



**URGENT ACTION FUND
FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

A decade of innovation in
human rights funding



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2008

Urgent Action Fund (UAF) celebrates its 10th Anniversary. Over 500 strategic Rapid Response Grants. 10 years of cutting-edge Research, Publications & Advocacy. A decade of women defending human rights is traced back through the following pages. Enjoy!



2007

September

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is adopted after more than 20 years of debate. A UAF grant enables several indigenous women from Latin America to meet with delegates in New York and negotiate the Declaration's final wording.



September

The Burmese government **violently cracks down on the 'saffron revolution,'** led by Buddhist monks and nuns. UAF approves two confidential Rapid Response Grants to groups responding to the escalation of violence.

August

UAF awards its 500th Rapid Response Grant.

November

UAF researchers Jane Barry & Jelena Djordjevic conduct a **workshop on self-protection and sustainability for LGBTI activists** at Front Line's Dublin Platform. UAF will conduct similar trainings for women activists in Nepal, Colombia and Kenya in 2008.



Increasing Security for Women Defenders Under Threat

Asociación de Mujeres de Petén Ixqik, Guatemala

Ixqik, an indigenous women's organization in Guatemala, begins receiving threats after leading a march in support of rape survivors in 2005. Their office is raided three times in nine days. Cameras with pictures of their members and confidential files are stolen.

UAF approves a Rapid Response Grant of 5,000 USD to increase the organization's security, including office relocation costs, security equipment, and cell phones. In 2007, threats against Ixqik increase again, amidst a wave of local killings. Staff members discover that their phones have been compromised, and suspicious visitors turn up at several of their homes.

June 5, 2007 - After several weeks of continuous threats to the staff and menacing surveillance by unidentified men, Ixqik team member Edit Corado is shot at her home. Her mother and brother are killed in the same attack.

June 7, 2007 - After receiving an Amnesty International alert denouncing the attack, UAF sends an email message to its contacts at Ixqik: "If you would like support for Ixqik's protection of women human rights defenders at this difficult time, please let us know and return the grant request form attached below."

June 25, 2007 - Leaders of Ixqik reply: "Recent events have made this difficult but we have drafted a project for several actions that would improve security for our association and our workers, so we can continue our labor in defense of women's rights."

June 26, 2007 - Less than 24 hours later, UAF approves a Rapid Response Security Grant of 5,000 USD and emails Ixqik the necessary paperwork to process payments.

Knowing that funds are en route, Ixqik is able to immediately begin work on replacing the compromised SIM cards in their mobile phones, hiring an attorney and a psychologist, paying for members' transportation to and from the capital where they pressure the government to protect human rights defenders, and creating an emergency reserve fund for ongoing security needs.

May

UAF's Sustaining Activism Project sparks a dialogue among women defenders

with the release of advance copies of *What's the Point of Revolution If We Can't Dance?*. Revolution amplifies the voices of over 100 activists from 40 countries on challenges and strategies for sustainability.

June

UAF releases *Philanthropy and Post-9/11 Policy Five Years Out: Philanthropy, Counterterrorism and Global Civil Society Activism* (Nancy Billica, PhD) and **co-founds the Global Nonprofit Information Network** with Cordaid, Grantmakers Without Borders and OMB Watch to monitor the effects of counterterrorism policies on international grantmaking.

* The events in this timeline represent a small sampling of the thousands of advances in women's human rights and the conflict/crisis situations that have comprised UAF's external operating environment over the past decade.

2006

December

The UN grants **consultative status to three LGBTI organizations**, the first LGBTI groups to gain official UN status in more than 10 years.



November

UAF supports Task Force Subic Rape's awareness-raising campaign during the trial of four US Marines charged with the rape of 'Nicole,' a young Filipina woman. The groundbreaking conviction achieved is the first out of more than 3,000 cases filed against US troop members in the Philippines alone, **setting a major precedent for ending impunity for visiting armed forces' assaults on women** worldwide.

November

Nicaragua bans all forms of abortion; eliminating long-standing exceptions for rape, malformation of the fetus, and risk to the life or health of the mother. Nicaraguan medical associations, the World Health Organization, and human rights groups around the world protest the decision. UAF provides a Rapid Response Grant to Asociación de Mujeres para la Integración de las Familias en Nicaragua for an awareness-raising campaign in response to this dangerous precedent.

