

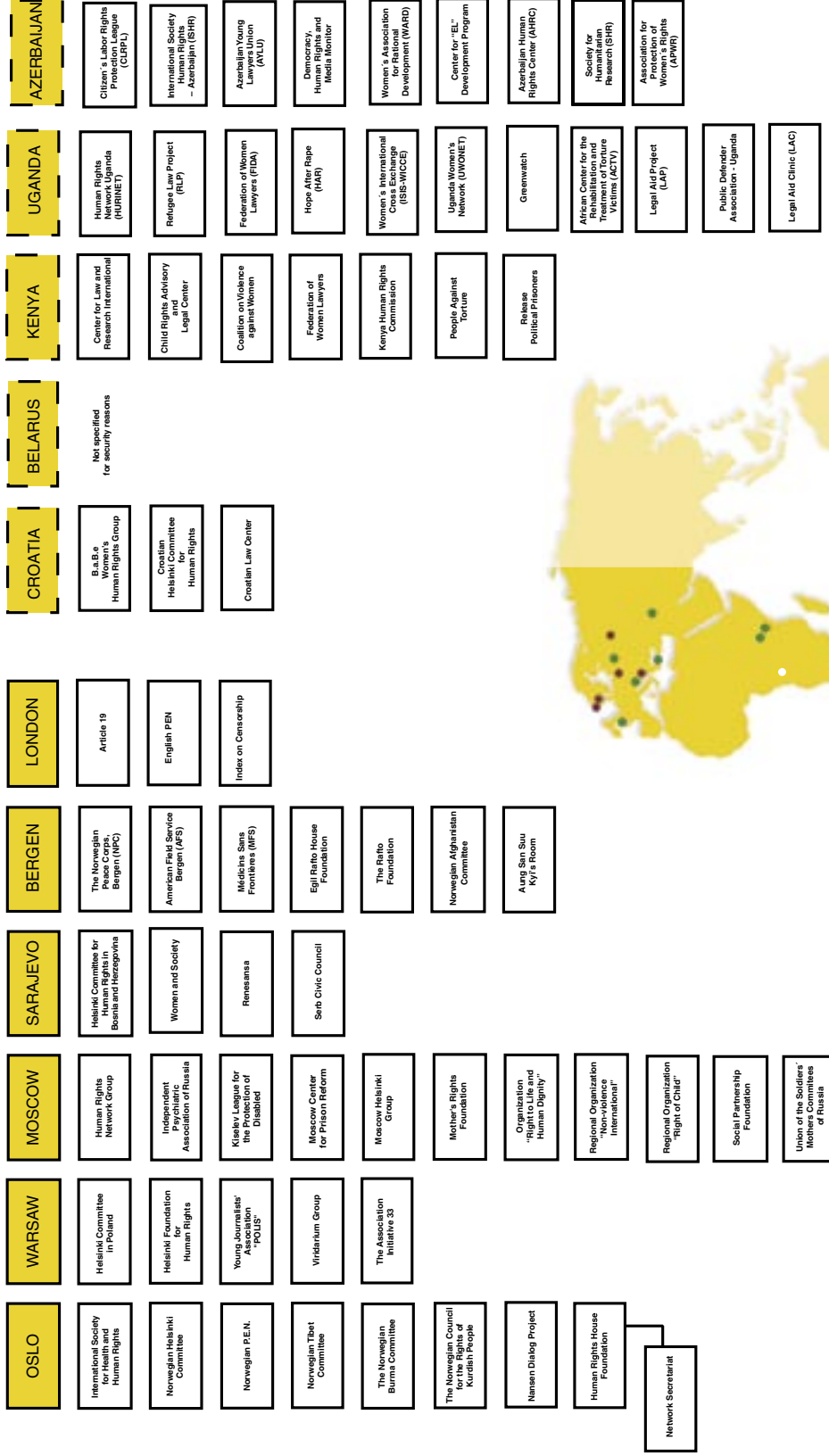


HUMAN
RIGHTS
HOUSE
NETWORK

Annual Report
2006

MOSCOW WARSAW SARAJEVO LONDON OSLO BERGEN
CROATIA KENYA UGANDA BELARUS AZERBAIJAN

The Human Rights House Network



Mission

The Human Rights House Foundation's aims are to support and strengthen human rights organisations locally, and unite them in an international network of Human Rights Houses.

Strategies

- : Promote the building of institutions and communities*
- : Advance human rights defenders and their work*
- : Generate political support to human rights defenders and organisations*
- : Secure financial stability for the Human Rights House Network*

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“I have merely reported what I have witnessed”



Maria Dahle
Executive Director
Human Rights House Foundation



PHOTO: BÅRD B. LØVVIC

The death of **Anna Politkovskaja**, the journalist shot dead at her home in Moscow on October 7th 2006, was a blow to people worldwide. Despite threats and persecution, she continued to courageously denounce human rights abuses, above all those committed by the Russian military in the ongoing conflict in Chechnya. We admired her for her courage, perseverance, and tenacity; and how she managed to overcome her fear.

Her own words provide the best insight into why she continued writing: *“I have merely reported what I have witnessed, no more than that. I have written and, less frequent, I have spoken. I am even reluctant to comment, because it reminds me too much of the imposed opinions of my Soviet childhood and youth. It seems to me our readers are capable of interpreting what they read for themselves.”*

We support the international demand for an impartial investigation to bring to justice those who are responsible for Anna Politkovskaja’s assassination.

Her death stands as an awful and brutal cry-out against the trend in several post-Soviet countries towards silencing the independent journalists, the human rights defenders and activists for democracy. New laws increase the authorities’ control over civil society organisations, and the court system is used to close down structures and activists are being criminalized.

We must join forces and increase our support and protection of the brave and courageous voices that carry no more than what they have witnessed.

Human Rights Houses are working communities where human rights organisations, big and small, share office facilities and cooperate to support and strengthen human rights. These local communities are united in an international network called the **Human Rights House Network**. In 2006 it included more than 80 non-governmental organisations.

The Network’s secretariat is the **Human Rights House Foundation** (HRH F), located at the Norwegian Human Rights House in Oslo and founded in 1989.

It provides both consultative and financial assistance to NGOs wishing to establish a Human Rights House and develops the Network in accordance with the strategies and plans set by the Network’s annual meeting.

The manual “Establishing a Human Rights House” has been created to guide local partners through the process. It is available in English in print and in Russian, Spanish, Turkish, and Azeri at www.humanrightshouse.org

Every year the HRH Network holds its **Annual Network Meeting**, and an international human rights conference. In 2006 both these events were held in Zagreb hosted by the three NGOs working to set up a Human Rights House. Representatives from HRH Sarajevo, Baku, Moscow, Minsk, Oslo, London, Warsaw and Kampala were present. Observers from human rights communities in Skopje, Kathmandu and Geneva also took part in order to exchange experiences and consider future inclusion in the Network. The Network meeting was dedicated to the programmes and regional plans of action developed in accordance with our mission and in response to the recommendations from the external evaluation that was finalised in 2006. **The International Conference** focused on discrimination and anti-discrimination policies and is further presented at page 20.

On the Human Rights House Network’s initiative the concept and Network was subject to an **external evaluation** that was finalised in 2006. Mr Ketil Fred Hansen of the University of Stavanger was the evaluator and visited HRH Oslo, HRH Moscow, HRH Minsk and HRH Nairobi.

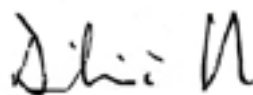


Antidiscrimination as priority for human rights groups

“Today, roughly speaking, we have two types of countries: Civilized, democratic ones with market economy and the other with authoritarian regimes, without real democracy. The first are prosperous, the latter are poor.

The second group of countries are still facing violations of basic rights such as right to life and property, freedom of expression and of thought. Discrimination however constitutes one of the most sophisticated forms of impeding the exercise of human rights. Increasingly democratic countries with market economy exploit that discrimination is difficult to prove.

Minority groups are the most common victims of this phenomenon that, in some countries, affect as much as 80% of the total population. Among the victims of discrimination are handi-



Srdjan Dizdarevic

President

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina,
Member of the Human Rights House Network's Advisory Team



capped and old people, children, women and those who suffer from torture or other types of violence. Often the discrimination is politically motivated. Thanks to the work of human rights organisations, and also advances in communication, the tendency of a given majority to dominate and not respect the rights of the minorities is getting more visible.

It is essential for human rights groups and activists to keep an eye on that phenomenon, to monitor the situation and to report on it. Furthermore, it is important to initiate the adoption of legislation in all the countries that would legally narrow the possibility for discrimination. Campaigning and lobbying is equally important and should be considered as priorities for the year 2007”

The Annual Network Meeting acknowledged the findings of the evaluation, which concluded that being member of a Human Rights House and using its network:

- Increases solidarity and moral support among the members.
- Lends a degree of visibility to the individual human rights organisations.
- Improves the service offered to the clients.
- Increases security and stability for human rights defenders and their clients.
- Increases legitimacy and credibility on a national level.
- Improves access to international partners and funding.

In response to the evaluation, the Annual Network Meeting decided to, within 2007;

- formalise the Advisory Team's mandate and composition in order to strengthen the democratic structure of the Network,
- strengthen the regional networks within the HRH Network,
- and grant more resources to the network's biggest joint project; the website www.humanrightshouse.org by focusing directly on news related to the organisations' field of focus and their core activities. Hence the local contact person arrangement will be evaluated and revised in March 2007.

The HRH Network wishes to thank the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for funding and supporting the evaluation. A long-term strategy on how to meet the political, organisational and financial challenges outlined by the evaluator and the Network was finalised in 2006.



Representatives from Article 19 at HRH London and the HRH Foundation worked together with the Annual Network meeting's observers from Geneva and Nepal on how to improve the network's lobbying efforts.



MOSCOW

Russian Research Centre for Human Rights

Organisations

- Human Rights Network Group
- Independent Psychiatric Association of Russia
- Kiselev League for the Protection of Disabled
- Moscow Centre for Prison Reform
- Moscow Helsinki Group
- Mother's Right Foundation Organization 'Right to Life and Human Dignity'
- Regional Organization 'Nonviolence International'
- Regional Organization 'Right of Child'
- Social Partnership Foundation
- Union of Soldiers' Mothers Committees of Russia

Director:

Liubov Vinogradova



The Human Rights House in Moscow, established in 1992 as the Russian Research Centre for Human Rights (RRCHR), is a joint initiative of a number of internationally recognized human rights activists.

