



ANNUAL REPORT **2010/2011**



**HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE
NETWORK**

HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE NETWORK

The mandate of the Human Rights House Network (HRHN) is to protect, empower and support human rights organisations locally, and unite them in an international network of Human Rights Houses.

STRATEGIC PROGRAMME I

Building networks and institutions

Objective: To facilitate the establishment of sustainable human rights institutions and networks.

HRHN knows that strong and efficient national, regional and international networks ensure better protection of human rights defenders and human rights at large. We therefore focus on establishing and maintaining sustainable institutions nationally through Human Rights Houses, regionally through regional networks, and internationally via HRHN. This programme includes a short term risk fund and shelter facility.

STRATEGIC PROGRAMME II

Strengthening capacity and sharing knowledge

Objective: To empower and protect human rights defenders and their work.

HRHN is a “bottom-up” network. Cooperation and sharing knowledge is driven by local needs. HRHN builds the capacity of lawyers, human rights defenders and journalists in international law. It currently runs the *Electronic Human Rights Education for Lawyers project* (EHREL, which provides distance training for lawyers from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and the Russian Federation) and the *Bring International Standards Home project* (BISH, which trains Belarusian lawyers and human rights defenders). HRHN also carries out various capacity building activities in advocacy, organisational development and network management.

STRATEGIC PROGRAMME III

Advocacy and raising awareness

Objectives: To generate political support for human rights defenders and NGOs and to promote and protect the freedoms of assembly, association and expression, and the right to be a human rights defender.

HRHN protects human rights defenders, promotes the work of human rights NGOs and strives to raise awareness about human rights. Its members alert one another when protection is required. This programme empowers local human rights defenders, enabling them to speak effectively to regional and international organisations and apply their knowledge and experience to strengthen national advocacy. HRHN and local Human Rights Houses raise awareness of human rights violations nationally and internationally, and mobilize international support by means of letters of concern, alerts, reports, campaigns, demonstrations and vigils.

STRATEGIC PROGRAMME IV

Fundraising and strategy

Objective: To underpin the sustainability of networks and activities.

HRHN attaches importance to shared strategy setting and long-term planning and undertakes joint fundraising activities to ensure that its programmes and Human Rights Houses are sustainable. HRHN will seek to increase the funding it receives from foundations, individuals and corporations.

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«The Human Rights House Network has inspired and supported a large number of fine individuals and groups dedicated to the work of defending human rights, even at times to the point of risking their lives, security and health. This is about defending human rights, and defending the rights of those who do the work locally: preventing, documenting, reporting, and claiming full accountability for those who are responsible for violations, abuses and atrocities in local communities as well as the power centres of this world.»

Nora Sveaass, Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Oslo, Member of the UN Committee against Torture

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



In September 2010, the Belarusian Human Rights House in exile in Vilnius hosted its first international conference on Human Rights: *Between Law and Morality*, as part of the project *Electronic Human Rights Education for Lawyers*. In the company of the graduates of the project, international experts discussed various topics, from human rights theory and philosophy to the practical application of international experience to protect human rights at home. The *Electronic Human Rights Education for Lawyers* project gives practicing lawyers from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, and the Russian Federation an opportunity to improve their knowledge of international human rights law by distance learning via Internet. (For more see page 10).



To mark the closing of the two-year project *Observatory of Media Freedom* in Poland, in October 2010 the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in Poland (HRH Warsaw), Article 19 (HRH London) and the Human Rights House Foundation (HRH Oslo) held an international conference on *Media Ownership, Freedom of Speech, and the Democratic Debate*. Among the guests were Polish and international experts on the media and media laws, including moderator Kjetil Haanes, a Norwegian journalist and UNESCO member, and Gregory Shvedov, editor of the information agency Memo.ru in the Russian Federation. The conference successfully initiated a public debate about the importance of reliable and independent media. (For more see page 27).



Amnesty International, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee and Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF) staged a silent protest outside the hotel in which President Dimitri Medvedev stayed during his visit to Norway in April 2010. Among the protesters were high profile Russian human rights activists like Rafto laureate Lidia Yusupova. The demonstration helped draw public attention to the many grave human rights concerns in the Russian Federation.

«How many more must die - civilians, journalists, human rights activists, lawyers - before the international community turns its attention to the situation in North Caucasus?» Lidia Yusupova (left), Chechen human rights advocate, 2005 Rafto Prize laureate.

INTRODUCTION BY MARIA DAHLE



Over the last decade the Human Rights House Network has developed significantly, whether this is measured in terms of our members, the number of regions in which we work, the range of our strategic programmes, or by our capacity, level of activity and impact.