July

Conflict reignites between Israel and Hezbollah militants of Lebanon.

Within days, UAF grants are enabling The Collective for Research and Training on Development Action (Lebanon) to provide gender-specific relief supplies to Lebanese women, the Coalition of Women for Peace (Israel) to organize an anti-war march in Tel Aviv, and the Feminist International Radio Endeavor (Costa Rica) to hold a "Webcast for a Just Peace in the Middle East."

Demanding Equal Protection for Sexual and Gender Minorities

Blue Diamond Society, Nepal

Blue Diamond Society (BDS) fights for the human rights and health of sexual and gender minorities in Nepal.

The group encounters a climate of extreme hostility and harassment as a result of their work. Outreach staff have been raped and beaten. In 2006, after holding a protest, 39 metis (transvestite) members of BDS are detained for two weeks, assaulted, photographed and videotaped, threatened with acid, and coerced into signing statements. Undeterred, BDS negotiates with the police, and the Inspector-General issues

a letter indicating concern over the level of police violence against LGBTI Nepalis.

Nevertheless, one night a BDS member is violently attacked by three men. The activist has been a visible figure in the community, especially for her work raising awareness on HIV/AIDS.

BDS approaches Urgent Action Fund for a Rapid Response Grant to support a strategic intervention. At the time of their request, the activist is still having trouble speaking and breathing as a result of her injuries. BDS requests funds

for an operation that can save her life, along with a concurrent international media campaign to draw attention to violence against sexual and gender minorities in Nepal.

The international media attention BDS is able to attract with UAF's support significantly raises their profile and helps to build alliances within the region. The activist survives and resumes her human rights work with BDS.

In 2007, Blue Diamond Society and four other groups submit a petition to Nepal's Supreme Court demanding equal protection under the law and constitutional rights for LGBTI persons. In December 2007, the Court issues a historic ruling in favor of the petition and orders the government to create new laws to protect LGBTI rights and to amend current discriminatory laws. In 2008, five BDS leaders run for office in the nation's first general election since 1999, hoping to ensure Parliament's action on the court order.



March

UAF strengthens its 5-year partnership with Colombian human rights funder FFP. Fondo para Ayudas de Emergencia y Fortalecimiento Organizacional en Protección y Autoprotección redistributes 20,000 USD from UAF in small grants (averaging 1,000 USD) to women human rights defenders for in-country security and protection.

January

Activists from Algeria, Bosnia, Burma, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Nepal, Serbia and Tunisia are interviewed for **Defending the Defenders**, a research project on security for women human rights defenders initiated by UAF with partners Kvinna till Kvinna and Front Line International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders. Feminist lawyer Vahida Nainar serves as lead investigator.

2005

Implementing Gender Policy in Peacemaking

Isha L'Isha, Israel

Isha L'Isha - Woman to Woman - pursues systemic change in Israel on issues of peacebuilding, sex trafficking, and women's economic advancement.

From Israel, Isha L'Isha writes to UAF regarding an opportunity to put UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace & Security (adopted in 2000) into unprecedented effect. Israel has passed a law stating that women must be included in all peace negotiations and discussions of domestic, foreign or security policy.

Isha L'Isha has been a driving force behind this law, working in partnership with the law's sponsors from the beginning of the legislative process: "The fact that we were able to take UN Resolution 1325 and have it implemented in Israeli legislation was no small feat because it was a radical step in a very conservative and military country." The new law requires that whenever a negotiating team or committee is appointed, its makeup will be reported to the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women in the Prime Minister's Office. If the Authority

believes that women are not properly represented, it can request that this be corrected.

Enforcing the legislation presents the next challenge. UAF provides a Rapid Response Grant to enable Isha L'Isha to compile and distribute a directory of 500 women leaders qualified to participate in such negotiations. Isha L'Isha enlists the cooperation of government offices and 300 NGOs to develop a list that is both non-partisan and diverse. Several government ministers attend the inauguration of the directory, and

October

Following the **Pakistan earthquake, which leaves 75,000 dead and millions homeless**, UAF supports women's group Shirkat Gah to train local NGOs to document human rights abuses occurring in internally-displaced persons' camps.

August

Hurricane Katrina devastates the Gulf Coast of the US and permanently displaces 400,000 residents. Two thirds of women-led households do not return to New Orleans.