The House and its activities

RRCHR consists of two buildings, where the majority of the organisations share common facilities and conduct joint projects. RRCHR focuses on the promotion, monitoring and protection of the rights of soldiers, prisoners, children, the disabled, the mentally ill, refugees etc. It provides legal assistance for citizens whose rights have been violated by the authorities and sends complaints to the European Court of Justice. RRCHR also facilitates cooperation between different regional NGOs in Russia by providing financial, technical and educational support for the NGOs' activities. The cooperation has led to the creation of a website called Human Rights Online <http://hro.org>

RRCHR develops and promotes guidelines for civil control in closed institutions such as

mental hospitals, army, prisons and boarding schools. RRCHR participates in numerous human rights projects on the international level. Its work with the Human Rights House Network is potentially the strongest example of this. Working on an international scale strengthens the RRCHR's position in the country and opens up new possibilities for action, e.g. the arrangement of joint projects and conferences, preparation of special reports concerning the human rights situation in Russia.

A year of extensive cooperation

2006 kept the House busy with a substantial record of activities:

- Members of the Union of Soldiers' Mothers Committees of Russia assisted more than 4000 people with legal advice
- Lawyers associated with the Mother's Right Foundation won several cases and received more than 2 million rubles of indemnity for the families of dead soldiers
- Given the prompt reaction of the human rights defenders, more than 500 persons with mental disorders avoided unlawful encroachment of their apartments and other private property
- More than 1500 juvenile delinquents in penitentiary institutions in Bryansk, Perm, and Mozhaysk received small gifts due to the charitable program 'Christmas behind bars', organized by the Centre for Prison Reform.
- The Child's Right Organisation helped more than 600 orphans find new homes
- Members of the House's organisations published a collection of articles entitled 'International Mechanisms for Human Rights Protection', booklets such as 'Teenager, Protect Your Rights!' and 'Rights of Citizens with Mental Disorders: Questions and Answers', and a guidebook for the exhibition 'Human Rights in Russia'

Additionally, all the organisations helped arrange two big projects in which:

They sought to engage young people with the human rights issues through voluntary work in the field. The European Union offered financial support for this project. The main activities took place in Moscow, Smolenskiy, and Voronezhskiy, as well as in the territories of Krasnodar and Stavropol. The project culminated in the opening of an



Juvenile delinquents are writing a creative work "The worst and the best day in my life" on the request of representatives of the Moscow Center for Prison Reform.





Director Liubov Vinogradova guides school-children at the exhibition "Human rights in Russia". In the Museum of Russian Contemporary History in Moscow. According to the organisers, more than 5000 young people participated in the project



Natalia Spiridonova, an expert of the Independent Psychiatric Association of Russia is examining a young soldier who left his military unit as a victim of dedovshchina, the violent and cruel hazing of young recruits.



16 April, in the centre of Moscow on Pushkinskaya Square, about 4,000 citizens gathered in a rally against censorship in mass media and in support of freedom of speech.

exhibition called 'Human Rights in Russia', held in the Museum of Russian Contemporary History in Moscow. There were also smaller exhibitions in regional show rooms. In the second project that was supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they reviewed developments in the observation and public control of Russia's closed institutions. The project participants published a collection of articles summarising their experiences in the field and prepared a new strategy for the NGOs dealing with these matters.

Opposing the regime

Throughout 2006, civil and political rights were drastically restricted under the banner of the 'fight against terrorism'. The government-affiliated forces launched a campaign of mass persecution of human rights activists. The characteristic feature of 2006 was the bold assassination of the Kremlin's main opponents. The journalist Anna Politkovskaya and Alexander Litvinenko were the most recent victims. A so-called 'espionage scandal' marked the beginning of the year. Human rights organisations were accused of receiving funds from the foreign special services. The introduction of the new NGO-law that was implemented in April, makes all publicly operating organisations dependent on the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry has the unchecked ability to dismantle non-governmental organisations. Even so, human rights defenders decided to unify their forces and oppose Putin's regime. The main threats to human rights in Russia concern the lack of independent media, liquidation of multi-party democracy,

all-encompassing corruption, and repressions on ethnic and religious grounds. The authorities accuse independent journalists of promoting extremism and persecute them as a result. The government can interpret the Counteraction to Extremist

Activities Law so that almost every criticism of the government's officials can be considered extremist activities. The authorities not only imposed censorship, but also turned all levels of mass media into the instrument of their own propaganda. In autumn of 2006, an anti-Georgian campaign was launched. It demonstrated how quickly and easily the 'enemy' image could be transmitted through the media.

Human rights in Russia

In 2006, the number of crimes committed on the grounds of ethnic hatred doubled. Members of neo-fascist organisations killed 54 and injured 520 people. The police refuse to institute any legal proceedings against the young neo-Nazis, and prefers to define the hate crimes as the acts of 'hooliganism'. The judicial system has been losing its independence through the government's interference in the courts' proceedings. In many cases, investigation is based on the practice of 'full confession under torture'. Acts of brutality and lawlessness are part of daily life in the prisons and the army.



Press conference at the exhibition "Political prisoners in contemporary Russia".

More than one third of the Russian population lives in poverty. Human rights defenders witnessed numerous violations of the citizens' social rights, especially in regard to the 'housing and municipal service' reform. The commercialization of the health and educational services leads to violation of such fundamental constitutional rights as the right to life, the right to living quarters and the right to participate in public life.



Mothers who lost their sons in the Russian army came to requiem for the deceased in the Russian army during military service, organized by the Mothers Right Foundation.



WARSAW

Organisations

- Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
- Helsinki Committee in Poland
- Association of Young Journalists 'POLIS'
- Association Initiative 33
- Viridarium Group

Director:

Danuta Przywara



The Human Rights House in Warsaw was established in 1993. Two leading organisations (the Helsinki Committee and the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights) had already been operating for many years. Common goals led the organisations to decide to work within the network together (each of them operates for the benefit of democracy and human rights). Membership within a network also allows small organisations to make more of an impact and benefit from the assistance and knowledge of the larger and more experienced members.

2006, the committee issued statements on the death penalty, lustration, and the situation in Belarus.

Association of Young Journalists, 'POLIS'

Established in 1995, its objectives include obtaining and developing journalistic skills, establishing and maintaining international contacts, and spreading the principles of democracy, market economy and human rights. The Association's activity focuses on publishing the newspaper POLIS and online festival newspapers. In 2006 they prepared newspapers for the Film Festival 'Jewish Motifs' and the Science Festival. It also organised workshops and travelling journalistic camps for students, as well as organising meetings with recognized journalists.

Association Initiative 33

The Association has been operating since fall 2004. Its objectives include, among other things, reflecting on the present and future situation of public issues in Poland, the promotion of the reflection's outcomes, and the promotion of the civil society and the democratic state. In recent times, its activity has concentrated on the organisation of social, educational, and scientific meetings and events.

Viridarium Group

Formed in 2001, the Viridarium Group operates alongside the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in Poland and The Open Republic - Association against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia. It deals with anti-Semitism and xenophobia in order to make the public aware of some of the crucial problems contemporary multicultural society needs to raise consciousness about. It organises lectures and meetings with Polish publicists, journalist, and scholars to familiarize the public with the issues of human rights and the relations between nations, cultures, and religions coexisting in Poland and Europe. The group spreads this information through leaflets, posters etc. and on the Internet. In 2006 it held meetings for students about the history of Polish-Jewish relations and cultural dialogue.

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR)

Established in 1989, HFHR is one of the most experienced and professional non-governmental organisations involved in the protection of human rights in Europe. It is active in Poland as well as abroad (mainly in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Caucasus and Central Asia). It monitors and advises on the violation of civil and political rights and works to implement educational programmes, both to numerous non-government organisations, and state institutions (the police, the judiciary, the prison system, the immigration service). HFHR cooperates with ngo's and inter alia Sejm's research and Analysis Office and commissions. It concerns itself primarily with furthering domestic and international education and in public interest actions.

Helsinki Committee in Poland

Founded by a group of intellectuals in 1982, the Committee started as an underground organisation that established a network of collaborators throughout the entire country. In 1983, it prepared its first report, 'Poland during the period of martial law'. It is one of the few groups that were able to switch from underground activity to functioning openly under democratic conditions. It also holds the Programme Council of the HFHR and holds monthly assemblies. In





From the opening of the HFHR's Human Rights School held in January 2006.



From the Equality Pride rally in Warsaw, June 2006

Human rights in Poland

The political situation that followed Poland's presidential and parliamentary elections in the fall of 2005 is best illustrated by quoting from the statement published by the Helsinki Committee on 22 March 2006: 'Bitter accusations and moral blackmail directed at people that hold different opinions, the embarrassing battles waged through the use of investigative committees, claims to having a monopoly on the truth and moral authority – these are the phenomena that have escalated during the recent months and are the cause of our serious concern. An atmosphere is being created that is conducive to the violation of basic rights.'

In 2006, there was renewed discussion on the death penalty thanks to politicians from the ruling party. The Polish Families League wanted a referendum to reinstate the death penalty and amendments to the penal code. The President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Kaczynski, stated in an interview on Polish Radio that he supports the death penalty and that Poland, through civil discourse, should initiate the changes in this realm in the European Union and the Council of Europe. Andrzej Lepper, the Deputy Prime Minister of the government and head of the Self-Defence Party also expressed support for the return of the death penalty.

The Polish authorities' lack of an anti-discrimination policy alarmed human rights organisations. In the fall of 2005, the office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men, which had previously handled the issue of discrimination, was dissolved and the Department for Women, Family and Counteracting Discrimination within the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare took over most of the office's responsibilities, excluding, however, the issues regarding racial and ethnic discrimination. The decision to dismiss the head of the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre, Mr. Mirosław Sielatycki, caused numerous protests. The government dismissed him after he published the book 'Compass - A manual on human rights education with young people', which, according to the Minister, encourages people to meet with homosexual organisations and promotes homosexuality.

The issue of lustration (the policy of limiting participation of former communists) and the lack of legal regulations based on the principles of the state of law also caught the attention of organisations dealing with human rights. The Helsinki Committee appealed on two occasions for the establishment of clear rules, based on which the lustration could be carried

HFHR observers are monitoring demonstrations.



From the International Film Festival WATCH DOCS where the Marek Nowicki Festival Prize is awarded Marcel Pozinski in December 2006



out. Particular concern was caused by the suggestions to abolish the lustration court and to transfer onto the lustrated individual the burden of proving that the documents significant to the outcome of the lustration procedure do not state the truth or do not concern the lustrated individual.

For some years, it has been common practice to bring suit against journalists for slander and libel based on Article 212 and Article 213 of the Polish Penal Code, which provides for a fine, the penalty of restriction of liberty, or imprisonment. These regulations were subject to criticism from journalist communities and organisations that monitor the state of freedom of speech in Poland. In October 2006, the Constitutional Tribunal issued a questionable ruling judging that a journalist may be imprisoned for slander and libel. The Tribunal stated that the regulations providing for penal sanctions for slander and imputations are in accordance with the Constitution. Three judges, Professor Marek Safjan, Professor Ewa Letowska and Professor Mirosław Wyrzykowski, submitted separate opinions cautioning against limiting the freedom of the press.

