

Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Newsletter



Thiad



Delphine Djiraiye



Marino Córdoba



Ekaterine Popkhadze



Charles Mung'anyi



Ilya Lebedev



Shafiq Nadeem



Renato



A.K.M.S.



2013–2014



Front row (l-r): Librarian Tim Myers, program assistant Marlena Papavaritis, program assistant Ashley Walburn, and program assistant Hainer Sibrian. Back row (l-r): program officer Jessica Ludwig, manager Zexxes Spencer, senior director Sally Blair, executive director Christopher Walker, senior research and conferences officer Melissa Aten, vice president Marc F. Plattner, and research associate Hilary Collins. (Not pictured: research associate Sarah Amin.)

Dear Friends,

This *Newsletter* offers eloquent testimony to the work of our Reagan-Fascell, Visiting, and Atlas Corps–Hurford Youth Fellows, including activists, journalists, and scholars from Bangladesh, Brazil, Burma, Chad, China, Colombia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Hungary, Jordan, Nepal, Pakistan, Senegal, South Sudan, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe. Prominent themes include the role of the arts in promoting democracy; judicial independence and legal recourse in defense of human rights; and the media. The Euromaidan and its aftermath inspired hope and subsequent alarm for Ukraine; violence in South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Pakistan caused ongoing concern; yet our fellows brought messages of strength and solidarity, reminding us that the spirit of democracy is alive and well around the world.

At this time of embattlement on many fronts, we pay tribute to the extraordinary courage of men and women who stand up despite threats, imprisonment, and exile to continue to press for democracy and human rights in their countries and regions. See page 23 to learn more about how the Reagan-Fascell program offers timely and specialized support for these “democrats at risk,” through emergency fellowships and increased cooperation with counterpart organizations, such as Freedom House and Scholars at Risk. This effort, led by Zexxes Spencer and Marlena Papavaritis, is a vital part of our work.

Sincerely,

Sally Blair
Sally Blair

Senior Director, Fellowship Programs

Inside This Issue

2014–2015 Fellows.....	3
2013–2014 Reagan-Fascell Fellows:	
AFRICA:	
Delphine Djiraibe.....	4
Merera Gudina Jefi.....	5
Charles Mangongera	6
Cheikh Oumar Toure (Thiat).....	7
ASIA:	
Jitman Basnet.....	8
Myo Aung Htwe.....	9
Shahid Nadeem	10
A. K. M. Nasim.....	11
Sabir Nazar.....	14
Guozhen Xiao.....	15
EURASIA:	
Ekaterine Popkhadze.....	16
EUROPE:	
Gábor Halmái.....	17
Sergii Leshchenko.....	18
LATIN AMERICA:	
Marino Córdoba.....	19
Maria Clara R. M. do Prado.....	20
Renato Lanfranchi.....	21
2013–2014 Atlas Corps–Hurford Youth Fellows:	
Alimure Ali.....	22
William Lukudu.....	22
Research Associates and Interns.....	22
“Democrats at Risk”.....	23

This *Newsletter* was produced by Zexxes Spencer, Virginia Cady, and Marlena Papavaritis, with contributions from Sally Blair. Opinions expressed herein are those of the fellows and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Endowment or its staff.

Pictured on the cover are NED’s 2013–2014 Fellows. From left to right—top row: Thiat, Myo Aung Htwe, Delphine Djiraibe, and Sabir Nazar; second row: Marino Córdoba, Ekaterine Popkhadze, Charles Mangongera, and Sergii Leshchenko; third row: Maria Clara R. M. do Prado, Merera Gudina Jefi, Gábor Halmái, and Guozhen Xiao; fourth row: Shahid Nadeem, Renato Lanfranchi, A. K. M. Nasim, and Jitman Basnet.

2014–2015 FELLOWS

Fall 2014

Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows

Ms. Maliha AlShehab (Saudi Arabia)

Saudi Women: Status, Outlook, and Roadmap

Ms. Zin Mar Aung (Burma)

Promoting Women's Political Empowerment in Burma

Mr. Umed Babakhanov (Tajikistan)

*Evolution of Political Islam in Tajikistan:
From the Trenches to the Parliament—and Back?*

Mr. Tabish Forugh (Afghanistan)

Strengthening Election Management Bodies in Afghanistan

Dr. Altay Goyushov (Azerbaijan)

*Secularism and Religion in Azerbaijan: Lessons from the
First Azerbaijani Republic of 1918–1920*

Mr. Arthur Gwagwa (Zimbabwe)

*How Civil Society Engagement Can
Strengthen Democracy in Zimbabwe*

Ms. N'yella Rogers (Sierra Leone)

*Harnessing Social Media to Combat Corruption
in Sierra Leone*

Dr. Negaso Solan (Ethiopia)

*The Role of Democracy in Building a Multi-Ethnic State:
The Case of Ethiopia*

Dr. Cu Huy Ha Vu (Vietnam)

Reflections on Freedom and Democracy in Vietnam



Visiting Fellows

Dr. Leonid Gozman (Russia)

*Social Entrepreneurship as a Way of
Overcoming Russia's Social and Political Crisis*

Spring 2015

Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows

Prof. Rut Diamint (Argentina)

*International Security and the Political Use of the Military
in Latin America*

Dr. Dmitry Dubrovsky (Russia)

*Experts, Anti-Extremism Legislation, and
Threats to Civil Liberties in Russia*

Ms. Lily Gomes (Bangladesh)

*Strengthening Democracy in Bangladesh through Women's
Participation in Ready-Made Garment Industries*

Ms. Farahnaz Ispahani (Pakistan)

Women's Political Participation in the Muslim World

Mr. Pepe Julian Onziema (Uganda)

*Enhancing Participatory Democracy and Respect for
Human Rights by Taking Uganda's Constitution
to the Grassroots*

Mr. Tidiani Togola (Mali)

*Developing ICT Solutions that Empower Local
Organizations to Observe Elections*



Hurford Youth Fellows

Ms. Saadat Baigazieva (Kyrgyzstan)

