group on Freedom of Association and Assembly, and the focus area Shrinking Space for Civil Society, as well as on its Strategy 2012–2018 and its Work Program 2015–2017, and the report on civil society space in the EuroMed region.³⁹

11. European Center for Not-for-Profit Law

PARTNER: Founded by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law

FUNDING: Diverse pool of donors on project-to-project basis, among others the United Nations Office for Project Services⁴⁰

PERIOD: [no information]

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy, technical assistance

The European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL) was founded by the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) and works toward the same goal of creating enabling environments for CSOs. In

comparison to the ICNL, the ECNL focuses primarily on advocacy and the provision of technical assistance, such as capacity building “for policy research and analysis.”⁴¹ ECNL is especially active in engaging with the European Union on promoting an enabling environment for civil society.⁴² Main thematic areas are “policies and laws that affect freedom of association and assembly; financial sustainability of CSOs, mechanisms that promote dialogue; cross-sector collaboration and CSO delivery of services; and emerging issues that affect CSOs, such as counter-terrorism policies or fundraising laws.”⁴³ The ECNL is centered within Eastern Europe, but also promotes civic space in Western Europe, new European Union member states, newly independent states (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine), the Western Balkans, and Turkey.⁴⁴

The ECNL works together with different organizations to implement its projects. For instance, the Moldova Partnerships for Sustainable Civil Society Program (MPSCS) is carried out with financial support by USAID.⁴⁵ Furthermore, ECNL was part of the Civic Space Initiative that aimed at promot-

38 Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, “Work Programme 2015–2017,” <http://www.euomedrights.org/about-us/who-we-are/>.

39 Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, “Who We Are,” <http://www.euomedrights.org/about-us/who-we-are/>; Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, “How We Work?,” <http://www.euomedrights.org/about-us/how-we-work/#our-donors>; Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, “Working Group on Freedom of Association and Assembly,” <http://www.euomedrights.org/working-group/freedom-of-association-and-assembly-working-group/>; Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, “Shrinking Space for Civil Society,” <http://www.euomedrights.org/theme/shrinking-space-for-civil-society/>; Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, “Strategy 2012–2018,” http://euomedrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Strategy2012_FINAL_EN.pdf; Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, “Emhrn: Work Programme 2015–2017,” <http://euomedrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/REMDH-WorkProgram-EN-Final.pdf>; Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, “Shackled Freedoms: What Space for Civil Society in the EuroMed?,” <http://euomedrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Shackled-freedoms-EN-report-06092016.pdf>.

40 More information on the funding of ECNL can be found in “Annex of the PBO Report of the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law,” http://ecnl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/3_ECNL-PBO-annex-2015_financial-report.pdf. However, not all donors are included in the respective documents, since most of ECNL’s funding relies on project-specific funds.

41 European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “About Us,” <http://ecnl.org/about-us/>.

42 European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “Supporting DG Devco and EU Delegations in Promoting CSO Enabling Environment,” <http://ecnl.org/what-we-do/european-standard-setting/supporting-dg-devco-and-eu-delegations-in-promoting-cso-enabling-environment/>.

43 European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “What We Do,” <http://ecnl.org/what-we-do/>.

44 European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “About Us,” <http://ecnl.org/about-us/>.

45 FHI360, “Moldova Partnerships for Sustainable Civil Society,” http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KB34.pdf.

ing an enabling environment for civil society by preventing restrictive legislation (initiative number 2 in this document) and is part of the transnational coalition on engagement of the FATF.

More information on the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, its work, and projects on the key subjects of policy and law reform and engagement with the European Union can be found on its website.⁴⁶

12. European Endowment for Democracy (EED)

PARTNER/FUNDING: Twenty-one states (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom) and the European Union; Canada supports EED through a special grant for Ukraine

PERIOD: Since 2013

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Financial support

The European Endowment for Democracy (EED), “supports local civic & political actors in their actions to improve democracy in their countries” and focuses specifically “on the ‘unsupported,’ who are not eligible for EU or other funding.”⁴⁷ It was established by the European Parliament in order to offer a new approach to human rights and democracy, for

instance by “encouraging social and political participation and protecting activists and journalists who, locally, do their utmost to ensure and expedite the launch of a democratic process, making justice more accessible.”⁴⁸ The EED works flexibly and does not focus on specific topics (hence, it does not focus on closing space specifically). The grants are provided for either projects or institutions and range from €10,000 to €150,000.⁴⁹ While initially focusing on countries in the EU neighborhood, the EED since 2015 has accepted requests from a wider range of countries like Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territories, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine; depending on future funding, the program might well expand.⁵⁰

More information on the European Endowment for Democracy and its grant program, as well as grant examples, the 2015 Annual Report, and an assessment of the two first years of the EED by Richard Youngs, can be found on the European Endowment for Democracy and the Carnegie Europe websites.⁵¹

13. European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

INITIATIVE BY: European Union

PERIOD: 2007–2013; in continuation 2014–2020

FUNDING: European Union

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Financial support,

46 European Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “Policy and Law Reform,” <http://ecnl.org/what-we-do/policy-and-law-reform/>.