Human rights violations also involve the slowness of court proceedings and the abuse of pre-trial detention.



SARAJEVO

The Human Rights House of Sarajevo

Organisations:

- The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)
- The Sarajevo Canton branch of the Serb Civic Council - Movement for Equality in BiH
- Association of female Citizens "Renaissance"
- Women and Society

President of the Managing Board of the Human Rights House Sarajevo:
Srdjan Dizdarevic



Established in 1998, the Human Rights House provides space and communication capabilities for its organisations, allowing them to exchange ideas and create new programmes and actions aimed at a stronger and more efficient fulfilment of the purposes of each organisation and the Human Rights House.

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The committee works to promote and protect human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the situation for ethnic and religious minorities, the state of prisons, the functioning of legislative power and police

forces. It does so by providing legal aid, making law proposals, monitoring of freedom of expression and hate speech, publishing regular and periodic reports and documents, making media appearances and organizing public debates.

Serb Civic Council - Movement for Equality - The Council of the Sarajevo Canton

SGV's strategic goal is BiH's reintegration into European institutions. In this sense, the council struggles for the economic revival of the state of BiH, return of refugees and displaced persons, democratization of society, rehabilitation of inter-ethnic trust, constituency and equality on the BiH territory, and general human rights protection.

Association of female Citizens "Renaissance"

The association offers help to those who have breast cancer and undergo medical treatment. It works to improve their quality of life and fights for their equality in society. The association offers education on health protection and cancer prevention and treatment. It works to change attitudes and improve legislation and treatments.

Women and Society

Women and Society is an independent, feminist, non-governmental and non-profit organisation operating on the state level. It monitors the position of women; calls for gender integration to institutional reforms, particularly to legislation; calls for law enforcement; lobbies for and advocates gender-sensitive democratic changes; calls for governmental accountability regarding women's human rights issues and gender equality; and makes coalitions with other human rights-oriented NGOs.

Organisational changes

The organisation Women for Women left the Human Rights House in 2006 after having acquired their own office. During the first part of 2006, the house's facilities were also used by two other organisations — the International Committee for Human Rights and the Association of Citizens "Dobro" — until their work was completed and their funds ran out. At the end of the year, the negotiations were finalised for Women and Society to join Human Rights House in Sarajevo.



Returnees, Photo: Danilo Krstanovic





Several mass graves have been found in Bosnia after the 1992-5 war between Muslims, Serbs and Croats. Here from Foca and Visegrad. Photos: Danilo Krstanovic



During the elections, candidates resorted to nationalistic rhetoric and created fear among ethnic groups. Human rights groups worked to prevent and monitor hate speech.

Members of the Human Rights House have been implementing their projects with more difficulty because of the introduction of the 17 per cent VAT rate, which increased utility and other service costs.

Office of Regional Co-ordinator for Youth Groups of West Balkan

Due to a strong interest from Human Rights School enrollees, local Helsinki Committees in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo set up Youth Groups. The project is a consequence of the unsatisfactory state of the regional societies, topics dealt with at the schools and recognition of their importance, and finally the possibility to make a difference by direct engagement through Youth Groups. In 2005, the Office of the Regional Co-ordinator for Youth Groups of West Balkan was founded in Sarajevo by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee. The main tasks of the Regional Co-ordinator are to work on realization of regional projects, to co-ordinate the work and cooperation between Youth Groups and gathering their projects and reports.

Human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina

2006 was marked by the elections and the election campaign, although the official campaign was only a month long. Representatives at all levels of government, except the local government, were elected on the first of October. Political relations in the country became more complicated than

before, and this particularly affected inter-ethnic relations. With the goal of winning voters' support, political leaders and election candidates resorted to nationalistic rhetoric and creation of fear among ethnic groups. The politicians' statements mostly reminded of the time preceding the war in the nineties. Consequently, the election results favoured more radical political options and left aside moderate politicians open to dialogue and compromise.

NATO's invitation for Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the Partnership for Peace can be assessed as positive, as this is considered an encouragement for reformist forces and forces of peace. Over the past year, Bosnia and Herzegovina has had talks on stabilization and association with the European Union, but due to delays in reforms, the European Union postponed signing the agreement until further notice. The major difficulty has been to reach an agreement on police reform, on which the European Union had insisted and which was opposed by one part of the political structures in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Processes against war crimes perpetrators from the period of 1992 to 1995 continued in the Hague before the International War Crimes Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia, as well as before Bosnian local courts. Nevertheless, the main criminals, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, still remain at large, which has complicated the situation and delayed the process of normalization of relations in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina.



LONDON

Open Word Network/ London Human Rights House

Organizations:

- Index on Censorship
- English PEN
- ARTICLE 19

Director:

Ursula Owens,
Henderson Mullin (from end 2006)



The three organizations that compose the London Human Rights House are committed to the protection and promotion of free expression around the world. From monitoring free expression violations around the globe to providing platforms for vital and critical debate on culture and politics to campaigning for legal reform to supporting writers in prison, the wide range of work taken on by the organizations has the advantage of being in London, where the work is sustainable and freely disseminated.

such as the Racial and Religious Hatred Act, which many critics fear will have the opposite effect to that originally intended, resulting in damage to communities that are in most need of protection. A recent proposal to make government correspondence exempt from the Freedom of Information Act has been called 'a serious attack on the public's right to know', signalling a worrying development for those working to protect civil society and promote transparency.

Index on Censorship

In 2006, Index on Censorship tackled a wide range of themes pertinent to free expression.

In 'Small wars', the magazine looked at parts of the globe ravaged by conflict, assessing what has happened to countries such as El Salvador, Nepal and Sierra Leone once the media shifted its focus on to the next war. An issue on India and China took as its focus economic growth and its effect on migration, poverty and dissent. Index also looked at the state of the media in four countries with very different relationships to the European Union — France, Turkey, Romania and Denmark — and highlighted the censorship rife in Turkmenistan prior to the death of the country's leader in December.

A photographic project entitled 'Open Shutters' was developed as part of Index on Censorship's international programme aimed at encouraging fresh and essential debate and involving otherwise unheard or marginalized voices. In Iraq and Syria, six women underwent training in the digital arts and were commissioned to document a hidden or unknown aspect of their lives. The project will culminate in a book for international distribution, a web publication and gallery exhibitions. A range of projects continued throughout 2006, addressing so-called hate speech and the issue of offence with particular relation to public discourse in times of war. Current activities focus on central Europe and the debate surrounding anti-Semitism, discrimination against Roma and homophobia in the media. *Index* also began its programme aimed at developing women's publishing capacity in the Middle East.

The International Centre for Literature and Free Expression

Nine high organisations are working together to create a new national asset, with a mission to promote and protect literature, literacy, freedom of expression and the free flow of information worldwide. The intention is to purchase a building in central London during 2007, offering the potential for member organisations to work together in a centre equipped to fulfil their various needs — including offices and meeting rooms, a theatre and performance space, and a café. The centre will ideally offer support and temporary office space for visiting journalists and individuals working for non-governmental organisations.

The situation for free expression advocates in the UK

While conflicts in Iraq and the Middle East continue to dominate the international landscape and influence the work of free expression advocates, within the United Kingdom, issues such as self-censorship, access to information, the right to protest, privacy and the politics of offence across cultural and religious divides are increasingly becoming focal points of their work. Free expression advocates, human rights campaigners and journalists have expressed alarm at the impact of anti-terrorist legislation on civil liberties, and at the introduction of new policies



English PEN

During 2006, membership continued to grow. The 'No Offence' campaign kicked off the year, mobilising the free expression community to speak out against proposals to limit free speech on the grounds of religious sensitivity. The Writers in Prison Committee (WiPC) continued its vital work, focusing on Turkish writers and publishers charged with 'insult' under the Turkish penal code. WiPC members observed numerous trials, including those of Orhan Pamuk, Perihan Magden and publisher Hrant Dink. Dink's horrendous murder in early 2007 demonstrates that the protection of free speech is central to debate in Europe today and provides devastating evidence of the necessity of this campaign.

PEN continued its lively and varied events programme in 2006, featuring film screenings, a fundraising event with Saqi Books for children in Lebanon in light of the events of late summer, and debates and discussions on subjects as diverse as the graphic novel and the role of literature in a globalised society. Books supported and launched by English PEN's Writers in Translation programme included *The Silent Steppe* by Mukhamet Shayakhmetov, translated from Russian by Jan Butler (Stacey International), and *Heart of Fire* by Senait Mehari, translated from German by Christine Lo (Profile). Writer Akbar Ganji was awarded the 2006 Golden PEN of Freedom.

ARTICLE 19

Through campaigning, advocacy and monitoring, in 2006 ARTICLE 19 continued to focus its work on the central issues challenging the free expression community today. Through participation in conferences and preparation of draft policy, A19's work on hate speech looked at the fallout from the Danish cartoon scandal. In response to increased concern over the impact of anti-terrorist legislation, it undertook a project to monitor laws in several countries including the United Kingdom, Spain, Maldives, Nepal and Turkey.

This is Beatrice Mtetwa, Winner of the Index on Censorship Free Expression Law Award 2006.



This is the Syrian part of the 'Open shutters' photo project Index is running with women in the Middle East.



A19 monitored the media in Angola, the Gambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Zambia, and issued guidelines for promoting media diversity in the run-up to elections. Responding to the rise in the use and abuse of defamation law, campaigns focused on Southeast Asia (Cambodia and Indonesia), and Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States. They lobbied governments and local authorities to discuss draft policies and advocate for change, assisting with the drafting of laws concerning transparency and freedom of expression in Moldova, and on broadcast laws in southern Sudan and Liberia.

Work connecting the right to free expression to economic and social rights included projects focused on youth's access to sexual and reproductive rights in Mexico and access to HIV/Aids information in Namibia and Mozambique. They also hosted events, including 'Voices of Iraq and Voices of Iran', bringing together disparate voices — the poet, the novelist, the musician, the journalist, the activist — in order to provide the audience with original insight into the two countries.



The writer Alan Bennett at English PEN's summer event celebrating the importance of literature.

Supinya Klagnarong, a Thai activist, acquitted in March from a private prosecution for defamation brought by Shin Corp., a large company with ties to the family of the then-prime minister. Article 19 supported Supinya throughout the case and sought to file a brief with the court (which was rejected on procedural grounds). The acquittal was hailed as a major victory for freedom of expression in the region.



