

# HELPING ARTISTS AT RISK

## WHAT IS ARTISTIC FREEDOM?

To be free from obstacles that impede "the flourishing of artistic creativity, that carry an aesthetic and/or symbolic dimension, using different media including, but not limited to, painting and drawing, music, songs and dances, poetry and literature, theatre and circus, photography, cinema and video, architecture and sculpture, performances and public art interventions, etc., irrespective of whether their content is sacred or profane, political or apolitical, or whether it addresses social issues or not".

*From the report (2013) of the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Farida Shaheed*

This handout is intended for individuals and organisations who decide to work with at-risk artists.

## INITIAL STEPS TO TAKE:

### 6. Get back to the artist

Bring information back to the artist and check regularly if there are any status change (safe/not safe).

### 1. Ask & listen

Listen carefully to the artist, ask for exact details of the repression, legal or other actions taken, etc., see ARJ toolkit for more detail. Ask as many questions as necessary to get as complete a picture as possible.

### 2. Is the artist safe?

If not, advise her/him to get in touch with local monitoring or Human Rights bodies. If there are none, help the artist to find a safe haven outside of their own country (ICORN, ARC (Artists at Risk Connection), Artist Protection Fund, Safemuse etc.)

### 5. Expert advice

Seek advices from experts on what can and/or must be done next in relation to the artist's request.

**LEARN  
TO ACT**

### 3. Consent & Caution

Ask the artist what she/he wants you to do. Do not share information with others or take action unless there was an agreement with the artist. Protect your online communication, see ARJ Toolkit for details.

### 4. Check

Examine the information given to you by talking to two or three independent local sources (organisations, experts, observer bodies etc.).

## ADDITIONALLY YOU CAN :

Support artists if they are on trial to signal the extent of your concerns to the authorities, as well as to communicate solidarity.

Media involvement can be very useful but must be used with utmost caution to not detriment a case. Discuss with the artist and other local advisers first.