47 European Endowment for Democracy, “About EED,” <https://www.democracyendowment.eu/about-eed/>.

48 European Parliament, “European Parliament Resolution of 9 July 2015 on the EU’s New Approach to Human Rights and Democracy—Evaluating the Activities of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) since Its Establishment,” July 9, 2015, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P8-TA-2015-0274&language=EN>.

49 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace—Carnegie Europe, “The European Endowment for Democracy: Two Years On,” <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/61190>.

50 Ibid.

51 European Endowment for Democracy “About EED”; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace—Carnegie Europe, “The European Endowment for Democracy: Two Years On”; European Endowment for Democracy, “We Support”; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace—Carnegie Europe, “The European Endowment for Democracy: Two Years On.”

technical assistance

The emergency fund for human rights defenders administered by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) offers direct small grants of up to €10,000 to human rights defenders or organizations at risk and provides funding for projects submitted by civil society organizations and international organizations.⁵² The fund also supports other projects and programs. The small grants may take the form of covering legal fees, medical expenses, and the evacuation of human rights defenders. Furthermore, grants are provided as support for the operations of human rights organizations, and are designated to “groups or individuals within civil society defending democracy as well as intergovernmental organizations that implement the international mechanisms for the protection of human rights.”⁵³ Most importantly, the aid of EIDHR can be granted without host government consent. Also, unregistered organizations (non-legal entities) can be supported by EIDHR.⁵⁴

More information on the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, its general funding possibilities, and its small grants, as well as results from the field, can be located on the European Commission on Democracy and Human Rights’ website.⁵⁵

14. Funders’ Initiative for Civil Society (FICS)

PARTNER: Ariadne: European Funders for Social Change and Human Rights, Human Rights Funders Network

PERIOD: 2017

FUNDING: American Jewish World Service, Arcus Foundation, Asfari Foundation, EuroMed Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Fund for Global Human Rights, Oak Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Sigrid Rausing Trust, Wallace Global Fund. Since FICS is a donor collaborative, funding may change over time and other funders may join and contribute to certain strands of activity.⁵⁶

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy, communication platform

The Funders’ Initiative for Civil Society (FICS) was founded after a workshop on closing space in order to develop a coherent and strategic response from the donor side.⁵⁷ Two reports on the Closing Space for Civil Society in 2015 and 2016 were issued; both aim at giving funders a “practical starting point” to challenge the negative trend of civil society restrictions.⁵⁸ FICS is mainly donor-driven and aspires to help private funders align their efforts against the trend of closing space by creating channels of communication between the network

52 European Commission on Democracy and Human Rights, “Apply for a Grant,” <http://www.eidhr.eu/funding>.

53 European Commission on Democracy and Human Rights, “Small Grants,” <http://www.eidhr.eu/side-panels/human-rights-defenders/small-grants>; European Commission on Democracy and Human Rights, “How we support Democracy and Human Rights,” <http://www.eidhr.eu/supporting-dandhrs/>.

54 European Commission on Democracy and Human Rights, “Apply for a Grant.”

55 European Commission on Democracy and Human Rights “How We Support Democracy and Human Rights”; European Commission on Democracy and Human Rights, “Apply for a Grant”; European Commission on Democracy and Human Rights, “Small Grants”; European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, “Assisting Endangered Activists,” http://www.eidhr.eu/files/dmfile/EIDHR2012_Fiche1_Peru.pdf.

56 Global Dialogue for Human Rights and Social Change, “Funders’ Initiative for Civil Society,” <http://global-dialogue.eu/funders-initiative-for-civil-society/>; Funders’ Initiative for Civil Society, “Introducing the Funders’ Initiative for Civil Society. Our Strategy,” <http://global-dialogue.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/FICS-Booklet.pdf>.

57 European Funders for Social Change and Human Rights, “Challenging the Closing Space for Civil Society: A Practical Starting Point for Funders,” http://www.ariadne-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Ariadne_ClosingSpaceReport-Final-Version.pdf; Global Dialogue for Human Rights and Social Change, “Funders’ Initiative for Civil Society.”

58 European Funders for Social Change and Human Rights, “Challenging the Closing Space for Civil Society: A Practical Starting Point for Funders,” http://www.ariadne-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Ariadne_ClosingSpaceReport-Final-Version.pdf; Global Dialogue for Human Rights and Social Change, “Funders’ Initiative for Civil Society.”

members as well as with state actors and international institutions.⁵⁹

More information on the Funders' Initiative for Civil Society, the Challenging the Closing Space for Civil Society Report 2016, and the Challenging the Closing Space for Civil Society Report 2015 can be obtained on the Ariadne Network website.⁶⁰

15. Fund for Global Human Rights (FGHR)

PROGRAM: Activism Under Threat

PERIOD: Since 2003

FUNDING: Ford Foundation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Oak Foundation amongst others (including private/anonymous funding)⁶¹

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Technical assistance, financial support, advocacy

The Fund for Global Human Rights (FGHR) focuses (through the program Activism Under Threat) on human rights defenders as well as human rights organizations that are restricted through legal and bureaucratic barriers (including foreign funding regulations). The initiative is not dedicated to closing space per se but fights against restrictions of human rights work more generally by offering technical assistance and allocating grants, as well as through advocacy.⁶² The Fund offers different types of grants for human rights defenders/organizations: regular grants (long-term resources), emergency grants (for

human rights organizations in danger/need), and donor-advised grants (as requested by individual or institutional donors in special focus countries).⁶³ The Fund currently has programs in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Burundi, Thailand, the Philippines, and Burma.⁶⁴

The Fund for Global Human Rights is part of the Donor Working Group on Cross-border Philanthropy (initiative number 9 in this document) that is hosted by the Ariadne Network and the International Human Rights Funders Group.