Building Inclusive Youth-Led Movements

Mr. Mohammad Sayed Madadi (Afghanistan)

*Promoting Democracy and Good Governance through
Accountability and Transparency*

Mr. Rami Soud (Jordan)

The Role of Youth in Social Change

2013–2014 REAGAN-FASCELL DEMOCRACY FELLOWS



Ms. Delphine Djiraibe is a human rights lawyer at the Public Interest Law Center in N'djamena who serves on the international team of lawyers prosecuting the Hissen Habré case in Senegal. During her fellowship, she explored issues of transitional justice and researched pro bono mechanisms to improve equal access to legal services in Chad. On June 19, 2014, Delphine delivered a presentation at NED, “How to Bring a Dictator to Justice: The Hissen Habré Trial,” which reflected upon lessons learned during the legal process and provided recommendations for African countries to hold perpetrators of human rights violations accountable. At the end of her fellowship, Delphine returned home to continue working on the Habré case and to share new ideas with colleagues at the Public Interest Law Center and beyond.

AFRICA

Ms. Delphine Djiraibe (Chad)

“Access to Justice and Democracy: The Case of Chad”
March–July 2014 | ddjiraibe@hotmail.com

“**F**or more than two decades, an international team of human rights defenders has worked tirelessly within a hostile environment to bring litigation against Hissen Habré, Chad’s former president, who cultivated a bloody dictatorship from 1982 until 1990. In 2013, the Extraordinary African Chambers responded to these atrocities by accusing Habré, now in exile in Senegal, of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and torture.

It is our hope that the Habré case will set a precedent for how to hold perpetrators accountable and demand compensation for victims. The case will not only serve to address past injustices and deter future offenders, but will also pave the path toward national reconciliation. Ultimately, the trial will serve to strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights in Chad. **The Habré case shows the importance of cooperation among civil society organizations and the potential for partnerships between international and national groups.** It illustrates the vital need to champion the rights of the oppressed and provide legal services to the poor. Above all, the case is a testament to the Chadian people’s quest for justice and the power of individual courage, patience, faith, and sacrifice. ”



—Delphine Djiraibe, June 19, 2014

On April 17, 2014, Delphine spoke to a graduate class at Columbia University about the role of women in Chad’s political and economic development. Drawing on her experiences as a human rights lawyer, she discussed her efforts to facilitate equal access to justice for low-income groups and her work to enhance accountability within Chad’s extractive industries.



Dr. Merera Gudina Jefi (Ethiopia)

“Ethiopia’s Democratic Transition: Opposition Politics and the Role of the Diaspora”

March–August 2014 | mererag@yahoo.com

“When the Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) took power in 1991, the regime promised to usher in an era of ethnic equality and multiparty democracy. More than twenty years and several elections later, EPRDF leaders are still talking about the transformation of the country even as they institutionalize a *de facto* one-party state. Through its practice of arbitrary detentions, land-grabbing, and media restrictions, Ethiopia’s ruling regime has exacerbated ethnic divisions and narrowed political space. Meanwhile, its Leninist-Maoist ideology has resulted in the fusion of party and state and an undermining of the separation of powers.

For its part, Ethiopia’s massive opposition, already fragmented along political and ethnic lines, is further divided by a diaspora that provides critical resources to groups with less accommodative agendas. **In uniting against the state, opposition forces at home and abroad must forge and maintain a strong alliance working toward a common democratic goal.** The Ethiopian government must abide by its own declarations—to which the international community should hold it accountable—to establish a genuine federalism ensuring the equality and fair representation of all ethnic groups.”

—Merera Gudina Jefi, July 10, 2014

On August 5 and 6, 2014, Merera attended the African Civil Society Conference, “Toward an Action Program for Democracy,” which coincided with the U.S.-Africa Summit. He participated in the election panel, where he shared his views on challenges facing free and fair elections in Africa.



Dr. Merera Gudina Jefi is associate professor of political science and international relations at Addis Ababa University. A former member of the Ethiopian parliament, he now leads two opposition groups, the Oromo Federalist Congress and the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum. During his fellowship, Merera explored opposition politics, political polarization, and the role of the diaspora in facilitating democratization in Ethiopia. He also participated in debates and conferences on methods to forge alliances within the fractured opposition. On July 10, 2014, he delivered a presentation at NED entitled “Ethiopia’s Democratic Transition: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back.” Following his fellowship, Merera returned to Ethiopia to resume his university position and to help prepare for regional and national elections.

AFRICA



Mr. Charles Mangongera is director of policy and research at the Movement for Democratic Change, a national, pro-democracy political party in Zimbabwe. During his fellowship, Charles explored the role of the military in supplanting Zimbabwe’s democratic transition. On January 15, 2014, he delivered a presentation at NED entitled “Zimbabwe’s Military and the Prospects for Democratic Reform,” which investigated the entrenchment of the military in key policy-making institutions and posited several future scenarios. He also published “A New Twilight in Zimbabwe? The Military vs. Democracy,” in the March 2014 issue of the *Journal of Democracy* (see box). At the conclusion of his fellowship, Charles returned to Zimbabwe to present his recommendations on security sector reform to key stakeholders.

AFRICA

Mr. Charles Mangongera (Zimbabwe)

“The Military & Zimbabwe’s Blocked Transition to Democracy”
 October 2013–February 2014 | cmangongera@gmail.com

“Since 2000, the military has played an increasingly prominent role in undermining democracy in Zimbabwe. As President Robert Mugabe has gradually lost his authoritarian grip on the state in the face of growing opposition, the military has become deeply entrenched in economic and political affairs, blocking the country’s transition to democracy through violent repression and militarization of key state institutions. Following the disputed July 2013 election, which marked the end of the government of national unity between ZANU (PF) and the MDC, Zimbabwe has experienced rapid economic and political regression. The economy is in a tailspin, and, as both domestic and foreign investment continue to dwindle, citizens bear the brunt of joblessness and the collapse of social services.



