

Dr. Daniel Calingaert
Freedom House

Dr. Calingaert oversees Freedom House's wide range of civil society and media programs. He is also Professorial Lecturer at American University, where he teaches courses on democracy.

He previously served as Associate Director of American University's Center for Democracy and Election Management and as Associate Director of the Commission on Federal Election Reform, which was co-chaired by Jimmy Carter and James A. Baker, III.

Dr. Calingaert has served as Director for Asia and as Deputy Director for Eastern Europe at the International Republican Institute, where he designed and managed a wide range of programs to promote democracy. These programs strengthened civil society, parliaments, governance, political parties, and elections in more than a dozen countries.

Lucie Morillon, Reporters Without Borders

Lucie Morillon works in the Washington, DC office of Reporters Without Borders. After earning a masters degree in history from the University of Nantes, and another in communications and politics from the Institut Supérieur du Management Public et Politique, Morillon joined the French National Consultative Commission of Human Rights (CNCDH).

Transferred to Washington, DC in July 2004, she opened a representative office in the American capital, where she supervises Reporters Without Borders USA in partnership with the New York office. She covers issues related to press freedom in the United States, which can be summarized for the most part by an increasing number of attacks against the right of reporters to maintain source confidentiality. She supervises press relations so as to ensure that the American media give more coverage to press freedom abuses abroad. The aim is to point a finger at repressive countries and to challenge their international reputation. She informs the political decision-makers concerned of the organization's positions.

Harry Wu, Laogai Research Foundation

Harry Wu spent 19 years incarcerated by the Chinese government in the Laogai — the “Bamboo Gulag”— as a political prisoner. In 12 different labor camps Wu was forced to manufacture chemicals, mine coal, build roads, and plant crops. He survived beatings, torture, and starvation, and witnessed the death of many of his fellow prisoners. After his release in 1979, Wu moved to the United States determined to expose the truth about the Laogai - the most extensive forced labor system in the world. He has repeatedly risked his life returning to China to document slavery and human rights abuses.

Wu is currently the executive director of the Laogai Research Foundation (LRF), a non-profit organization committed to documenting the Laogai system and exposing other human rights abuses in China such as the death penalty, organ harvesting, and the One Child Policy. He also heads the China Information Center (CIC), an online Chinese-language news and commentary website directed at mainland Chinese readers. Wu has received numerous awards for his activities, including the Hungarian Freedom Fighters Award in 1991, the Martin Ennals Human Rights Award in 1994, the Human Rights Advocate Award of the Harvard Foundation of Harvard University, and the 1996 Geuzen Medal of Honor from the Dutch Foundation for the Geuzen Resistance Movement, the Hero of Freedom Medal of the President of the Republic of Hungary in 2007, as well as other international honors.

Mehdi Khalaji, Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Mehdi Khalaji is a senior fellow at The Washington Institute, focusing on the domestic policy of Iran as well as the politics of Shiite groups in the Middle East. A Shiite theologian by training, Mr. Khalaji has also served on the editorial boards of two prominent Iranian periodicals and produced for BBC as well as the U.S. government's Persian news service.

From 1986 to 2000, Mr. Khalaji trained in the seminaries of Qom, the traditional center of Iran's clerical establishment. There he studied theology and jurisprudence, earning a doctorate and researching widely on modern intellectual and philosophical-political developments in Iran and the wider Islamic and Western worlds. In Qom, and later in Tehran, Mr. Khalaji embarked on a career in journalism, first serving on the editorial board of a theological journal *Naqd va Nazar* and the daily *Entekhab*. In addition to his own writing, he has translated the works of the humanist Islamic scholar Muhammad Arkoun.

In 2000, Mr. Khalaji moved Paris where he studies Shiite theology and exegesis in the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes and worked for BBC Persian Service as the political analyst on Iranian affairs and eventually became a broadcaster for the Prague-based Radio Farda, the Persian-language service of the U.S. government's Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. At Radio Farda, he produced news, features, and analysis on a range of Middle Eastern, Iranian, and Islamic issues.

T. Kumar
Advocacy Director for Asia & Pacific
Amnesty International USA

T. Kumar is the Advocacy Director for Asia & Pacific for Amnesty International USA. He has worked in several Asian and African countries and served as a human rights monitor in many Asian countries as well as in Bosnia, Haiti, Guatemala, and South Africa. He has also served as director of several refugee ships and refugee camps.

Kumar frequently lectures at the Foreign Service Institute where U.S. diplomats are trained and he often testifies before the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. He is also a Professor at Washington College of Law's Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. He holds an advanced degree in law from the University of Pennsylvania Law School.