2016 was full of human rights challenges. With unchecked human rights violations happening throughout Southeast Asia, it was easy to feel disillusioned. But as we sifted through the headlines and took stock of our work, we found glimmers of hope in the positive impacts achieved together with our partners and supporters. We saw our strategies working and we saw positive change taking shape. Together we rose to the challenge.

Through our work and with the support of strong partners, laws and policies improved, human rights defenders were protected, perpetrators faced accountability, and collective responses of communities were strengthened. We expanded our reach. For the second consecutive year, we scaled our impacts to a new country—Malaysia—and expanded our team, welcoming Henry Koh as our Malaysia Human Rights Specialist and John Quinley III as our Associate Human Rights Specialist. Our team at the end of 2016 comprised nine full-time members, including five men and four women hailing from four countries, speaking multiple languages, and bringing impressive expertise and commitment to our human rights work. Four of our five Human Rights Specialists are nationals of the countries where we work: Thailand, Myanmar, and now Malaysia.

We stood together with partners. Throughout the year, we partnered with 39 at-risk human rights defenders, civil society organizations, and affected communities to strengthen collective responses to abuses. We did 16 skill-building trainings for partners in three countries, honing practical skills that can be used to end human rights violations.

We spoke out against human rights violations. With the support of our partners and in collaboration with at-risk human rights defenders, civil society organizations, and affected communities, we conducted strategic advocacy in countries throughout the world: whether in Asian towns and capitals, the United Nations in Geneva, or the halls of power in Washington D.C., we engaged more than 60 stakeholders, including high-level government and elected officials, policy-makers, companies, and even human rights abusers.

The news media took notice. In just 12 months, more than 2,900 media publications mentioned the work of our team, helping us reach an astounding 4.7 billion people. That’s more than 230 media mentions per month on average.

We exposed abuses. Our specialists conducted eight in-depth investigations and produced 64 original publications, including five full-length reports and long-form publications, 37 news releases, and 17 joint letters or statements. We also published five opinion editorials, including three in prominent international outlets—CNN, Foreign Policy, and the Wall Street Journal—as well as two in prominent regional outlets—the Jakarta Post and Bangkok Post.

2016 brought significant human rights challenges, but we responded and saw that change is possible. There is hope for a better future, and we are more determined and prepared to take on whatever challenges lie ahead. Thank you for continuing the fight with us.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MATTHEW SMITH
Co-Founder / Chief Executive Officer

AMY SMITH
Co-Founder / Executive Director
Fortify Rights works to ensure and defend human rights for all. We investigate human rights violations, engage policymakers and the media, and strengthen collective responses by working closely with human rights defenders, affected communities, and allies locally. We believe in the influence of evidence-based reporting, the power of strategic truth-telling, and the importance of collaborating with individuals, communities, and movements pushing for change. We are an independent, nonprofit organization based in Southeast Asia and registered in the United States and Switzerland.

MISSION & VISIONS

TOGETHER WE IMPROVED LAWS & POLICIES

In 2016, we partnered with the Burmese Rohingya Organization UK (BROUK) to investigate the treatment of Rohingya refugees in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. We published a joint report in March, exposing the ongoing indefinite detention of Rohingya refugees—including children—in squalid, inhumane conditions, as well as other human rights violations against Rohingya trafficking survivors in the region. Following the report and high-level meetings with Thai authorities, the Thai government issued a Cabinet Resolution that created protections for human trafficking survivors and ordered relevant ministries to immediately comply.

Myanmar took steps to amend a repressive law

In March 2016, the Myanmar Government announced its intention to amend the Ward and Township Administration Act—almost a year after Fortify Rights released a report exposing how Myanmar authorities were using the law to restrict the rights to freedom of movement, association, and privacy, targeting political activists and the poor. Fortify Rights worked closely with the late U Ko Ni and others in advocacy that ultimately led the Parliament to amend the law.

Thailand suspended mining operations due to community concerns

In 2016, we worked closely with environmental defenders and communities affected by harmful mining practices in Thailand. In December 2016, the Thai government suspended all mining operations in the country following mounting protests by community activists about potentially harmful environmental impacts of Thailand’s mining sector.