Zimbabwe is in urgent need of fundamental reform of state institutions, allowing citizens a voice in electing a government of their choosing. At 90 years of age, Mugabe cannot stay at the helm forever. **The post-Mugabe period will present an opportunity to turn the corner, but this can only happen if the men and women in uniform retreat to the barracks and let Zimbabweans determine the future of their country.** For this reason, it is timely to initiate political dialogue towards a serious agenda for security sector reform.”

—Charles Mangongera, January 15, 2014

Charles authored an article, “A New Twilight in Zimbabwe? The Military vs. Democracy,” which appeared in the March 2014 issue of the *Journal of Democracy*. The article examines the role of the military in hindering Zimbabwe’s democratic transition.



Thiat (Mr. Cheikh Oumar Toure) (Senegal)

“100 Percent Democracy by Youth”

October 2013–February 2014 | thiatkeurgui@yahoo.fr

“In recent years, protests in Africa have increased as youth across the continent voice frustration with their governments. Many young people see their countries’ leadership as corrupt and lacking credibility. **It’s clear that Africa is in need of strong institutions, not strong men. It is also in need of a**



robust civil society. How can young people make meaningful contributions to their societies? Africa’s youth population is large, energetic, and determined. This energy must be harnessed for good—to promote a ‘new type’ of African citizen and build strong democracies.

An emerging generation of activists is using hip hop to speak out about issues affecting their countries. Hip hop has taken on a new importance around the world as youth utilize the musical genre as a vehicle to address their grievances on a local, national, and even international scale. We see this when young Africans use hip hop to describe the oppressive conditions they experience and to speak out about the injustice of their governments. The Y’en a Marre movement in Senegal illustrates that hip hop can be a tool to organize and call for political reform. As such, hip hop can also build connections among various youth groups across Africa working toward democratic change. ”

—Thiat, January 30, 2014



On March 30, 2014, Thiat performed with his band Keur Gui Crew at the Kennedy Center’s Millennium Stage. Following his fellowship, he released his newest album, *Encyclopedie*.



Thiat is a hip hop artist and member of Keur Gui Crew, a West African hip hop group known for its hard-hitting lyrics denouncing corruption and bad governance. In 2011, he and his band helped to launch Y’en a Marre, a movement that calls for political reform and public engagement among Senegalese youth. During his fellowship, Thiat reflected on the role of Y’en a Marre, developed a project to build bridges among youth across Africa, and composed the lyrics for his next album focusing on democracy, nonviolence, and human rights. On January 30, 2014, he gave a presentation at NED entitled “Y’en a Marre: Youth and Social Engagement in Senegal,” which encouraged youth to advocate for social change by aspiring to become a “new type” of African citizen. Following his fellowship, Thiat returned to Senegal to release his new album (see box) and pursue his youth advocacy work.

AFRICA



Mr. Jitman Basnet is a Nepali human rights lawyer and journalist who has been working in the field of transitional justice and peace building for fifteen years. In 2002, he was kidnapped by Maoist rebels, and in 2004, he was arrested by the Nepali army and tortured in secret custody, an experience documented in his memoir, *258 Dark Days*. During his fellowship, Jitman published articles in English- and Nepali-language newspapers on political corruption, the failed constituent assembly, and impunity for perpetrators of violence. On December 12, 2013, he delivered a presentation at NED, “Nepal’s Crisis and Journey toward Peace and Democracy.” As a political asylee in the United States, Jitman was reunited with his family in the post-fellowship period and continued his advocacy on behalf of conflict victims and their families.

ASIA

Mr. Jitman Basnet (Nepal)

“Nepal’s Crisis and Journey toward Peace and Democracy”
July 2013–February 2014 | jmbasnet@gmail.com

“In 2006, the Nepali government, Maoist leaders, and a coalition of seven political parties agreed to halt a decade-long, violent civil war through a Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which called for a new constitution, army integration, and transitional justice. Despite a promising start, the elected constituent assembly failed to produce a new constitution, while many



former Maoist combatants threatened to resume the people’s war. As a final blow to the peace process, no meaningful steps were taken to deliver justice on behalf of the victims of the conflict.

In view of the challenges ahead, providing justice must be an integral component of the peace process. Nepal must establish and legitimize a number of dedicated investigation commissions and prosecution bodies to ensure that conflict-era perpetrators are properly detained and indicted. Additionally, the government should provide sufficient reparations for victims’ families. These initiatives will be ineffective, however, without technical training and assistance from stakeholders in the international community, responsible investment in development projects, and steady external pressure to comply with internationally recognized human rights mechanisms. ”

—Jitman Basnet, December 12, 2013

Jitman continued his close collaboration with Peace Brigades International (PBI), an organization dedicated to providing “protective accompaniment” and other forms of security to human rights defenders. Along with PBI executive director Katherine Hughes-Fraitekh, Jitman raised awareness concerning human rights abuses in Nepal and participated in roundtable discussions organized by human rights defenders in exile.



Mr. Myo Aung Htwe (Burma)

“Building a Strong National Student Union to Promote Democratic Values in Burma”

Oct. 2013–Feb. 2014 | umyoaughtwe.yspsinyangon@gmail.com

“Youth have always been at the forefront of the struggle for independence and democracy in Burma. Following a coup in 1962, the military regime launched a campaign to suppress the growing political engagement among youth. Then, in 1988, a student-led democratic uprising toppled the governing Burma Socialist Program Party. Even though the military council assumed control shortly thereafter, student movements gained momentum under military rule.

Despite the reemergence of nascent student unions since Burma’s democratic opening in 2012, all student organizations are still officially illegal in the country today. Thus, there is an urgent need for stakeholders to advocate for their legalization



and promote education reform. Given the legacy of military rule, a major challenge student unions face is their lack of familiarity with democratic practices. Civil society can play an important role by organizing trainings for students and establishing support facilities. Student unions can make progress by drafting new constitutions, creating a ‘student bill of rights’ and amending their organizational structures.

