



# ISHR NEWSLETTER

October 2018

## IMPORTANT DATES

### 10 October

World Day Against the  
Death Penalty

### 16 October

World Food Day

### 18 October

EU Day against  
trafficking in human  
beings

### 24 - 31 October

Global Media and  
Information Literacy  
Week (UNESCO)



"March demanding freedom for political prisoners" in Nicaragua. Source: Jorge Mejía Peralta CC BY 2.0

## CONTENTS

<b>From the President</b> .....	<b>1</b>
The human rights of threatened people.....	1
<b>From the Sections</b> .....	<b>1</b>
ISHR Belarus	
<i>Human rights competitions held in honor of the 70th anniversary of the UN- UDHR</i> .....	1
ISHR Spain	
<i>Participation in the commemoration of the Roma victims of the Holocaust at Auschwitz-Birkenau</i> .....	2
<b>Current Developments</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Nicaragua	
<i>Repression of independent media &amp; health professionals – protests criminalized under anti-terror law</i> .....	3
<b>ISHR Events</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Schirmacher thanks 40,000 Ahmadiyya Muslims for their advocacy for religious freedom .....	4

## WINTER IS COMING

As the weather gets colder, people living in countries affected by high rates of poverty or conflict are going to need our support this coming winter. Also, the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is approaching in December. In this issue, the Belarussian section tells us about how they are celebrating this momentous document. Share what your section will be doing to ring in this season!

---

*“Freedom is a timeless value...the Universal Declaration of Human Rights mentions freedom more than twenty times. All countries have committed to protecting individual freedoms on paper - but in practice, too many break their pledge.”*

– Ban Ki-Moon

---

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### The human rights of threatened peoples



*Thomas and Christine Schirrmacher pictured with indigenous women during their visit to Peru*

As President of the ISHR, I have been invited to testify on November 28, 2018 in the Human Rights Council of the German Federal Parliament on “Threatened Peoples” on November 28, 2018. Having studied ethnology/cultural anthropology among other subjects, this is a topic that has accompanied me all my life.

Some human rights violations do not only target individuals, but entire groups of people, whether ethnic, linguistic, religious, or those with lower economic status, or often, a combination of those elements. Recently, I visited marginalized indigenous ethnic groups in Ecuador and in Peru at an altitude of between 2600 and 3500 meters, alongside partner organizations who are involved in fighting for the freedom of press there. In the case of Ecuador, the indigenous

tribes that fought the Inca centuries ago are threatened, whereas in Peru, it is typically the descendants of the Incas themselves who are still living in the picturesque Andes Mountains that face discrimination. As seen in the photo above, some of these indigenous descendants from the Incas showed us how they still produce clothing from alpaca wool with natural dyes in the same way as it was done 500 years ago.

The ISHR has a long history of fighting for the human rights of threatened peoples, such as the Yezidis in Iraq, the Kurds in Turkey, the Rohingya in Myanmar, the Syrian-Orthodox Christians in Syria, the Tibetans and Uighurs in China, the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan or the Armenians in Turkey, among others. This has led us to becoming a part of a network of good friends who have offered incredible hospitality worldwide, which I am deeply grateful for.

*Thomas Schirrmacher*

## FROM THE SECTIONS

### ISHR Belarus

*Human rights competitions held in honor of the 70th anniversary of the UN- UDHR*

On the eve of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the UN in 1948, the Belarussian section of the ISHR has announced a call for submission of written work for two thematic competitions for school children and university students of the Republic of Belarus.

Students are given an opportunity to use their knowledge of the provisions of the Declaration to subjectively reinterpret existing problems in the field of the implementation of certain categories of human rights, suggesting original ways and methods to solve them.

Schoolchildren are invited to write an essay on the topic

“The contemporary significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, to demonstrate its importance for the international community and for each person as a whole, expressing their attitude to the ideas embodied by this universal document.



*Winners of a previous human rights competition initiated by ISHR Belarus, at the PACE center in Strasbourg in 2014.*

More details regarding the requirements for the works and conditions of the competitions can be found on [humanrights-online.org/ru/белорусская-секция-мопч-проводит-кон/](http://humanrights-online.org/ru/белорусская-секция-мопч-проводит-кон/). Laureates of both competitions will be awarded at the jubilee events of the Belarusian section of the ISHR and the Brest Human Rights Group on December 7–8, 2018.