September

UAF releases ***Voices of Solidarity: International Women Activists Share Their Perspective on the Katrina Disaster***, which applies lessons learned through UAF's tsunami-response grantmaking and suggests strategic priorities for funders' responses to Katrina that can empower women activists throughout the recovery process.

it is delivered personally to the Prime Minister, cabinet, heads of agencies, and other decision-makers.

By creating a comprehensive list of skilled women negotiators and presenting it to government officials and the press, Isha L'Isha makes certain that the government cannot sidestep implementation of the law by claiming a lack of qualified women candidates.

July

UAF-Africa becomes an independent legal entity, under the leadership of Kaari B. Murungi and governing Board Members: Hope Chigudu (Zimbabwe), Jane Kiragu (Kenya), Maria Nassali (Uganda) and Vahida Nainar (India).

April

UAF begins a **re-granting partnership with the newly formed Reconstruction Women's Fund** in Serbia. This partnership increases Rapid Response Grants available to Roma and lesbian organizations, among others.



March

At Beijing+10, **UAF launches *Rising Up in Response: Women's Rights Activism in Conflict***, an in-depth exploration of how women activists respond to conflict, how conflict alters their activism, and strategies for transcending the barriers that they face. To ensure accessibility, the report is translated into Albanian, Serbian, Sinhala and Tamil, with the Executive Summary also in French and Spanish.

July

On the **10th Anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide** in Bosnia and Herzegovina—the largest mass murder on European soil since WWII—members of Women in Black Belgrade are tear-gassed by a group of young fascists during a silent vigil.



2004

September

Shortly after testifying before the UN Commission on Human Rights on behalf of LGBTI peoples' rights, **FannyAnn Eddy is murdered** in the offices of the Sierra Leone Lesbian & Gay Association (now Dignity Association). The outcry against her murder reverberates throughout the world of sexual rights activism.



July

International Court of Justice (ICJ) rules that the Israeli-built "**apartheid wall**" in occupied Palestine violates international law and must be torn down.

May

UAF Program Officer Kirsten Westby relocates to Kenya to assist UAF-Africa in setting up an independent Rapid Response Grantmaking Program serving women throughout the continent. By October **UAF-Africa's grants are being paid out independently** of UAF, and in 2005 the 'spin-off' to independent sister fund is complete.

August

After **Quechua women gain the right to run for office** in the Cuzco region of Peru, they are violently targeted by the corrupt local government. With UAF's urgent support, a group of indigenous activists airs a series of anti-violence radio spots and convenes leaders of 53 indigenous women's organizations to raise local authorities' awareness of women's rights.

August

Darfur genocide escalates, resulting in 80,000 deaths, systematic rape, burning and looting of villages, and over 1 million people driven from their homes.

When Natural Disasters Threaten Women's Human Rights

Tsunami Response in Sri Lanka's War Zone

A UAF Board member since 2006, Sunila Abeysekera is the former director of INFORM, and works to protect women human rights defenders and to bring about a just peace in Sri Lanka, where the government has been locked in violent struggle with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam for more than twenty years.

On December 26, 2004 the Indian Ocean tsunami devastates coastal communities throughout South and Southeast Asia. Almost immediately, women begin reporting incidents of sexual assault and physical violence in the temporary shelters and destroyed areas. UAF's first grant is made just two days after the disaster to document missing

women human rights defenders. An additional seven grants are made shortly thereafter, totaling 43,000 USD.

"In the weeks following the tsunami, the level of insecurity is the worst for women in the North and East of Sri Lanka. They are affected by the disaster, but have already suffered for years because of the war. Anyone suspected of sympathizing with the opposition encounters difficulty accessing relief supplies or services. Widows and unmarried women who have lost their families are at great risk of abuse.

UAF knows that women human rights activists will respond immediately

and strategically to this new crisis. One example of this is a coalition of sixty women's rights groups who join together to create the Coalition for Assisting Tsunami-Affected Women. UAF supports them right away to offer practical and material help to women's groups, ensure that their security and dignity is guaranteed at all times, and push for women's equal participation in reconstruction processes.