IN 2016, WE ACHIEVED IMPACTS...
Malaysia freed Maria Chin Abdullah

In December, we increased Malaysian public awareness on the situation of Rohingya refugees in Thailand through several events in 2016. In June, we facilitated travel arrangements for more than 45 members of the Rohingya community to attend the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association Global Forum in Bangkok. In November, we also collaborated with award-winning photographer Greg Constantine to show his photo exhibition featuring Rohingya communities in Myanmar and in exile in Thailand's Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. Fortify Rights also co-hosted a photo exhibition in Bangkok featuring the photography of Rohingya communities in Myanmar and in exile in Bangladesh. In December, we brought much-needed attention to the lack of legal services for members of the transgender community in Malaysia at the U.N. Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review session for Malaysia as well as at the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association Global Forum in Bangkok.

We increased Thai public awareness on the situation of Rohingya refugees in Thailand through a photo exhibition of Rohingya in Thailand during the launch of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association Global Forum 2016 Broadcast Award in October.

Increased awareness of protection concerns for Rohingya refugees in Myanmar

In November, following mounting pressure, she was freed. We increased Thai public awareness on the situation of Rohingya refugees in Thailand through a photo exhibition of Rohingya in Thailand during the launch of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association Global Forum 2016 Broadcast Award in October.

TOGETHER WE SPOTLIGHTED HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS

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In March, our CEO Matthew Smith testified before the U.S. Congress and our team engaged with U.S. government officials and members of Congress about the ongoing scourge of human trafficking in Myanmar. In June, the State Department downgraded Myanmar to the lowest tier in its annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) ranking process, recognizing the government’s failures to effectively combat trafficking, spurring Myanmar to do more.

In 2016, we engaged governments and others on the need for a U.N.-mandated investigation to assess and identify solutions to address atrocity crimes perpetrated against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. With Rohingya activists, we then worked with 40 diverse civil society organizations in Myanmar who developed a joint statement calling for a U.N.-mandated independent investigation.

We worked closely with Thai partners to assist in the establishment of the Coalition for the Rights of Refugees and Stateless Persons (CRSP), a Thai coalition focused on refugee and statelessness issues, and with a particular emphasis on promoting alternatives to detention.

We facilitated opportunities for partners to engage decision-makers and power brokers.

We provided technical support to an ethnic-Chin “Streer Committee” for the development of a Chin Human Rights Organization. Together we completed the first draft of a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Chin Human Rights Committee, and we worked closely with the Chin Human Rights Organization (DHR). This committee will be the first sub-national human rights institution in Myanmar and may serve as a model for other ethnic groups.

Together, we worked with 40 diverse civil society organizations engaged in statelessness issues, national-level civil society organizations representing a diversity of ethnicities in Myanmar, and Rohingya community leaders, all of whom started to publicly support a call for a U.N.-mandated independent investigation. We then worked with 40 diverse civil society organizations in Myanmar who developed a joint statement calling for a U.N.-mandated independent investigation for a commission of inquiry into the situation in Rakhine.

In December 2016, we facilitated an opportunity for six partners from Myanmar, Thailand, and Malaysia in the U.S. Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association Mansi Xi in Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. We worked with our partners to develop talking points and English-language submissions to deliver during the respective meetings.

In June, we arranged for a Rohingya partner from Myanmar to attend the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Consultations in Geneva and organized meetings in Geneva with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UNHCR Regional Officer on Statelessness, and the Ambassador of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. In June, we arranged for an at-risk ethnic Rakhine human rights defender to meet with the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Yanghee Lee during her visit to Myanmar, facilitating an opportunity to share information about his personal security concerns as well as human rights concerns.

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At the end of November, we provided an opportunity for Rohingya and Kachin partners from Myanmar to speak on a panel about the situation of displacement for their respective communities in Myanmar during a well-attended event at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand in Bangkok.

In December, we facilitated the participation of Thai community-based environmental defenders in a public forum to discuss the implementation of the recently adopted Mining Act in Thailand. With Fortify Rights’ support, a community-based representative served as one of the speakers of the forum, providing an opportunity to directly represent the community’s concern with the new Mining Act.

In February, we co-hosted the first-ever nationwide gathering of Muslim Women’s Associations in Thailand, involving more than 100 Muslim women from across Thailand. During this workshop and a follow-up workshop in April, we conducted skill-building sessions on institutional capacity building and women’s leadership. Following these workshops, members of the Muslim Women’s Association began to support Rohingya women and children detained in Thailand’s closed shelters.