By integrating democratic norms and values into their activities, student unions can help pave the way for sustainable, high-quality democracy to take root in Burma.”

—Myo Aung Htwe, February 6, 2014

On February 20, 2014, the Kay Spiritual Life Center at American University sponsored a talk by Myo as part of its human rights defender series. In his remarks, Myo reflected on his experiences as a political prisoner and the role of student unions in facilitating Burma’s transition to democracy.



Mr. Myo Aung Htwe is a former prisoner of conscience currently serving as director of the board at the Yangon School of Political Science. A student union member who participated in the 1988 uprisings, Myo was arrested at the age of 17, convicted of high treason, and sentenced to death in 1991. Upon his release 18 years later, he established the Cultural Impact Studies Club, which seeks to promote multiculturalism and trust-building among Burma’s ethnic groups. During his fellowship, Myo explored the role of student unions as a vehicle for promoting democratic values in Burma. On February 6, 2014, he delivered a presentation at NED entitled “The Rise of the Student Union Movement in Burma: Efforts to Strengthen Democratic Practice.” At the conclusion of his fellowship, Myo returned to Burma to share his findings on curriculum development and international exchange opportunities with U.S. universities.

ASIA



Mr. Shahid Nadeem is an acclaimed playwright who has been at the forefront of the campaign for human rights and justice in Pakistan since the 1960s. As executive director and chair of Ajoka Theatre, Pakistan's leading theater company, he has written, directed, and produced plays on a wide range of human rights themes, including corruption, gender violence, minority rights, and resistance to terrorism. Shahid used his fellowship to explore the potential for Sufi theater to promote the spiritual message of Sufi Islam as a nonviolent alternative to extremism in Pakistan. He also met with leading theater groups, including the Steppenwolf Theater in Chicago. On February 18, 2014, he gave a presentation at NED, entitled "Promoting Democracy through the Performing Arts in Pakistan: Towards a Sufi Theater." In the months following his fellowship, Shahid led activities in support of the Indo-Pak Theatre for Peace.

ASIA

Mr. Shahid Nadeem (Pakistan)

"Promoting Pluralism through the Performing Arts in Pakistan"
Oct. 2013–Feb. 2014 | shahidmahmoodnadeem@gmail.com

“**M**eaningful theater in Pakistan faces formidable challenges: authoritarian rule, religious extremism, and hostility from conservative sections of society. For the past three decades, the Ajoka Theatre Group has overcome these hurdles with courage and creativity. Through our efforts to connect with a conservative, poverty-stricken society, we have discovered a rich cultural powerhouse that can be harnessed to strengthen the movement for a more just and democratic society. **Sufi traditions are a major cultural force in Pakistan, and their narrative of peace, equality, and universal humanism offers a compelling alternative to the forces of bigotry and violent extremism in the country.**



Building on my experience writing plays on Sufi themes, which have enabled us to convey a message of peace and pluralism to enthusiastic new audiences, Ajoka is now exploring the potential for a 'Sufi theater,' a platform that would blend Sufi performing elements such as devotional music, poetry, and dance with contemporary issues of justice and freedom. This would enable Ajoka to connect with broader sections of society, reclaim the space appropriated by religious extremists, and build a theater for peace and democracy based on our spiritual and cultural heritage. ”

—Shahid Nadeem, February 18, 2014

On February 7, 2014, Stanford University's Center for South Asia sponsored an event entitled "Theater in the Time of Jihad," featuring a discussion with Shahid and excerpts from "Burqavaganza," a controversial play produced by his theater group, in which all characters wear *burqas*, including men. The satirical play, banned by the Pakistani government in 2007, touches upon issues of radicalization, Islamic values, and Pakistan's relationship with the West.

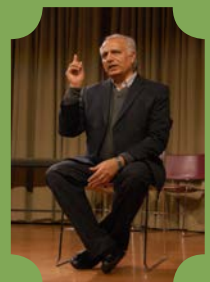


Photo courtesy of Cemendtaur

Mr. A. K. M. Nasim (Bangladesh)

“Strengthening Democratic Practices in Bangladesh through Workers’ Welfare Associations”

Oct. 2013–Feb. 2014 | akm_nasim@yahoo.com

“The 2012 Tazreen fire and 2013 Rana Plaza collapse, which together claimed more than 1,200 lives, exposed fatal flaws in Bangladesh’s industrial relations mechanisms. The government’s ratification of the International Labor Organization’s conventions upholding workers’ freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, did not lead to comprehensive legal protection on the ground. Successive labor legislation systematically reduced workers’ opportunities to organize, form trade unions, collectively bargain, and participate effectively in decision-making and dispute settlements. Despite two laws enacted to grant workers in Export Processing Zones (EPZs) the right to form Workers’ Welfare Associations (WWAs), EPZ authorities and employers have abused loopholes in the laws to undermine their implementation. EPZ workers are left with virtually no means to protect or promote their rights and interests.

If Bangladesh is to make meaningful strides toward equality in the workplace, the country must undertake comprehensive reforms to ensure that its labor laws conform to international standards.

International actors should ensure that their programs promoting workers’ rights are sustainable and effective in the long term. Half-hearted reform and limited engagement from the international community may leave workers struggling for at least another generation to achieve their fundamental rights.”