HRHN has grown slowly and gradually, step by step. We have become stronger, more professional and more experienced, together. The strength of the network lies in the fact that its development and growth have occurred in response to the requests of local human rights experts and organisations. A network can be alive and vibrant only if its members play the key part.

The role of the Human Rights House Foundation, the network's Secretariat, has changed with the network. Whereas in the 1990s HRHF had many independent projects not directly linked to HRHN, everything HRHF does today is primarily connected to its role as the HRHN's secretariat. The secretariat acts in accordance with the strategy, plan of action and code of conduct set by HRHN's members. Engagements are made in response to requests by local members or potential members, and implemented in association with a coalition of local partners.

In parallel to HRHN's internal development, the situation of human rights defenders has deteriorated for the majority of HRHN members over the last decade. Operating in a harsher climate, they want to focus more on making sure that defenders can stay alive, remain in their countries, and continue to work. As a result, HRHN's members are calling for "more": more visibility, more influence and impact, more joint networking, more space for local voices.

They want HRHN to:

- Consolidate our work in the existing four regions until we have achieved a critical mass.
- Cooperate with HRHN's members on a long term basis.
- Facilitate the access of national organisations to regional and international partners and donors.
- Increase HRHN's local visibility to strengthen promotion and protection of rights.
- Professionalise HRHN's regional and international advocacy and campaigning, and apply the knowledge and experience we have gained to national advocacy.
- Strengthen regional networking and knowledge-sharing.

While HRHN's current organisational structure and processes allow us to achieve the first three of these objectives, the last three require us to change. If we are to meet the new demands of our members, we will have to adjust our structure, our processes and our focus. As a result, in 2010 we began a transition that will continue into 2011-2012.

Internal change takes time, capacity and sweat. The challenge we face is to give longevity to what makes this network so special: our flexibility and informality, our focus on local needs and demands, our independence, the pluralism of our members, our ability to act together rapidly, our commitment to bring local defenders to regional and international arenas and amplify their voices – i.e. to bring international standards home. A challenging time awaits us, but refining our internal operations will better equip us to join forces in support of human rights in the future.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

FOCUS ON BELARUS AND THE BALTIC STATES

«This Conference ... brings together human rights defenders from different states. It is important that NGOs support each other, that they know about each other and provide support to friends and colleagues.»

Jan E. Helgesen, Professor at the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo, First Vice-President of the Venice Commission and President of its Scientific Council



«This conference is important for Lithuania and for the whole region – the Baltic States and Belarus. It is important for the entire European Union. ... I would like to pay my respects and express gratitude for the invaluable work of human rights defenders in all countries to protect human rights and the principles of the rule of law and democracy, and for helping to avoid conflicts, at the price of endangering themselves and the safety of their families and parents.»

Dr. Laima Andrikiene (first on the right), Member of the European Parliament and Vice-Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights in the European Parliament

Every year, HRHN organises an international conference. In September 2010 *Joining Forces for Human Rights* focused on the human rights situation in Belarus and the Baltic States. Around 200 participants from Nordic countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Croatia, Moldova, Poland, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, the UK, Ukraine, and elsewhere, came together to share their experience with human rights defenders in Belarus and the Baltic States, and discuss common human rights challenges and advocacy concerns and ways to improve protection.

Many speakers noted the reversal of human rights advances in the last decade, and the importance of increasing awareness of human rights among decision-makers, civil servants and judicial officials, and in the media and general public. The conference stressed the need for holistic and creative network-building, litigation, research and reporting, and public advocacy.



«What is needed ... is bringing human rights back into political agenda and concentrated, if not passionate, work on promotion of human rights. Members of a political and cultural elite, state officials have still to realise that modern Lithuanian statehood is based upon the respect for human rights and that genuine democracy without ensuring human rights is not possible.»

Henrikas Mickevicius, Executive Director of the Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Lithuania

THE ANNUAL MEETING

“HRHN annual meetings are always useful to meet potential partners, to receive good advice, inspiration and updated information”.

Therese Jebsen, Executive Director of the Rafto Foundation.

The annual meeting of HRHN determines the direction and evolution of the Network and approves new members. Bringing all the Houses together in a social, informal gathering creates a good atmosphere for collaborative networking and advocacy, while the workshops and seminars that take place enable participants to share information and knowledge, build capacity, and network.

The 2010 annual meeting discussed how to enhance our advocacy efforts, be more effective, raise awareness, and create a larger local, regional and international impact. Representatives from the NGO Liaison Unit of the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) took part in group discussion of how recommendations can be followed up nationally and how regional and international mechanisms can be used.