This is not the first time that the organization has held competitions on the eve of International Human Rights Day on December 10, as well as on other anniversary dates. For example, the winners of the last competition, dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Vienna Declaration, visited the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) winter session of 2014 in Strasbourg (see photo).

*Pavel Pernikau  
Head of the Press Centre, ISHR Belarus*

## ISHR Spain

*Participation in the commemoration of the Roma victims of the Holocaust at Auschwitz-Birkenau*



*Ricardo Valenti-Gutierrez, ISHR Spain (left), pictured with Roma Holocaust survivor Raymond Gureme (middle)*

On August 2, 1944, the ‘Gypsy Camp’ of Auschwitz-Birkenau was closed, resulting in an estimated 4000 Roma and Sinti being killed in the gas chambers by the morning of August 3. Today, there are international efforts to recognize August 2 as Roma Holocaust Memorial Day, in remembrance of the estimated 500,000 to 1.5 million Roma victims of this most dark and painful part of human history.

This year on this day, representatives of ISHR Spain were invited to participate in commemoration activities for Roma Holocaust victims that took place in Auschwitz-Birkenau itself and in Krakow, Poland. We were invited

by the Documentation and Cultural Centre of the German Sinti and Roma foundation in Heidelberg through Ternype, the International Roma Youth Network, which organizes annual events including this one as a part of the ‘Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative’. The goal of this initiative is to ‘raise awareness among young Europeans, civil society, and decision-makers about the Roma Genocide, as well as about the mechanisms of anti-gypsyism in a challenging context of rising racism, hate speech and extremism in Europe. With this initiative, Roma youth advocate for the official recognition of August 2 as the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day to pay homage to the victims, heroes, and survivors, as well as to strengthen identity based on deep knowledge of the past’.

At this year’s event, called “Dikh he na bister” (Look and don’t forget), we joined 250 Roma and non-Roma youth from across Europe for a week of talks and training by experts on the Holocaust, from the fields of anthropology, history and human rights. We also had the opportunity to meet with survivors, including Raymond Gureme, a 93 year old Roma survivor of the Holocaust (see photo). It was a great experience, but at the same time a very painful one, to listen to people who were sharing their life experiences who had survived those times. We felt very lucky to meet these wonderful people and to be able to interview them.



*Auschwitz-Birkenau camp in Poland, today preserved as a part of a museum. Photo: 2017, Enerida Isuf*

After this experience, Ricardo Valenti Gutierrez of ISHR Spain will take action by joining with other people who are interested in this topic to organize a series of awareness-building session in different primary and secondary schools in Barcelona, of which we will inform you on in coming newsletter articles.

*Enerida Isuf  
President, ISHR Spain*

# CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

## Nicaragua

### *Repression of independent media & health professionals – protests criminalized under anti-terror law*

Haydee Marin, ISHR Vice President and Coordinator of the Latin American Committee, reports on current human rights violations committed by the authoritarian regime of Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua:

It started on April 18 of this year, when retirees entered the streets of the city of León to protest proposed changes to social security, who were ruthlessly attacked by sympathizers of the Sandinista government. This led to protests of university students in Masaya and Managua, to which the Ortega regime responded with intense violence. Nicaraguan civil society supported the students, spreading the protests nationwide. In response, violent paramilitary groups and national police were used to assassinate defenseless citizens.

According to our sources, more than 400 have been killed and 500 remain missing as a result of government attacks; furthermore, over 2000 people have been detained under degrading conditions, many of whom have reported torture. Mutilated dead bodies of students have appeared, and their relatives reported that these young people had been arrested by police.



'We are the Voice' March on Sept. 23, 2018.  
Source: Jorge Mejía Peralta, CC BY 2.0

Recently, a law was passed that facilitates the punishment of those who participated in the protests, or who spoke out against the government in the media, by accusing them of terrorism. This has allowed the government to persecute not only protest leaders, but all also anyone involved in the 'Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy', which consists of student leaders, poor farmers, civil society actors, and private enterprises. This alliance represented the Nicaraguan people at the negotiation table with the Ortega government, mediated by the Catholic Church. However, negotiations have since been suspended by the government. Repression continues, in particular towards the following:



Marchers demanding the release of political prisoners in September. Source: Jorge Mejía Peralta, CC BY 2.0

*Healthcare professionals* - More than 300 health professionals have been dismissed (doctors, nurses, auxiliaries) in health centers across the country in retaliation by Daniel Ortega's government for treating protesters who were injured by police and paramilitaries.