—A. K. M. Nasim, February 11, 2014

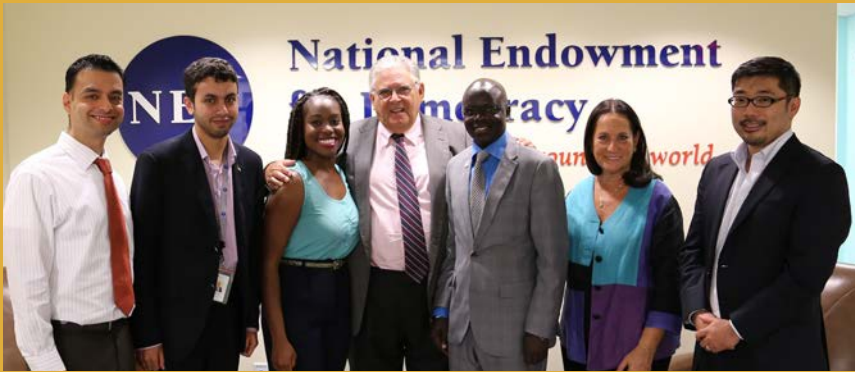
Nasim benefited from close collaboration with the Solidarity Center’s Asia program staff. The Solidarity Center connected him with key experts and leading labor rights advocates in Washington, D.C., including Congressional representatives and their staff.



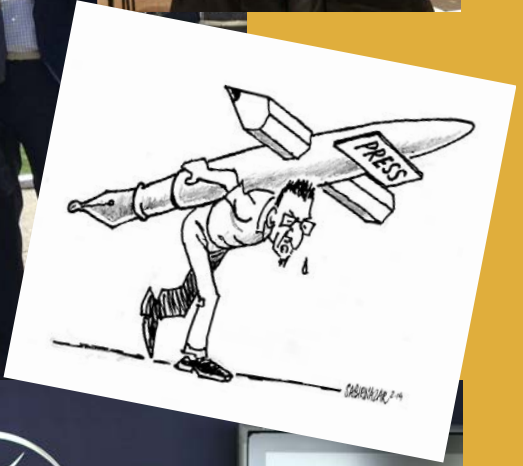
Mr. A. K. M. Nasim is a senior legal counselor with the Dhaka office of the Solidarity Center. An experienced labor lawyer, he provides legal counseling and representation in industrial disputes to the workers and unions in Bangladesh’s Export Processing Zones (EPZs), as well as in Labor Courts and the Labor Appellate Tribunal. During his fellowship, Nasim conducted interviews with experts on Bangladesh’s labor unions and EPZ authorities and developed guidelines for strengthening democratic practices in the formation and functioning of workers’ welfare associations. On February 11, 2014, he gave a presentation at NED entitled “Strengthening Democratic Practices in Bangladesh: Empowering Workers in Export Processing Zones.” Following his fellowship, Nasim returned to Dhaka to engage with leaders of the labor movement, expand and refine his guidelines for legal reform, and continue to advocate for workers’ rights.

ASIA

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR



2013-2014 FELLOWSHIP YEAR





Mr. Sabir Nazar is an editorial cartoonist with the *Express Tribune*, Pakistan's first internationally affiliated newspaper, partnered with the *International Herald Tribune*, and the *Friday Times*, Pakistan's first independent weekly paper. Over the course of his career, he has produced over 5,000 illustrations, depicting a broad spectrum of political events and social issues, including human rights violations, women's voter rights, sectarian strife, and extremism. During his fellowship, Sabir worked on a book project portraying the political history of Pakistan through cartoons. On July 23, 2014, he delivered a presentation at NED entitled "Resisting Extremism through Media: Claiming a Space for Political Cartoons in Pakistan," which highlighted key challenges in the field of cartooning. Despite a crackdown on journalists, Sabir returned to Pakistan after his fellowship to continue his work.

ASIA

Mr. Sabir Nazar (Pakistan)

"Documenting Democracy and Extremism in Pakistan through Political Cartoons"

March–August 2014 | sabirnazar@gmail.com

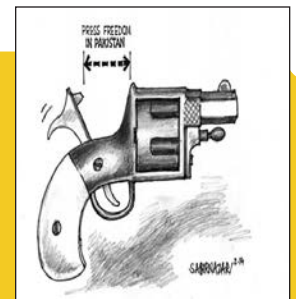
“An important tool for creative expression and critical self-examination, the political cartoon is an equalizer that can cut powerful leaders down to size, attracting the ire of elites who consider themselves beyond reproach. Pakistan's return to democracy in 2008 neither led to greater press freedom nor broadened the space for political cartoons. Rather, in recent times, the country has witnessed the rise of violent, non-state actors determined to wage war against civilian leaders and impose strict censorship on the media. **Various forms of cultural and artistic expression have fallen increasingly under the threat of religious intolerance and extremism, with cartoonists now facing restrictions from both political and religious authorities.**



In a diverse country like Pakistan, democracy can only flourish if elected governments are receptive to multiple narratives. As such, Pakistan should introduce laws that protect journalists and promote free expression, including the right to criticize an elected government. Journalists must also create associations that safeguard their own interests. Ultimately, it is only through the establishment of such laws and institutions that Pakistan's pluralistic and democratic future can be secured.”

—Sabir Nazar, July 23, 2014

In its first-ever BuzzFeed post, the International Forum for Democratic Studies highlighted Sabir's cartoons, which illustrate the challenges facing journalists in Pakistan. Entitled "No Laughing Matter," the post draws attention to the shrinking space for journalism due to strict censorship laws and other political pressures.



Ms. Guozhen Xiao (China)

“Exploring the Path to Democracy in China”

March–September 2014 | beijinglawyerxiao@gmail.com

“More than sixty years after it seized power in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party continues to hold a tight grip on the country through its use of propaganda, intimidation, arbitrary detentions, and the denial of basic political rights stipulated in the country’s constitution. Following in the footsteps of previous democratic movements, a network of civil rights activists is responding with a clear set of goals to advance constitutionalism, freedom, and the rule of law. This New Citizens’ Movement represents the struggle to develop a civic-minded spirit among citizens and facilitate the country’s peaceful transition from a ‘servants’ society’ to a civil society of order and liberty.

By campaigning for equal rights in education, wealth disclosure by government officials, the expansion of political freedoms, and the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the New Citizens’ Movement is raising domestic and international awareness concerning the dire political situation in China. Through such ongoing efforts, and with the extensive use of new technologies, including social media, the movement strives to build a new political platform and an ideological foundation for a future wave of democratization.”