NORWAY

OSLO

The Norwegian Human Rights House

Organisations:

- Norwegian PEN
- Norwegian Burma Committee
- Norwegian Helsinki Committee
- Norwegian Tibet Committee
- Nansen Dialogue Network
- Norwegian Council for the Rights of the Kurds
- International Society for Health and Human Rights (ISHHR)
- Human Rights House Foundation (HRH F)

Coordinator:

Bjørn Engesland



Set up in 1989, it was the first Human Rights House in the network. In 2004 it moved to a new address and co-located with Amnesty International Norway.

Cooperation

Organisations at the Human Rights House cooperated to hold a joint seminar on xenophobia in Norwegian media. They hosted seminars with Uyghur spokesperson Rebiya Kadeer, Iranian human rights lawyer Shirin Ebadi, Lidija Yusupova from the Russian NGO Memorial, and UN Special Representative for Human Rights Defenders, Hina Jilani. Collectively, the organisations held demonstrations to protest the assassination of Anna Politkovskaja, the shooting of Tibetan refugees by Chinese border guards, human rights in Russia, as well as several demonstrations in relation to the Belarusian elections. NGOs have also cooperated on 'Voice of Tibet', a radio station that broadcasts news and cultural programs

daily in Tibetan and Mandarin. Further, in collaboration with the other organisations from the Norwegian NGO Forum, NGOs at the Human Rights House made recommendations on human rights areas for the Norwegian government to focus on in the UN in 2006.

Norwegian Burma Committee

Supports the Burmese democracy movement through information, advocacy, and support to Burmese organisations and projects both in exile and inside Burma. In 2006 it published the first Norwegian book about Burma, 'Prisoners in Our Own Country', together with PD Burma and Norwegian

Church Aid. It was launched to mark the 15th anniversary of Aung San Suu Kyi's Nobel Peace Prize award.

Norwegian Helsinki Committee

Monitors compliance of human rights within the OSCE's signatory states. It provides election observation, information, education, international processes and democracy support to NGO and independent media. The committee is secretariat of the Norwegian Human Rights House and the NGO Forum for Human Rights, and author of an annual report on the human rights situation in Norway from 2006. It coordinates Norwegian NGO involvement in projects supported by the EEA and the Norwegian financial mechanisms. The committee granted the Sakharov Freedom Award to Belarusian Aleksandr Bialiatki in February. (see page 29)

Norwegian Tibet Committee

As one of the largest and most active Tibet support groups in Europe with more than 1500 members, the committee participated in the Race for Tibet campaign to make the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics a catalyst for change in China. It also campaigned for the Panchen Lama, who was kidnapped in 1995, and asked for the release of the Tibetan refugee children that were arrested in relation to the shooting at the Nepalese border by Chinese border police. These issues were raised with the UN Human Rights Council as well as with the Right of the Child Committee.

Nansen Dialogue Network

Ten dialogue centres staffed by local workers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo. Its objective is to contribute to sustainable peace and reconciliation by promoting interethnic dialogue through programs directed toward local institutions like municipalities and schools. It challenges ethnicity as its main organisational principle, and it promotes multiethnic values and practices through concrete multiethnic projects and processes.

Norwegian Council for the Rights of the Kurds

Spreads information and supports initiatives toward constructive dialogue among conflicting Kurdish parties as a method of stimulating a pluralist Kurdish community in Norway and abroad. It hosted several seminars in 2006, including one on human rights in Turkey and Iraq and on the situation for women. It continued to publish the magazine *Tema Kurdistan*.



International Society for Health and Human Rights

Main task in Norway: the Internet database "Health and Human Rights Info" in collaboration with the Mental Health Project. Available in English and Spanish at www.hhri.org ISHHR's secretariat has moved from Oslo to Sydney, Australia. Its next conference, in Peru in 2008, will focus on health, justice and transitions. A reference group with international experts on mental health and trauma has been established.

Norwegian PEN

A section of International PEN, the global association of writers advocating freedom of expression, Norwegian PEN monitors free expression and defends writers, journalists and publishers with a special focus on Turkey, Belarus, Tunisia, Afghanistan, China and the Middle East. Through the Writers in Prison committee, it writes protest letters to authorities and letters of support and solidarity to prisoners' families. Norwegian PEN also coordinates the Norwegian network for Cities of Refuge for persecuted writers.

Human Rights House Foundation (HRH F)

HRH F is the secretariat of the Human Rights House Network (see page 4).

Human Rights in Norway

Overall, human rights played an integral part of Norwegian legislation and policies. However, there were serious deficiencies in the protection of human rights in a number of areas.

Concerns were related to the long duration of solitary confinement, the length of the pre-trial detention period and breaches of the 24-hour rule of transferring remand prisoners from police establishments to prison cells. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) published a report on Norway, stating that the objective should be to put an end to the practice of holding remand prisoners in police establishments. It criticised the fact that those held in police custody were only allowed to exercise the right to have access to a lawyer after being questioned by police or even later, when brought before a judge. CPT voiced serious concern that many detainees, both those held in remand custody and those sentenced to imprisonment, were held in involuntary isolation on the basis of the prison authorities' decision.

During recent years, treaty bodies, human rights organizations and experts have criticised Norway for insufficient protection of religious freedoms in the school system, in the political system (because of a constitutional requirement that half of the government belong to the Norwegian State Church), and in other spheres of society. A governmental commission proposed reforms that would loosen the ties between the state and the church, without abolishing the system entirely, and instead that would establish a system of equality among religious communities in the country.



During the Russian Prime Minister's visit to Oslo, demonstrators from the Norwegian Human Rights House protested against human rights violations in Russia and Belarus.



Hina Jilani, UN Special Representative for Human Rights Defenders, visited the Human Rights House. She said the security and working conditions of human rights defenders remain lacking.

Dechen Pelmo Thargyal of the Norwegian Tibet Committee handing out information about the killing of Tibetan refugees by Chinese border guards. Members of the Tibetan diaspora were joined by Norwegian human rights activists and other sympathizers in a peaceful demonstration in front of the Norwegian Parliament.



The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and human rights organizations criticised the government for insufficient protection against racial discrimination. It criticised the tolerance of organisations that promote and incite racial discrimination, the neglect of the special needs of the East Saami people, and detention of persons suspected of providing a false identity. CERD also recommended full implementation of legislation that would prohibit discrimination in the labour market.

Norwegian authorities disregarded UN protection guidelines with respect to asylum seekers from a number of regions. To ensure that asylum seekers get a fair appeal, eleven NGOs asked the Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion to change the working methods of the Norwegian Immigration Appeals Board (UNE).

Source: The Norwegian Helsinki Committee



NORWAY

BERGEN

The Rafto Human Rights House

Organisations:

- Norwegian Peace Corps, Bergen
- AFS Intercultural Learning, Bergen
- Médecins Sans Frontières
- Rafto House Foundation
- Rafto Foundation
- Norwegian Afghanistan Committee
- Aung San Suu Kyis Room

Director:

Therese Jebesen



The Rafto Human Rights House was established in 1997 and has become a vital nexus for human rights activities in Bergen. In 2006, nearly 400 meetings were held in the House.

HRHN represents a valuable network for the Rafto House. Especially fruitful is the co-operation among the Human Rights House Foundation (HRH F), the Rafto Foundation and the Rafto House. Many of the Rafto Laureates have visited the Norwegian Human Rights House, and HRH F has facilitated and organized meetings and seminars with Rafto Laureates. The close ties with HRH F and the contact with the network strengthen the capacity of the Rafto House. The Bergen branch of Amnesty International Norway is co-located in the house and is an active partner.

to prepare them for their missions in a developing country or Norway. In October, NPC Bergen arranged an event called Bringing People Together in the municipality of Samnanger, which has been granted status as an international municipality. Nearly 300 people participated.

AFS Intercultural Learning Bergen

With several youths from Bergen going abroad and many foreign exchange students staying with local host families, 2006 was a busy year. Its main aim is to help integrate the exchange students living in and around Bergen. AFS offered a language course and many other activities.

Medecins Sans Frontier Bergen

MSF supported the work of its mother organisation through fundraising and information activities. It engages in areas of war, conflict and natural disaster, and in areas where basic health care for other reasons is not provided and works both in the field and with the dissemination of information about assaults and injustice.

Rafto Foundation

The 2006 Rafto Prize to Vietnamese Human Rights Advocate was awarded to the Venerable Thich Quang Do, deputy leader of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam. Quang Do is one of Vietnam's most prominent defenders of democracy, religious freedom and human rights.

• Civic Commission

The Rafto Foundation co-organized the third International Conference on EU, Turkey and the Kurds at the European Parliament in Brussels in 2006. Human rights defenders, writers, academics, lawyers and experts participated. The aim of the EUTCC is to monitor Turkish compliance with EU accession criteria and to promote a peaceful, democratic and long-term solution to the Kurdish issue.

Rafto House Foundation

The two main objectives are to manage the Rafto Human Rights House and to engage in educational and informational activities. A special focus on the Rafto Prize laureates is an important part of the mandate.

• Educational projects

A program for children at lower levels focused on human rights in general and on the situation in North Korea in particular. Inspired by what they learned, the children made

Norwegian Afghanistan Committee Bergen

The committee supports the Afghan people's right to independence and democracy and contributes to the reconstruction and development of the country. It focuses on long-term aid and development work on health, education and environment, and it cooperates with other humanitarian organizations in times of crisis, for instance the prolonged draught Afghanistan has suffered in recent years.

Norwegian Peace Corps Bergen

The corps hosted an open seminar in April about microfinance and screened a film documentary from Bolivia called 'Microsteps'. In September, NPC held a three-week course for 36 participants representing nine different nationalities





Together with Citizens Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, the Rafto House hosted the 7th International Conference on North Korean Human Rights & Refugees. Close to 200 delegates from more than 20 countries attended. The HRH F was involved. Here is UN Special Rapporteur, Vitit Muntarbhorn. Photo: Andrej Liankevich



In 2006, the Rafto House published the book *In Our World of Good and Evil*, consisting of children's drawings and short texts by children expressing their thoughts about human rights. Rebiya Kadeer (right), Rafto recipient in 2004, wrote the preface. Photo: Andrej Liankevich



Tich Quang Do was awarded the 2006 Rafto Prize for his personal courage and perseverance through three decades of peaceful opposition against the communist regime in Vietnam.

graphic prints. On behalf of the municipality, the Foundation taught democracy issues for immigrants and for members of pupils' councils, principals and teachers. Students at the high school level participated in a role-play held in a prison camp originating from the Second World War. They were subjected to classical methods of power abuse, with the purpose of giving them a glimpse of how it feels to be deprived of basic rights and freedoms.

