



**Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF)**

**RELEASE**

**Launching of the Annual Report 2008**

**Copenhagen, June 29, 2009.** *The Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF) which aims at supporting defenders in the South-Mediterranean countries is publishing today its 2008 Annual Report. The report focuses on the actions undertaken by the EMHRF during the year 2008.*

The repression continued to grow and human rights defenders in the southern Mediterranean have continued to carry on the difficult task of promoting and defending human rights in 2008.

Driss El Yazami, President of the EMHRF, said: *“the year highlighted unprecedented collective movements of peaceful protest in Tunisia, Syria and Egypt challenging unfair employment practices and calling for the establishment of a democratic system that respects the rights of citizens, guarantees the rights to freedom of expression and association, and brings an end to discrimination. However, the governments’ only response led to several arrests, imprisonment sentences and reprisal measures against the families of defenders”*.

In light of the broad political trends at the national and international levels, it was essential to provide defenders not only with political support but also with financial support, taking into account the need for timeliness and flexibility, so as to enable them to develop their activities not only as witnesses, advocates and promoters but also as defenders of all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Against this background, the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF) provided support to ***more than a hundred defenders***, individuals and NGOs, in the region.

This report is published in French, English and Arabic.

**‘Highlights 2008’ are available on the EMHRF website:**

<http://www.emhrf.org/usr/00000003/00000143.pdf>

**For the full version of the report:**

<http://www.emhrf.org/usr/00000003/00000146.pdf>