THE ANNUAL MEETING DECIDED:

- To organise a roster of HRHN experts to accompany and provide protection to human rights organisations during elections and on other occasions when human rights are challenged. A mobile group joined human rights organisations in Azerbaijan during the parliamentary election in November. A second group would have travelled to Belarus for the elections in December but the government failed to grant visas.
- To campaign more intensively, nationally and internationally, on the right to freedom of association.
- To raise the profile of HRHN and its work, because human rights defenders are at greater risk and need additional protection in the countries in which we are active.



Maya Ganesh, Project Manager at the Tactical Technology Collective, presenting a documentary that showed ten ways of using information, communication and digital technology to maximise the impact of human rights advocacy.

REFLECTION BY SANJA SARNAVKA



Yesterday I spent the day with 20 young people who had decided to join a programme on human rights. Three times a year, Croatian secondary school students can take part in a Human Rights School where activists explain to them the basic principles of human rights – their history, founding principles and vision. At the end of the day I was exhausted and sad. In an age characterised by the enormous and unpredictable development of information technologies and the continuous growth of social networks, one student told me that Sweden is a traditional country where homosexuals are not perceived as normal people, while another tried to explain why he thinks the LGBT population should be hidden behind closed doors, and a third thought LGBT people are accepted only in countries where rich gay guys invest money in PR campaigns. Nobody knew anything about the political situation in Azerbaijan or Belarus. I heard other bizarre statements – though it was true too that, no matter how strange I might have seemed to them, the students listened carefully to my wild points of view.

While driving home, I thought how lucky I was to be able to explore, investigate, learn and create opinions by myself, and how sad it is to talk to people who are taught to hate or at least dislike everything that differs from the average, and everyone who stands separate from the crowd or dares to live a life according to his or her own principles.

At home I searched Facebook for a while, and discovered that 29,245,157 people like Lady Gaga and 29,497,931 people like Eminem, while Nobel Prize winner Shirin Ebadi has only 29,119 'likes'. I sighed and whispered, «there is a long way to go».

Yet, no matter how long and winding the road may be, I know I will never give up and leave it. And many people feel the same. Friends and comrades are there, scattered all over the globe.

Luckily, the Human Rights House Network has enabled me and all the activists who joined the Human Rights House in Zagreb to know that, in many cities and towns in different continents, there are people who share the same ideas and strive to achieve the same goals – respect for all human beings no matter how poor or powerless they are.

Maybe one day, another generation will finally live our dream and be free to be whatever each individual wants and may become. And human beings will enjoy the human rights that we today fight for.

Without HRHN and all of us who joined it, this dream would be very difficult even to envision.

Sanja Sarnavka is President of B.a.b.e. (Be Active, Be Emancipated), and Chair of the Board of HRH Zagreb. She joined the HRHN's International Advisory Board in 2010.

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES GOING INTO 2011

«The role of human rights defenders in strengthening respect for human rights cannot be overestimated in any society. Their situation is a clear indicator of the general human rights situation. That is why it is so necessary to monitor trends, to see what is changing.»

Maria Dahle, Executive Director of the Human Rights House Foundation

HRHN exists to support the work of human rights defenders who uphold and advance human rights of all kinds in their countries. But human rights defenders can only be effective in what they do if they themselves enjoy certain rights. In particular, defenders must be able to express their opinions freely, form associations, assemble peacefully, and obtain information and funding. HRHN therefore focuses on the protection and promotion of four fundamental rights: to freedom of **expression, association and peaceful assembly**, and to be a **human rights defender**. We monitor violations of these rights and press states to support them in the United Nations (UN), OSCE and the Council of Europe (CoE). At the same time our advocacy efforts and awareness-raising campaigns seek to ensure that international human rights standards are “brought home”, and that these four rights are respected and protected across the regions in which we work. By strengthening them we enable human rights organisations and defenders in different countries to focus their attention on the most urgent human rights problems in their countries.

In 2010 the situation of human rights defenders continued to deteriorate in most of the regions in which HRHN is active. In some cases, repression takes familiar old-fashioned forms: threats, intimidation, violence and arrest. In many instances, however, governments are applying more sophisticated techniques for suppressing criticism. They pass restrictive legislation; they make it difficult for human rights organisations to register, or receive funds, or travel abroad, or attend meetings, or communicate. They impose burdensome bureaucratic requirements, or use the media to slander reputations. These forms of obstruction and intimidation are time-consuming and exhausting for under-resourced organisations to combat, and set new challenges for human rights defenders and those who support them in their work. The



Citizens of Belarus protesting against the results of the country's Presidential election of 19 December. Photo by: Dmitry Brushko

story has therefore become more complicated than it was: old forms of solidarity and action are still necessary because old forms of repression persist, but new methods of human right defence need to be invented and new forms of repression need to be understood. Moreover, because human rights campaigners have been effective in holding governments to account and winning public support, corrupt and oppressive officials are more afraid than they were – and this means that human rights defenders in some societies have more reason to be afraid themselves.

In Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, the human rights situation remains problematic and the environment for human rights defenders is increasingly worrisome. Human rights organisations are often impeded by cumbersome registration processes, restraints on activity, restrictions on international funding, harassment by security forces, and severe censorship. Intimidation, threats and attacks against human rights defenders and other critical



Court hearing of Azerbaijani journalist Eynulla Fatullayev in May 2010, after new fabricated criminal charges of drug possession were brought against him. Photo by: HRHF.



Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya (GALCK) activists demonstrating for the right to health care. Photo by: GALCK.

independent voices persisted. **The Russian Federation** and **Azerbaijan** continue to prosecute human rights defenders and journalists on charges of defamation, despite international appeals to decriminalize this offence. In **Belarus, Azerbaijan** and the **Russian Federation**, the offices of human rights organisations and media agencies were subject to unwarranted official inspections. After the presidential elections in **Ukraine** in January 2010, searches, prosecutions and attacks on human rights defenders (including journalists and lawyers) increased. In **Georgia and Armenia**, smear campaigns against human rights defenders were used to suppress their work.

Throughout the **Western Balkans**, improvements in human rights remain intermittent and durable progress is still slow, despite the fact that several of these countries aspire to join the European Union. Discrimination, marginalization of ethnic minorities and lack of accountability for war crimes remain key issues. In 2010, the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly were restricted in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**. LGBT activists, in particular, face hate speech and persecution and are physically in danger if they openly express their opinions. In **Croatia**, national minorities are at risk. Free legal aid is not guaranteed to everyone and bureaucratic procedures *de facto* prevent the most vulnerable social groups from access to justice.

In the **East and Horn of Africa**, where the human rights situation continued to worsen, there was worrying evidence of cross-border co-operation in the persecution of human rights defenders, and states appear to be borrowing techniques of suppression from one another. As a result of new



In October 2010, the Ugandan tabloid Rolling Stone published a list of the country's 'top' 100 presumed homosexuals with the headline "hang them".

legislation in **Ethiopia**, almost all human rights organisations were forced to change their mandate and cease to act as human rights organisations. In **Eritrea**, only state media are now allowed to operate, no independent human rights organisations can be found, and freedom of assembly cannot be exercised because it is likely to result in arrest and indefinite imprisonment (without charge or trial). In **Uganda**, the oppression of human rights defenders and their organisations is more subtle and varies in severity. Defenders of sexual minorities' rights have been the most targeted group. They face severe restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly as well as on their right to be a human rights defender.

In **Western Europe**, the human rights situation remains stable and human rights defenders work in a relatively safe environment. Relatively safe working conditions for human rights defenders allow them to concentrate their efforts on domestic issues as well as human rights concerns in other parts of the world.

KEY AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Human Rights Houses work together to build networks and institutions, strengthen capacity and share knowledge, and promote human rights through advocacy and awareness-raising. Key illustrations of our work in 2010 include:

BUILDING NETWORKS AND INSTITUTIONS

The South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders

This network is composed of 30 human rights organisations from Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. A significant proportion of its members are also members of Human Rights Houses, and HRHF is the Network's principal international partner. HRHN works very closely with the South Caucasus Network to raise international awareness of violations and rights and human rights trends in the South Caucasus region, as many references to co-operation in this Annual Report make clear.

«The HRHF's involvement made our international advocacy efforts more effective and significantly contributed to the visibility of the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders and its members. Together with HRHF the South Caucasus Network has achieved much in two years but the most important was facilitating the culture of sharing – information, resources, ideas, and the spirit of solidarity.»

Ana Natsvlshvili, coordinator of the Georgia team of the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders 2010, Human Rights Centre.

«Human rights defenders can respond ... to growing pressure from the state by co-operation across civil society and by raising the culture and values of society to the same level as among activists. The first of these objectives was achieved by the South Caucasus Network: it will take a long time and deep focus to achieve the second.»

Grigory Shvedov, Editor in Chief of Caucasian Knot and memo.ru, associated partner of the South Caucasus Network.