Rafto Human Rights Series:

- Documentaries produced by PIRAYA FILM. The film 'Tightrope Walkers', directed by Petr Lom, tracks a selection of orphans from the Muslim Uyghur minority in Xinjiang Province, China. 'Tightrope Walkers' premiered in Amsterdam in November. The film has received international recognition and has been screened at some of the main international festivals. The film 'Belarusian Performance', directed by Polish Andrzej Fidyk, is a portrait of the painter and performance artist, Alexander Pusjkin and will premiere in spring 2007. 'Yodok Story', a film about the human rights situation in North Korea, will be finished during spring 2007.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Room Opened at the Rafto Human Right House. The opening ceremony of this room, which is dedicated to Burmese in exile working for human rights and the democratization of Burma, was held in October 2006. Suu Kyi won the Rafto Prize in 1990 and is the patron of the Rafto Human Rights House.

The Human Rights Square next to the Rafto House has been approved as a United Nations Human Rights Plaza.

Rafto Foundation 20 years



The Rafto Foundation for Human Rights was established in gratitude of the efforts and inspiration given by Professor Thorolf Rafto, who devoted much of his time to the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights.

The program included a human rights symposium (below) and a cultural event in the Grieg Concert Hall with artistic performances and a film documentary. Ten former Rafto Prize laureates attended the events and made a declaration, which you will find on page 31 in this report.



The Rafto award ceremony was chaired by Maria Dahle from the Human Rights House Foundation.



Here are former political prisoner Thich Tri Luc, President Vo Van Ai of the Action for Democracy in Vietnam & Vietnam Committee on Human Rights, and Vice-President Penelope Faulkner of Vietnam Committee on Human Rights.

All photos: Andrej Liankevich



BELARUS

Given the deteriorating political situation in the country, the Belarusian Human Rights House was set up in exile in the neighbouring country Lithuania late 2006. Because of security reasons, names of the people and organisations engaged in the project will not be provided.

A need for a house in exile

In 2002, eight Belarusian NGOs and HRH F began working to establish a Human Rights House. Unfortunately, the political situation in Belarus significantly hampered this process. The government closed down almost all operating human rights NGOs and declared their activities

illegal. In addition, over the last nine years, authorities have denied registration of any new organisation. In light of these developments, the representatives of the Belarusian NGOs decided to set up an exiled house. The idea was initially presented during the September 2005 annual meeting of the Human Rights House Network in Baku. Human rights activists emphasized the need for the creation of a shelter and a meeting place where they could freely conduct human rights-related activities. In December 2006, the Human Rights House was officially registered in Vilnius, Lithuania. It will start with its activities in early 2007.

Activities of the house

The entire human rights movement in Belarus has been forced to conduct their activities in a clandestine manner. The member organizations of the Belarusian Human Rights House have made directing public attention to the need for the protection of human rights their main objective. The organisations publish leaflets that not only promote human rights in general, but also document violations against the political, social and cultural rights of Belarusian citizens.

Two organisations continued their joint programme providing legal assistance to political prisoners, demonstrators, youth activists, and the editors of banned newspapers. The organisations provided financial support to the families of the missing politicians and the missing journalists. Moreover, the House's member organisations held joint educational programmes for activists affiliated with republican and other movements. Training workshops aimed at increasing knowledge of how to provide legal and psychological assistance to detainees were held. Through the "International Law in Advocacy" programme, seminars for lawyers aimed to increase their knowledge of international human rights

standards and mechanisms were held in cooperation with Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Polish partner organisations. Due to security concerns, most of the seminars and training workshops took place in neighboring countries.

Human rights in Belarus

In the wake of the presidential elections on March 19th, 2006, the authorities stepped up pressure against Belarusian civil society. The regime continued its campaign against independent media. The state-owned *Belposhta* company (the Belarusian Post) does not publish newspapers which reflect any oppositional viewpoints, and this significantly limits people's access to any alternative sources of information. In March 2006, Belarusian customs officers withdrew the entire print run of several independent newspapers; one of them was *Narodnaia Volia*. Then, in April, Belarusian authorities denied two Polish journalists entry to the country. During the presidential campaign, more than 30 local and foreign journalists were accused of "petty hooliganism" and detained for up to 15 days in prison. The example of the *Nasha Niva's* editor serves as a case in point.

The Lukashenka regime took extensive measures to intimidate its political opponents. One of the most commonly used methods is that of the KGB and police officers searching private apartments. In 2006, more than 1000 activists were detained as a result of this activity. The law enforcement services confiscated compact discs, external drives and other hardware designed for the transmission of information, computer equipment, printed leaflets, newspapers, and documents.

Another sign of expanding authoritarianism was the February 21st detention of four leaders of the "Partnerstvo" ("Partnership") initiative. "Partnerstvo's aim was to organise and conduct independent observation of the presidential elections. The arrested leaders were later convicted and sentenced to imprisonment (from six months up to two years) in accordance with criminal code provisions concerning unlawful activities of unregistered organisations. Dmitri Dashkevich, the leader of the Young Front organisation, was sentenced to one and a half years' imprisonment under the same article.

On March 25th, Aliaksandr Kazulin, the former presidential opponent of Lukashenka, was arrested and sentenced to



five and a half years of imprisonment. The judgement was based on accusations of “hooliganism” and the disruption of public order through the organisation of mass demonstrations. In light of these proceedings, Kazulin went on a 53 day-hunger strike. He demanded that the UN Security Council examine the human rights situation in Belarus. Alexander Milinkevich and other opposition leaders were arrested on the 26th of April, the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, charged with organising an “unsanctioned rally” and received a sentence of 10-15 days’ imprisonment.

Human Rights Defenders at risk

Criminalisation of public activities such as anti government protests and demonstrations is one of the key methods for silencing human rights defenders. The detention of Ales Bialiatski, who participated in the March 25th peaceful demonstration, illustrates these practices. Activists are punished for distributing information and holding seminars about human rights issues. Involvement in public activities promoting human rights often has negative impact on activists’ everyday life. They face repercussions in the workplace and at universities. For example, Siarhei Marchyk, one of the leaders of the Young Front, was expelled from the financial-judicial department of the Baranavichy State University, while Iauhen Skarabutan, the leader of the Hrodna branch of the Young Front, was expelled from the department of Belarusian philology of the Hrodna State University. In both cases, the reasons given for expulsion were participation in illegal political activity.

The Belarusian Helsinki Committee (BHC) is one of the very few registered and legally operating human rights NGOs. Its activity was restricted by the introduction of economic sanctions. In December 2006, the Ministry of Justice unsuccessfully attempted to shut down the organisation. BHC assets were confiscated. However, as a result of serious criticism from the international community, the authorities allowed the Committee’s operation to continue until further notice.

Action by the walls of detention center where leaders of opposition are under arrest. Minsk, May 1, 2006. Young people stood in a row creating the inscription “What for?” Photo: Andrei Liankevich



The editor of Nasha Niva, Andrej Dynko, published his diary from detention in Akrestsina prison after the Presidential election.” -The worst tricks of Soviet times are back, and the repressive machine has grown much larger. In 1996, the courts fined people for scuffling with police. In 2006, they convict young women to 7 days on a plank bed without mattresses for a bottle with tea” Photo: promedia.by



The tent camp set up by peaceful demonstrators at the Square after the Presidential Election, was scattered by SWAT officers on March 24. Photo: promedia.by

Support action of Zmiter Dashkevish-leader of unregistered organization “Young Front”. On November 1, 2006 he was convicted for 1.5 years of prison because of “the activity from the name of unregistered organization”.

Photos: Nasha Niva



CROATIA

Organisations:

- B.a.B.e. - Be active.
Be emancipated
- Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights
- Croatian Law Centre

Coordinator:

Tin Gazivoda

Following up on several conversations with representatives of the Human Rights House Foundation at the end of 2001, the three prominent NGOs mentioned above decided to work together to establish the Human Rights House in Zagreb. Having

worked closely together on several projects in the past, the partner organisations had a commitment to establish a house and worked closely with the Human Rights House Foundation from Oslo to achieve this aim. Their objectives included the initiation of new joint programmes and the reduction of expenses but, above all, to open a house for those united in their dedication to the concept of human rights. The organisations joined the Human Rights House Network because they see it as an opportunity to spread the concept of human rights, to share experiences with partners in the Network, and to strengthen their own position when initiating and applying for future mutual projects.

B.a.B.e. - Be active. Be emancipated is a feminist advocacy and lobbying organisation established in 1994. B.a.B.e. lobbies for the recognition and improvement of women's rights, including:

- The right to be free from violence, both at home and in the public sphere;
- The right to reproductive choice and reproductive health, including the right to decide when to start a family, with whom and how to raise children;
- The right to equal and full participation in all aspects of society, especially in leadership roles and important decision-making bodies;

B.a.B.e. supports civil society in Croatia and works with peace, human rights and ecological groups in the country.

Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights (CHC) is an association that involves outstanding public personalities committed to protection and promotion of human rights. The office of the association works on protection of human rights (approximately 2000 new cases, i.e. 3 to 5000 persons annually). Five field offices are also included in that activity: Eastern Slavonia (Osijek and Vukovar), Karlovac, Knin, Split, and Dubrovnik. Every year schools of human

rights take place – for the youth, for civil society activists, and for future decision-makers. Special projects include education for judiciary and public attorneys, research on political objectivity and/or bias of media, implementation of right to access information, rights of minorities, etc. Public actions of the Committee and the Council for Media are dedicated to sensitising the public to violations of human rights and to advocating development of legal norms and improvement of political culture to the benefit of human rights. Given the high number of people who need assistance to claim their vital rights, CHC depends on support also from domestic sources. Goals of the CHC are:

- Effective protection of human rights
- Development of the system of protection of human rights
- Development of culture of human rights and tolerance
- Raising the level of knowledge about human rights

Croatian Law Centre (CLC) was established in 1994 with the support of the Open Society Institute-Croatia. The main goal of the CLC is to promote the rule of law in Croatia through such means as establishing legal principles that are in accordance with international standards, advancing professionalism in the judiciary, and supporting general legal research. The centre is working on revising legislation that will initiate reforms of local self-government. The goals of the Centre are:

- To achieve decentralisation of public administration
- To fight against corruption
- To facilitate access to justice
- The protection and development of human rights

Hosting the Annual HRH Network Meeting

The 3 organisations working to set up a Human Rights House in Croatia hosted the Annual Network Meeting 2006 and arranged an International Conference on discrimination and anti-discrimination policies. Discrimination occurs in every country regardless of its level of development. Hence, no state is immune to this phenomenon. Therefore, only if the knowledge of how to counteract discrimination is shared and implemented, it will be possible to improve the situation. Participants from the whole HRH Network discussed discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, and unequal levels of development. Governments' failure to fight discrimination, were identified



and concrete recommendations for action were made. The chairman of the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Zarko Puhovski, opened the Conference with remarks on discriminating powers. The chairman of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Bosnia and Hercegovina and director of the HRH Sarajevo Srdjan Dizdarevic, opened this annual report and closed the conference in Zagreb, by presenting the key issues of possible anti-discrimination policies and legislation.

