

2022 Oslo Freedom Forum

23-25 May 2022

Oslo Konserthus | Oslo, Norway

Impact Report

ABOUT THE OSLO FREEDOM FORUM

The Oslo Freedom Forum (OFF) is a thriving global community united by a common vision of making the world more peaceful, prosperous, and free from tyranny. It is where some of the world's leading human rights advocates, business leaders, tech entrepreneurs, journalists, and policymakers come together to share their stories and discuss ways to advance liberty and democracy across the globe.

OFF is a catalyst for human rights defenders and their work: from sharing their stories on stage and raising awareness of key human rights issues, to developing new skills and refining practices that strengthen their missions, to networking with champions of change from all fields and all corners of the world. The flagship Forum is held annually in Oslo, Norway, while OFF satellite events convene in cities like New York, Johannesburg, Mexico City, San Francisco, Miami, and Taipei.

“One of the greatest benefits of the Oslo Freedom Forum (OFF), say its participants, is that it makes people feel less alone. If you are a dissident up against a dictatorship, you can feel very, very alone. But the people at OFF are in the same boat, so to speak. They can trade stories, compare notes — be understood. And they feel less alone.”

— Jay Nordlinger
National Review (1 June 2022)

Activism

Democracy

Peace

Truth

CHAMPION OF CHANGE

OSLO FREEDOM FORUM

Resilience

Freedom

Justice

Education

Human Rights

We have seen time and again that when faced with repression by authoritarian regimes, seemingly ordinary individuals step up to become champions of change in their communities and in the world. While governments and multilateral organizations are often slow to react to international crises, these individuals leap into action — sometimes at great personal risk — to protect freedom, expose corruption, and reform unjust systems.

Our theme for OFF 2022, **Champion of Change**, celebrated both activists, who are themselves champions, and their causes. This theme represented a strong, scalable call to action, inviting our community to act and advocate on behalf of activists and unite in the common cause of promoting freedom and human rights. At OFF, we realize that everyone has the potential to effect change — either as a champion on an individual level, or as part of a larger movement.

SPONSORS



Sergey Brin
Family Foundation



KINGSWAY
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SUPPORTERS



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LIKESTILLING | INTEGRERING | MANGFOLD



MIGHTY GUM



oslo business region

PAXFUL



yubico

MEDIA IMPACT

More than **150 international and local journalists** attended OFF 2022 to cover our keynote speakers and shed light on the most pressing human rights issues of this year. As of June 2022, there have been more than **445 unique articles, profiles, op-eds, interviews, podcasts, and videos** produced about the conference and its speakers, in **22 languages** and from **47 countries**. Outlets covering OFF 2022 include ***CNN, The Washington Post, Bloomberg, National Review, POLITICO, Associated Press, NRK, Aftenposten, and The Guardian.***

OFF in the News



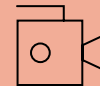
445 Articles



22 Languages

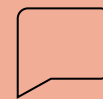


47 Countries



256 Media Sources

Social Media Engagement



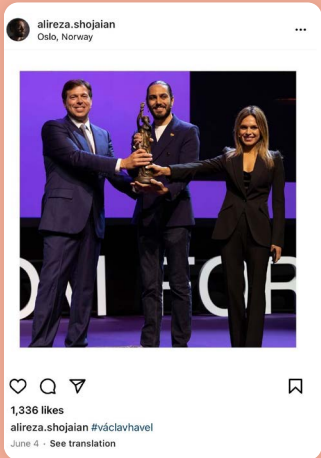
363 Unique Posts



200,000 Video Views



12M Social Media Impressions



HIGHLIGHTS

The Washington Post

Iranian Artists-in-Exile Find a Vehicle for Protest 4 June 2022



The Guardian

'You Have to Step Over Your Fear': How to Take on a Dictator 7 June 2022



NATIONAL REVIEW

For Freedom, Against Dictatorship, Campaigning for Good 1 June 2022



AP

PaykanArtCar Receives the Havel Prize for Creative Dissent at the 2022 Oslo Freedom Forum 26 May 2022



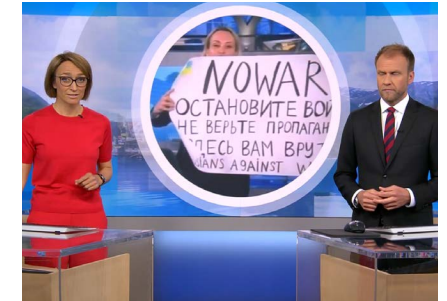
CNN

Connect the World 27 May 2022



NRK

Dagsrevyen 25 May 2022



VG

Hjelpeløse FN 28 May 2022





THEATER TALKS

At OFF 2022, speakers revealed how they are championing causes — including justice, human rights, truth, peace, and innovation — in their communities and in the world. They called upon the international community to stand in solidarity with activists and take tangible actions to advance freedom and democracy.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**AREEJ
AL-SADHAN**