More information on the Fund for Global Human Rights, the program Activism Under Threat, the types of grants and funding criteria, and its funding and grant examples can be found on the Fund for Global Human Rights website.⁶⁵

16. Global Civil Society Legal Enabling Environment Project (LEEP II)

PRECEDING PROJECT: NGO Legal Enabling Environment Program (LEEP I)

IMPLEMENTED BY: International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL)

PERIOD: LEEP I: 2008-2013; LEEP II: 2013-2018

FUNDING: USAID/U.S. Government

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Technical Assistance

59 European Funders for Social Change and Human Rights, "Challenging the Closing Space for Civil Society: A Practical Starting Point for Funders"; Global Dialogue for Human Rights and Social Change, "Funders' Initiative for Civil Society."

60 European Funders for Social Change and Human Rights, "Challenging the Closing Space for Civil Society: A Practical Starting Point for Funders"; Global Dialogue for Human Rights and Social Change, "Funders' Initiative for Civil Society."

61 Fund for Global Human Rights, "Our Financials," <http://globalhumanrights.org/who-we-are/financials/>.

62 Fund for Global Human Rights, "Activism under Threat," <http://globalhumanrights.org/issues/activism-under-threat/>.

63 Fund for Global Human Rights, "Types of Grants," <http://globalhumanrights.org/grants/types-of-grant/>.

64 Fund for Global Human Rights, "Activism under Threat."

65 Fund for Global Human Rights, "Who We Are," <http://globalhumanrights.org/who-we-are/>; Fund for Global Human Rights, "Activism Under Threat"; Fund for Global Human Rights, "Types of Grants"; Fund for Global Human Rights, "Funding Criteria," <http://globalhumanrights.org/grants/funding-criteria/>; Fund for Global Human Rights, "Our Financials"; Fund for Global Human Rights, "Recent Grants," <http://globalhumanrights.org/grants/recent-grants/>.

The Global Civil Society Legal Enabling Environment Project (LEEP I & II) focuses on three interrelated areas of activity: (1) the project offers technical assistance to help civil society to respond to restrictive legislation or to extend enabling legislation; (2) it strengthens local capacity by offering a research fellowship program and by the launch of the Global Forum on Civil Society Law; and, finally (3) it conducts research on NGO legislation.⁶⁶ While LEEP I exclusively focused on the freedoms of association and assembly, the scope was broadened for LEEP II to include “the freedoms of expression, information and other human rights essential to the vibrant functioning of civil society.”⁶⁷ Apart from technical assistance, the project offers financial support to its partners within local civil society, training, and expert research in order to respond to the trend of closing spaces.⁶⁸

More information on the Civil Society Legal Enabling Environment Project in general and its extension as LEEP II, the Quarterly Programmatic Report of LEEP I, and the Fact Sheet of the U.S. Government: U.S. Support for Civil Society can be found on the ICNL website and the White House archives.⁶⁹

17. Global Non-Profit Organizations Coalition on FATF

PARTNER: Charity and Security Network (CSN), Human Security Collective (HSC) [with regard to the Non-Profit Platform on the FATF (see below), two additional partners are the European Center for Not for Profit Law and the European Foundation Center]

PERIOD: [no information]

FUNDING: [no information]

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy

The Global Non-Profit Organizations Coalition on FATF is a transnational coalition of NGOs that monitors and responds to restrictions of civil society related to the activities of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), in particular restrictions on funding for civil society due to the declared “vulnerability” of civil society to terrorist funding.⁷⁰ It seeks to highlight feedback on and reverse the consequences of the FATF’s policies on civil society, namely Recommendation 8.⁷¹ The engagement eventually shall “lead to a practical understanding of the impact of anti-terrorism financing measures on the non-profit sector, as well as increased capacities of non-profits in tackling issues of corruption, fraud, terrorism and other unlawful use of funds.”⁷² To this end, the Transnational Civil Society Working Group by CSN

66 International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “Global Programs,” <http://www.icnl.org/programs/global/index.html>.

67 International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “Expanding the Legal Enabling Environment Program,” October 30, 2014, <http://www.icnl.org/news/2014/30-Oct.html>.

68 The White House, “Fact Sheet: U.S. Support for Civil Society,” <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/23/fact-sheet-us-support-civil-society>.