Defenders of human rights in Croatia do not encounter harassment by state bodies and agencies, or violence by intolerant nationalists, as used to be the case until the early part of this decade. However, their appeals on behalf of victims of violations of human rights are often ignored. Furthermore, the most outspoken among them are exposed to a certain degree of hate speech in public when they draw attention to the unpleasant truths resulting from the process of redressing the gravest violations of human rights occurring during the 1990s and following years. Most human rights violations take place as a part of the everyday functioning (or non-functioning) of public administration, the welfare system, and other systems which are not capable of guaranteeing civic, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and other human rights. On the other hand, there are many ongoing serious violations, even policies of ethnic discrimination and violence, factors that led to the effective ethnic cleansing of Croatia. This issue is still a taboo to a certain extent, and the defenders of human rights who raise them in public are still met with resistance, hate, or public slander. Some lower-ranking government officials occasionally express the attitude that treats such civic activities as almost amounting to treason. Regarding the overall position of civic activism, organisations dealing with human rights, as well as their donors and sponsors, do not enjoy any kind of tax exemption or any other public benefits.



The Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights organises human rights schools for youth, activists and for future decision-makers. Here is from the summer school 2006.



Srdjan Dvornik, Executive Director of the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights introduces the speakers opening the International Conference held prior to the Annual Network Meeting in November. From the left: Goran Mikulicic, President of the Croatian Law Center, Elisabeth Walaas, Norwegian ambassador in Zagreb, Maria Dahle, Executive Director of HRH Foundation and Milan Bandic, Mayor of the City of Zagreb.



Scenes from the Knin region where activists from the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights assist returning refugees in their struggle for rights.



AZERBAIJAN

Organisations:

- Association for Protection of Women's Rights
- Azerbaijan Human Rights Center
- Azerbaijan National Group of International Society for Human Rights
- Azerbaijan Young Lawyers' Union
- Center for "EL" Development Program
- Citizens' Labor Rights Protection League
- Democracy, Human Rights and Media Monitor
- Society for Humanitarian Research
- Women's Association for Rational Development

Coordinator:

Shahla Ismailova

The idea of establishing a Human Rights House in Baku appeared for the first time in 2003. Since then, human rights defenders in Azerbaijan have been multiplying their efforts to accelerate this process. However, due to political instabilities triggered predominately by economic problems such as fluctuating market prices, inflation, and a dramatic increase in the oil and energy products prices, creation of the House has been significantly delayed. Formal proceedings concerning the establishment of the Human Rights House Baku however, were finalised in December.

The Azeri NGOs are awaiting official registration by the Ministry of Justice. In the meantime, the Core Group (leaders of the human rights NGOs involved) decided with the HRH Foundation's support, to set up a temporary office in Baku.

Core group in action

2006 was a year of enhanced cooperation among the Core Group members. The NGOs leaders primarily focused on

solving all practicalities that accompany the process of the establishment of the House. On the other hand, they continued promotion of human rights in Azerbaijan. Joint activities of the member organisations of the future Human Rights House attracted public attention and media coverage. Two examples are the Women's Forum in June, hosted by the Women's Association for Rational Development, and the meeting between the human rights defenders from Azerbaijan and Great Britain, initiated by the Azerbaijan Young Lawyers Union.

Human rights in Azerbaijan

In 2006, the Azeri human rights defenders continued to face deteriorating tendencies in regard to freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. Despite numerous appeals on the part of the oppositional political parties, none of the peaceful demonstrations was granted the government's consent. At the same time, any attempt to hold an unauthorized picket was brutally dispersed by the law enforcement officers. What is more, human rights activists witnessed series of students' hunger striking against the violations of their educational rights and for unrightfully being expelled from their university. A group of human rights defenders visited these protests to lend their support for the students' action. They also appealed to authorities to improve the students' situation. Unfortunately, the government did not undertake any serious action to meet the protesters' concerns.

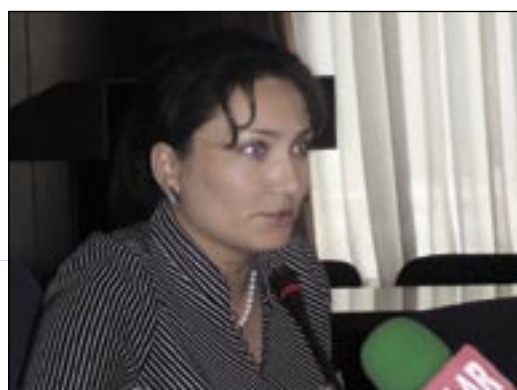
Smothering independent voices

One of the most striking events in 2006 was the November 24th decision by the National Television and Radio Council (NTRC) to shut down the Azerbaijan News Service (ANS), the first private radio and television company. Although the ANS was allowed to temporarily resume broadcasting, it is not clear whether it will be granted permission for permanent operation. The government's campaign against the free media also affected other institutions. The Azadlig newspaper, the Turan Information Agency and the Institute for Reporter's Freedom and Safety were all unexpectedly evicted from their offices in November. More generally, oppositional journalists and media institutions repeatedly faced significant infringements in regard to freedom of speech and expression. Accusations of libel and insult leading either to high fines or imprisonment constitute the most common means for silencing the critical voices. The example of the June 2006

Shahla Ismailova is the coordinator of the Core Group as well as the chairwoman of WARD. Here; at the Women's Forum 2 June . The event hosted more than 30 women's organizations and women's rights actors.



Core Group meeting with the leaders of the nine member organizations, 21 October. The registration details concerning the Human Rights House Baku were discussed.



imprisonment of Sakit Zahidov, a satiric journalist from the Azadlig newspaper, may serve as a case in point. He was sentenced to three years of imprisonment 15 October after 3,5 months in detention. Independent journalists were also subjected to continuous harassment and life threats. The most appalling incidents were the life-endangering attacks on three journalists, Fikret Huseynli, Bahaddin Haziyevev and Nijat Huseynov. Moreover, there was no significant progress in the investigation of the murder of Elmar Huseynov, a prominent journalist and the editor of Monitor, who was killed in March 2005 outside his apartment in Baku.

Situation of human rights defenders

A majority of human rights activists and NGOs express fear of the government's persecution. There are serious reasons to expect that human rights advocates will become the next target-group after closure of all independent media. In spite of these predictions, the groups involved in the human rights movement have become more tolerant and supportive toward one another and have initiated various united actions, joint conferences and meetings.



Students hunger striking for their right to education and organization in January. The human rights organization as well as Human Rights House Foundation sent statements to the Azeri authorities asking them to restore the expelled students rights.



The satirical journalist, Sakit Zahidov, with a politically motivated criminal drug case, was sentenced to 3 years of imprisonment 15 October after 3,5 months detention.



The Azadlig newspaper, the Turan Information Agency and the Institute for Reporter's Freedom and Safety were all unexpectedly evicted from their offices in November. Photo: Emin Huseynov, Institute for Reporter Freedom and Safety, IRFS.

UGANDA

Organisations:

- Human Rights Network (HURINET)
Uganda Legal Aid Project
- Public Defenders Association of Uganda
- African Centre for the Treatment and rehabilitation of Torture Victims
- Refugee Law Project
- Federation of Women Lawyers Women's International Cross Exchange
- Hope After Rape Green Watch
- Uganda Women's Network
- Legal Aid Clinic

Coordinator: Mohammed Ndifuna, National Coordinator of Human Rights Network (HURINET) Uganda

A process to downscale the project with a view to make it more network-oriented was set in motion when it became clear that there was no funding available to continue the project as foreseen. The project's local coordinator, Nivatiti Nandujja therefore only worked until September. Future work is likely to include closer cooperation with, among others, the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project. In addition, intensified contact with human rights organisations in northern Uganda brought momentum to the prospect of including an already existing NGO House in Gulu in the HRH Network. Work will continue on both fronts in 2007.





In January, the Norwegian Council for Africa and HRH F co-hosted the seminar “Aid and the troubled democracies of East- Africa”. The invited speakers, former editor of the Monitor in Uganda; Charles Onyango, the HRH coordinators Nivatiti Nandujja and Martin Olouch and the well known human rights defender Beatrice Kamau, all underlined the importance of a strong civil society for the functioning of a democracy.



Why the organisations have come together

For many among the 11 Kampala-based organisations committed to getting a joint Human Rights House, the prospect of increasing accessibility for their clients and creating a one-stop-station, rather than having to pass clients on, is crucial. For all, the anticipated costsaving also weighs heavily in favour of having such a house. With problems of integration, coordination and cooperation continuing to hamper the efforts and efficiency of the independent human rights sector, hopes are high that a Human Rights House will help amend this situation and create a joint platform for launches, approaches and other initiatives, at the national and international levels alike. Finally, given the recent years' marked decline in respect for human rights in Uganda and the ever heavier restrictions on how the human rights sector can operate, the importance of supporting one another and becoming part of an international network of Human Rights Houses cannot be over-estimated.

Human rights in Uganda

The elections in February and the peace talks in northern Uganda, commencing mid-July, dominated the human rights agenda in 2006. While the elections, marred by intimidation of the opposition and widespread voting irregularities, still awarded President Yoweri Museveni a third term (and constitutional amendments opened up for even further re-elections), the peace talks fizzled out and left the 1.7 million people in the region confined to displaced persons camps, with good reason to continue to fear for their own security. Local human rights defenders warn that with no guarantees of peace, protection, rather than return, should remain both Ugandan authorities' and the international community's first priority. Despite Uganda now being a multi-party democracy by constitution, political freedoms remain restricted and the ruling National Resistance Movement Organisation maintains its privileged access to state

resources, including the exclusive use, often to the detriment of the opposition, of the police, the army and other state security bodies. Local journalists faced intimidation and prosecution in the months preceding the elections and a Ministry of Information directive to all media outlets forbade all stories on the trial of opposition candidate Kizza Besigye. Various units within the Ugandan security and military forces continue to use 'safe houses', unauthorised secret detention centres, to detain and interrogate suspected political dissidents. Among the many reported cases of the use of 'safe houses', one includes the death of the detainee, allegedly as a result of torture. In the Karamoja region in eastern Uganda, clashes between local groups and units of the Uganda People's Defence Forces, following in the wake of alleged cases of torture, rape and other human rights abuses committed by undisciplined elements of UPDF, led to the death of at least 22 soldiers and an unknown number of civilians.