Activist & Sister of Jailed
Saudi Humanitarian Aid Worker
Abdulrahman Al-Sadhan



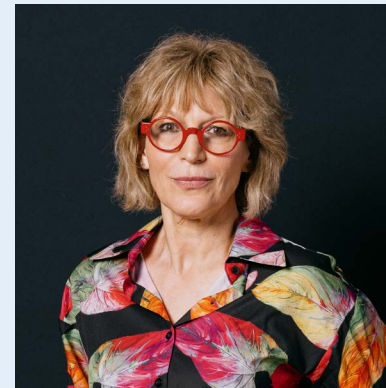
**MARIANNE
BORGEN**

Mayor of Oslo



**OMAR
ALSHOGRE**

Director of Detainee Affairs,
Syrian Emergency Task Force



**AGNÈS
CALLAMARD**

Secretary General,
Amnesty International



**CAROLINA
BARRERO**

Cuban Art Historian &
Human Rights Advocate



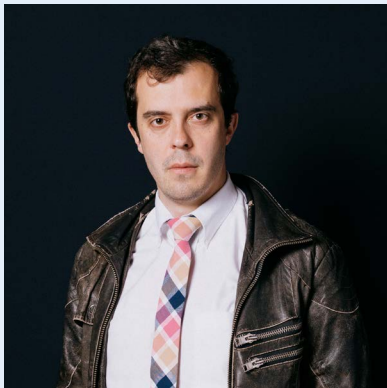
**FILMON
DEBRU**

Eritrean Human Trafficking Survivor



FODÉ DIOP

Senegalese Financial
Freedom Advocate



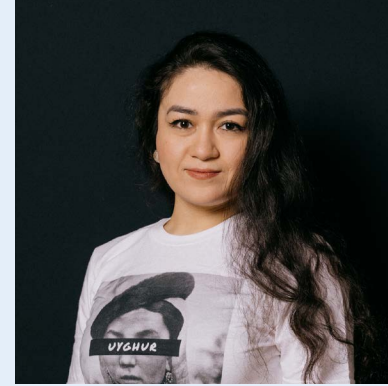
ROMAN DOBROKHOTOV

Russian Investigative Journalist



ZARIFA GHAFARI

Exiled Afghan Activist
& Politician



JEWHER ILHAM

Uyghur Advocate & Daughter
of Imprisoned Scholar Ilham Tohti



BEKTOUR ISKENDER

Kyrgyz Journalist &
Free Speech Activist



CARINE KANIMBA

Daughter of Imprisoned
“Hotel Rwanda” Hero
Paul Rusesabagina



EVGENIA KARA-MURZA

Project Manager,
Free Russia Foundation



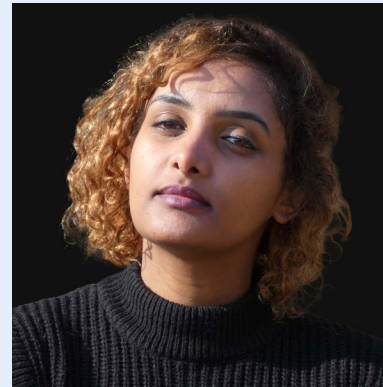
GARRY KASPAROV

Chairman, Human Rights Foundation



TAWAKKOL KARMAN

Yemeni Nobel Peace Prize Laureate &
Human Rights Activist



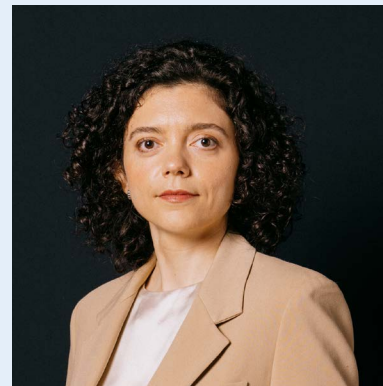
LUCY KASSA

Ethiopian Investigative Journalist



FATMA KARUME

Tanzanian Lawyer &
Human Rights Advocate



TATSIANA KHOMICH

Belarusian Activist & Sister of
Political Prisoner Maria Kalesnikava



**DMYTRO
KULEBA**

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ukraine



**CHUNG CHING
(GLACIER) KWONG**

Hong Kong Political &
Digital Rights Activist



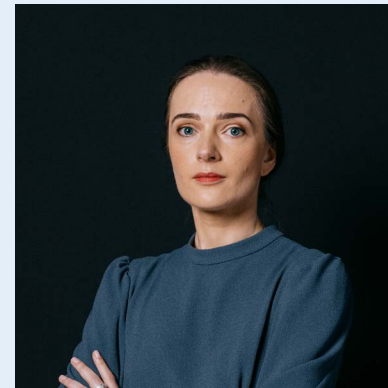
**CHEMI
LHAMO**

Tibetan Activist &
Community Organizer



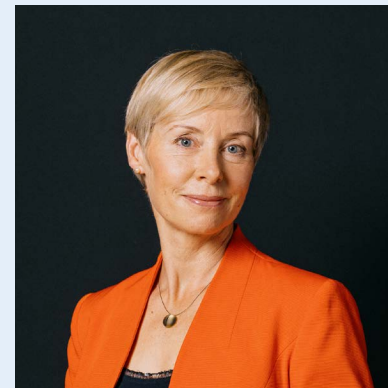
**JACK
MALLERS**

CEO, Strike



**OLEKSANDRA
MATVIICHUK**

Head of the Center for
Civil Liberties, Ukraine



**PHILIPPA
THOMAS**

BBC Journalist

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**VERONICA
TSEPKALO**

Chair, Belarus Women's Foundation



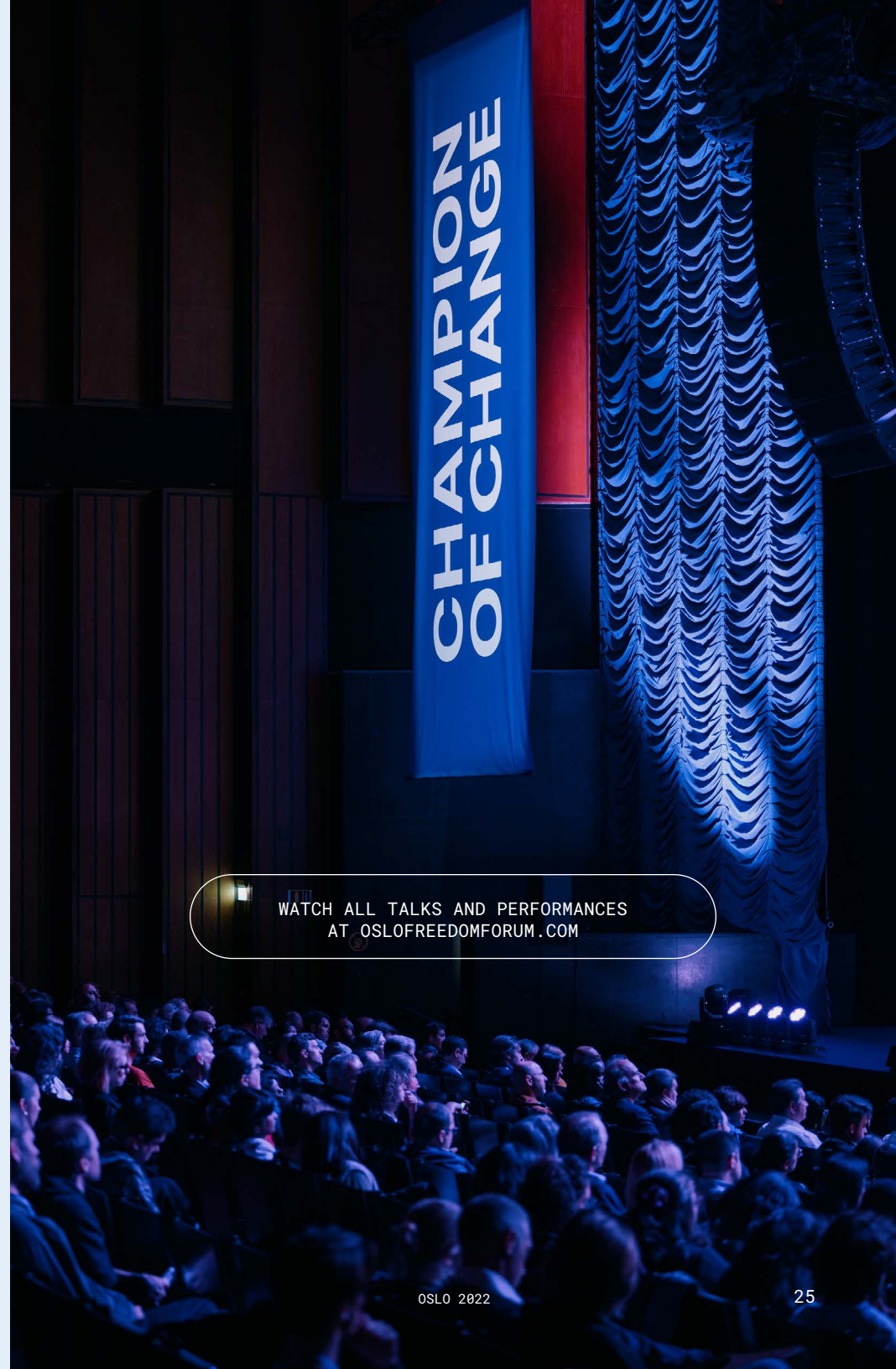
**SVIATLANA
TSIKHANOUSKAYA**

Leader of Democratic Belarus



**MICHELA
WRONG**

Author & Journalist



WATCH ALL TALKS AND PERFORMANCES
AT [OSLOFREEDOMFORUM.COM](https://oslofreedomforum.com)

PERFORMERS



**LYNN
ADIB**

Syrian Vocalist & Musician



**WALID
BEN SELIM**

Moroccan Musician & Producer



**SAKDIYAH
MA'RUF**

Indonesia's First Muslim Female Stand-Up Comic



**MANASSEH
MATHIANG**

Sudanese Musician & Activist



**JP
JOFRE**

Argentinian Bandoneon Player & Composer



**ØISTEIN
KRISTIANSEN**

Norwegian Cartoonist, Author, & Media Personality



**KEVORK
MOURAD**

Armenian-Syrian Visual Artist



**YURY
REVICH**

Austrian Classical Violinist & Composer

TALK HIGHLIGHTS



“The war continues, and I cannot know the way my personal story will end. However, I am certain that Ukraine will win. And freedom will prevail.”

– OLEKSANDRA MATVIICHUK
Head of the Center for Civil Liberties, Ukraine

“And the next time you see refugees as a burden, say my name. Remember that refugees are refugees for a reason. Filmon did not choose to become a refugee. Filmon’s body was sold and trafficked and almost left for dead. Filmon was fleeing for his life.”

– FILMON DEBRU
Eritrean Human Trafficking Survivor





**“Honor the sacrifice
Hong Kong has made