One coalition member is already a UAF grantee: the Suriya Women's Development Center, which is the only women's NGO in Eastern Sri Lanka, where the conflict is most severe. UAF enables the group to establish the



secretariat of the Women's Coalition for Disaster Management to respond to urgent gender concerns in the post-tsunami context. The secretariat focuses on land rights for women and representation by women in decision-making bodies. Ultimately, the group becomes one of three women's organizations appointed to the highest-level decision-making body of the district's Livelihoods Task Force."

- Sunila Abeysekera

January

The **African Court of Human and People's Rights** is established.



February

A **coup d'état in Haiti** results in socio-economic crisis and widespread human rights violations. UAF provides a Rapid Response Grant to Kay Fanm, a Haitian women's rights organization, to increase their capacity to respond to the growing numbers of sexual violence survivors seeking support services.

2003



August
UAF staff members Ariella Futral and Kirsten Westby travel to Indonesia to reach out to Acehese women activists, who have been living under martial law since May, alerting them to the availability of Rapid Response Grants.



April
The **Brazil Resolution on Human Rights and Sexual Orientation** is introduced to the UN Human Rights Commission - it is the first UN draft resolution that directly names abuses against LGBTI individuals as human rights violations.

September

Afghan Women's Bill of Rights is drafted by women activists in Kandahar, Afghanistan, and handed to President Hamid Karzai.

June

UAF-Africa hosts **Regional Experts Meeting on Engendering Instruments and Mechanisms of Peacebuilding** in Kenya in order to achieve gender inclusiveness in peace negotiations and transitional justice processes in conflict-affected nations such as Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Somalia.

Streamlining Security Grants for Colombian Women Defenders

Fondo para Ayudas de Emergencia y Fortalecimiento Organizacional en Protección y Autoprotección, Colombia

The Fondo para Ayudas de Emergencia y Fortalecimiento Organizacional en Protección y Autoprotección (The Fund for Emergency Support and Organizational Strengthening in Protection and Self-Defense or FFP), was created by six human rights groups in Colombia to provide emergency support to human rights defenders.

When formal talks collapse between Colombia's government and the FARC-EP guerrilla force in 2002, violence escalates on all fronts of the 40-year internal war. All armed factions use rape and sexual violence to incite terror.

On July 25, 2002, Colombian women hold a massive peace march involving 25,000 people in Bogotá. Women human rights defenders have come under increasing threat from all sides—the government, the guerrillas, the civilian informants, and the paramilitaries operating in league with the army.

In response, UAF seeks to streamline Colombian women's access to Rapid Response Security & Protection Grants and put decision-making power into the hands of local activists, by initiating a re-granting partnership with the Bogotá-based fund FFP.

When activists receive death threats aimed at stopping their human rights work, sometimes a very small amount of money enables them to relocate, hire safe transportation, purchase cell phones or fortify their security through other means. FFP significantly increases women defenders' access to emergency assistance by being locally-based. FFP also reaches into rural areas where activists do not have easy access to resources or safe means of communication.

Since 2002, UAF's re-granting partnership with FFP has provided more than 67 Rapid Response Grants averaging 1,000 USD each to Colombian women human rights defenders and their families. The impact of each of these grants is a lifetime of activism that will continue in a context where human rights defenders face extreme threats on a daily basis. UAF continues to make numerous grants in Colombia directly to women-led groups whose needs exceed the amount offered by FFP.

March

US-led invasion of Iraq begins as an escalation of the 'war on terror.'

February

UAF staff travel to Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo to reach out to women survivors, encourage grant requests, and help UAF better understand the needs and strategies of activists there. Former UAF program officer Kirsten Westby notes, "This is the first time many women from Eastern provinces of the DRC are coming together. The meeting goes long into the night. They say, 'I might be dead tomorrow. Write this down. Tell someone. Tell the world what's happening in the Congo.' We make dozens of grants."

2002

September

With UAF support, Sri Lankan women activists from both sides of the conflict demand that women be incorporated into a just peace, resulting in an invitation to form 'the Sub-committee on Gender Issues.' This is the **first time in history that an official committee on gender is included in a formal peace process.**

October

Somali peace talks enter 'Third Power-Sharing Phase' in Kenya. A UAF grant enables Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC) to attend, where they represent women as a 'Sixth Clan' at the meetings. SSWC chairwoman Asha Hagi Elmi makes history by becoming the **first woman in Africa to be a signatory to a peace accord.**

June

UAF launches **Beyond Compliance: Philanthropy at Risk** project to monitor and evaluate counterterrorism measures restricting international philanthropy post-9/11.