In February and March, we partnered with the Burmese Rohingya Organization-UK (BROUK) to assist in a regional assessment of the situation of Rohingya refugees in the region. We coordinated meetings with ASEAN policy-makers, U.N. officials, and others as well as members of the Rohingya refugee communities in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. We worked closely with BROUK to write and publish a joint report entitled, “Everywhere is Trouble,” catching the interest of the highest levels of government in Thailand.

In late February, we co-hosted a strategy meeting with 30 ethnic Rohingya leaders, human rights defenders, and allies, providing them with a platform to identify key priority areas of concern and to develop a coordinated strategy plan.

In August, we conducted a five-day workshop on human rights law and documentation for 13 ethnically diverse women from Myanmar working in conflict zones.

Training with human rights defenders in Malaysia supported by Fortify Rights. ©Fortify Rights, 2016

In October, we facilitated a four-day human rights documentation and advocacy training for 23 mostly women participants involved with a partner organization in Myanmar.

In October, we held a five-day security and protection workshop for about 20 Rohingya refugees and community leaders living in Thailand to facilitate individualized security self-assessments and discussions on practical protection measures as well as information on refugee/migrant protection in Thailand.

In 2016, we provided English-language editing assistance to several partners in Thailand to strengthen publications produced by partners.

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In 2016, we nominated several community-based partners and human rights defenders for various awards, including community activists from Loei Province for the Taiwan Human Rights and Democracy Award, a Thai human rights lawyer for the Martin Ennals Human Rights Award, and a Thai human rights lawyer representing environmental defenders in Thailand for an award sponsored by Lawyers4Lawyers and another award through the American Bar Association.

We supported the development of six joint statements with partner organisations and joined as a signatory on 11 joint statements or open letters initiated by partner organisations.

A leader of the Khon Ban Rak Kerd Group, who faces multiple legal challenges for his role in engaging in environmental activism in Thailand’s Loei Province. Fortify Rights has been monitoring his case and calling for the authorities to dismiss all wrongful charges against human rights defenders. ©Luke Duggleby/Fortify Rights, 2016.
Fortify Rights' Chief Executive Officer Matthew Smith with U.S. Representative Chris Smith, the author of the Trafficking in Persons legislation. In March, Fortify Rights testified before the U.S. Congress on human trafficking concerns in Southeast Asia.

©Fortify Rights, 2016
Members of the Khon Ban Rak Kerd Group preparing for a peaceful rally outside the courthouse in Thailand’s Loei Province. Fortify Rights has called on Thailand to protect the right to protest and free speech.

BOARD MEMBERS

ODDNY GUMAER, (PRESIDENT STARTING IN JUNE 2016)
ROB KILPATRICK, (PRESIDENT UNTIL JUNE 2016)
GERALD BOURGEOIS
ISABELLE BOURGEOIS
JOE CASHION
STEVE GUMAER
BRAD HAZLETT
SIDNEY J. JANSMA III
AMY A. SMITH
MATTHEW SMITH

GOVERNANCE

FORTIFY RIGHT’S BOARD MEMBERS

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS


Phil Robertson, Deputy Asia Director at Human Rights Watch

Victor Hslak Lien, human rights and democracy activist, 2010 recipient of St. Stephen’s Prize for Norway’s Human Rights Alliance International

Tomas Oye Quintana, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar

Mike Haung, human rights lawyer with Gaojia Human Rights Law Foundation and Human Rights Committee Coordinator of the Korean Bar Association

Tyke Guinn, Clinical Professor and Director of the International Human Rights Clinic, Harvard Law School

Kerry Kennedy, President of the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights


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## FORTIFY RIGHTS’ SUPPORTERS

![Logos of various organizations]

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

### 1. REVENUE AND SUPPORT

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<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue and Support</strong></td>
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### 2. EXPENSES

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<tbody>
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<td>Supporting Services</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management and General</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resource Development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Change in New Assets</strong></td>
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### NET ASSETS

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<td><strong>Beginning of Year</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>End of Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$426,824</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Resource Development:
- Grants: 93%
- Donations: 7%

### Program Service:
- 87%

### Management & General:
- 7%
Pregnant wife holds portrait of her wrongfully detained husband. Fortify Rights has been monitoring the cases of judicial harassment against Muslims in Myanmar, ©Luke Duggleby/Fortify Rights, 2016