



ISHR NEWSLETTER

September 2019

IMPORTANT DATES

26 September

International Day for
the total Elimination
of Nuclear Weapons

28 September

International Day for
Universal Access to
Information

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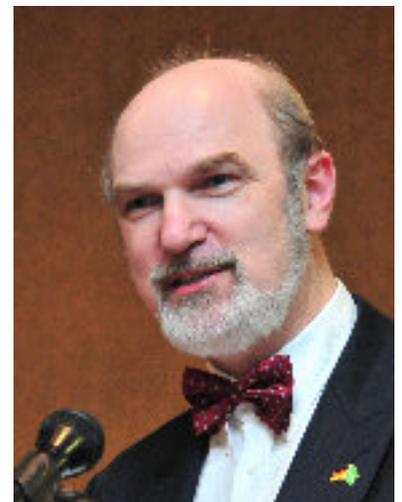
FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our Advocacy for Humanity

Dear ISHR community,

We present to you the September edition of our newsletter. One could see in the articles that they possess an overarching theme, which could be summarized in the words; advocacy for humanity.

The ISHR calls for the release of political prisoners both in Nicaragua and in Iran,



“Through love, tribes have been intermixing colors to reveal a new rainbow world. And as more time passes, this racial and cultural blending will make it harder for humans to side with one race, nation or religion over another”

– Suzy Kassem,
Rise up and Salute the Sun

Article continues on next page ...

which could be seen in this edition is the banner of our campaign and advocacy for our common humanity, and the rights which nature's God bestowed on each and every one of us, as human beings. These rights are not gifts of the State to us. It is the responsibility of the State to protect and preserve these rights. Not to violate them. Unfortunately, the reverse has been the case across our world today, as Nicaragua and Iran exemplifies. The ISHR there calls on the governments of Iran and Nicaragua to stop terrorizing her civilians and to allow human rights to fructify in their countries. We call upon Iran especially to release the political prisoners in her jails.

Our advocacy for humanity is not only limited to our campaigns. Our humanitarian interventions in areas of need, as exemplified in the relief transport that the ISHR Wittlich has been sending out to various countries, where emergency reliefs are required has been the practical dimension of this advocacy. We are eternally grateful to Mrs. Bornmüller and her team in Wittlich, as well as Mrs. Karin Muller-Kinet and her team in Frankfurt. Wittlich is sending her 470th relief convoy in total, and the 16th to Northern Iraq. We urge them never to relent in this part of our advocacy.

One is also joyful when our little efforts bear fruits. We welcome Fr. Tom Uzunnahlil to Frankfurt. Father Uzunnahlil was kidnapped in Yemen by Islamic militants. The ISHR was among the voices that campaigned for his release. After an 18 months ordeal at the hands of his captors, he was released. He came around to thank every voice that raised itself for his release and everyone that offer a thought and prayer for his welfare. at the moment.

We wish you all a happy reading.

Prof. Dr. Thomas Schirrmacher

President of the International Council of the ISHR

Emmanuel Onyemaechi Ogbunwezeh, Ph.D.

Managing Editor

FROM THE SECTIONS

Nicaragua

*Violence and arrests against peaceful demonstrators;
ISHR demands the release of political prisoners*

The Nicaraguan police again prevented an opposition protest march in the capital Managua on Saturday, September 21, 2019. According to reports reaching the ISHR Frankfurt, around 100 demonstrators were arrested by police. A young man was injured in the head by a tear gas grenade. The demonstrators shouted "Murderer" and "We are not afraid" to the police while they sang the national anthem and waved the flag of Nicaragua.

It is a fact that Nicaragua's state authorities have repeatedly banned opposition demonstrations and accuse their organisers of taking part in coup attempts against President Daniel Ortega.

The Chairman of ISHR Germany, Mr. Edgar Lamm accuses Ortega of corruption, nepotism and the establishment of a dictatorship. According to Mr. Lamm, “Ortega has been ruling the Central American country like totalitarianism for 12 years, together with his wife Rosario Murillo, who is also vice president! He called for the release of political prisoners and a return to democracy.”