April

International Criminal Court comes into force, the world's first mechanism for addressing individual crimes at the international level, with the Rome Statute finally defining rape, sexual slavery and sexual violence as "crimes against humanity."



Supporting Gender-Focused Rapid Response Teams

International Initiative for Justice in Gujarat, India

In November 2002, Urgent Action Fund convenes leading activists from Afghanistan, Albania, Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia, India, Israel, Kenya, Kosovo, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Serbia, Somalia, the UK, US, and Zimbabwe to discuss the feasibility and strategic importance of creating 'Gender-Focused Rapid Response Teams' to respond to emerging crises.

The teams are envisioned as international groups of experienced women who would respond to requests from local women in crisis situations to ensure a gender-focused conflict response.

A feminist lawyer in India, Vahida Nainar is a former UAF Board member and currently serves on the governing boards of UAF-Africa and the Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice.

"UAF supports a Rapid Response Team intervention - of which I am a key member - almost immediately following the consultation. The International Initiative for Justice in Gujarat (IIJG) convenes in December to avert a repeat of the genocidal violence in Gujarat state, which followed the deaths of 57 Hindus, including 35 women and children, in the Godhra Train Burning incident. The train burning ignited two months of anti-Muslim pogroms in February and March 2002, resulting

in more than 2,000 people killed and widespread sexual violence and torture.

Concerned by nine months of impunity, silence from the international community, and lack of justice for the victims of the atrocities, we (the IIJG) convene a panel of female jurists and activists to provide witness, feminist analysis, and a call to action during India's elections.

UAF's timely Rapid Response Grant helps to enable us to travel to Gujarat during the elections and meet with 181 women and 136 men, all survivors or witnesses to the atrocities.



Press briefings and television and radio interviews in Mumbai and Delhi make our preliminary findings public even before we leave India. The chilling final report, *Threatened Existence: A Feminist Analysis of the Genocide in Gujarat*, is submitted to the Indian government, international organizations, and women's groups in Gujarat and other states. At the UN, India protests its distribution and will not allow testimony, but we make an informal presentation to the UN Security Council nonetheless."

- Vahida Nainar



March

UAF-Africa holds a **consultative meeting on UN Security Council Resolution 1325** in Kampala, Uganda. The meeting takes a close look at the challenges African women face in joining peace processes and launches the Africa 1325 network.

January

In the wake of the **2001 palace massacre** of Nepal's royal family, UAF provides several grants throughout 2002 to Nagarik Aawaz and other Nepali women's peace organizations engaged in peacebuilding work between the Maoists and the monarchy.

2001



October

The **US launches the 'war on terror'** with its invasion of Afghanistan, following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

February

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia convicts three Bosnian Serb soldiers on counts of rape, torture, and enslavement—the **first time in history an international tribunal brings charges solely for crimes of sexual violence against women.**

October

Having relocated to Boulder, Colorado in September 2000, **UAF moves into the Spruce Street Mansion** - Boulder's philanthropic center - at the invitation of the Brett Family Foundation and the Community Foundation Serving Boulder County.

July

Uganda and Rwanda begin pulling back troops from Democratic Republic of Congo. The UN reports that more than 2.5 million people have died in DRC in three years. A Security & Protection grant from **UAF helps a leading activist escape** arrest in DRC and find temporary asylum in Canada.

The First Regional UAF Sister Fund Emerges in Kenya

Urgent Action Fund – Africa

Sierra Leone. Uganda. Sudan. Angola. Liberia. DR Congo. Ethiopia. Eritrea. Somalia. Rwanda. Armed conflict reverberates across Africa. To better respond to the needs of African women activists living and working in conflict situations, Kaari B. Murungi sets up an “Africa desk” for UAF in Nairobi in 2001.

One of the earliest UAF Board members, Murungi is a feminist lawyer from Kenya and a legal adviser on gender-related crimes at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

“In the three years following UAF’s founding, more than 40% of grant requests come from Africa. We decide

that in order to conduct the necessary outreach to activists, we need a presence on the ground, with decisions being made locally.

While UAF-Africa follows the same Rapid Response Grantmaking model and criteria created by UAF, there are a few key differences. Instead of email, we rely mostly on cell phones and good old snail mail.