for you, and press your
governments to stand
with those who held
umbrellas into a wind of
tear gas to defend our
common values.”**

– CHUNG CHING (GLACIER) KWONG
Hong Kong Political & Digital Rights Activist

**“It was all a mock execution;
my mother managed to
smuggle me out. A moment
near death, that taught me
that my life has a purpose:
I must serve.”**

– OMAR ALSHOGRE
Director of Detainee Affairs,
Syrian Emergency Task Force



“To the leaders present here today, invest in the youth. Look around, the champions of change are here, right beside you. We are ready and so, together, let’s RISE.”

– CHEMI LHAMO

Tibetan Activist & Community Organizer





THE VÁCLAV HAVEL INTERNATIONAL PRIZE FOR CREATIVE DISSENT

The Havel Prize was founded in 2012 with Dagmar Havlová, the widow of the late Czech poet, playwright, dissident, and statesman Václav Havel. Havel was the chairman of HRF from 2009 until his death in December 2011. The Havel Prize honors his legacy and celebrates those who, with bravery and ingenuity, unmask the lie of dictatorship by living and creating in truth. The 2022 Havel Prize Laureates include: PaykanArtCar, Enes Kanter Freedom, and Marina Ovsyannikova.



Left to right: Norwegian MP Mahmoud Farahmand, Iranian artist Alireza Shojaian, PaykanArtCar CEO Ambassador Mark Wallace, and PaykanArtCar Executive Director & Co-Founder Dr. Hiva Feizi.

PAYKANARTCAR

Each year, the PaykanArtCar organization commissions an exceptional Iranian artist-in-exile to use its vintage Paykan automobile as a canvas to capture the Iranian struggle for human dignity and basic freedoms. The inaugural PaykanArtCar was designed by Alireza Shojaian and features a historic Persian design with a provocative message about the brutality and ruthlessness faced by the marginalized and oppressed LGBTQ+ community inside Iran.



ENES KANTER FREEDOM

Enes Kanter Freedom is a professional basketball player who has used his global platform to raise awareness of the Chinese Communist Party's human rights abuses. Using his basketball shoes as the canvas for his messages, he wore multiple artistic designs highlighting issues such as the Uyghur genocide, the occupation of Tibet, and the intolerance of China's dictator.



MARINA OVSYANNIKOVA

Marina Ovsyannikova is a Ukrainian-born Russian journalist and activist, who staged a live protest against the war in Ukraine during a news broadcast on Russian state TV. Following her demonstration on live TV and subsequent anti-war video, Ovsyannikova was held overnight in a police station, denied access to a lawyer, and ultimately fined 30,000 roubles.

INTERACTIVE PROGRAMMING

Interactive programming at OFF 2022 featured panel discussions, deep dives, fireside chats, and workshops each afternoon. The sessions challenged participants to think more critically about the issues presented during the theater talks, forge partnerships, and create practical, innovative solutions to advance freedom worldwide. Sessions were organized into four thematic tracks that explored various elements of our theme, Champion of Change.



Panel discussion: "Building Justice for Syria: Universal Jurisdiction and the Koblenz Trial." From front to back: Omar Alshogre, Alexandra Lily Kather, & Alia Malek.