Representatives of the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders demonstrating in front of the UN in Geneva in March 2011. Photo by: HRHF



Azerbaijani participants of *Electronic Human Rights Education for Lawyers* registering for the online training course. Photo by: HRHF



Initiated in 2006 and implemented by several Human Rights Houses and their member organisations, *International Law in Advocacy* aims to:

- Increase the knowledge and skills of lawyers in international human rights protection
- Facilitate the implementation of international human rights standards in national practice
- Provide better protection for human rights defenders and victims of fundamental rights violations.

The program is comprised of two projects:

1. *Bring International Standards Home* – BISH (see p. 23)
2. *Electronic Human Rights Education for Lawyers* - EHREL (see below).

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

The *Electronic Human Rights Education for Lawyers* project

This online training course is jointly implemented by partner organisations and Human Rights Houses in Warsaw, Moscow, Vilnius, Oslo, Baku and Tbilisi. In 2010, 108 lawyers from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and the Russian Federation participated in the project, which is organised by HRHN and delivered by a team of international and national legal experts.

Lawyers who apply international human rights standards in daily litigation play a vital role in developing and embedding the rule of law and policies that are socially equitable, especially in countries that are instable or in transition. They help ensure that victims of human rights violations obtain effective remedies and protection, and that perpetrators of violations are brought to justice. They drive reform of national legislation and court practice. They contribute to and guide public discussion of political ethics and governance. To discharge these responsibilities well, however, lawyers need to be well informed about international human rights standards and instruments and related jurisprudence. The EHREL project aims to raise the level of human rights legal expertise in the region, increase awareness of human rights, promote human rights litigation, and build co-operation between lawyers and human rights defenders. In its first two years, the project can already demonstrate results: more lawyers are defending victims of human rights violations and analysing national legislation in terms of international standards; and there is evidence of increased co-operation

and solidarity. Many of the project's graduates are assisting human rights defenders who are at risk; and many are also supporting legal colleagues in their own countries and elsewhere in the region who face sanctions or repression because of their human rights legal work.

When the government of Belarus cracked down in December 2010, for example, lawyers in Belarus contacted their colleagues from international Bar Associations and subsequently received support from lawyers in Poland, the Ukraine, Moldova, Ireland, the Czech Republic, the Council of Bar and Law Societies of Europe, and the Criminal Bar Association. Such broad-based legal advocacy is unprecedented in Belarus, and indicates that human rights awareness-raising programmes such as EHREL encourage lawyers to stand up to state pressure.

«Having struggled to cope with human rights theory for decades, post-Soviet countries are still failing to develop a fully-fledged effective mechanism to ensure and protect citizens' rights in practice. This is what makes the international project Electronic Human Rights Education for Lawyers so relevant and timely. It enables professional lawyers to fill gaps in their skills and knowledge, and empowers them to take on board new competences. The recent events in Belarus proved they are able to do this efficiently, consistently and together. This is a unique project with good prospects for the future in terms of expanding to new countries and new target groups of lawyers interested in protecting those in need.»

Prof. Alla Sokolova, Dean of the Graduate School, European Humanities University, Lithuania

ADVOCACY AND RAISING AWARENESS

HRHN advocacy strategy is country-specific. We react to cases of human rights violations by uniting forces and issuing joint letters of concern. The cases are followed up nationally and internationally in the UN and European institutions. HRHN also uses those mechanisms for its long-term human rights protection strategy.

The country reports in this Annual Report illustrate some of the ways in which HRHF supports HRHN partners and Human Rights Houses to prepare their reports and advocate within those institutions. HRHN also defends and promotes in the UN and European institutions the four core rights that are the Network's priorities. This co-operation enables local NGOs to influence national policies and make their recommendations widely known, supported by the whole Network and the secretariat.

HRHN sends letters of concern that draw attention to specific issues or cases. Each letter calls for corrective action, and is followed up by national and international advocacy activities to ensure there is an impact. In 2010, HRHN sent 23 joint letters of concern to official authorities. In parallel, we briefed international organisations and asked them to use their influence to remedy the problem in question. HRHN worked on the following issues and cases in 2010:

ARMENIA

- Unfair trial of journalist **Nikol Pashinyan** and his ill treatment in prison. HRHN sent a letter to the Armenian authorities and international community signed by 48 HRHN organizations.

