



# ISHR NEWSLETTER

October 2019

## IMPORTANT DATES

### 11 October

International Day of  
the Girl Child

### 15 October

International Day of  
Rural Women

### 17 October

International Day for  
the Eradication of  
Poverty

*“Women’s rights  
are human rights!!!”*

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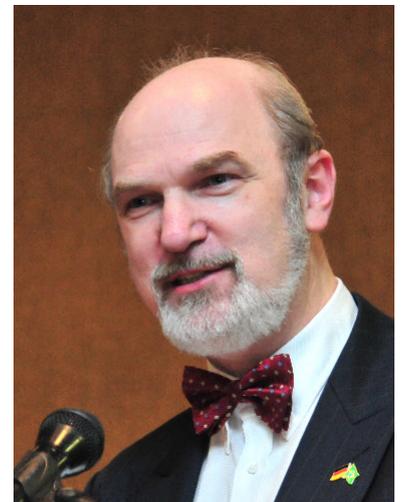
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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear ISHR community,

the UN dedicated October 11th and October 15th as the International Day of the girl child, and the international day of rural women, respectively. This is to emphasize on the need to uphold, further and preserve the rights of women and the girl child all over the world. This edition of the Newsletter keeps that in view.



*Article continues on next page ...*

In that regard, we wish also to honor the work of the women at the ISHR, who have been veritable parts of our human rights defense, advocacy and struggle. We salute the many generations of women, who have been parts of the ISHR journey and story, especially those, who seem to have been forgotten to our memories. In this edition, we wish to remember the great women of the ISHR Germany's Humanitarian Help Team led by Mrs. Karin Müller-Kinet. These women have spent themselves packing relief materials, and raising funds for human rights work, through their Flea-market campaign, and working on the GDR files. Many times, we forget to thank them for the great work they have been doing. Today, we wish to name these great women, to honour to their service and sacrifice. They are:

1. Karin Müller-Kinet
2. Elke Alexy
3. Ingrid Brummert
4. Anthonia Dietrich
5. Stefani Grothmann
6. Monika Hoffmann
7. Brigitte Kluge
8. Barbara Metzger
9. Charlotte Reusch
10. Getrud Richter
11. Johanna Rickmann
12. Friedel Römisch
13. Ursula Schäfer
14. Ingrid Winter
15. Ursual Rieger

We remember also Heidi Eckert, a member of this group, who unfortunately has died. We thank all of them for their service.

We serve you a variety of articles across a broad range of work areas.

Happy reading!

*Prof. Dr. Thomas Schirrmacher*  
President of the International Council of the ISHR  
*Emmanuel Onyemaechi Ogbunwezeh, Ph.D.*  
Managing Editor

## FROM THE SECTIONS

### ISHR Belarus

#### *Minsk Roundtable-Overcoming Disinformation in the Media*

As a part of the project initiated by Dr. Carmen Krusch-Grün, and funded by a grant of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs in relation to Civil-Society-Cooperation; the ISHR Belarus Section held a round-table discussion on the theme: “Media, opinion formation, human rights”. This was held in collaboration with Board and the Scientific Expert Council of the Belarusian Section of the ISHR, with the Republican Public Association “Belarusian Philosophical Society” and the Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. It took place on October 17, 2019 in Minsk. The topic handled was “Disinformation in the media: Ways to overcome it”.

The organizing committee for the preparation and conduct of the meeting was headed by Professor Ivan Kotlyar, chairman of the board of the Belarusian Section of the ISHR, and the meeting was moderated by Alexandr Kuish, Senior Researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. Scientists from the Institute and higher educational institutions (International University “MITSO,” Institute of Entrepreneurship and Parliamentarism, Belarusian State University (Institute of Journalism), Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after Maxim Tank, Brest State University named after A.S.Pushkin, and others), members of the Belarusian Section of the ISHR, and bloggers all actively participated in the round table.



*Cross section of the Participants © ISHR Belarus*

The meeting was opened by Professor Ivan Kotlyar and Anatoly Lazarevich, director of the Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, deputy chairman of the Republican Public Association “Belarusian Philosophical Society,” who made welcoming speeches to all those gathered and outlined the scientific framework and the need for discussion.