CREATIVITY, RESILIENCE, & MOVEMENTS



Panel discussion, "Putin's Wars: How to Defend Human Rights in Russia, Ukraine, and Beyond." From left to right: Anne Applebaum, Oleksandra Matviichuk, Paul Massaro, & Garry Kasparov.

Successful movements rely on passion, creativity, and the commitment of their fiercest champions. Painting, music, theater, and film can act as tools for dissident artists to reveal the corruption of dictatorships and create symbols that unite people around a common message of freedom. Some of the most effective activists leverage their creative talents to build a coalition of people against tyranny. However, in building these movements, activists also face challenges along the way and learn to develop resilience.

- **Defending the Defenders: The Right to Protect the Environment**
- **Fighting Transnational Repression Against Journalists**
- **LGBTQI+ Rights When Democracy Dies**
- **How to Talk to the Media** [workshop]
- **Putin's Wars: How to Defend Human Rights in Russia, Ukraine, and Beyond**
- **The Myth of the "Efficient" Dictatorship**
- **How Can Civil Society Counter a Coup d'Etat?**
- **Using Creativity to Champion Change** [workshop]
- **Building an Alliance for Freedom** [workshop]
- **Tanzania's Child Marriage Struggle**

ACCOUNTABILITY, JUSTICE, & REFORM



Panel discussion, “Sportswashing: From the Beijing Genocide Games to Qatar’s FIFA World Cup Migrant Workers’ Crisis.” From left to right: Karim Zidane, Malcolm Bidali, Chemi Lhamo, & Lise Klaveness.

Justice is the bedrock of a prosperous and free society because it allows everyday citizens to hold those in power accountable for their actions. In autocracies, the law is used and abused to keep the regime in power and eliminate all forms of opposition. Without independent judiciaries, free media, and democratic elections, ordinary citizens cannot protect themselves from government abuse. This thematic area explored how activists and their allies work to hold regimes accountable — revealing their corruption, reporting on their brutality, and showing that a fairer, more just society is possible.

- **Corruption, Rent-Seeking, and the Acquisition of Loot:**
The Central Objectives of Authoritarianism
- **The True Story of China’s Genocide of the Uyghurs:**
A Conversation with Nury Turkel and Garry Kasparov
- **Sportswashing:** From the Beijing Genocide Games to Qatar’s FIFA World Cup Migrant Workers’ Crisis
- **Authoritarianism, ESG, and the Impact of Foreign Investment on Global Human Rights**
- **When Systems Fail:** Understanding the Intersection of Authoritarian Regimes and Modern Slavery
- **Citizen Driven Corporate Accountability in Human Rights and Beyond**
- **Building Justice for Syria:** Universal Jurisdiction and the Koblenz Trial
- **The Future of Palestine**

INNOVATION, TECH, & CIVIL LIBERTIES



Office hours, "Meta & the Community."

Over the past decade, the internet and other technologies have played a central role in organizing social movements across the globe. However, even as these technologies have connected billions of people, authoritarian regimes have manipulated them to encroach on civil liberties, censor dissidents, and spread discord. Surveillance states, troll factories, and internet blackouts all serve to prevent ordinary people from uncovering the truth and organizing resistance. However, this thematic area showed how activists across the world have harnessed the power of innovation to overcome the barriers put up by dictatorships.

- **Citizen Lab & the Community** [office hours]
- **Twitter & the Community** [office hours]
- **Meta & the Community** [office hours]
- **Tech Tactics of New Authoritarianism**
- **Digital Security with Yubico** [workshop]
- **The Spyware That Came in From the Cold: Pegasus and Candiru** [workshop]
- **Digital Safety Training for Artists and Human Rights Defenders** [workshop]
- **Can NFTs be a Helpful Tool for Human Rights Activists?**

FINANCIAL FREEDOM



Workshop, "Bitcoin Academy."

Financial freedom is an increasingly important aspect of human rights. Authoritarian regimes are more likely to devalue their currencies, steal from ordinary citizens, and freeze activists' bank accounts. This thematic area examined how dictatorships — such as those in China, Turkey, and Venezuela — use money to pressure ordinary citizens to behave a certain way, whether that be by monitoring bank accounts or providing incentives to join a political party. Some activists are using Bitcoin and related technology to push back. This programming was generously sponsored by Seetee.

- **The Quest for Financial Freedom**
- **Can Bitcoin Reach a Billion People?**
- **The Rise of Stablecoins in Emerging Markets and Authoritarian Regimes**
- **Is Bitcoin Compatible with Democracy?**
- **Bitcoin, the Environment, and Human Rights**
- **CBDCs, Privacy, and the Cashless Society**
- **A Sustainable Financial World**

EXPO & ARTS PROGRAMMING

Confronting authoritarianism requires a creative, multi-faceted approach. The 2022 expo featured innovative projects by artists, technologists, civil society organizations, academics, and business leaders who have become champions of change within their particular industries. Through hands-on exhibits and art installations, the expo invited attendees from all disciplines, regions, and walks of life to unite in protecting freedom and human rights globally. Exhibits showcased HRF programs, as well as initiatives by our partner organizations.