69 International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “Global Programs”; International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “Expanding the Legal Enabling Environment Program,” <http://www.icnl.org/news/2014/30-Oct.html>; International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “The NGO Legal Enabling Environment Program (LEEP),” http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pdacp042.pdf; The White House, “FACT SHEET: U.S. Support for Civil Society.”

70 Charity and Security Network, “Transitional Civil Society Working Group on FATE,” <http://www.charityandsecurity.org/node/1005>.

71 Global NPO Coalition on FATE, “The Platform,” <http://fatfplatform.org/>.

72 Human Security Collective, “Financial Action Task Force: Engagement and Advocacy,” <http://www.hscollective.org/financial-action-task-force-engagement-advocacy/>.

and HSC established the Non-Profit Platform on the FATF that provides information on antiterrorist legislation, recommendations, and best practices.⁷³ Furthermore, CSN and HSC provide a platform for consultations with various stakeholders (CSOs, donors, FATF) to address the negative impact of legislation that aims at impeding the abuse of the non-profit sector for terrorist financing.

More information on the Transnational Civil Society Working Group, the engagement with the FATE, and the Non-Profit Platform on the FATF can be located on the Charity and Security Network, FATF Platform, and Human Security Collective websites.⁷⁴

18. Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN)

PROJECT: Working Group “Enabling Environment for Civil Society”

PARTICIPANTS: NGOs active in the Working Group: ACT Alliance, Amnesty International, Brot für die Welt, Copenhagen Initiative for Central America and Mexico, DEMAS, EuroMed Rights, European Partnership for Democracy, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, Front Line Defenders, Harm Reduction International, Human Rights House Foundation, Human Rights Watch, ILGA-Europe, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), International Partnership for Human Rights, Open Society Foundations, Protection International

PERIOD: Since 2004

FUNDING: [no information]

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy

The Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) is an informal platform of human rights and democracy NGOs at the EU level. It mainly focuses on advocacy toward European countries and aims at influencing EU human rights policies in general and of its member states in particular.⁷⁵ The HRDN’s working group Enabling Environment for Civil Society supports the EU in “its commitment to foster a dynamic, pluralistic and independent civil society and [its commitment] to meaningful and structured engagement with civil society.”⁷⁶ To this end, the HRDN developed a four-point framework to promote an enabling environment for civil society comprising the legal environment, policy and practice, funding and participation.⁷⁷ The HRDN, furthermore, co-organized the 17th EU-NGO Human Rights Forum on Promoting and Protecting Civil Society Space that resulted in a final report on that topic.

More information on the Human Rights and Democracy Network, the activities of the Working Group on an Enabling Environment for Civil Society, and the 17th Human Rights Forum can be obtained on the Human Rights and Democracy Network website.⁷⁸

19. Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund

PARTNER: Freedom House, CIVICUS, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Front Line Defenders, ICNL, People in Need, Swedish International Liberal Centre

PERIOD: Since 2011

⁷³ Global NPO Coalition on FATE, “The Platform.”

⁷⁴ Charity and Security Network, “Transitional Civil Society Working Group on FATF”; Human Security Collective, “Financial Action Task Force: Engagement and Advocacy”; Global NPO Coalition on FATE, “The Platform.”

⁷⁵ Human Rights and Democracy Network, “About Us,” <http://hrdn.eu/about-us/>.

⁷⁶ Human Rights and Democracy Network, “The Closing Space for Civil Society: A Rights-Based Approach for Action,” http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/AboutUs/CivilSociety/ReportHC/78_HRDN_%20Briefing%202014%20The%20Closing%20Space%20for%20Civil%20Society.pdf.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.; Human Rights and Democracy Network, “About Us”; United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, “17th EU-NGO Human Rights Forum,” December 28, 2015, <https://www.protecting-defenders.org/en/news/17th-eu-ngo-human-rights-forum>.

FUNDING: Funded by international donors, included in the Donor Steering Committee⁷⁹

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Financial support, advocacy

The Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund is a multilateral initiative that provides rapid response advocacy to respond to closing spaces as they arise (namely, the Lifeline Advocacy Grants) as well as short-term emergency financial assistance for CSOs under threat (namely, the Lifeline Emergency Assistance Fund).⁸⁰ Since 2011, support was provided to “over 879 CSOs in 97 countries with emergency assistance and rapid response advocacy grants.”⁸¹

The Lifeline Advocacy Grants enable CSOs to engage in fact-finding research and policy and legal analysis, to launch advocacy campaigns and assist in legal disputes, as well as to initiate joint advocacy campaigns and capacity building in particular countries. It is mainly dedicated to organizations that are victims of repressive civil society legislation together with direct (governmental) attacks on civil society. Lifeline describes the grants as highly flexible—they are short-term (1 to 3 months, 6 months maximum) and should only address urgent threats or temporary opportunities.⁸² The advocacy grants are provided by all Lifeline partners except Front Line Defenders. Applications for advocacy grants must be directed at a Lifeline partner. The Lifeline Emergency Assistance, in comparison, focuses more on physical threats to civil society activists and organizations, namely when there are

“significant security risks, loss of property or equipment, injury or imprisonment of staff, and/or prosecution or other legal proceedings” for a CSO and its staff members.⁸³ The grants can cover security and medical expenses, costs for legal representation, together with spending for trial monitoring, prison visits and temporary relocation. The emergency grants are only provided by Freedom and Front Line Defenders (initiative number 10 in this document).