—Guozhen Xiao, July 16, 2014

In an effort to strengthen and expand the scope of the New Citizens’ Movement, Guozhen networked with advocates from the Uyghur rights movement and the International Campaign for Tibet in Washington, D.C.



Guozhen meets with members of the International Campaign for Tibet (July 17, 2014).



Ms. Guozhen Xiao is a leading human rights lawyer, most recently with the Beijing-based Huahuang Law Firm, where she handled various sensitive cases, representing civil rights activists, petitioners, and prisoners of conscience targeted by the Chinese authorities. Guozhen is one of the key organizers of the New Citizens’ Movement, a network of civil rights activists who work towards the country’s transition to constitutionalism. During her fellowship, Guozhen researched comparative constitutionalism and identified ways to promote rule of law in China. On July 14, 2014, she gave a roundtable presentation at NED entitled “The New Citizens’ Movement: Toward a Democratic Future for China.” After her fellowship, Guozhen remained in the United States to continue her human rights work.

ASIA



Ms. Ekaterine Popkhadze recently served as executive director of the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA), a leading Tbilisi-based civil society organization dedicated to protecting human rights and strengthening the rule of law in Georgia. During her fellowship, she conducted a comparative analysis of the judicial systems in the United States and Georgia, drawing relevant lessons from the U.S. system. On June 24, 2014, she delivered a presentation at NED entitled "Judicial Independence: A Linchpin for Georgian Democracy," which examined recent changes in Georgia's judicial system and provided recommendations to the Georgian government and democracy assistance community. After her fellowship, Eka returned to Tbilisi to work with UNDP and continue her efforts to strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights in Georgia.

EURASIA

Ms. Ekaterine Popkhadze (Georgia)

"Judicial Independence & Impartiality: Important Groundwork for Building a Democratic State"

March–July 2014 | popkhadze_eka@yahoo.com

“The sweeping reforms implemented in the wake of Georgia’s 2003 ‘Rose Revolution’ dramatically altered the country’s political and social landscape. A number of reforms succeeded in eliminating petty corruption and professionalizing certain sectors, but the judicial branch remained subject to heavy executive interference and low levels of public trust. This compromised the integrity of the courts and hindered the development of a strong and independent judiciary capable of upholding the rule of law.



While executive interference in judicial matters has declined following the election of a new governing coalition in 2012, a number of outstanding issues remain—from a lack of transparency and legal justification of rulings by the High Council of Justice to confusion surrounding the appointment procedure for judges. Members of the legal profession—judges, defense lawyers, and prosecutors in particular—must engage in deeper dialogue and foster greater unity of purpose. **For their part, local and international NGOs must continue to hold the Georgian government and judiciary accountable and push for internationally accepted legal norms that strengthen judicial independence.** The liberal and democratic future of our country depends on it. ”

—Ekaterine Popkhadze, June 24, 2014

Eka developed a fruitful association with the Federal Judicial Center (FJC), the official research and education agency of the U.S. judicial system. Through the FJC, she attended a seminar at the U.S. Supreme Court, met with leading legal scholars, and exchanged ideas with lawyers and judges.



Dr. Gábor Halmai (Hungary)

“The Role of Constitutional Culture in Democratic Processes”
April–August 2014 | halmaigabor@gmail.com

“Given the increasing indications of constitutional backsliding in recent years, the major issue regarding the future of Hungary is whether democracy and liberalism must go hand in hand, as is the case in the Western world, including institutions like the European Union, of which Hungary is currently a member. As in any other nation, Hungarians certainly have the right to oppose the development of a liberal political system. However, this conclusion must be reached through a democratic process, unlike the constitution-making that took place in 2011, when Hungarian leaders neglected to consult the people regarding the very nature of the constitution.



Liberal or not, the country’s next constitution cannot be the exclusive product of elite-driven negotiations. **If Hungarians ultimately opt for a non-liberal democracy, they must accept certain consequences, including parting from the European Union and the wider community of liberal democracies.**”

—Gábor Halmai, July 8, 2014



Gábor participated in several conferences on constitutionalism and transitional justice, including the International Congress of Comparative Law in Bratislava; the Law and Society Association’s annual conference in Minneapolis; the Conference on Revolutions and Constitutions in Tel Aviv; and the Regional Consultation on Transitional Justice for Europe and North America in Berlin.



Mr. Gábor Halmai is professor of law at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, where he teaches courses on international human rights and comparative constitutional law. He is the founding director of the Hungarian Human Rights Information and Documentation Centre and editor-in-chief of its human rights quarterly, *Fundamentum*. During his fellowship, Gábor researched the role of constitutional culture in democracies and wrote a paper on “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy in Hungary,” which he will expand upon for a forthcoming book. On July 8, 2014, he gave a presentation at NED entitled “The Rise and Fall of Liberal Constitutionalism in Hungary,” which explored explanations for the recent backsliding of democracy in Hungary. In the post-fellowship period, Gábor joined the Princeton Seminary’s Center of Theological Inquiry as a visiting research fellow.

EUROPE



Mr. Sergii Leshchenko is a Kyiv-based journalist, blogger, and press freedom activist who helped to launch the “Stop Censorship!” movement in 2010 in defense of free speech in Ukraine. Since 2000, he has worked for *Ukrainska Pravda*, an online newspaper, where he specializes in anti-corruption investigations and other political reporting. During his fellowship, Sergii published articles on corruption and media restrictions in Ukraine, and he traveled to Kyiv in December 2013 to observe political developments (see box). On February 12, 2014, he gave a presentation at NED entitled “Ukraine’s Lessons Learned: From the Orange Revolution to the Euromaidan.” Following his fellowship, Sergii returned to Kyiv to continue covering events for *Ukrainska Pravda*. In the fall of 2014, he joined with other leading activists to run for office in the country’s parliamentary elections.