*The Catholic Church* - Aggression towards Catholic priests and attacks on parishioners, as well as vandalism of structures continues. Paramilitary groups are ordered by the Ortega regime to enter and destroy the inside of churches.

*The media* - Independent media that is not controlled by the government is being threatened; journalists cannot carry out their job of reporting reliably because they are physically attacked, their equipment is stolen, and they face death threats.

Some media outlets, such as the TV channels 100 % Noticias, Channel 12, and Channel 10, were set on fire, while others have been looted, and their journalists were attacked.

*Private companies* - Private enterprises are also being threatened, as merchandise is held by customs and excessive taxes and fines are being charged as a form of punishment for supporting the protests of civil society. Some businessmen received death threats, while the farms and businesses of others have been invaded by pro-government forces. The national police do not intervene in defense of the legitimate owners.

*Students and civil society* - Brutal repression is taking place on an ongoing basis against students, poor farmers, civil society actors, and private enterprises.

Multiple international organizations, including the Organization of American States (OAS), the UN, and the European Economic Community, are aware of these human rights violations and have taken action. The recent report from OAS directly accuses the government of being the cause of the acts of violence in the country, which was also the case in the report by the UN-OHCHR. This resulted in the Ortega-Murillo government dismissing the UN from the country.

*Haydee Marin*  
*Vice President of the International Council*  
*Coordinator of the ISHR Latin America Committee*

## ISHR EVENTS

### Schirmmacher thanks 40,000 Ahmadiyya Muslims for their advocacy for religious freedom



*Address to 40,000 participants of the Ahmadiyya Jalsa Salana in Karlsruhe © BQ / Warnecke*

On September 8, the president of the International Council of the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) and Director of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF), Prof. Thomas Schirmmacher, thanked the 40.000 participants of the Ahmadiyya Jalsa Salana in Karlsruhe, the yearly meeting of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat in Germany, just before the lecture of their spiritual leader, ‘His Holiness Kalif’ Mirza Masroor Ahmad, for not only enjoying religious freedom in Germany after having fled death threats in Pakistan, but in turn raising his voice to call for and insist on religious freedom and to oppose any violence or compulsion in religion.

Among other things Schirmmacher called upon Pakistan to change its constitution, which states, that Islam is the State Religion under which only Muslims have full rights; an extra paragraph in the constitution establishes that Ahmadis are not considered to be Muslims.

On behalf of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), Prof. Thomas Schirmmacher has met with ‘His Holiness’ Mirza Masroor Ahmad for the second time, who is the fifth Caliph of Ahmadiyya Muslims. This time, the two met in the Caliph’s headquarters in London. The discussion revolved around the common struggle for religious freedom. Leading individuals carrying responsibility within Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat thanked the ISHR, the IIRF and the WEA for their efforts towards protecting Ahmadis around the world and for their repeated criticism of Pakistan for persecuting and killing Ahmadis, as well as for constitutionally denying them citizenship.

Persecution in Sunni Muslim countries and above all in their home country of Pakistan is primarily traceable back to the fact that according to Mohammad, there are not to be any further prophets. Adherents of special variations of Islam with a prophet after Mohammad are, as a general rule, more strongly discriminated against than Jews and Christians and are not categorized as a religion of the book, but as pagans and idolaters.

In contrast to the majority of Sunni and Shiite theologians, the Ahmadiyya Muslim community actively campaigns for religious freedom and explicitly rejects violence as a means of spreading Islam. They seek to attract adherents through intensive but fully voluntary and peaceful missionary work. The most important motto of the Caliph is present everywhere in the form of large banners hanging at major events: “Love for all, hatred for no one.”

#### Contact Information

Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte  
Deutsche Sektion e.V.  
Borsigallee 9, 60486 Frankfurt am Main (Germany)

Editor: Thomas Schirmmacher  
Managing Editor: Maya Robinson ([maya.robinson@igfm.de](mailto:maya.robinson@igfm.de))  
Assistant Editor: Martin Warnecke