More information on the Lifeline Assistance Fund for Embattled Civil Society Organizations in general, the Advocacy Grants, the Emergency Assistance Grants, and the CIVICUS Crisis Response Fund in particular can be found on the Freedom House and CIVICUS’s websites.⁸⁴

20. MOVEMENTS.org

ADMINISTERED BY: Advancing Human Rights

PARTNER: MOVEMENTS partners with different NGOs to provide specific services to activists in need.⁸⁵

PERIOD: [differing information – Carothers 2015 says that the Platform was founded in 2014, while two New York Times articles speak of 2007 (Bornstein 2015) and 2008 (Shane 2012)]

FUNDING: Grant-based funding (by private funders)

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Crowdsourcing (technical and legal assistance)

MOVEMENTS.org is an online platform of the NGO Advancing Human Rights that offers a platform

79 The Donor Steering Committee is composed of 18 governments and two foundations, namely Australia, Benin, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mongolia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uruguay, as well as the Ford Foundation and the MacArthur Foundation. The fund has an annual budget of between \$2 million and \$3 million.

80 Freedom House, “Lifeline: Assistance Fund for Embattled Civil Society Organizations,” <https://freedomhouse.org/program/lifeline>.

81 CIVICUS, “Crisis Response Fund,” <http://www.civicus.org/index.php/get-involved/get-support/crisis-response-fund>.

82 Lifeline, “Advocacy Grants,” <https://www.csolifeline.org/advocacy-grants>.

83 Freedom House, “Lifeline: Assistance Fund for Embattled Civil Society Organizations.”

84 Freedom House, “Lifeline: Assistance Fund for Embattled Civil Society Organizations”; Lifeline, “Advocacy Grants”; Lifeline, “Emergency Assistance,” <https://www.csolifeline.org/emergency-assistance>; CIVICUS, “Crisis Response Fund.”

85 Movements, “Our Partners,” <https://www.movements.org/en/movements/our-partners/>

for crowdsourcing for human rights defenders in closed space. Activists in closed spaces may anonymously request help (advice, contacts, training, services, knowledge, but also equipment) for specific human rights abuses, while the activists on the other side can either reply to offers or offer their skills themselves.⁸⁶

More information can be located on MOVEMENTS.org.⁸⁷

21. Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (OBS)

PARTNER: International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), World Organization Against Torture (OMCT)

PERIOD: Since 1997

FUNDING: [no information]⁸⁸

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Technical assistance, advocacy, financial support

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (OBS) was created by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) and is based on their respective NGO networks.⁸⁹ Apart from research and collection of information

(the Observatory publishes an annual report), OBS established a system of urgent interventions that focuses on advocacy through urgent appeals, press releases, and letters to authorities. Furthermore, the initiative offers technical and material assistance to human rights defenders and human rights organizations, as well as sends out fact-finding missions, judicial observations, and support missions within countries.⁹⁰ OMCT through the Observatory grants material and financial support to human rights defenders and local human rights organizations at risk. The material assistance and emergency support may be dedicated to “digital security; communications; capacity building in security; secure transportation; legal support; social assistance (including family support); support to temporary relocation where necessary; urgent monitoring, reporting and advocacy; etc.”⁹¹ Financial support, on the other hand, is intended to help NGOs strengthen and sustain sensitive human rights work.⁹²

More information on the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, human rights defenders, and in particular the financial support to human rights defenders and local human rights

86 Movements.org in their FAQ explains that “We use Freedom House’s list of ‘Not Free’ and ‘Partially Free’ countries. Of these, we are currently focusing on those countries with populations over 5 million. Given limited resources, we have chosen to focus on the largest dictatorships. As Movements expands, we look forward to helping smaller unfree nations. We focus on closed societies because citizens of democracies have means to redress their human rights problems through voting, free speech, independent judiciaries, and a free press.” See: Movements, “Acknowledgments,” <https://www.movements.org/en/movements/about-movements/acknowledgment/>.

87 “Ibid.; Movements, “Our Partners”; David Bornstein, “Crowdsourcing for Human Rights,” *New York Times*, October 2, 2015, https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/10/02/guiding-human-rights-victims-toward-help/?smid=tw-nytopinion&smtyp=cur&_r=2; Scott Shane, “Groups to Help Online Activists in Authoritarian Countries,” *New York Times*, June 12, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/12/world/americas/groups-to-aid-online-activists-in-authoritarian-countries.html>.

88 The 2013 report was supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Fondation de France, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF), the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Paris City Hall, the Sigrid Rausing Trust, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

89 World Organization Against Torture, “The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights,” <http://www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/observatory/>.

90 Ibid.

91 Human Rights Defenders,” World Organization Against Torture, <http://www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/>.

