Defending basic human rights is a noble, difficult and often hazardous job. Even the UN’s top advocate for human rights – Sergio Vieira de Mello – was killed in a terrorist attack in Baghdad in August 2003. Yet a number of governments around the world are using anti-terrorism measures as a pretext for inhibiting human rights advocates.

What kinds of risks face defenders of women’s rights in countries like Pakistan? With the U.S.-led “war on terrorism”, are Western countries turning a blind eye to human rights abuses? Is being a human rights advocate more hazardous than ever?

In this edition of World Chronicle, these questions are explored with the help of Hina Jilani, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Human Rights Defenders.