Art in Protest Residency: Transmuting Borders

Art in Protest



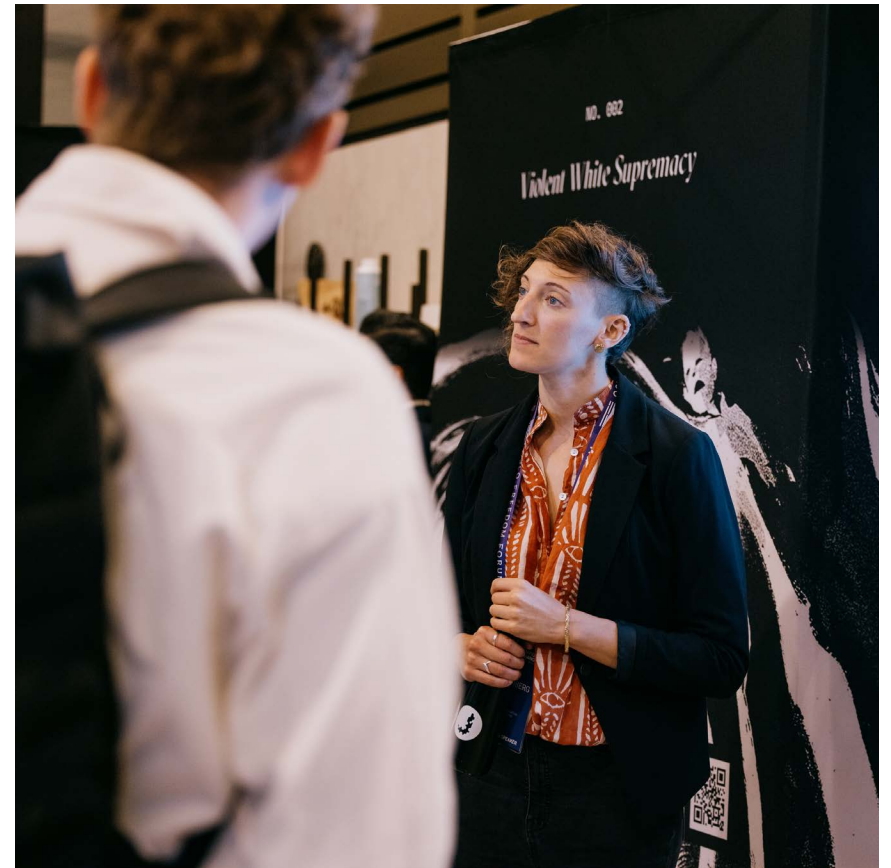
"Transmuting Borders," a digital installation featuring works from artists in HRF's Art in Protest Residency, explores themes of protest in the face of global authoritarianism and the refugee crisis it perpetuates.

ArtLords Community Mural: Stand With Ukraine



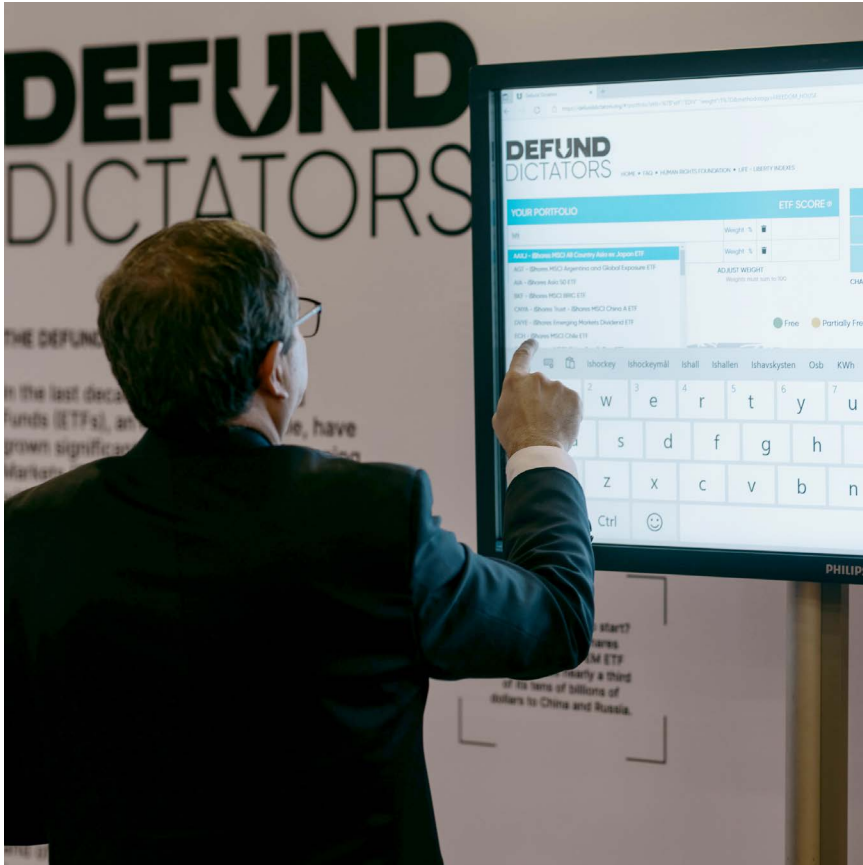
Attendees contribute to a live community mural, designed by ArtLords, which paid tribute to the children of Ukraine during the Russian invasion.

The Current by Jigsaw



Representatives from Jigsaw introduce attendees to *The Current*, a new publication that compiles and connects relevant research, data, technology, and culture.

Defund Dictators



A guest uses HRF’s new Defund Dictators tool to see if one of his investments may be inadvertently propping up an authoritarian regime. Defund Dictators is part of HRF’s recently launched Responsible Finance program.

Gaming for Freedom



Attendees explore how video games can be a creative avenue for activism in HRF’s “Gaming for Freedom” exhibit, which debuted at the SXSW conference in March 2022.

End Banned Books



The “End Banned Books” exhibit, hosted by Ideas Beyond Borders, highlights the evolving global character of book banning and censorship by showcasing various books by OFF speakers that have been banned by dictatorships.

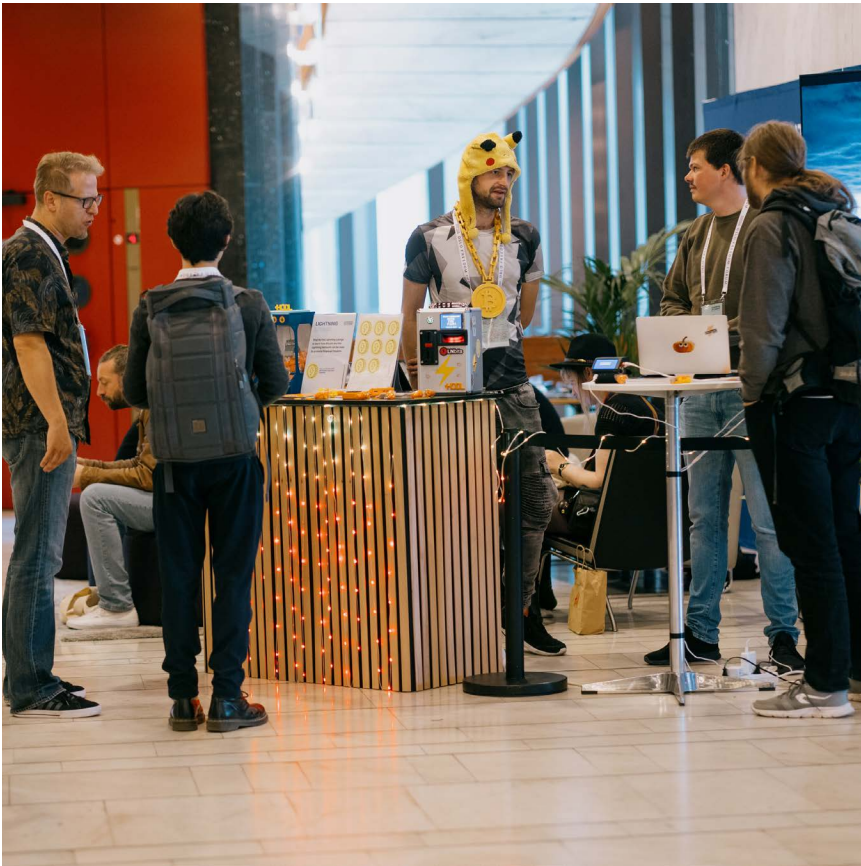
Impact Litigation: Postcards for Prisoners