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH) has repeatedly condemned the state violence in Nicaragua. Nicaraguan human rights groups estimate that at least 325 people have died as a result of repression over the past 12 years.

There are also 2,000 injured and over 60,000 refugees.

ISHR Germany

ISHR Germany hosts a seminar on 30 years after the peaceful revolution in GDR and Eastern Europe

The International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) German Section e. V., under the Chairmanship of Mr. Edgar Lamm, would be hosting a symposium in remembrance of the 30 years after the peaceful revolution in the German Democratic Republic and Eastern Europe. The Seminar would be x-raying the contributions of the Stasi and KGB memorials to the culture of remembrance. The event takes place from the 26th to the 27th of October, 2019. The event which is funded by the Federal Foundation for the Study of the SED Dictatorship (Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur), would take place at Saalbau Volkshaus Enkheim, which is at Borsigallee 40, 60388 Frankfurt am Main.

Program of Events for the 30 years after the peaceful revolution in the GDR and Eastern Europe: The contribution of Stasi and KGB memorials to the culture of remembrance, October 26–27, 2019 in Frankfurt/M.

Saturday, 26 Oct 2019

13.00 Arrival and snacks

13.45 Welcome Speech: *Edgar Lamm (Chairman of the ISHR)*

14.00 Opening Remarks: *Norbert Altenkamp MdB (Member of the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid of the German Bundestag)*

14.15 Riga Occupation Museum, Latvia: *Prof. Dr. Valters Nollendorfs (Since 1996 Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Latvian, Occupation museum, 1961–1995 Professor at the University of Wisconsin/USA, 1988–1989 Director of the Latvian Grammar School Münster)*



Mr. Edgar Lamm, Chairman ISHR Germany © ISHR Germany

16.00 Coffee break

16.15 Okkupationsmuseum (KGB Museum) Tallinn, Estonia: *Raimo Tõnissoo*

18.00 Dinner

Sunday, 27 Oct 2019

9.00 Memorial to Cottbus Prison: *Sylvia Wähling (Head of the Cottbus prison memorial site)*

10.30 Break

10.45 Imre Nagy Memorial House, Budapest, Hungary: *Prof. Dr. Lajos Gecsényi (Curator of the Imre Nagy Foundation former General Director of the Hungarian National Archives)*

12.15 Lunch

13.00 End of the meeting



Mr. Edgar Lamm, Chairman ISHR Germany © ISHR Germany

Event Location: Saalbau Volkshaus Enkheim • Borsigallee 40 • 60388 Frankfurt/M.

Funded by the Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur (Federal Foundation for the Study of the SED Dictatorship)

ISHR Wittlich

470th and 16th transport of the ISHR-Wittlich

The International Society for People right – ISHR-Wittlich sent her 470th and 16th aid transport to refugee camps in Kurdistan Iraq, thanks to the help of Birgit and Peter Schmitt, who helped in securing ICU hospital beds, wheelchairs and a lot of other hospital and household equipment and also clothes and shoes most especially for children, healthcare products for the sick, and school material and household goods, bicycles and baby carriages, toys, etc.

We are grateful to all donors, especially for the financial support for the transport costs 5000€. Our efforts would have amounted to nothing without the indefatigable ISHR group. Special thanks go to the ISHR personnel in charge of Iraq, Mr. Khalil Al-Rasho, who together with Mrs. Bornmüller organized the documentation, and paperwork, and for his translation of those into Arabic. We



470th and 16th Relief Transport to Northern Iraq © ISHR Wittlich

are also grateful to the ISHR Kurdistan Section, which helps with the distribution of relief supplies.

The next transport goes to Latvia. And we still ask for financial support and donations, which could be made to the account below.

DE24 5875 1230 0060 0051 54

If you require a receipt for your donation, Please indicate your address.

You can reach the following people at the telephone numbers below if you require more information.