EUROPE

Mr. Sergii Leshchenko (Ukraine)

“Ukraine’s Lessons Learned: From the Orange Revolution to the Euromaidan”

October 2013–February 2014 | mail.pravda@gmail.com

“Ukraine is at a critical and defining moment in its history. The 2004 Orange Revolution, which marked the beginning of our movement against rampant corruption and fraudulent elections, failed to consolidate democratic gains. As a result, Ukraine took a frightening turn for the worse under authoritarian president Viktor Yanukovich. His refusal to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union and unrestrained use of force against protesters spurred a new wave of demonstrations known as the ‘Euromaidan.’

Now more than ever, it is crucial that the United States and European Union assume an active role in condemning violence and supporting a peaceful, democratic solution to the crisis. Implementing targeted sanctions against corrupt oligarchs and perpetrators of violence, for instance, would send a strong message to those in power. **It is vital that democracy assistance organizations continue to support an ‘infrastructure of democracy’ by providing material and technical resources to NGOs on the ground.** With the solidarity and support of the international community, I am confident that the Ukrainian people will reclaim their country’s political mantle and realize their democratic aspirations.”



—Sergii Leshchenko, February 12, 2014



During the height of Ukraine’s protests in December 2013, Sergii traveled back to the frontlines of the “Euromaidan” in Kyiv, where he had the unique opportunity to observe developments on the ground, interact with civil society leaders and political figures, and interview Senator John McCain.

Mr. Marino Córdoba (Colombia)

“From Conflict to Peace: The Afro-Colombian Experience”
May–September 2014 | cordoba.afrodes@gmail.com

“Since the 1980s, an armed conflict among the Colombian military, leftist rebels, and right-wing paramilitary groups has forcibly displaced more than six million Colombians, of whom one-third are Colombia’s Afro-descendant communities.



Marino Córdoba

With its blatant disregard for Law 70 (1993), which recognizes Afro-Colombians’ collective rights over their ancestral lands, the Colombian government demonstrates its complicity in this grave crime against its own citizens.

As the Colombian government and FARC rebels gather to discuss a longstanding peace, leaders must take steps to reintegrate displaced

Afro-Colombians within our traditional communities and safeguard our civil, political, and socioeconomic rights. A successful post-conflict reintegration would uncover the truth about the crimes against the displaced and lead to sanctions against perpetrators, reparations for victims, and restoration of stolen land. The government must provide access to education, rebuild fundamental infrastructure in hard-hit areas, recognize the legal authority of Afro-Colombian leaders, strengthen our labor rights, and elevate our socioeconomic status in collaboration with the international community. ”

—Marino Córdoba, September 23, 2014

In cooperation with the Washington Office on Latin America, Marino conducted extensive outreach on Capitol Hill. He also traveled to Pittsburgh, where he met with the United Steelworkers Union to discuss labor rights for Colombian workers. On September 17, 2014, he participated in a panel on Afro-Colombian issues featuring Grammy award-winning singer Carlos Vives.



Mr. Marino Córdoba is founding president of the National Association of Displaced Afro-Colombians (AFRODES), a Bogotá-based organization that advocates for the rights of Afro-descendent peoples internally displaced in Colombia as a result of armed conflict. After surviving five assassination attempts, he was forced to flee to the United States in 2002, where he laid the groundwork for AFRODES USA. In 2012, he returned to Colombia and was elected AFRODES president. During his fellowship, Marino examined how best to deepen the political participation of Afro-Colombians. On September 23, 2014, he gave a talk at NED entitled “From Internal Displacement to Inclusive Democracy: The Afro-Colombian Experience.” Following his fellowship, Marino took steps to register AFRODES in the United States and continued working on his memoirs.

LATIN AMERICA



Ms. Maria Clara R. M. do Prado is a journalist covering social, economic, and financial issues across Brazil. She currently serves as a columnist for Brazil’s major economic newspaper, *Valor Econômico*. During her fellowship, she explored how distributive economic policies have led to the emergence of a new middle class in Brazil and investigated how this development may foster a more inclusive democracy. On June 26, 2014, she gave a presentation at NED entitled “More Equality, More Democracy: The Case of Brazil.” She also authored a working paper by the same title, examining the country’s socioeconomic strides (see box). At the conclusion of her fellowship, Maria Clara returned home to further stimulate debate on the political impact of the rising middle class and the need to address socioeconomic inequality in Brazil.

LATIN AMERICA

Ms. Maria Clara R. M. do Prado (Brazil)

“Inflation, Inequality, and Democracy: Stabilization and Its Crucial Role in the Democratization of Brazil”
 March–July 2014 | mclaraprado@gmail.com

“Brazil has long been one of the most unequal countries in the world. In 1989, its Gini coefficient stood at 0.636, the second-worst in the world, ahead only of Sierra Leone. Over the past 15 years, however, the country has made impressive strides toward greater equality. Among the factors behind this success have been public programs aimed at eliminating extreme poverty and allowing the poor to afford middle-class patterns of consumption.



Another factor is monetary stability: after enduring tough economic times, with inflation skyrocketing to unimaginable levels in the 1990s, Brazil was finally able to have a valued currency—the *real*—in 1994, thus paving the way for development and for policies that would bring a vast number of people out of poverty in the first decade of the 2000s. Despite the recent and substantial decline in inequality, however, **Brazil still has a long way to go in expanding equal opportunity and promoting democratic inclusion.**”

—Maria Clara R. M. do Prado, June 26, 2014



As part of her fellowship project, Maria Clara interviewed experts on the relationship between economic growth and democratic development. This outreach contributed to her paper, “More Equality, More Democracy: The Case of Brazil,” published as part of the Reagan-Fascell program’s Working Paper Series.

Mr. Renato Lanfranchi (Brazil)

“Promoting Participatory Democracy in Brazil through Public Policy and Budget Monitoring”

November 2013–April 2014 | renlan56@gmail.com

“Civil society organizations have long been at the forefront of the democratization process in Brazil. From early participation in constitution-making to campaigning for landmark human rights legislation, grassroots groups have demonstrated the crucial role of civil society in the struggle for democracy.



democracy.