In-depth, informative reports on the phenomenon of disinformation (Alexandr Kuish), on the media landscape of the Republic of Belarus (Vadim Zhilko, member of the Belarusian section of the ISHR and the Belarusian Association of Journalists, deputy editor-in-chief of the “Inform-Progulka” newspaper), on technical means of disinformation (Pavel Pernikau, head of the press center of the Belarusian section of the ISHR), on the role of the media in shaping public opinion in the fight against disinformation (Emmanuil Ioffe, Professor at Belarusian State Pedagogical University named after Maxim Tank) were presented to the participants of the meeting.

As a political scientist and famous human rights champion, Professor Ivan Kotlyar spoke on the topic “On disinformation regarding human rights.” In his report, which caused considerable interest, he gave a critical expert assessment of the information broadcast on the author’s television program “Evening with Vladimir Solovyov” on June 6, 2019, on the channel “Russia,” exposing disinformation from the side of the anchor of the popular talk show.

As part of the program of the meeting, the thematic reports “Disinformation: the responsibility of the media and the responsibility of consumers of information,” “Media culture as a means of counteracting disinformation,” and “Disinformation and freedom of conscience” were also heard. All of them reinforced the speakers’ presentations and emphasized the importance of the problem under discussion once again.

Following the discussion of the problem, recommendations were made to the journalistic community, state institutions of Belarus, and international institutions, while all of the participants noted that the round table was conducted at a high organizational and scientific level and they themselves gained new knowledge that they could apply in the future.



*Dr. Lazarevich Speaking at the event © ISHR Belarus*

*Pavel Pernikau, ISHR Belarus*

## ISHR Lithuania

### *Letter from Lithuania*

Dear friends of human rights, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2019, the humanitarian aid transport from the ISHR Working Group Wittlich, reached Northern Lithuania/Kupiskis. The relief goods were distributed in about two hours. The people were already waiting impatiently for the transport. It is a big event for the whole city and the surrounding area, whenever the transport arrives. The relief materials are unloaded first in the camp, near the hospital and in the course of days, the leaders of the Kupiskis hospital, Father K. Balys of Catholic parish Panemunis, the headmistress of the high and primary school, the teachers of the kindergarten, all come to fetch certain amounts of cartons and bags, which are later sorted in their own establishments, and distributed to the needy.

“Our patients at the Kupiskis Hospital are not the only people, who have been in reception of this great support and care from Germany, but the employees also feel that warmth of solidarity. We are always happy when such necessary medical accessories like hygienic products, diapers, medicines, and bandages reach us. Apart from yours, Kupiski’s hospital has never received any support from abroad. Hospitals in small towns in Lithuania are forgotten. Today, almost every corner of our hospital is decorated with things from Wittlich. We are grateful to all the people, who donated and also to all those who packed them for us. We also understand that the transport couldn’t have reached us, without donations that covered the logistics and transportation costs. Our thanks go to the Chairperson of ISHR Wittlich, Mrs. Katrin Bornmüller and to our Jurgita, both of whom organize everything, so that the help



*Relief Materials arriving Lithuania © ISHR*

gets into the right hands” – these are the words of the director in Kupiski’s hospital R. Ramanauskiene.

“God’s blessing, love and happiness to you, our dear friends from Germany, the most important thing is that the people in our church feel that someone is remembers them and is in solidarity with them, in their hour of need and sorrow. We are together with you in the solidarity of our prayers and thank you for the long term help and solidarity you have offered to our people” – says the priest K. Balys from the Panemuni Catholic Parish.

In Lithuania about 30 percent of people live below the poverty line, 20 percent are unemployed in the small villages of Lithuania, the families with many children get very little child benefit, almost in every family one parent works abroad, because the parents cannot afford to feed and clothe their children.

In the name of all Lithuanians, we express our profound gratitude to people who think of others; even if they live in prosperity and often forget that shared bread tastes better.

We urge you to continue this important work that you are doing. In love,

*Jurgita Samoskiene, President ISHR Lithuania*



*Relief Materials arriving Lithuania © ISHR Lithuania*

## CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

### **Turkey: Active Christians are undesirable in Turkey**

*The ISHR is deeply disturbed that active Christians are now undesirable in Erdogan’s Turkey*

The latest invasion of Syria by Turkey and Islamist militias associated with it has been associated with outrageous human rights violations; in particular the expulsion of Kurds, Christians and Yazidis. But what the rest of the world has failed to notice, is that government of Turkey under Erdoğan, has been quietly “cleansing” Turkey of Christians and other minorities. The ISHR has been watching with deep dismay, the expulsions and entry bans for committed Christians in Turkey, which are becoming increasingly widespread.