Info: Katrin Bornmüller: 06571/28307

Johanna Werner: 06571/4047

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470th and 16th Relief Transport to Northern Iraq © ISHR Wittlich

ISHR Iran

High prison sentences against journalist and writer

Reports reaching the ISHR show that on the 24 August 2019, the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Tehran handed down long prison sentences to a journalist and a writer. The journalist and women's rights activist Marzieh Amiri was sentenced to over ten years imprisonment and 148 lashes, for participating in a demonstration. The writer and satirist Kiumars Marzban was sentenced to 23 years in prison for alleged “propaganda against the Islamic state”.

The court rejected Amiri's application for bail and temporary release for medical treatment, although the journalist suffered an epileptic seizure in prison. Amiri was arrested on 1 May 2019 during her participation in a May rally, together with other trade unionists in front of the Iranian parliament building. She has since been held in the infamous Evin prison. The journalist is accused of “gathering and collusion, propaganda against the state” and “disturbing public order”.



Kiumars-marzban and Marzieh Amiri © ISHR Germany

The 26-year-old writer and satirist Kiumars Marzban was sentenced to 23 years and nine months in prison on the same day. Marzban was arrested by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards on 26 August 2018. Among other things he is accused of “cooperation with an enemy state”, “blasphemy”, “propaganda against the state” and “insulting the state leadership”.

Marzban lived in Malaysia from 2010 to 2017 and returned to Iran in 2018. Marzban began his professional career with the production of short films. In Malaysia he directed the comedy podcast “Sangtab Radio” and published several books. During his arrest by members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards, Marzban’s personal belongings, as well as his laptop and smartphone, were confiscated. Since then, Marzban has also been imprisoned in the Evin prison in Tehran.

The International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) therefore demands the immediate release of the two peaceful intellectuals.

CURRENT EVENTS

Indian Priest kidnapped in Yemen visits ISHR Germany

The Indian Priest of the Salesian Don Bosco order, who was kidnapped by Islamic militants in Yemen and held for 18 months in captivity, Father Tom Uzunnalil, paid a visit to the ISHR office in Frankfurt, on the 16th of September, 2019. The ISHR was among the organizations that campaigned for his release. And he came to express his gratitude and share his experiences in captivity with us.

The ISHR through the Former Executive Director, Mr. Karl Hafen, welcome him to Frankfurt. Leading him with questions, Mr. Hafen asked him about his experiences during those trying times in his life. He gave us a somber recollection of events that led to his being sent to Yemen, and to his captivity and release. We were all humbled by the resilience and forgiving spirit exuded by this Priest. The meeting was moderated by Dr. Emmanuel Ogbunwezeh, the Africa Director at the ISHR. Father Uzunnalil came in company of the procurator of his Order. The Director of the Religious liberty department at the ISHR, as well as the chairperson of the Stephanus Foundation for persecuted Christians, Michaela Kohler was also in attendance. Dr. Carmen Krusch-Grün of the Eastern Europe Department at the ISHR, as well as Valerio Krüger, Mr and Mrs. Langer were all in attendance as well as Dr. Nemcinova.



The ISHR President Thomas in company of his wife Christine Schirmmacher meets Norng Chan Phal, a survivor of S-21

The ISHR President, Thomas and Christine Schirmmacher were given information in Cambodia about the most important memorials to the massive human rights violations of the Khmer Rouge.

They were introduced by Pastor Tep Samnang, whose parents, who were unknown to him, perished under the Khmer Rouge and who, like more than a million other Cambodians, grew up as an orphan. President of the Evangelical Alliance of Cambodia is Pastor Sok Sophon.

S-21, Killing Fields

On April 17th, 1975, the child soldiers of the communists, called Khmer Rouge, won the Cambodian civil war under their leader Pol Pot (“Brother Number One”). On January 6th, 1979, the vanquishers in turn were defeated by the Vietnamese communist troops, even though the Khmer Rouge still waged a guerrilla war from the jungle until Pol Pot resigned as party leader in 1995 and died in 1998. In less than four years almost all the cultural assets of the country, temples, mosques and churches, palaces and villas, museums, art treasures, and the National Archives, were rudely burned down, demolished or otherwise destroyed. Only the famous temple of Angkor Wat survived in the jungle far from the capital.