**IMPACT
LITIGATION**



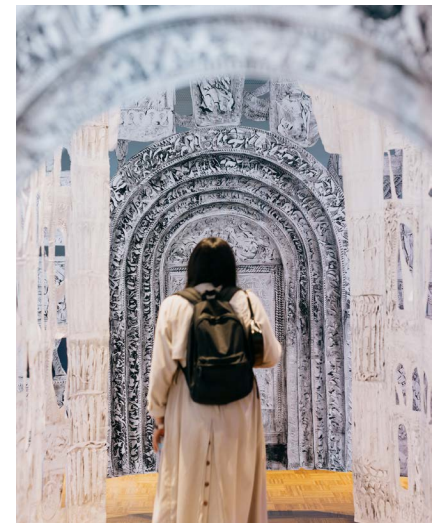
Attendees view portraits and stories of arbitrarily detained dissidents whom HRF's Impact Litigation team has defended. Guests were able to write supportive messages on postcards to these individuals.

The Lightning Lounge



Engineers and developers chat with attendees about how the Lightning Network is making online payments faster, cheaper, and more private.

Memory Gates



"Memory Gates," a 3D art installation by Armenian-Syrian artist Kevork Mourad, explores the complexities and connections between memory and place.

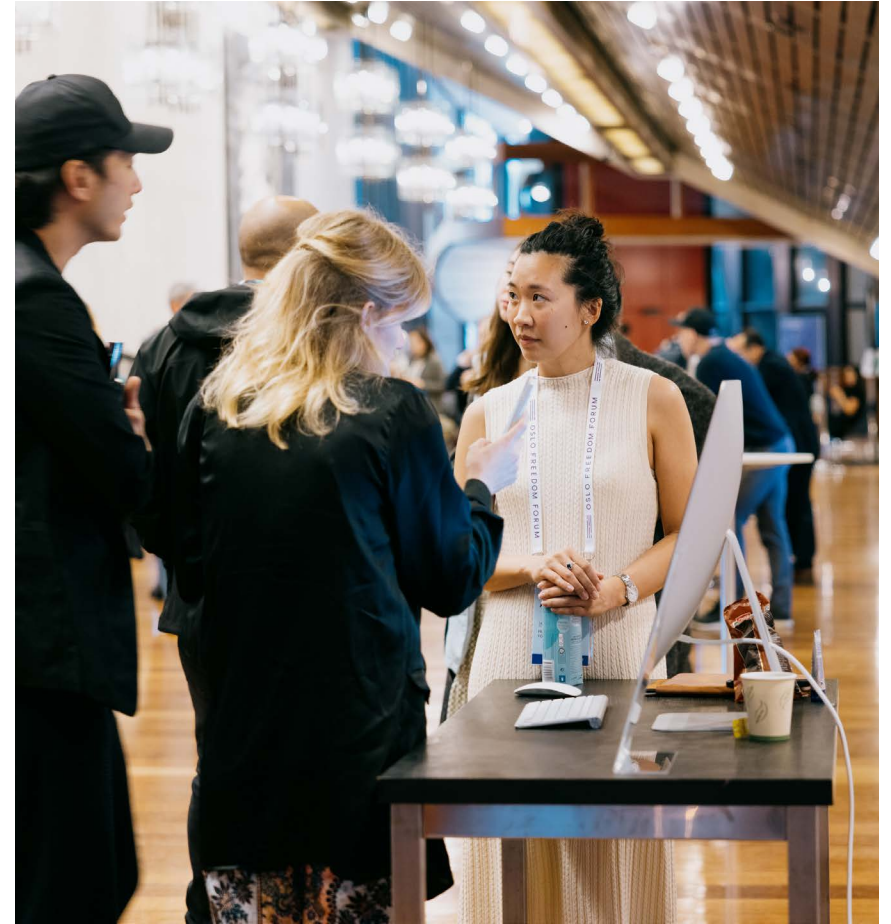
Pillar of Shame



Amnesty International Norway and the Hong Kong Committee in Norway unveil the Pillar of Shame, an eight-meter-tall statue that pays homage to the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre.



Uncomfortable Truth



A HRF staff member helps attendees use the “Uncomfortable Truth” plug-in, which pings online shoppers when they are about to make a purchase from brands that are complicit in Uyghur forced labor.



Voices from Inside Ukraine



The "Voices from Inside" exhibit plays short audio testimonials from Ukrainians about Putin's war. Guests have the opportunity to record their own messages of support for the Ukrainian people.

Nobody's Listening



A guest tries out "Nobody's Listening," a powerful VR experience that transports viewers to sites of the Yazidi genocide to help them understand and empathize with victims.

STORIES OF IMPACT

OFF is just the first step. After the event, connections often blossom into innovative collaborations and useful partnerships. OFF has a ripple effect — inspiring social innovation, policy changes, greater international awareness for human rights issues, alliances, and new philanthropic support for pro-democracy causes. The following pages are just a few examples of OFF 2022's impact so far.





Citizen Lab hosts office hours on digital security.



OFF 2022 speaker Carine Kanimba discovered that her phone was infected with the Pegasus spyware, thanks to the help of Citizen Lab, a digital security lab based in Canada.

At OFF 2022, Citizen Lab hosted office hours in which its team tested guests' phones to see if they had been infected by spyware from authoritarian regimes. This was the second time the Rwandan regime had targeted Kanimba's devices to monitor and repress her activism. Through this experience, Kanimba was able to evade dictator Paul Kagame and continue freely advocating for the release of her father, Paul Rusesabagina, who is currently a prisoner of conscience in Rwanda.