92 Ibid.

organizations can be obtained on the World Organization Against Torture website.⁹³

22. Open Government Partnership (OGP)

PARTICIPANTS: Signed by 75 countries

PERIOD: Since 2011

FUNDING: Grant-based funding by governments and foundations; exhaustive list on financial information about the OGP.⁹⁴

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy, technical assistance

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a global alliance between governments and civil society aimed at making governments “more transparent, more accountable, and more responsive to their own citizens, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of governance, as well as the quality of services that citizens receive.”⁹⁵ It comprises states that sign the Open Government Declaration—thereby committing to “foster a global culture of open government that empowers and delivers for citizens, and advances the ideals of open and participatory 21st century government”—and develop concrete Open Government National Action Plans (NAP), designed and implemented in close consultation with their citizens.⁹⁶

Encouraged by its civil society members, in 2014 the OGP adopted a Response Policy to address clos-

ing spaces, in particular “to deal with concerns raised about civic space in participating countries,” and assist countries in creating an enabling environment for collaboration between governments and civil society.⁹⁷ The Response Policy is activated when a letter of concern (that may be issued by civil society or other relevant actors) regarding critical situations (e.g., introduction of restrictive legislation or policies) is submitted to the OGP Steering Committee or Support Unit. To date, five countries have been under Response Policy review, Turkey, Australia, Israel, Hungary, and Azerbaijan. In May 2016, Azerbaijan was declared “inactive,” after it did not tackle issues of concern raised by the complaint letter.⁹⁸ Nonetheless, while the Response Policy and the case of Azerbaijan certainly are advancements in the OGP’s commitment to an enabling environment, Carothers (2015) points to the fact that, until now, it is unclear “what will be the effects of negative findings by the OGP in such cases on the behavior of the offending governments.”⁹⁹

The Open Government Partnership has also cooperated with the ICNL to draft a new chapter of the Open Governance Guide, which is a key source of information for OGP member states across a range of issues. With respect to the topic of citizen engagement, the guide recommends to “reform legislation to create an enabling environment for civil society organizations” referring to the International Principles Protecting

93 Ibid.; World Organization Against Torture, “The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights”; World Organization Against Torture, “Financial Support To Human Rights Defenders and Local Human Rights Organization,” <http://www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/financial-support/>.

94 Open Government Partnership, “Finances and Budget,” <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-ogp/legal-and-financial/finances-and-budget>.

95 Open Government Partnership, “Mission and Strategy,” <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/mission-and-strategy>.

96 Open Government Partnership, “Open Government Declaration,” <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/open-government-declaration>.

97 Open Government Partnership, “Response Policy,” <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/response-policy>.

98 Open Government Partnership, “Resolution of the OGP Steering Committee Regarding the Status of the Government of Azerbaijan in OGP, May 4th, 2016, Cape Town, South Africa,” <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/attachments/OGPSteeringCommitteeResolutiononAzerbaijan-2.pdf>.

99 Carothers, “The Closing Space Challenge: How Are Funders Responding?”

Civil Society jointly developed by the ICNL and the World Movement for Democracy.¹⁰⁰

More information on this initiative can be located on the Open Government Partnership website.¹⁰¹

23. Prague Civil Society Centre

PARTICIPANTS: People in Need (Czech Republic), Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Human Rights House Foundation

PERIOD: Since 2015

FUNDING: Mott Foundation, Oak Foundation, Governments of the United States of America, Sweden, and the Czech Republic

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Financial support, technical assistance

The Prague Civil Society Centre was launched as a response to an increasingly restrictive environment for civil society in Russia. The organization supports the development of independent civil society in Russia as well as other countries in Eastern Europe (former Soviet Union) with the aim of empowering and connecting civil society in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and to connect civil society within and across borders.¹⁰² To this end, the Prague Civil Society Centre serves as a civil society hub that—based on a broad definition of civil society—does not only include human rights organizations, but also artists, journalists, bloggers, etc. The Prague Civil Society Centre supports organizations in campaigning for their goals in the best way possible.¹⁰³

Furthermore, the Prague Civil Society Centre offers grants “to support projects which help civil society connect with communities, build lasting relationships and push for social change” and that, among others, can be used for democracy support, human rights and legal empowerment.¹⁰⁴

More information on the Prague Civil Society Centre, its grant programs, and its technical assistance programs can be found on its website.¹⁰⁵

24. United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

INITIATIVE BY: United Nations

PERIOD: Since 2010

FUNDING: United Nations

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy

The special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association monitors and reports on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association and specific country situations globally.¹⁰⁶ The special rapporteur’s mandate includes the gathering of information (fact-finding country visits), collaboration with governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, the contribution of technical assistance or advisory services by the Office of the High Commissioner, and, finally, reporting on violations (urgent appeals and allegation letters). The special rapporteur released a report on the rights

100 World Movement for Democracy, “International Principles Protecting Civil Society,” <http://www.defendingcivilsociety.org/en/index.php/principles>; Open Government Guide, “Welcome to the Open Gov Guide,” <http://www.opengovguide.com/>.