The approximately two million inhabitants of Phnom Penh, the ‘Paris of the East,’ were expelled from the city after the capture within one day and had to work in agriculture, no matter what their profession was. In the course the expulsion alone, 20,000 people died.

Eventually, every fourth of the eight million Cambodians were killed in the country’s so-called ‘Killing Fields,’ 1.67 million of the approximately two million dead are documented by name. In percentage terms this is higher than the blood toll of Hitler, Stalin, or Mao. In January 1977, the majority of party officials, especially the educated among them, were themselves victims of the blood rush.

Particularly notorious was the torture centre for important persons in Phnom Penh in the former school ‘Tuol Sleng,’ code name S-21, although we know today that there were



Norng Chan Pal with Christine and Thomas Schirmmacher, the photo of his family and the signed book about his life story © BQ/Schirmmacher



The tree in Choeung Ek, where the skulls of the children were smashed © BQ/Schirmmacher

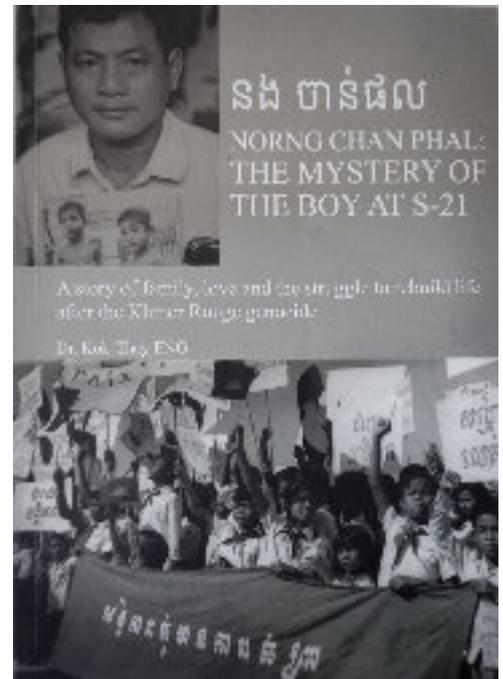
about 200 torture centres in the country with 10,000 to 60,000 deaths each. S-21 is a memorial today. If the victims did not already die during the torture, they were abducted to 300 different so-called Killing Fields. In order to save resources, most were beaten to death with axes, shovels, and sticks and then buried in mass graves. Infants were grabbed by their feet and their heads were hurled against one particular tree (see photo).

The best-known and most accessible Killing Field in the country, Choeung Ek, is, alongside S-21, now the country's most important memorial site. To date, 17,000 skulls have been recovered and displayed in a memorial stupa behind glass, along with other bones and clothing. This stupa, however, is not used for religious purposes; Buddhists were given their own stupa nearby.

S-21-Survivors and their books

In S-21 there are still two survivors who have both published their life stories with the help of scholarly authors and who met with Thomas and Christine Schirrmacher:

Bou Meng, born 1941, survived the camp as an adult, and Norng Chan Phal, who was eight or nine years old when he was imprisoned together with his mother and his younger brother in S-21. When the prison was evacuated in 1979, he hid his little brother and both were found together with two other surviving children by Vietnamese soldiers and taken with them. They then lived among the soldiers for a lengthy period of time. Later he became one of the most important witnesses in the trials against the leaders of the Khmer Rouge. Norng Chan Phal dedicated a copy of his book to Thomas Schirrmacher on behalf of the ISHR.



- InKok Thay Eng. *Norng Chan Phal: The Mystery of the Boy at S-21*. Cambodian Institute for Peace and Development: Phnom Penh, 2018. ISBN 978-996390067.
- Huy Vannak. *Bou Meng: A Survivor From Khmer Rouge Prison S-21, Justice for the Future Not Just for the Victims*. Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2010. ISBN 978-9995060190.

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