UAF-Africa focuses its work around peacebuilding and transitional justice. For example, when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is set up in Sierra Leone in 2002, we

support female witnesses testifying on gender-based and sexual violence. We also provide funds to the Society for Women Against AIDS in Africa to enable witnesses to receive medical services and counseling support, because telling their stories is so re-traumatizing.

UAF-Africa places women’s organizations at the center of regional peace advocacy, and strives to enhance women’s access to regional mechanisms for conflict resolution and human rights. We hold official observer status to monitor Rwanda’s Gacaca courts for settling disputes, and in 2005 we hosted the SSK Solidarity Forum, which convened Somali, Sudanese and Kenyan women to



share insights and lessons learned from their experiences in peace talks.

Together with UAF, we comprise this growing family of ‘urgent action funds’ working collaboratively towards a world in which women’s rights are promoted and protected.”

- Kaari B. Murungi

UAF-Africa’s numerous publications and reports are available at www.urgentactionfund.org.

January

The **Global Gag Rule**, forbidding US aid to groups that provide pro-choice counseling or services, is reinstated by the Bush Administration, severely undermining family planning services around the world.

January

UAF’s triples its staff capacity by hiring its first full-time Program Officer, Kirsten Westby, and making the temporary Office Manager position (first held by Jude Colle in 2000) permanent with the hire of Trena Moya (now UAF’s Finance & Operations Manager).



2000-1999

2000 September

The UN General Assembly sets eight **Millennium Development Goals to reach by 2015**. MDG #3, on gender equality and the empowerment of women, is declared a prerequisite for achieving all others.

2000 August

The UN Secretary General appoints the first **Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders**, Hina Jilani of Pakistan.



2000 May

UAF's office moves from Julie Shaw's kitchen table to an office in the Tides Center in San Francisco donated by Margaret Schink. Serena Brewer and Anne Frahn join UAF as the first part-time staff members.

2000 October

Under pressure from women activists worldwide, the UN Security Council adopts **Resolution 1325**, mandating women's equal participation in all efforts for peace and security, and in conflict prevention and resolution.



2000 June

Consultant Laurie Laird conducts UAF's **first outreach trips to Colombia and Ecuador** to meet with potential grantees.

Setting Legal Precedents for Women's Human Rights

Metlhaetsile Women's Information Centre, Botswana

A women lawyers group, the Metlhaetsile Women's Information Centre actively seeks precedent-setting cases to build the legal framework for women's rights and equality in Botswana.

In 1998, the Metlhaetsile Women's Information Centre in Botswana takes the case of Seponono Harvey, who faces the death penalty for the murder of her abusive partner. The defendant has been convicted of a capital offense, but the court agrees to hear arguments for reducing Ms. Harvey's sentence due to circumstances of domestic abuse.

In the appeal, Metlhaetsile seeks to make legal history by introducing "battered woman syndrome" as a defense in Botswana. "Battered woman syndrome" explains a mental state affecting a defendant's perception of danger posed by the abuser. After experiencing years of physical and emotional abuse, the defendant attempts or kills the aggressor, believing there is no other way out.

The syndrome has been recognized by judicial systems in the United Kingdom,

Canada and the US, but not in Southern Africa so far. In this case, the court allows "battered woman syndrome" as a defense, but only on the condition that a legal expert from the UK comes to testify (Botswana uses a British model for its legal system). However, the court will not pay for the expert to appear.

Urgent Action Fund provides the Rapid Response Grant to enable the UK lawyer's day in court, and to support Metlhaetsile's media campaign, Domestic Violence: It's A Crime!.

A national survey reveals that 3 out of every 5 women in Botswana are victims of violence, and 37% have been beaten during the prior year at the hands of their partner. With the legal expert's testimony, Ms. Harvey receives a reduced sentence of five years' imprisonment, and a precedent is set for using "battered woman syndrome" as a legal defense in future cases.

1999 November

UAF Board Chair Ariane Brunet travels to the Balkans to intensify UAF's Rapid Response Grantmaking in the region and to evaluate the involvement and effect on women and girls of major post-conflict reconstruction programs. With support from consultant Chris Corrin, **UAF releases its first publication, *Gender Audit of Reconstruction Programmes in South Eastern Europe***. Translated into Albanian, Bosnian, English and Serbian, the Gender Audit is launched at Beijing +5 as a tool to bring women more fully into the peacebuilding process.