Despite this progress, the street protests of 2013 were a wake-up call for civil society and signaled the rise of public dissatisfaction with social inequality, corruption, and poor public services. **Civil society organizations are poised to continue leading the way toward an inclusive democracy,**

but only if they can avoid co-optation by the state and strike a balance in their relationships with both the government and marginalized citizens.

To effectively serve the most marginalized communities, civil society organizations must establish a new legal framework with the state, one that ensures their political autonomy and public legitimacy and that provides funding incentives for the private sector. The democracy assistance community should invest in groups that are actively promoting justice, security, and dignity for all citizens.”

—Renato Lanfranchi, February 26, 2014



During his fellowship, Renato maintained close ties with Ashoka Innovators and Freedom House. Joining him in DC was his wife, award-winning human rights defender Valdênia Paulino Lanfranchi, who

served as a volunteer consultant with Ashoka Innovators (see p. 23).



Mr. Renato Lanfranchi is a human rights activist working in Brazil since 1991. For the past five years, he has served as coordinator of the Oscar Romero Centre for Human Rights, an NGO based in Paraíba. During his fellowship, Renato conducted extensive research on participatory mechanisms, including budget monitoring, with relevance for Brazil. On February 26, 2014, he gave a presentation at NED entitled “Building Inclusive Democracy in Brazil: Civil Society’s Advances and Challenges,” in which he offered recommendations to the democracy assistance community on how best to support grassroots civil society efforts in Brazil. Following his fellowship, Renato and his wife Valdênia returned to São Paulo before traveling to University of York, in England, for further studies.

LATIN AMERICA

2013–2014 ATLAS CORPS–HURFORD YOUTH FELLOWS

In 2013–2014, the International Forum for Democratic Studies partnered with the World Movement for Democracy and Atlas Corps, a D.C.-based network of global nonprofit professionals, to host NED’s first two Atlas Corps–Hurford Youth Fellows.



Mr. Alimure Ali (South Sudan)

“Civil Society Organizations and Dynamics of Governance in South Sudan”
May–October 2014 | alimureali@gmail.com

Mr. Alimure Ali has worked as an assistant program manager in the Juba office of the National Democratic Institute and served as a domestic election observer in southern Sudan. During his fellowship, he contributed to the planning of the World Movement for Democracy’s 2015 Global Assembly and supported NED’s grant-making programs in Africa.



Mr. William Lukudu (South Sudan)

“Understanding the Impact of Restrictive Environments on Civil Society”
September 2013–February 2014 | wlukudu1@gmail.com

Mr. William Lukudu has five years of experience working on civil society development, women’s political participation, civic and voter education, and election monitoring in South Sudan. During his fellowship, he served as researcher for the World Movement’s Defending Civil Society project. He also provided programmatic support to NED’s grant-making program in South Sudan.

2013–2014 RESEARCH ASSOCIATES AND INTERNS



Sarah Amin now works in the field of international development.



Hilary Collins now serves as assistant editor, *Journal of Democracy*.



Marlena Papavaritis now serves as program assistant, Fellowship Programs.



Hainer Sibrian serves as program assistant with the Forum.



Yongjoong Cho (ASAN intern) is completing his BA at Seoul National University.



Kayoung Shin (ASAN intern) is completing her BA at Yonsei University.



Virginia Cady (R-F summer intern) is completing her BA at Dickinson College.

SUPPORTING “DEMOCRATS AT RISK”

At a time of authoritarian backlash against defenders of democracy worldwide, the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program recognizes the vital importance of standing in solidarity with the courageous men and women who risk their lives for freedom. In response to urgent requests from activists, journalists, and scholars facing political persecution abroad, the program offers emergency fellowships and specialized support within NED’s International Forum for Democratic Studies.



Left to right: Marc Plattner, Valdênia Lanfranchi, Renato Lanfranchi, and Carl Gershman.

For democracy advocates under attack, the Forum offers a restorative environment that encourages personal renewal and professional growth. At-risk fellows, in turn, add important value to the work of the Endowment and international community with their unique insights and first-hand experiences from the frontlines back home.

Working in close consultation with Zerxes Spencer and Marlena Pavaritis, at-risk fellows receive guidance in key areas of concern, including social services and psychological counseling, immigration and asylum, English-language and skill-building courses, and post-fellowship placements.

Recognizing the burgeoning demand for sustained support, the program seeks to combine efforts and facilitate collaboration with counterpart organizations, including Open Society Foundations, Scholars at Risk, and Ashoka Innovators. In partnership with Freedom House and others, the program is developing a directory of resources for human rights defenders in need of urgent assistance.



Left to right: Colombian fellow Marino Córdoba, NED president Carl Gershman, and Zakiya Carr Johnson, director, Race, Ethnicity, and Social Inclusion Unit, Department of State.

Working in close consultation with Zerxes Spencer and Marlena Pavaritis, at-risk fellows receive guidance in key areas of concern, including social services and psychological counseling, immigration and asylum, English-language and skill-building courses, and post-fellowship placements.

In 2013–2014, the Reagan-Fascell program hosted “democrats at risk” from Brazil, China, Colombia, Ethiopia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Vietnam. For further information, please contact Zerxes Spencer at zerxes@ned.org.

Dr. Cu Huy Ha Vu is a leading human rights lawyer who has written widely on civil and political rights in Vietnam. Through a law firm established with his wife, Attorney Nguyen Thi Duong Ha, Dr. Vu has challenged the ruling Communist Party’s monopoly over power and has encouraged citizens to stand up against the government’s unlawful acts. He was arrested on trumped-up charges and sentenced in 2011 to seven years in jail and three years of house arrest. Released in 2014 in the face of mounting international pressure, Dr. Vu traveled to DC to pursue an emergency fellowship at NED (June–December 2014), with funding from the Open Society Foundations. During his fellowship, he assessed the state of Vietnam’s democracy movement and the importance of promoting human rights and democratization in Vietnam.



REAGAN-FASCELL
Democracy Fellows Program

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