Since the beginning of 2019, a total of 25 persons have already been expelled, who are unofficially portrayed as a threat to national security. In addition there are spouses and other family members, so that this year alone 60 to 70 people have already become victims of this policy. The victims are foreigners, some of whom settled in Turkey decades ago and who are considered particularly active in their Turkish communities. They come from Germany, Great Britain, Finland, USA, New Zealand, Canada and Australia. Most of those affected learned of their expulsion on leaving the country, some only on re-entry.

“Freedom of religion, including the right to mission, is guaranteed by Turkish law. Expulsion of missionary believers is illegal. The accusations that those affected are threats to public safety are ridiculous and outrageous”.

The expellees are integrated in Turkey. Most of them lived and worked in the greater Istanbul area, Ankara and Izmir. They have families and jobs there, own houses or have children in education. They have never been to blame for anything, are partly even employers for locals. The expellees are also banned from entering the country. The Turkish government does not provide a written explanation as to why the persons concerned suddenly pose a threat and are assigned the code “N-82” or “G-82”, which effectively acts as an entry ban. A number of deported Christians have filed complaints against this order of the authorities.



*Martin Lessenthin (middle); on his left Michael Brandt, MP, Chair of the Human Rights Committee of the CDU/CSU in the German Parliament © ISHR Germany*

The ISHR believes that it is necessary that representatives of the Federal Government of Germany observe these court proceedings, and send

representatives of the embassy and consulate to the court hearings. The Foreign Office should demand explanations from the Turkish government as to why the code N-82 or G-82 is used. The series of expulsions began in July 2017 and has reached its peak in 2019. There is no common ground among these expelled persons, except that they are all Protestant Christians, who are active in church life and/or active in evangelism.

To this end, it is the view of the ISHR that despite claims to the contrary by the Turkish government, all religious minorities in Turkey are discriminated against in many ways. This applies to Alawites, Yazidi, Syrian Orthodox and Armenian Christians. Erdoğan’s pursues the goal of consolidating power in the country and beyond the national borders. Minority protection is Erdoğan’s view, a sign of weakness.

*Martin Lessenthin*

Spokesman of the Board, ISHR Germany

## **Swiss Human Rights Award 2019 to Prof. Dr. Ruedi Lüthy**

Since 1994, the Swiss Section of the IGFIM has been awarding its Human Rights Prize annually. The aim of this award is to honour people and actions that support and promote peace and human security. Among the previous award winners are the Dalai Lama, Dr. Cornelio Sommaruga, Swiss Solidarity, Adolf Ogi, a group of “1000 Women for Peace”, Dick Marty, David Kilgour and David Matas, Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini and other public figures. The 2019 award winner is Prof. Dr. Ruedi Lüthy.

### *AIDS expert of the first hour*

Ruedi Lüthy, a specialist in infectious diseases, has been dealing with AIDS since the 1980s. As head of the Infectious Diseases Department at the University Hospital of Zurich, he was unable to do more in the first few years than accompany people as they died. At the end of the 1980s, together with other specialists, he founded the death hospice Zürcher Lighthouse, which he headed for several years. Thanks to effective medication, HIV infection has become a treatable chronic disease in Switzerland since the mid-1990s.

Unfortunately, Southern Africa is not yet ready. HIV is still omnipresent: 1.3 million people in Zimbabwe live with the virus, and every year more than 30,000 people die as a result of AIDS. Ruedi Lüthy felt it was his moral duty to help alleviate the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe. Shortly before retirement, after a fulfilling professional life in Switzerland, Ruedi Lüthy collected donations, brought the necessary equipment to the country and finally founded an HIV clinic in the capital Harare in 2003.

*“I have a dream!”*

HIV has turned the lives of Simba’s family upside down. The 17-year-old has been HIV-positive since birth. His mother died of AIDS when he was six years old. His father, who was also HIV-positive, remarried – Simba got a healthy half-brother. His older sister also gave birth to an HIV-negative boy thanks to the therapy. With the support of the Newlands Clinic, the patchwork family can once again stand on its own two feet. To feed the extended family, his father grows corn, sweet potatoes and beans. But the harvest is often insufficient because it rains far too much or almost not at all. That’s why the Newlands Clinic is providing the family with the knowledge they need to cultivate maize in a water-efficient way as part of the maize cultivation project.