AZERBAIJAN

- Imprisonment of **Eynulla Fatullayev**; failure by the Azerbaijani government to release him in accordance with a European Court of Human Rights decision. HRHN sent two letters of concern to the Azerbaijani authorities and with other international NGOs appealed to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to supervise implementation of the ECHR's judgment.
- Seizure of documentary materials belonging to the filmmaker **Erling Borgen** in Baku airport. Seven HRHN organizations wrote asking the Azerbaijani authorities to return his property.
- The deteriorating human rights situation in Azerbaijan: **lack of respect for democracy, human rights and basic freedoms**. HRHN issued a joint letter of concern with 14 Azerbaijani and international human rights NGOs, which was distributed at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and to the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in January 2010. In June, the same organisations issued another appeal urging PACE Members to ask Azerbaijan to respect its international obligations.

- Lack of **freedom of expression and protection of human rights defenders and journalists**. At the HRHN annual meeting, participants called on the Azerbaijani authorities to protect freedom of expression, release imprisoned journalists and bloggers, and bring legislation into line with international standards.
- **Irregularities and fraudulent practices during parliamentary elections**. A three person HRHN monitoring group observed elections in Azerbaijan and requested the authorities to redress electoral fraud, bring those responsible for falsification and violence to justice, annul falsified results, and hold new elections.

BELARUS

- Execution of **Andrei Zhuk** and **Vasil Yuzepchuk**; failure to respect recommendations of the UN Human Rights Committee. HRHN and other organisations condemned the executions and asked the Belarusian authorities to meet their international obligations and cease harassment of human rights defenders.
- Detention of **Ales Bialiatski**, **Valiantsin Stefanovich** and **Iryna Toustsiak** for protesting peacefully against the death penalty and executions. Four human rights NGOs, including HRHF and the Belarusian Human Rights House in exile, asked the Belarusian authorities to cease harassing human rights defenders and promote the rights of all citizens in accordance with national legislation and international standards.
- **Serious and systematic human rights violations**. Participants at the HRHN annual meeting addressed the deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus and called on the authorities to comply with international human rights standards.
- **Post-election dispersal of peaceful demonstrators, their detention and beating, disproportionate use of force**. HRHN organizations and other human rights NGOs strongly condemned the crackdown on demonstrators, and arrests and beatings of human rights defenders, journalists and opposition leaders, and called on the Belarusian president to release those detained, stop violence, and ensure free exercise of civil and political rights in Belarus. Several HRHN members and partners also addressed the arrest of students and teachers of the European Humanities University.

GEORGIA

- Defamation campaign and death threats by Georgian authorities against the investigative journalist **Vakhtang Komakhidze** and members of his family. HRHN and other human rights NGOs requested the Georgian authorities to end his persecution and ensure his protection.

«HRHF did not confine its assistance to financial support. It also provided advocacy expertise on lobbying government missions, an area where HRHF has good experience.»

Tamar Khidasheli, Board Member of the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, and member of a civil society delegation from Georgia to the UN in December organized by HRHF and FIDH.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

- Anniversary of the murder of Russian human rights lawyer **Stanislav Markelov** and journalist **Anastasia Baburova**. Three Norwegian human rights organizations, including HRHF, called on the Russian authorities to hold an impartial investigation and guarantee the security of human rights defenders.
- Criminal prosecution of two Russian lawyers, **Nadezhda Nizovkina** and **Tatiana Stetsura**. Partner organizations of the "Electronic Human Rights Education for Lawyers" project appealed to the Russian authorities to investigate the charges objectively.
- **Yury Samodurov** and **Andrey Erofeev** sentenced for inciting hatred and enmity, while organizing the "Forbidden art 2006" exhibition in the Sakharov museum. Several HRHN organisations called on the Russian authorities to fulfil their international obligations and strengthen freedom of expression.

UKRAINE

- **Harassment and repressions of human rights defenders, journalists and academics**. 43 HRHN organisations called on the Ukrainian authorities to take all necessary measures to prevent harassment and repression and to comply with international human rights standards.

EASTERN EUROPE AND SOUTH CAUCASUS

- **Restrictions on freedoms of assembly and association** in South Caucasus, Belarus and the Russian Federation. HRHF and the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders requested OSCE states to monitor and investigate restrictions and take measures to prevent human rights violations.

ALL REGIONS

- **The UN Special Procedures mandate on freedom of assembly and association**. The HRHN annual meeting called on the UN Human Rights Council to strengthen freedom of peaceful assembly and association by establishing a special procedures mandate.



Andrey Sannikov and his wife - journalist and BAJ member Irina Khalip, beaten on the night of 19 December. Photo by: Uladz Hrydzin.

CASE STUDY: BELARUS

Following mass arrests in Belarus in December 2010 (see page 20), more than 50 HRHN organisations addressed a joint letter to the President of Belarus condemning the arrests and the repression of demonstrations.