Attendees visit the "Gaming for Freedom" expo room to learn how video games can enhance activism.

CÉLINE

SESSION 1

THOR

EVGENIA
KARA-MURZA

MARIANNE
BORGÉN

OLEKSANDRIA
MATVIICHUK

NIGHT IS
DARKEST
BEFORE
DAWN

justified

LET ME
DIE
STANDING.

- MUCK
EXECUTION
- 100
FLOWERS

By graphic designer and illustrator
Alice Mao (@alicemaoart)



From left to right: PaykanArtCar CEO Ambassador Mark Wallace, Iranian artist Alireza Shojaian, and PaykanArtCar Executive Director & Co-Founder Dr. Hiva Feizi accept the 2022 Havel Prize.

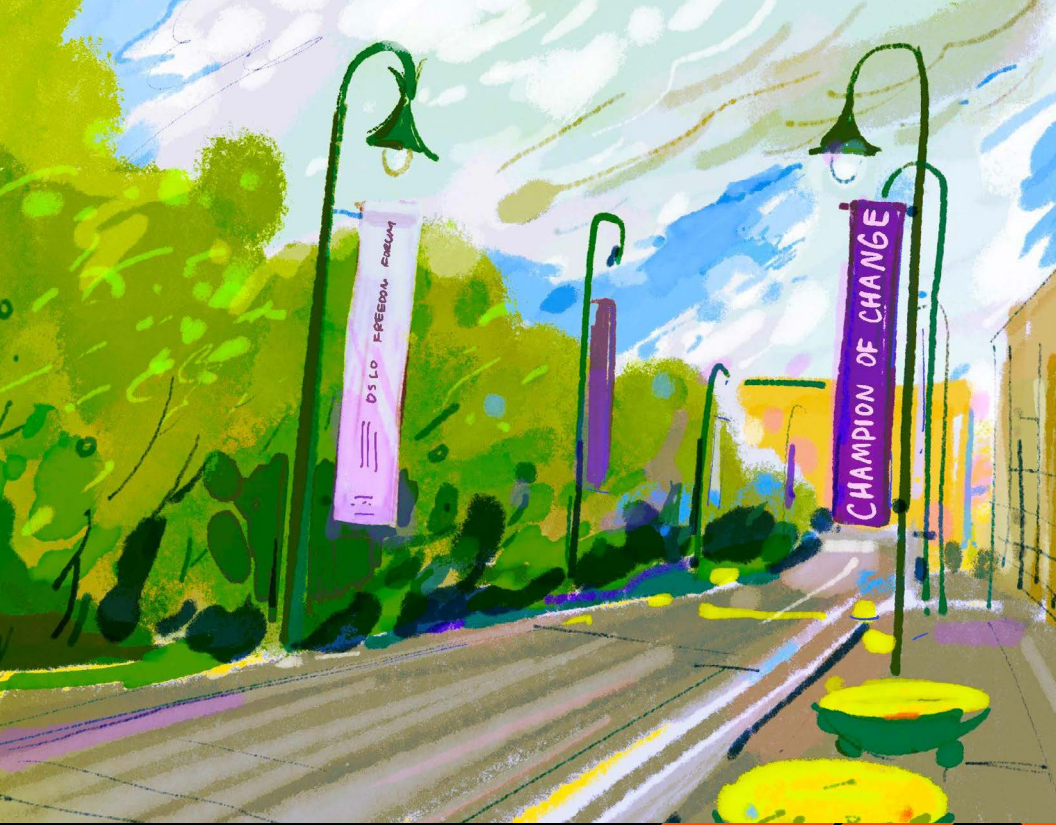


Attendees from all over the world connect and network at evening events and receptions.

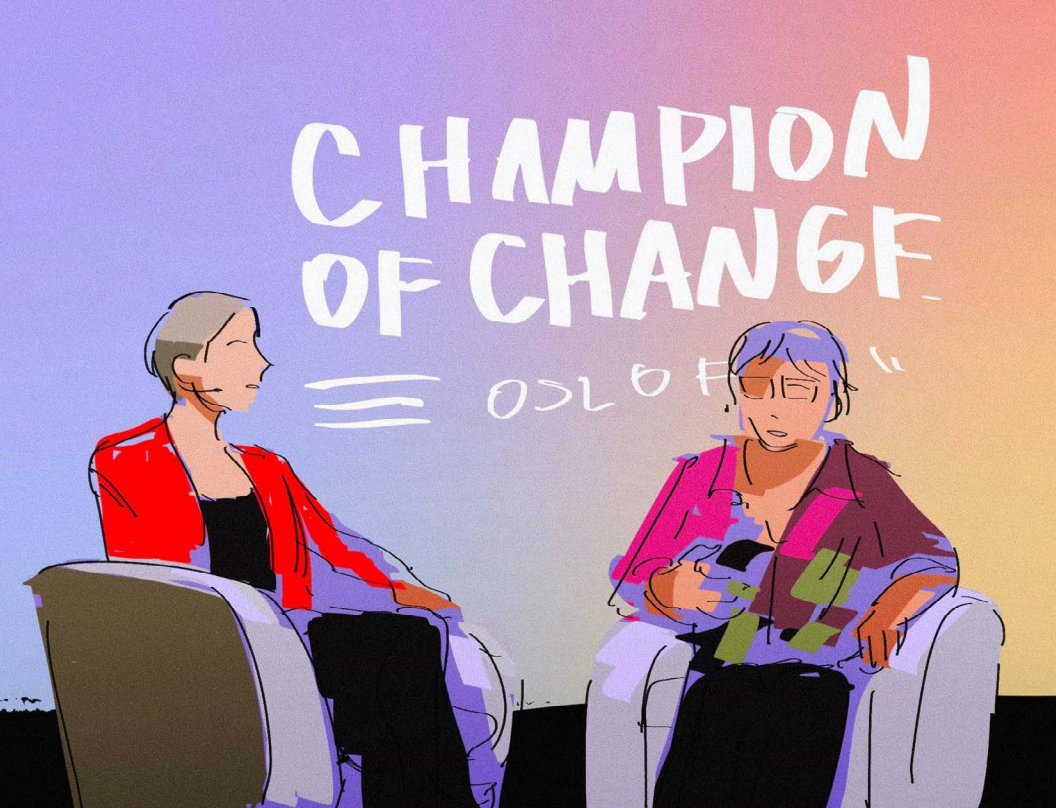
Reporter and journalist Melissa Mahtani joined award-winning filmmaker David Henry Gerson to host a Q&A at a recent screening of Gerson’s new documentary “The Story Won’t Die.”

