

## Huda Al-Sarari (Yemen)



Huda Al-Sarari is a Yemeni lawyer and human rights activist. She graduated in Sharia and Law from Aden University in 2011 and holds a masters in Women's Studies and Development from the Women's Centre at Aden University.

She has been working for more than a decade with numerous local Yemeni human rights organisations such as the Yemeni Women's Union, the Adalah Centre for

Rights and Freedoms and the National Committee to Investigate Allegations of Human Rights Violations.

Over the last years, she investigated, exposed and challenged the network of secret prisons run by foreign governments in Yemen since 2015, where thousands of men and boys suffered arbitrary detention and torture.

Huda Al-Sarari collected evidence on more than 250 cases of abuse taking place within the prisons and succeeded in convincing international organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch to take up the cause.

Despite the threats, defamation campaigns and sacrifices she and her family endured, she continues to stand alongside the families of those who have disappeared and pursue justice. In October 2019, she was honoured as a co-finalist by the Aurora Prize.

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*'It is particularly difficult to defend human rights in the context of the conflict raging in Yemen and even more difficult to obtain concrete results. Huda Al-Sarari is one of the few people to achieve that,'* underlined **Brian Dooley of Human Rights First**

*'Huda Al Sarari has chosen not to leave Yemen. That is a decision which shows a rare courage, all the more so as she is working in a high-risk context and a source of danger for herself'* declared **Alice Mogwe of the FIDH**.

## Norma Ledezma (Mexico)



Norma Librada Ledezma began her career as a human rights defender the day her daughter, Paloma, disappeared on her way home from school in Chihuahua, Mexico.

Since that moment, Norma has dedicated herself to seeking justice for the families and victims of femicide, disappearance and human trafficking in Mexico.

She is one of the founders and Director of Justicia Para Nuestras Hijas, a local organisation that offers legal counsel and support to ongoing cases. She is a member of the Board of the Centre for Justice for Women of Chihuahua, the Consultative Assembly of the Executive Committee for Victim's Redress, and Deputy Coordinator of the Committee for Prevention and Redress of Domestic and Gender-based Violence.

Norma has supported over 200 investigations into cases of femicide and disappearances, on behalf of both male and female victims. As a party in the case over her daughter's murder, which was brought before the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights, Norma is responsible for the creation of a Special Prosecutor for Women Victims of Violence in her native state of Chihuahua. In spite of having received numerous death threats, she continues with her human rights work.

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*'Mexico is at the same time both a democratic country offering judicial remedies and a brutal country where 98% of the innumerable cases of enforced disappearances and torture go unpunished'*, commented **Gerald Staberock of the OMCT** in a critical remark.

*'Norma Ledezma has received numerous death threats, but she is not daunted and continues her work seeking not only to obtain justice for the murder of her daughter, but for all the young women who have been murdered,'* noted **Andrew Anderson of Frontline Defenders**.

## Sizani Ngubane (South Africa)



Sizani Ngubane is a South African activist who has dedicated her life to promoting gender equality, fighting for women's and indigenous people's rights.

After her initial career as an activist with the ANC, she became Provincial Coordinator of the SA Women's National Coalition in 1991 and contributed to the development of the Women's Charter for Effective Equality in South Africa. That contribution was instrumental in building the section on rural and indigenous women of the Bill of Rights within the South African Constitution.

In 1998, Sizani founded the Rural Women's Movement (RWM), a unique organisation striving against gender-based violence and for women's access to land, education, land rights, property and inheritance rights in courts operating under customary law.

Recently, she is focused on fighting against traditional courts legislation, such as the Ingonyama Trust, which could lead to the misappropriation of many families' land in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

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*'The misappropriation of very large tracts of lands is done under the cover of customary law in Kwa Zulu Natal. Local people, and women in particular, are victims of this situation,'* commented **Gisella Reina of Huridocs** in a critical remark.

*'Sizani Ngubane's work has greatly advanced the rights of women and girls in South Africa over more than 40 years,'* underlined **Guadalupe Marengo of Amnesty International**.