In cooperation with Health and Human Rights Info, HRHF appealed to the World Medical Association and the International Committee of the Red Cross, and urged the Belarusian authorities to provide medical aid to those who had been detained.

HRHF, Civic Belarus, the Belarusian HRH Vilnius and the Norwegian Association of Youth Organizations called on the Belarusian authorities to release detained students of the European Humanities University, a Belarusian University in exile in Lithuania.

Based on information provided by Belarusian human rights organizations, HRHF sent the names of all those who had been detained or interrogated, and injured journalists, to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression.

HRHN supported the Committee on International Control over the Human Rights Situation in Belarus (a committee set up by Russian NGOs, including the Youth Human Rights Movement, Voronezh) in its efforts to monitor the situation in Belarus and defend human rights defenders and others from repression.

In addition, graduates of the EHREL project appealed for support to legal colleagues abroad (see above: Strengthening capacity and sharing knowledge).

In 2011, HRHN has continued to work with Belarusian and international NGOs to raise awareness within the diplomatic community of ongoing human rights violations in Belarus.

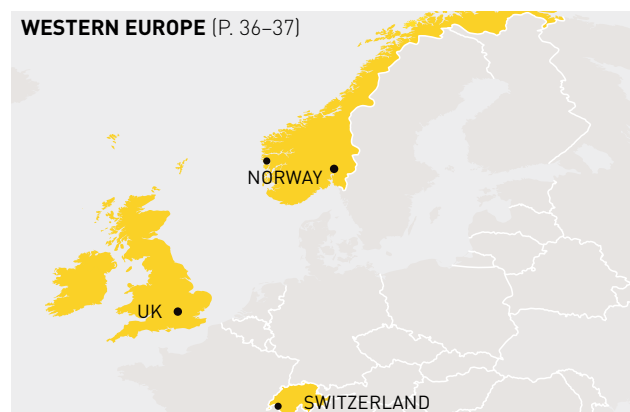
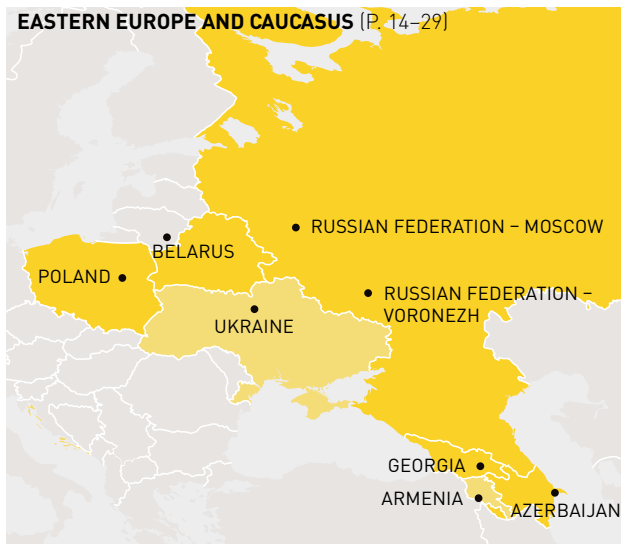
COUNTRY REPORTS

STRONG NETWORKS – STRONG HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Protection of human rights defenders is achieved by various means. Ad hoc emergency responses can lead to medium and long-term training, capacity-building and advocacy. These create the possibility of a more socially-oriented approach that can expand support for human rights defenders politically, legally and socially. The aim must be to build a protection system which is comprehensive. Only a comprehensive system based on legal norms, institutions, mechanisms, solidarity networks, and public support can reverse the tendency to 'delegitimise' defenders' activities. The best way to achieve this goal is to develop networks, and their member organisations, based on common interest and shared effort.

By providing constant solidarity and support, networks like HRHN can play a crucial role in advocacy and capacity building. Their aim should be to protect human rights defenders in ways that only international NGOs can achieve. HRHN is in a unique position because it can harness international attention and collective capacity in general.

Anna Dobrovolskaya, Youth Human Rights Movement, Voronezh, Russian Federation.



ARMENIA

Situation of human rights defenders

In 2010 the authorities continued to intimidate critics and used intrusive bureaucratic measures to control and harass them. Indoor gatherings were restricted from March 2008, obstructing the ability of critical NGOs to convene events. In December the office of the human rights lawyer Artak Zeynalyan, leader of Jurists Against Torture (a partner of the South Caucasus Network) was raided. Pro-government organisations and the mass media continued to slander human rights defenders, alleging they are spies or agents or only interested in obtaining grants.