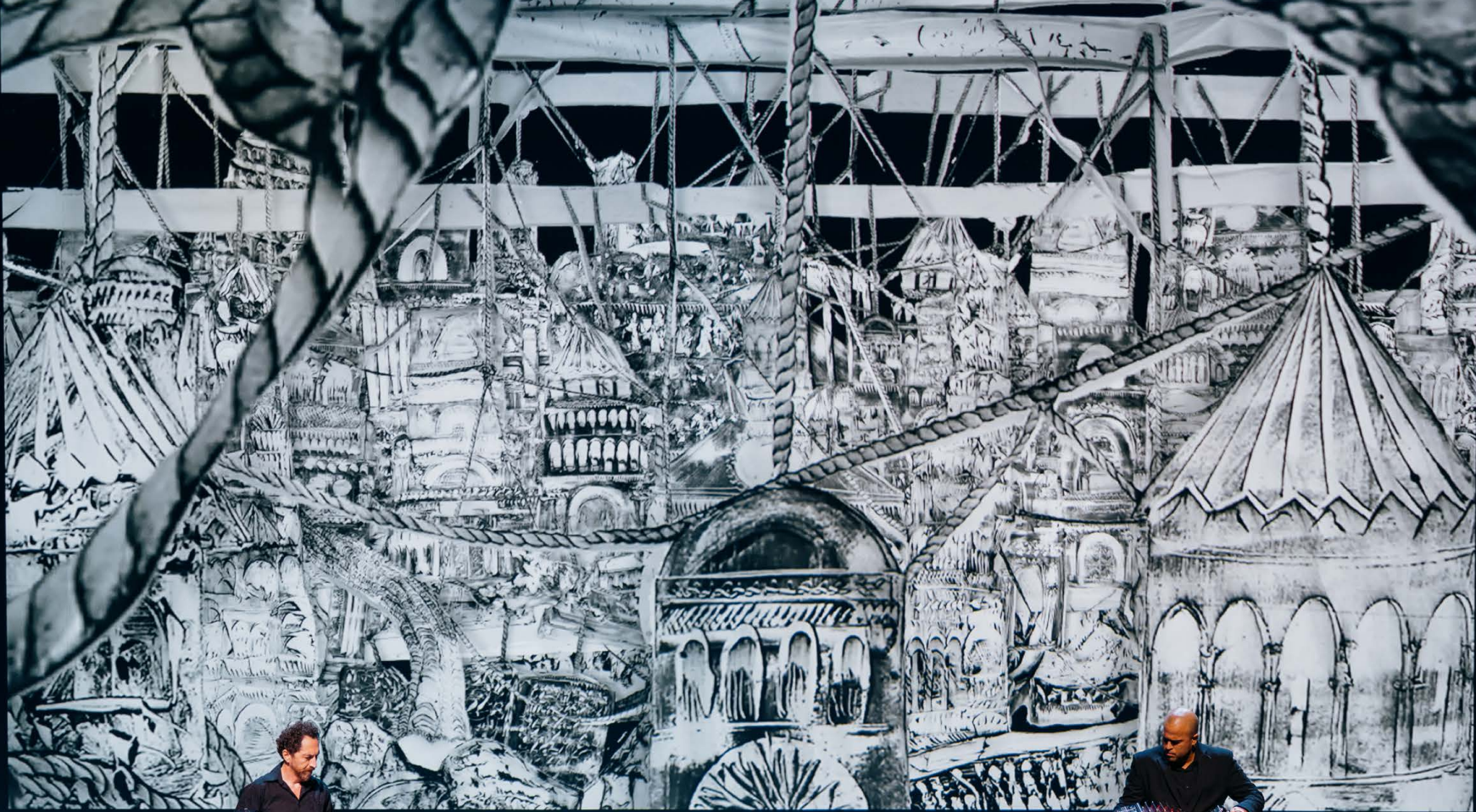
The documentary, which Mahtani first saw at OFF 2022, examines a young generation of Syrian artists who use their work to protest and process the Syrian refugee crisis. Mahtani and Gerson reunited at an exclusive documentary screening at Soho House in New York on June 15, 2022, and were able to garner greater attention for this film and stories of Syrian activists.





YURY SYREVICH
ORIGINAL
COMPOSITION





OSLO FREEDOM FORUM

Visual artist Kevork Mourad and composer JP Jofre perform together on the OFF mainstage.



Julie Trébault, Director of Artists at Risk Connection at PEN America, and OFF 2022 speaker Carolina Barrero have decided to launch a campaign to put pressure on the Cuban government to release prisoners of conscience.

Barrero has been advocating on behalf of fellow Cuban artist and HRF community member Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, who was sentenced to five years in prison for creating art critical of the Cuban regime. She met Trébault at OFF 2022, and the two began working on this collaboration soon after the event.

HRF Freedom Fellows Kenyan labor rights defender Malcolm Bidali and Ethiopian blogger and civil society leader Befekadu Hailu have shared regional know-how and resources.

After meeting for the first time in-person at OFF 2022, Bidali also introduced Hailu to a lawyer who has helped him finalize outstanding paperwork for his organization, the Center for Advancement of Rights and Democracy.



Dmytro Kuleba, Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, gives a virtual talk on how the international community can support Ukraine.



Speakers and audience members alike consider how they can be champions of change.

Violinist Yury Revich performs on the OFF mainstage.

OSLO
FREEDOM
FORUM





Through networking opportunities at OFF 2022, Russian environmental activist Evgeniya Chirikova secured a grant from Avaaz, a US-based campaigning community that supports activists around the world.

Chirikova and her team are using this grant to open and operate a shelter in Russia for Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine.



As a result of attending OFF 2022, Togolese human rights defender Farida Nabourema and Senegalese developer Fodé Diop received \$150,000 in new funding for their upcoming conference on financial freedom for Africa, to take place December 7-9 in Accra, Ghana.

CHAMPION

FREEDOM RESIL

TRUTH ACTIVIS

PEACE CREATIV

JUSTICE DEMOC

CHANGE INNOV

HUMAN RIGHTS