Simba has been a patient at the Newlands Clinic for eleven years. Thanks to the regular intake of his medication, he is doing well today – and can pursue his dreams. His greatest dream is to become a doctor one day. Since his family is poor, the Ruedi Lüthy Foundation pays for the school fees, uniform and school materials. Because every child treated in the Newlands Clinic should be able to go to school. Simba is infinitely grateful for this and works hard to one day be able to actively help as a doctor.



*Dr. Lüthy speaking with a patient © ISHR Switzerland*

With the founding and operation of the Newlands Clinic in Harare, Zimbabwe, this year’s award winner Prof. Dr. Ruedi Lüthy is fighting tirelessly against this terrible disease. Today, more than 6,500 HIV patients from the poorest backgrounds receive medical help at the clinic – for life. With his great commitment and knowledge, Ruedi Lüthy makes a special contribution to human rights, because he gives hope to countless young people and their families and gives them back the right to a self-determined life. As founder of the Ruedi Lüthy Foundation and the Newlands Clinic, Ruedi Lüthy ensures that patients are in good hands and passes on his extensive knowledge to local doctors and nurses at the clinic’s own training centre.

We congratulate Prof. Dr. Ruedi Lüthy for this award and for the great work he is doing for humanity.

## Obituary

*Vladimir Bukovsky 1942–2019 (Former Member, ISHR Curatorium)*

The death has been announced of Vladimir Konstantinovich Bukovsky, former member of the ISHR Curatorium. Once dubbed “a hero of almost legendary proportion among the Soviet dissident movement” by the New York Times, died of cardiac arrest in Addenbrookes Hospital, in

Cambridge, England at 9:46 PM Greenwich Time on 27 October, 2019. He was 76. His health had been poor in recent years.

A gifted writer, Bukovsky was revered for his ability to document both the daily insults and grand oppression of Soviet prison life, and to convey with detail the soul-crushing effects of torture on both prisoner and jailer. A leading Russian human rights writer and activist, Bukovsky spent a total of 12 years imprisoned by the USSR. After his release to the West in 1976, he spent his last four decades writing and campaigning against successive regimes in his homeland.

Bukovsky first gained notoriety as a student writer and organizer in Moscow. In 1963, he was arrested for possessing forbidden literature. Rather than put him on trial, Soviet authorities had him declared mentally ill and locked him in a psychiatric hospital – a common tactic used in the USSR to discredit dissenters and confine them without appearing to be holding political prisoners. He was arrested again in 1967 and sent to a labor camp for three years.

He was one the cases for, which we as the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) campaigned and fought for his release.

After his release, Bukovsky created an international uproar when he had psychiatric hospital records for six well-known dissidents smuggled to the West in 1971. International psychiatrists' organizations studied the records and charged Soviet doctors and the government with creating false diagnoses as a way to indefinitely detain possibly thousands of political opponents who showed no medically recognized symptoms of mental illness.

After another prison sentence, in 1976, Bukovsky was deported from the USSR and exchanged by the Soviet government for Luis Corvalán, the imprisoned general secretary of the Communist Party of Chile. After his release, he settled in Cambridge, England. He authored a best-selling memoir, *To Build a Castle*, appeared on American TV shows, and met with President Carter at the White House. His most recent book, *Judgment In Moscow: Soviet Crimes and Western Complicity* (Ninth of November Press) published in English on May 14, 2019, analyzes thousands of pages of top secret Soviet archives he stole in 1993.

Over four decades, Bukovsky played key roles in several political organizations, including Resistance International, Human Rights Foundation, the Cato Institute, and the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, which awarded him their Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom. He was a Curatorium Member of the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR)

At a time when many young Russians waxed nostalgic for the iron fist of Josef Stalin, Bukovsky was a living role model to his native country's new generation of dissenters. Political activist rock band Pussy Riot credited him as a major influence, one "undeterred by fear" of state retaliation.



*Bukovsky © Rob C. Croes/ANeFo.*

## Contact Information

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

Editor: Thomas Schirmmacher  
Managing Editor: Emmanuel Ogbunwezeh ([afrika@igfm.de](mailto:afrika@igfm.de))  
Assistant Editor: Martin Warnecke