101 Open Government Partnership “Response Policy”; Open Government Guide, “Welcome to the Open Gov Guide.”

102 Prague Civil Society Centre, “Supporting and Empowering Civil Society,” <http://praguecivilsociety.org/>.

103 Prague Civil Society, “Technology & Innovation Labs,” <http://praguecivilsociety.org/innovation-communication/technology-innovation-labs/>.

104 Prague Civil Society, “Grants,” <http://praguecivilsociety.org/grants/>.

105 Prague Civil Society Centre, “Supporting and Empowering Civil Society”; Prague Civil Society “Grants”; Prague Civil Society, “Technology & Innovation Labs.”

106 United Nations Human Rights | Office of the High Commissioner, “Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association,” <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/AssemblyAssociation/Pages/SRFreedomAssemblyAssociationIndex.aspx>.

to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and the right to access financial resources in 2013.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the special rapporteur leads a number of regional dialogues among civic activists and governments on foreign funding restrictions in cooperation with the Community of Democracies.

More information on the mandate of the special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association as well as the report of special rapporteur on the right to access financial resources can be located on the website of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner.¹⁰⁸

25. USAID: Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance

DIVISION: Civil Society and Media (CSM) Division

PERIOD: [*the Civil Society and Media (CSM) Division forms part of the Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance that was launched in 2012*]

FUNDING: U.S. Government

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Financial support, technical assistance

USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG Center) is not an initiative per se but an office of USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance.

While it funds several initiatives, it is not eligible for general funding requests by civil society. Within the DRG Center, the Civil Society and Media (CSM) Division deals with closing space by designing “targeted activities that effectively support local, grass-roots civil-society organizations and independent media.”¹⁰⁹ USAID supports both civil society organizations in their advocacy efforts and more generally in the creation of legal and regulatory frameworks for an enabling environment in more restrictive environments. To this end, USAID developed approaches to supporting civil society in restrictive environments in its 2013 Strategy, as well as a Guidance on Programming in Closed Spaces.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, USAID designed of Best Practices paper “gleaned from USAID’s partnerships with civil society, likeminded governments, and multilateral organizations, highlighting effective tools and strategies for safeguarding and expanding civic space.”¹¹¹ Support in cases of closing space include technical and legal assistance and guidance for CSOs to help them dialogue with governments as well as “facilitate CSO advocacy in regional forums or in the U.S” to sustain diplomatic pressure.¹¹² To assess the enabling environment for civil society of a country (and, thus, the potential urgency of an intervention), USAID developed the CSO Sustainability Index that until now comprises 48 countries.¹¹³

107 United Nations Human Rights | Office of the High Commissioner, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association, Maina Kiai,” http://freemovement.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/A_HRC_23.39_EN-annual-report-April-2013.pdf.

108 United Nations Human Rights | Office of the High Commissioner, “Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association”; United Nations Human Rights | Office of the High Commissioner, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association, Maina Kiai.”

109 U.S. Agency for International Development, “Supporting Vibrant Civil Society & Independent Media,” <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/democracy-human-rights-and-governance/supporting-vibrant-civil-society-independent-media>.

110 U.S. Agency for International Development, “USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance,” https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/USAID%20DRG_%20final%20final%206-24%203%20%281%29.pdf; U.S. Agency for International Development, “USAID Guidance on Programming in Closed Spaces,” <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/USAID%20Guidance%20on%20Programming%20in%20Closed%20Spaces%20Ident.pdf>.

111 U.S. Agency for International Development, “Stand with Civil Society: Best Practices,” http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PBAAE863.pdf.

112 Ibid.

113 U.S. Agency for International Development, “CSO Sustainability Index Methodology,” <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/democracy-human-rights-and-governance/cso-sustainability-index-methodology>.

More information on USAID’s Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, the Supporting Vibrant Civil Society and Independent Media approach and the CSO Sustainability Index, as well as its 2013 Strategy, its Guidance on Programming in Closed Spaces, and the Best Practices, can be obtained on USAID’s website.¹¹⁴

26. U.S. Department of State: Human Rights & Democracy Fund (HRDF)

ADMINISTERED BY: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL)

PROGRAM: Human Rights & Democracy Fund (HRDF)

PERIOD: Established in 1998

FUNDING: U.S. government (over \$207 million since 2010)

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Financial support

The Human Rights and Democracy Fund is used by the U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) to monitor and promote human rights and democracy worldwide. The program is designed to flexibly react to threats to democratization and major human rights abuses in closing or closed spaces. According to its description, HRDF programs “enable the U.S. to minimize human rights abuses, support democracy activists worldwide, open political space in struggling or nascent democracies and authoritarian regimes, and bring positive transnational change.”¹¹⁵ The grants are is-

sued through a competitive process and published as calls for proposals that include specific target countries and topics.¹¹⁶

Apart from the Human Rights & Democracy Fund, DRL supports a global human rights initiative, and supports the Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund (initiative number 20 in this document).¹¹⁷

More information on the U.S. Department of State: Human Rights & Democracy Fund, specialized funds supported by the DRL, Call for Proposals, and the Grants Process Overview can be found on the U.S. Department of State’s website.¹¹⁸