2000 January

After an amnesty deadline in **Algeria's armed conflict**, violent attacks add 2,700 more deaths to the 100,000 casualties since 1992.



1998-97

1998 March

The **Kosovo Liberation Army** escalates their guerilla attacks into open rebellion against Serb rule after the Drenica massacre.

1997 November

UAF awards its first grant to the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women-Canada (GAATW-Canada). After police bust a sex trafficking ring in Canada, GAATW-Canada uses a Rapid Response Grant to mobilize an international Crisis Intervention Team to defend the trafficked Thai and Malaysian women facing deportation and/or criminal charges. A law granting temporary residence permits for trafficking victims is finally passed in 2006.

1997 October

A small group of women donors gather in San Francisco, California with UAF's co-founders Julie Shaw, Ariane Brunet and Margaret Schink. **These 'founding mothers' pool their resources and UAF is launched** as a project of the Tides Foundation & Tides Center.

No small thing

There was once a time, when what you had forged, was not.
No one missed it but you, you could hear it dripping across time.
It recognized your grit saw its reflection in the steel of your mind.
How you toiled to make it white hot turning the iron with the hands of your sisters.
Muscle, and sweat. Bone, on metal. Knowledge hard won.
You took the something and shaped it.
You gave it to your sisters and said a tool for justice that your labors may be less long.
And, well girl, that is NO SMALL THING!
The mothers cried 'folly' and the grandmothers cried 'yes'
and the daughters will take it and will forge anew from the core strong
and no one will remember
that there was a time when what was forged
was not.

This poem was written to honor Julie Shaw who through belief, determination and persistence birthed Urgent Action Fund through its founding years.



A Resounding 'Yes!'

The Founding of UAF

Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights was born from make-or-break moments in the global women's movement. Moments in which women's rights and human rights gained or lost ground, when women activists defied danger or faced harm.

In 1996 Julie Shaw, then Senior Program Manager at The Global Fund for Women, and Ariane Brunet of Rights & Democracy in Canada, who had recently launched the Coalition for Women's

Human Rights in Conflict Situations, met at the AWID Forum in Washington, DC and contemplated the needs of women activists operating in high-risk environments.

"There was a terrible void between the spur-of-the-moment situation for activists in conflict situations, and the capacity of donors to respond."

- Ariane Brunet, Co-founder

The solution was sketched out during that first meeting and subsequent conversations: rapid response grantmaking for women human rights defenders in urgent situations. When a threat becomes imminent, or a door of opportunity swings open, these are the moments that demand urgent action—by activists and donors alike.

By 1997, these two veterans in women's rights movements were ready to take action. They set out to build a new funding model, melding activist courage with donor commitment. Julie used six months of sabbatical support from members of the Women Donors Network to conduct a feasibility study for an 'Urgent Action Fund.' Among her 80 interviews with donors and activists was one with Margaret (Mudge) Schink of the Shaler Adams Foundation.

1997 January

Julie Shaw begins a feasibility study for UAF, interviewing over 80 activists and donors around the world to help develop the Rapid Response Grantmaking model.

1997 March

Switzerland ratifies CEDAW (the UN **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women**) making the US the only industrialized nation to reject it. The Optional Protocol is adopted in 1999, giving the UN the capacity to hear complaints by individuals and to conduct inquiries into violations of women's rights.



1996-93

“There was a lot of enthusiasm for this idea of an Urgent Action Fund. Part of that was because of Julie’s dedication and from people’s understanding and appreciation of the way that she worked. She developed a way of doing this that was new and respectful of all the stakeholders.”

- Margaret Schink, Co-founder

Together, Julie Shaw, Ariane Brunet, and Margaret Schink developed the Rapid Response Grantmaking model and UAF’s mission, both centered on the needs of activists: Cash in a crisis. To stay safe, to respond to a threat, or to seize an opportunity. One page of questions that you can fill out in your native language. A response in 72 hours. Money wired within the week.

1996 December
Peace Accords are signed in Guatemala, ending 36 years of civil war.



1995 September

The **Fourth UN World Conference on Women** convenes in Beijing, China and the resultant 'Beijing Platform for Action' becomes the basis of UAF's definition of women's human rights.

