



Human Rights Abuse Database

Without proof, the majority of the U.S. public is unwilling to accept or even to examine the premise that U.S. laws and policies might go too far and hurt innocent people. Proof of abuses is essential for reaching millions of people, including politicians and lawmakers, and for gaining their collaboration in preventing further abuses. Media stories emerge occasionally about innocent people and families whose lives and plans have been negatively affected by post-9/11 laws and policies that went too far. Our local organizers have used those stories effectively in different ways. For example, the New York City, Bill of Rights Defense Campaign printed stories to convince city councilors to support a civil liberties resolution.

BORDC's U.S. Human Rights Abuse Database, now in the testing phase, is a web-based, searchable repository of stories about post-9/11 human rights abuses that have emerged in local and national press and in reports or records of organizations and immigration attorneys' offices nationwide. The database will allow partner organizations (partners) to input detailed information, including abstracts and links, about human rights abuses committed in the U.S. since September 11, 2001. Website visitors can then search the stories by specific type of abuse, law or policy or government entities involved; geographic region or city; nationality or other characteristic of the group or persons affected; and date range.

How HRAD Can Benefit Your Work

Journalists can use the database to add detail and depth to their stories on relatively well-known abuses and, in the process, learn of previously unreported stories. Reporters will become more familiar with and establish relations with the BORDC and, through a portal to a companion database, will be able to contact affiliated rights groups that track the information.

Civil liberties, human rights, and immigrant and refugee rights organizations and activists can use the database to find stories that can be used in public hearings, published in literature and booklets, or printed and delivered to local or national legislators to prove that new laws and policies are having a disastrous effect on innocent people. Public hearings featuring dramatic presentations of stories will provide forums for dialogue among the public and their elected representatives. Organizations that collect victims' stories can enter them into the database, provided they have the victims' permission.

Local residents and activists can print reports for their area to present to their peers and to local officials and federal legislators at in-district meetings to support their concerns that certain laws and policies have resulted in human rights abuses in their area and need to be amended.

Please contact hrad@bordc.org to learn more about the Human Rights Abuse Database.