The situation for human rights defenders

In 2006, a new law that caused severe concern was passed in Parliament and it requires all NGOs to register annually. For as long as applications for registration have not been handled, however, organisations are still allowed to operate. Even so, the law is widely understood as a tool to silence for instance human rights organisations without having to refer to politics, but instead, as it will seem, do it for bureaucratic reasons only. Sexual minorities' rights defenders were once again targeted, with some forced to leave the country for their own security, especially after the tabloid Red Pepper's publication in August of full identifying details of 45 alleged homosexuals. With homosexuality now constitutionally banned, Ugandan authorities have not persecuted the newspaper or any of its staff.



KENYA

Organisations:

- Kenya Human Rights Commission
- Centre for Law and Research International
- Coalition on Violence Against Women in Kenya
- Federation of Women Lawyers – Kenya
- People Against Torture
- Release Political Prisoners
- Child Rights Advisory, Documentation and Legal Centre

Team leader of the Interim Board: Morris Odhiambo, Executive Director of CLARION. Coordinator: Martin O'bongo Oluoch

Setting up a Human Rights House according to the original plan and budget has proven an unlikely prospect. Hence, a process has been set in motion to reconsider all aspects of the project, with a view to significantly reduce the costs. Thought is now directed towards buying a smaller house that can be expanded as needed and as funding permits. 2006 saw a further increase in collaboration and networking among

Human Rights House member organisations and others. This was done mainly through thematic- and issue-based networks and working groups. The most visible network involving member organisations of HRH was Name and Shame of Corruption Networks (NASCON), which organised street demonstrations forcing four senior cabinet ministers to resign over corruption allegations against them. HRH member organisations also collaborated through the Anti-Human Trafficking Network, Anti-Torture Lobby, Justice Juvenile Network and Paralegal Networks.

Why organisations have come together

The independent human rights sector in Kenya suffers from weak cooperation and lack of effective networks. Organisations are dodged with unnecessary competition; duplication of work; lack of capacity and visibility; inadequate accessibility; limited sharing of contacts, knowledge and experience; high operational costs; and weak influence and authority. Moral, political and financial support has been diminishing. The intention of the Human Rights House is to meet these challenges. The seven human rights organisations involved want to enhance coordination and cooperation through joint programming of issues and actions.

Human rights in Kenya

In 2006, Kenyans found ever more reason to doubt the genuineness of their government's commitment to human rights, good governance and corruption. Real improvement, regardless of area, was hard to find. Instead, the general perception is that the country's human rights record did not show any sign of change for the better. Instead, the government showed its disregard of human rights by intimidating institutions like the media and even the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. Basic constitutional issues, promised to be dealt with soon after the current administration came to power in 2002, remain unresolved as the government is now instead preparing for new elections late 2007. Corruption once again dominated the scene during 2006. It became evident that a culture of impunity has taken root in President Mwai Kibaki's administration. It emerged that senior members of the government were even more deeply involved in the grand corruption scandals than had previously been assumed. Civil society organised several big street demonstrations calling for the termination or resignation of ministers implicated in the corruption scandals. Pending investigation, the president was forced to dismiss the four ministers. One of the ministers was later cleared by court, prompting many Kenyans to doubt the government's resolve in fighting corruption. Reports that police beat and tortured suspects continued. There was also a rise in



Human rights defenders and members of the public hold a peaceful demonstration outside the offices of the Kenya Television Network in downtown Nairobi. They were protesting against a government raid (using hired mercenaries from Armenia) the previous day on the printing facilities of the standard newspapers where they burned newspapers and dismantled the printing machines. The government had also raided the KTN television station and shut it down. The demonstration was held in March. Photo: Kenya Human Rights Commission.



Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya, GALCK, campaigning on World Aids Day, 1 December, in Nairobi. Luzau Basambombo (left), a sexual minorities' rights campaigner, has had to flee his native DR Congo, first to Uganda, then to Kenya, to protect himself and his family from repeated harassment.' Photo: Annika Rodriguez.



extrajudicial killings by the police, and police officers being killed. Several innocent civilians lost their lives in shoot-outs between police officers and criminals. For the third year running, rape remained the highest recorded crime. Incidences of both defilement and rape continued to rise despite the passing of the new sexual offences law in 2006. According to FIDA, 'child abuse unfortunately rarely comes out in the open, especially when it involves family members.'

Situation of human rights defenders

Problems faced by Kenyan human rights defenders include threats, intimidation, arrests and injuries during violent disruption of peaceful public protest rallies. In 2006, human rights defenders also faced further challenges related to the dwindling support from abroad and their own authorities' unwillingness to release resources earmarked by donors for civil society use. Threats of deregistration, as suggested by the Minister of Justice, was once again being used as a tool to intimidate human rights defenders and their organisations in 2006.

Expanding the network

The Human Rights House concept generated interest in a number of countries also in 2006. HRH F was in contact with NGOs and networks in Angola, Georgia, Afghanistan, Armenia, Macedonia, Iran, Jordan, Tunisia, South Africa, Nepal, Colombia and Zimbabwe in 2006 concerning cooperation and advice on how to establish a Human Rights House. However HRH F only had the capacity to follow up Macedonia, Geneva, Nepal, Afghanistan and Angola.

Macedonia, Skopje

Human Rights House Macedonia officially registered on the 18 September and with the intention to enhance their capacity; improve their service towards their clients; strengthen the position of civil society; as well as strengthen the position of human rights defenders, they are working for the establishment of a house. A board composed of the leaders of the 5 individual organisations runs the HRH Macedonia.

The organisations:

- The Macedonian Centre for Women's Rights - Shelter Centre fights the long-standing neglect of women's human rights in Macedonian society through programmes for combating domestic violence and sexual harassment.
- The First Children's Embassy in the World – Megjashi was established to protect the rights of children in the transition period and has diplomatic corps in five continents in the world, with over 120 beneficiaries of its diplomatic passport so far. The Embassy has Consulates in Democratic Republic of Congo, France, Spain, Brazil and Italy.

- The Association for Democratic Initiatives aims to integrate human rights into Southeast European societies and is currently a partner with Minority Rights Group International implementing activities as a part of the "Diversity and Democracy Program in Southeast Europe". It has country offices in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo, Albania and has representatives in New York and Western Europe.
- Polio Plus – Movement Against Disability focuses strategically on achieving legislative and policy change through self-advocacy and awareness rising of disability rights in order to remove discrimination and marginalisation.
- The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia was founded in 1994. The Committee reacts in cases of violations of the human rights promoted by the international legislation, guaranteed by the Constitution, the national legislation and by the State and its institutions. It monitors provides free legal aid, undertakes casework, legal initiatives, researches, disseminations on human rights, organizes conferences and trainings.

Geneva, Switzerland

The house, called la Maison des Associations, is a full downtown complex consisting of four buildings located in the heart of Geneva. It includes two conference halls, seven meeting rooms, a cafe called 'Alegre', cinema facilities and office space for the 62 organisations that work in the house, covering the areas of human and people rights, environmental issues, peace and disarmament and sustainable development. Both international and national NGOs as well as local





A workshop in web journalism was held in Moscow for local contact persons at Human Rights Houses in London, Sarajevo, Baku, Minsk, Warsaw, Moscow and Oslo, as well as a human rights defender from Nizhny Novgorod.

associations have seen the house solving various difficulties faced by civil society groups: tight financial situations, geographical scattering, low contact level with the public, to mention but a few. The NGO House was developed by the 'Foundation pour l'Expression Associative' whose aim is to join the HRH Network in 2007. www.lafea.org

Nepal, Kathmandu.

In Kathmandu, the decision to establish a Human Rights Home and join the HRH Network was made in 2005. While the initiative came from the International Commission of Jurists, the local organisations held their first general assembly in mid-December 2006. The 43 organisations that have applied for membership cover the areas of social, economic and political rights, health care, minorities' rights and peace and are currently in the process of setting up membership guidelines.

Afghanistan

With support from the Norwegian PEN, HRH F has secured funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to inquire about the feasibility of establishing a Human Rights House in Kabul. Such a house might be established in conjunction with the already existing writers' house, set up with support from Norwegian PEN.

Angola

In 2005, Angolan human rights NGOs and the United Nations' Office for Human Rights in Luanda invited HRH F to accompany the strengthening of networks and the establishment of a Human Rights House in Angola. Since then, HRH F has had an ongoing dialogue with the Dutch organisation

Netherlands institute for Southern Africa (NiZA), with a view to develop a joint project aimed at providing support for the independent human rights sector in the country.

Exchange of knowledge and capacity building

One of the Network's three programmes is to promote the building of institutions and communities for exchange of knowledge and capacity building. Since 2003, HRH F has trained contact persons at the local Human Rights Houses (see page 28).

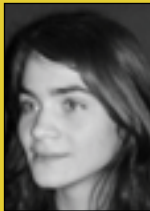
HRH F nominated one Belarusian lawyer to the Training course for Human Rights Defenders in Geneva, April 2006. In cooperation with Belarusian partners, HRH F coordinated the project 'Law in Advocacy' and attended and monitored seminars of international human rights standards for Belarusian lawyers in Vilnius and Warsaw, autumn 2006. Experts and trainers from the Polish Helsinki Foundation, the International Service for Human Rights in Geneva and Council of Europe contributed to the seminars.

In addition, HRH F attended and contributed to a number of conferences, including the following:

- At the University of Aalborg, Denmark, the university's Centre for Comparative Integration Studies, the Civil Society Research Network, and the Nordic Africa Institute organized a conference on African civil societies.
- The East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network's journalist's workshop in Entebbe, Uganda.
- HRH F spoke at an international conference on sexual minorities' rights in Oslo, focusing on East Africa.

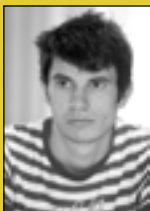


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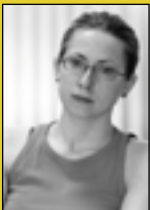
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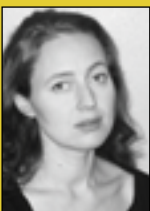
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Belarus

The contact person in Belarus was anonymous for security reasons



Information

Information is essential for mobilising support and contributing to change. Therefore it continued to be the Network's largest joint project in 2006. Information is relevant across the board in the overall strategy of the Human Rights House Network

The joint website humanrightshouse.org contains links to and information from the member organisations. The website was upgraded technically in 2006. The traffic more than doubled from last year (2460 requests for pages per day). Among the recommendations from an external evaluator was to 'stop being a general human rights news provider from the countries where Human Rights Houses are established or emerging' and to 'increase the visibility of the network'. It also said that the 'multiple training sessions conducted by experienced personnel at the HRH F have had good impact on the quality of the published articles.'

The HRH Network's response to this conclusion was to focus directly on news related to the organisations' field of focus and their core activities (more on evaluation, see page 5).