In the fall of 1997, the founders brought a small group of women donors together at the Tides Center, and presented the findings of the feasibility study. The response was a resounding, "Yes!". Every woman in the room wrote a check. UAF began immediately, with Julie as the Executive Director and only staff member, working out of her kitchen.

"We never saw ourselves as being outside of movements, but as activist-funders within the movement. This is reflected in our Board of Directors, which has always been comprised mostly of women defenders living and working in conflict-affected areas."

- Julie Shaw, Co-founder

"We approved the first grant within a week of the founding. Rapid Response Grantmaking was so much of our daily lives, we just lived and breathed human rights, trying to find the places where there were needs and trying to meet those needs. The first year or two we were all on call 24/7, Ariane, Julie and I reviewing every request that came in. Women can be in horrific situations, and it was extraordinary that they were able to reach out and quickly receive the funds."

- Margaret Schink, Co-founder

"I believe deeply that we need to pay attention to those activists that everyone else forgets - the women who are there prior, during, and after conflict situations. They will be there because they don't have a choice, because otherwise their society, family, or community won't survive. So even though our grants are quick, UAF's vigil has to stay."

- Ariane Brunet, Co-founder

1994 April – August

Over 800,000 people are killed in the **Rwandan Genocide**.

1993 June

Women's advocacy at the UN World Conference on Human Rights results in the **Vienna Declaration** stating, "The human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral, and indivisible part of universal human rights."



Ten Years

In ten years the women of Rwanda have gone from the horrors of genocide to the highest number of female lawmakers in the world, with women holding 48.5% of the seats in Rwanda's National Parliament in 2005. In ten years, women's activism has led to the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace & Security; the first convictions of rape as a war crime; adoption of the UN Millennium Development Goal on gender equality; and many other international mechanisms for advancing women's human rights.

At the same time, armed conflicts have proliferated in nearly every world region. Natural disasters have revealed the fatal costs of social inequalities. And the war on terror has rolled back civil liberties around the globe, undermining civil society activism on a wide range of issues.

With ten innovative years of Rapid Response Grantmaking and activist-led research on women's activism in conflict, UAF is firmly grounded in the movements we support and ready to grow our impact by leaps and bounds over the next decade.

In its tenth anniversary year, UAF is welcoming new leadership as renowned Israeli feminist activist Terry Greenblatt steps onto the trail blazed by co-founder Julie Shaw. Terry's energy and experience will help to propel UAF towards a future in which we continue to succeed in our core mission: to increase the amount and type of support available to women human rights defenders in situations of conflict and crisis.



Ten Times the Thanks

These acts of courage and vision would not be possible, nor would they have gained such ground for human rights, without the inestimable contributions of UAF's founding mothers, donors, advisors, staff, interns, board members, and above all, activist partners—who live their lives in the service of protecting and advancing the human rights of each of us.

Of the thousands of people who have made the last decade of UAF innovations in funding human rights possible, the following individuals merit special acknowledgment.

Founding Mother Donors

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Kathy Barry
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Finally, to the phenomenal Urgent Action Fund-Africa team - UAF offers its thanks and solidarity for decades to come.

**Italics indicate current involvement.*

About UAF & UAF-Africa

Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (UAF), founded in 1997, is an independent nonprofit organization with a strategic mandate to protect and promote women's human rights through Rapid Response Grantmaking, collaborative initiatives, research and publications. Grounded in a human rights framework and focused on women in civil society, Urgent Action Fund supports women human rights defenders responding to conflict and crisis around the world.

Urgent Action Fund-Africa (UAF-Africa), the independent sister fund of UAF, was established in 2001 in Kenya. UAF-Africa promotes women's human rights by encouraging or creating collaborative initiatives in peacebuilding, transitional justice and marginalized women's rights, as well as by providing Rapid Response Grants to women human rights defenders throughout the African continent.

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Launch of UAF-Latin America, likely to be located in Colombia. As with UAF-Africa, the establishment of UAF-Latin America will ground decision-making processes and resources with local activists, increase access to Rapid Response Grants and stimulate collaborative initiatives to advance women's human rights and peacebuilding throughout the region.

**URGENT
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FUND ♀**

FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

3100 Arapahoe Avenue, Suite 201

Boulder, CO 80303 USA

[t] (001) 303 442 2388

[f] (001) 303 442 2370

urgentact@urgentactionfund.org

www.urgentactionfund.org