

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Front Line Defenders welcomes 145 human rights defenders from 95 countries to Dublin for 7th Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders

Today the Tanaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr Eamon Gilmore TD, joined Front Line Defenders in Dublin Castle for the formal opening of the 7th Dublin Platform for Human Rights Defenders.

In his key-note address to the 145 human rights defenders who had travelled from 95 countries to attend the Dublin Platform, Mr Gilmore emphasised the important role of human rights defenders, whose work is vital to the creation of more just and equal societies. He also reiterated the Irish Government's commitment to continue working for the security and protection of human rights defenders at risk .

Speaking at the opening session, Front Line Defenders founder and Executive Director, Mary Lawlor said, "Human rights defenders painstakingly and relentlessly fight injustice with determination mixed with hope. Their work is legitimate, their spirit and resilience unshakable and they are entitled to state protection against attack."

All of the human rights defenders taking part in the Dublin Platform have been invited because of the risks they face as a result of their peaceful work defending the rights of others.

Speaking from Dublin, Canadian human rights defender, Dr. Cindy Blackstock said, "To be a human rights defender is to have the moral courage to peacefully stand up for the right thing when those in power want you to sit down. To be among the 145 human rights defenders is to be reminded of the best of the human spirit; to be better equipped to work in the community of others for a better world for indigenous children."

The Dublin Platform provides a unique opportunity and a safe space in which human rights defenders, many of whom can not speak freely in their own country, can share experiences, learn from each other and come up with new and more effective strategies for their security and protection.

Denis O'Brien, Chairman and co-founder of Front Line Defenders, said "it is a great joy, indeed a privilege, for me to welcome you all today to the 7th Dublin Platform. The Dublin Platform is a celebration of courage, of brave people, people like you, who persist in fighting the good fight, despite the odds stacked against you."

This year's Dublin Platform will include a focus on digital security with one day of training followed by one-to-one digital security clinics. There will also be sessions on the specific risks faced by women human rights defenders and security and protection for those working in the context of armed conflict.

For further information or to arrange one-to-one interviews with any of the participants, please contact:

Jim Loughran Head of Media and Communications, Front Line Defenders

Tel +353 1 212 37 50 Mobile +353 (0)87 231 60 49 SKYPE jim.frontline

The Front Line Defenders Media team at media@frontlinedefenders.org