27. U.S. White House: Stand with Civil Society

INITIATIVE OF: U.S. government

PERIOD: Launched in September 2013

FUNDING: U.S. government

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy, financial support

In 2013, President Obama launched the global initiative Stand with Civil Society during a High Level Event on Supporting Civil Society on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly “to improve the policy environment for CSOs around the world, strengthen institutions that work to protect civil society, and coordinate diplomatic action to push back against restrictive laws.”¹¹⁹ The initiative is a coordinated effort in partnership with other governments as well as multilat-

114 U.S. Agency for International Development, “User’s Guide to Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Programming,” https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/DRG_Users_Guide_2.3.2017_FINAL.pdf; U.S. Agency for International Development, “Supporting Vibrant Civil Society & Independent Media”; U.S. Agency for International Development “CSO Sustainability Index Methodology”; U.S. Agency for International Development, “USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance”; U.S. Agency for International Development, “USAID Guidance on Programming in Closed Spaces”; U.S. Agency for International Development, “Stand with Civil Society: Best Practices.”

115 U.S. Department of State, “DRL Programs,” <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/index.htm>.

116 U.S. Department of State, “Grants Process Overview,” <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c23187.htm>.

117 U.S. Department of State, “Specialized Funds,” <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c46943.htm>.

118 U.S. Department of State, “DRL Programs”; U.S. Department of State, “Specialized Funds”; U.S. Department of State, “Open Calls for Statements of Interest / Requests for Proposals,” <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/p/c12302.htm>; U.S. Department of State, “Grants Process Overview.”

119 The White House, “Fact Sheet: U.S. Support for Civil Society,” September 23, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/23/fact-sheet-us-support-civil-society>.

eral initiatives. The initiative included diplomatic and policy engagement, as well as programmatic support to civil society. Stand with Civil Society resulted in the launch of the Civil Society Innovation Initiative (initiative number 3 in this document), increase funding for the Community of Democracies (initiative number 6 in this document) and the Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund, and the expansion of the Global Civil Society Legal Enabling Environment Project (initiative number 17 in this document).¹²⁰

The Stand with Civil Society initiative pursues three lines of efforts:

1. Promoting laws, policies, and practices that foster a supportive environment for civil society in accordance with international norms;
2. Coordinating multilateral, diplomatic pressure to push back against undue restrictions on civil society;
3. Identifying innovative ways of providing technical, financial, and logistical support to promote a transparent and vibrant civil society.¹²¹

The promotion of an enabling environment for civil society is goal four within the strategic plan of the U.S. Department of State and USAID and was embedded in policy through a Presidential Memorandum on Deepening U.S. Government Efforts to Collaborate with and Strengthen Civil Society.¹²²

More information on the Stand with Civil Society Initiative and U.S. Support for Civil Society more

generally can be located on ICNL and the Obama White House archives' websites.¹²³

28. World Movement for Democracy (WMD)

PROGRAM: Defending Civil Society

PARTNER: World Movement for Democracy with support by the World Movement for Democracy's Secretariat at the National Endowment for Democracy and the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law.

PERIOD: since 1999 (the Defending Civil Society project since 2007)

FUNDING: [not specified]

RESPONSES/ACTIVITIES: Advocacy, technical assistance

The World Movement for Democracy (WMD) brings together individuals, organizations, and networks aimed at promoting, strengthening, and defending democracy. The project Defending Civil Society was launched in 2007 to develop a unified response to the Backlash Against Democracy Assistance observed by the NED in 2006.¹²⁴ Besides the publication of different reports (the Defending Civil Society reports), the project is dedicated to the development of strategies to counter the negative trend of closing spaces and to the enhancement of civic space by supporting CSOs in their efforts to reform restrictive legislation.¹²⁵ Furthermore, the initiative provides information for organizations and activists on how to engage in NGO law reform processes and, more specifically, information about restrictions on the access of funding and how to respond to those restrictions.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.; U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Department of State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan FY2014-2017," March 17, 2014, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/223997.pdf>.

¹²³ International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, "Obama: Expanded Multilateral Effort Will Support Civil Society"; The White House, "Fact Sheet: U.S. Support for Civil Society."

¹²⁴ National Endowment for Democracy, "World Movement for Democracy," http://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/World_Movement_09.pdf.

¹²⁵ World Movement for Democracy, "Defending Civil Society," <http://www.defendingcivilsociety.org/en/index.php/home>.

¹²⁶ Ibid.; World Movement for Democracy, "Access to Resources Initiative," <http://www.movedemocracy.org/civil-society-right-access-resources>.

More information on the World Movement for Democracy, the Defending Civil Society project, its Defending Civil Society Toolkit, and the Civil Society and the Rights to Access Resource initiative can be located on the National Endowment for Democracy and World Movement for Democracy’s websites.¹²⁷

127 National Endowment for Democracy, “World Movement for Democracy”; World Movement for Democracy, “Defending Civil Society,” <http://www.movedemocracy.org/defending-civil-society-project> ; World Movement for Democracy “Defending Civil Society”; World Movement for Democracy “Access to Resources Initiative.”



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