Based on a selection of stories from humanrightshouse.org, five **newsletters** were distributed to 5700 recipients, including authorities, international and regional organisations, media, NGOs, donors and human rights researchers. Thematic newsletters were introduced in 2006, focusing on women's rights, on torture, and on the assassination of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaja, respectively. Local Human Rights Houses and the HRH Foundation produced and facilitated the spreading of statements and appeals to authorities in cases where mainly freedom of speech, assembly and organization, and the right to be a human rights defender were violated.

The Norwegian portal menneskerettigheter.no continued to be developed and updated regularly by the Human Rights House Foundation. It contains human rights news and background.

The average number of visits was 600 per day. In early 2006, sub-pages aimed at schools were finalized.

The local **contact persons** received training in technical, editorial and ethical aspects of web journalism at workshops in Moscow and Oslo. Further, the role of the contact persons in linking the human rights environment they work in to the international network was examined in the workshops. It resulted in specific recommendations and a plan of action to strengthen the network information. In addition, contact persons received individual feedback from HRH Foundation on editorial practices throughout the year. All contact persons have been equipped with technical manuals and journalistic guidelines developed by HRH F, available on an intranet. To strengthen the sharing of information, internal bulletins were also distributed from house to house. The contact persons were employed locally, while HRH F facilitated funding and training.

The 7 October killing of the Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya sent shockwaves through the human rights movement around the world. A special edition of the newsletter from the Human Rights House Network summed up some of the reactions. Here from a silent protest outside the Russian Embassy in Oslo. Photo: Amnesty International Norway



Lobbying and advocacy:

The Norwegian Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs has given political support to the development of the human rights house concept and its international network. Hence, the Human Rights House Network is part of Norway's strategic support to human rights defenders and the strengthening of civil society.

In 2006 HRH Foundation had several individual meetings with all the political parties' representatives of the Norwegian Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs. The committee, together with members of staff from the Norwegian Embassy, also met with HRH representatives in Nairobi while attending the Inter-Parliamentary Union's assembly there in March. HRH F contributed to the Parliament's official hearings on Belarus and the Norwegian National State Budget.

Further, on an international level HRH Foundation:

- Attended the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Vienna, April 2006.
- Attended and led the workshop about the human rights priorities of the EEA grants support to the NGO Fund in the Czech Republic in Prague, May 2006.
- Attended the Prize Award of the Gerd Bucerius Prize Free Press of Eastern Europe and the Freedom of Expression Foundation's Press Prize in Hamburg, May 2006. The Russian Chechen Information Agency in Nizhny Novgorod was awarded the prize, after a joint nomination of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, the Rafto Human Rights House and the HRH Foundation.

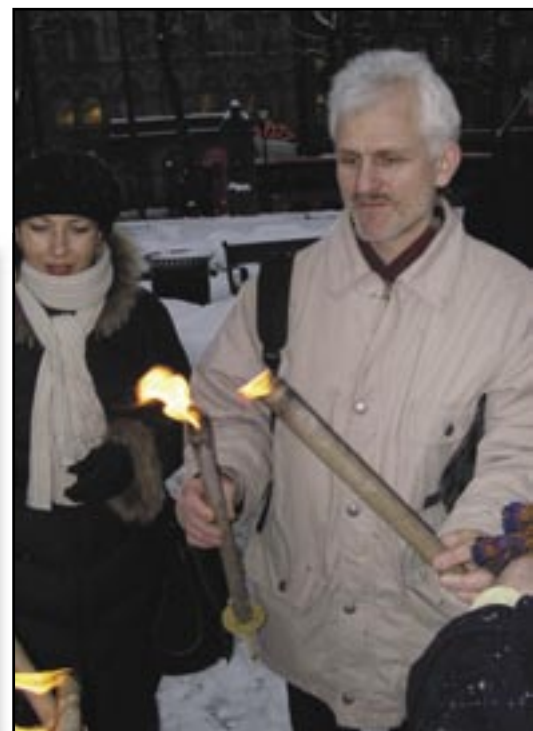
Funding:

The HRH F devotes substantial effort to seek funding to establish new Human Rights Houses and develop the international network. As in previous years, HRH F received generous support from the Norwegian MFA. HRH F was also granted funding from Development Cooperation Ireland and the OSCE, and continued to seek funding from other sources as well. In 2006, the Freedom of Expression Foundation in Norway decided to grant essential support to the HRH Foundation's work in Caucasus- and Eastern Europe for 2007. Joint efforts from various parts of the HRH Network as well as People in Need resulted in funding to the exile house for Belarusian human rights defenders in Vilnius. This was obtained from Civic Belarus through Transformation Cooperation Unit of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish Helsinki Committee, and the Netherlands' MFA. The House in Zagreb was fully financed in 2006, whereas the process initiated in Colombia in 2004 was halted due to lack of funding.

Human rights defenders gathered political support both inside and outside the Norwegian Parliament throughout 2006. Here demonstrators from the Human Rights House wave the Tibetan flag and protest the shooting of Tibetan refugees by Chinese border guards in September.



HRH F accompanied the Belarusian human rights defender Ales Bialiatski to Prague in March 2006, where he received the Czech organization People in Need's Homo Homini Award during the opening of the 8th International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival. Here Bialiatski is in Oslo where he received the Sakharov Award from the Norwegian Helsinki Committee in February.



FUNDING 2006	NOK	Euro
Norwegian MFA	7 101 000	887 625
OSCE	58 830	7 354
The Freedom of Expression Foundation	120 000	15 000
Development Cooperation Ireland, Irish MFA	100 937	12 617
Donations to Voice of Tibet	2 362 500	295 313
Total income	9 743 267	1 217 908
Joint projects	1 169 767	146 221
HRH establishments	2 811 000	351 375
Annual Network meeting	760 000	95 000
Information	1 470 000	183 750
Voice of Tibet	2 362 500	295 313
Lobbying, advocacy and fundraising	1 170 000	146 250
Expenses	9 743 267	1 217 908

Who we are

International Advisory Team

In order to strengthen the democratic structure of the Network, it was decided that the Advisory team's mandate and composition were to be formalized by March 2007. The team is to participate in both strategic development and representation of the Human Rights House Network.

Board Members for HRH Foundation

- **Lars A. Christensen** (Chairperson), Supreme Court Lawyer and Senior Partner of the law firm Wikborg, Rein & co
- **Elisabeth Eide**, Assistant Professor of Journalism, Oslo University College, Author, extensive work experience from Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh
- **Bente Erichsen**, Executive Director, Nobel Peace Centre, prepared the cultural events for the Olympics-94, extensive work within film and documentary, Chairperson of the Board of Amnesty International, Norwegian chapter.
- **Bernt Hagtvet**, Professor in Political Science at the University of Oslo. Visiting Professor at Yale University
- **Knut U. Kloster Jr.**, Founder of HRH F
- **Mette Newth**, Author, Illustrator, Translator and Lecturer. Until 2006, Chair of the International Steering Committee and Project leader for Beacon for Freedom of Expression



Lars A. Christensen



Elisabeth Eide



Bente Erichsen



Bernt Hagtvet



Knut U. Kloster Jr.



Mette Newth

Support staff at HRH Foundation

- **Marijke Bohm**, Project Assistant (voluntary)
- **Øistein S. Galaen**, IT Consultant, Technical Support
- **Fabrice Jacobs**, Project Assistance (voluntary)
- **Svein Jacobsen**, Strategy and Fundraising Advisor
- **Henry Luzinda**, Project Assistant (voluntary)
- **Ralph Pluimert**, Project Assistant (voluntary)
- **Liudmila Ulyashyna**, Jurist, Belarus Advisor

Permanent Staff at the HRH Foundation



• **Ane Tusvik Bonde**

Project Manager, post Soviet Union



• **Maria Dahle**

Executive Director



• **Sigurd Kraft Gulbrandsen**

Administrative Consultant



• **Niels Jacob Harbitz**

Project Manager, Africa / Web journalism



• **Nina Luhr**

Covering maternity leave as Project Manager, information/ network



• **Borghild T. Krokan**

On maternity leave from February 2006



Declaration by the Rafto Laureates on the occasion of the
20th anniversary of the Rafto Foundation.

We call for a renewed international commitment to human rights.

At a time when security concerns threaten to erode the international human rights regime, we issue a warning and emphasise that respect for human rights and the dignity and worth of each and every human being is the only sustainable road to freedom, justice and peace and thereby also to security.

A commitment to human rights is more than to recognise human rights as ideals and lofty principles. Dedication to human rights requires that we accept them as a standard against which to measure and judge the means by which we pursue our aims. Human rights thus must be accepted as ethical norms and as binding international law.

Hence, while we strongly denounce the disregard and contempt for human rights that forms part of every act of terrorism, we also denounce responses to terrorist threats that disregard and undermine international human rights norms. If we respond to threats against our freedom and human dignity by negating the norms through which these fundamental values are expressed and protected, we surrender our humanity.

Therefore, and as much as we recognise the duty of states to protect their citizens' right to life, integrity and freedom from fear, we denounce all use of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment as unjustified and fundamental violations of our common humanity.

We also call on all States to respect Articles 9 and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile, and that everyone is entitled to a fair, and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal.

A commitment to human rights entails to respect and promote the dignity and worth of all human beings and the equal rights of men and women. It is a pledge to respect diversity, to let a multitude of voices be heard and given consideration and respect.

The values of tolerance and engagement are fundamental to an open society. Lastly, we therefore call on all to respect the freedom of speech and of belief. A society that silences its critics – whether through terror, censorship, or by incarcerating or killing them - is hindered in its development.

Thich Quang Do, Lidia Yusupova, Rebiya Kadeer, Paulos Tesfagiorgis, Shirin Ebadi, Ian Hancock, ECPAT by Carmen Madrinan, Peter Molnar, Leyla Zana, Trivimi Velliste and Jiri Hajek.

Bergen, November 4, 2006



Human Rights House Network

Human Rights Houses are working communities where human rights organisations, big and small, share office facilities and cooperate to support and strengthen human rights.

These local communities are united in an international network called the **Human Rights House Network**. In 2006, this network embraced more than 80 non-governmental organisations in 11 countries.

The Network's secretariat is the **Human Rights House Foundation** (HRH F), located at the Norwegian Human Rights House in Oslo, founded in 1989.

The manual "Establishing a Human Rights House" is available in English in print and in Russian, Spanish, Turkish, and Azeri at www.humanrightshouse.org.

An external evaluation concluded in 2006 that the main advantages of the Human Rights House Network are:

- Increased solidarity and moral support between the members.
- More visibility for the local human rights organizations.
- Improved service for the clients.
- Increased security and stability for the human rights defenders and their clients.
- Increased legitimacy and credibility on the national level.
- Improved access to international partners and funding.

The Human Rights House Foundation (HRH F)

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