Artak Zeynalyan speaking at FIDH Forum in Yerevan about the outcome of the 1 March 2008 events. Photo by: HRHF



«While certain human rights defenders have experienced direct violence and assaults, especially in the aftermath of the 2008 Presidential elections, in the majority of the cases harassment and intimidation are carried out by more subtle and sophisticated methods, such as stigmatization by the media and certain politicians; smear campaigns; intrusive tax inspections; threatening phone calls; and pressure on donors. (...) Indoor gatherings have been hindered since March 2008, and the difficulties experienced by NGOs in renting meeting space appear to be systematic.

(...) Among the most vulnerable groups of human rights defenders in Armenia are those working of the rights of LGBT persons, women human rights defenders, NGOs working in remote areas and environmental activists.»

Mission to Armenia, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Margaret Sekaggya.



Every Friday, the Wives of Armenia's Political Prisoners organise a picket outside the Prosecutor General's Office and deliver a letter calling for impartial investigation into the events of 1 March 2008 and the release of the remaining political prisoners. Photo by: HRHF

Building networks and institutions

Twelve local human rights organisations linked to the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights began setting up a human rights house in Yerevan. They are fundraising for joint premises that would provide a shared public space for the human rights community of Armenia, complete with a conference hall, library and training facilities.

Strengthening capacity and sharing knowledge

The UN Human Rights Council reviewed Armenia on 6 May 2010. A month beforehand, on 8 April, HRHF and the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders convened a seminar in Yerevan to prepare a national and international follow-up process for the UPR. Armenian human rights organisations in the South Caucasus Network have translated and disseminated the UPR recommendations, in the country.

To raise public awareness of international discussions of Armenia's human rights performance, HRHF funded the editor Levon Barsegyan from the Asparez Journalists' Club to participate in a Media 21 workshop on the UPR in Geneva. He wrote several articles in the Armenian media, ensuring that Armenia's UPR review received more balanced coverage.



The South Caucasus Network for Human Rights Defenders and HRHF held a seminar in Yerevan in April on the UPR mechanism and OSCE handbook on freedom of association. Photo by: HRHF

Advocacy and raising awareness

In April 2010 HRHF organised a meeting with the Head of ODIHR and Armenian members of the South Caucasus Network, at which the participants made recommendations to the OSCE on following up its trial-monitoring report of 8 March 2010.

HRHN briefed the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Margaret Sekaggya, before she visited Armenia in June 2010. During her visit, she met member organisations of the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders from Armenia and Georgia, who briefed her on regional trends. The Special Rapporteur acknowledged the South Caucasus Network in her report and expressed serious concern that human rights defenders are regularly depicted in a distorted manner in state-controlled media.

HRHN and the South Caucasus Network intervened on behalf of targeted human rights defenders. In January 2010, having been detained while observing elections, the human rights defender Arshaluys Hakobyan was acquitted for lack of evidence. In December 2010, HRHF expressed concern for the safety of the imprisoned journalist Nikol Pashinyan and called for his release.

AZERBAIJAN

«In 2010 the Human Rights House Baku became an effective and active meeting place, especially for young people.»

Malahat Nasibova, human rights defender from Nakchivan, winner of the Rafto Prize in 2009.

The situation of human rights defenders

The authorities continue to make allegations against human rights defenders and journalists and to indict them on controversial grounds such as defamation. Various forms of intimidation are used to silence critical voices, including harassment, revocation of registration, tax inspections, and arrest and imprisonment. Tighter restrictions on holding peaceful gatherings and on freedom of expression have been imposed across the country. In April 2010 HRH Baku was inspected by the police while a group of young people was meeting in the conference hall. HRH Baku complained formally about the incident to the Minister of the Internal Affairs but received no official response.

In the run up to parliamentary elections in November 2010, local authorities and law enforcement agencies prevented efforts by civil society organisations to carry out activities. The Legal Education Society, a partner of HRH Baku, was not given permission by the local authorities to organize trainings and seminars. Following the election, the bloggers Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizade were conditionally freed after 16 months of detention: HRHN was one of many international organisations that campaigned for their release. Many human rights organisations considered the release was timed to dampen international criticism of the electoral process.



Bloggers Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizade were conditionally freed after 16 months of detention. Photo by: IRFS



Elena Fidaeva (Article 42 of the Constitution, Georgia) from the Mobile Monitoring Group interviewing an independent observer in Sumgait. Photo by: HRHF.



Mobile Monitoring Group collects information from the detained observers in Baku. Photo by: HRHF.

Building networks and institutions

In a country in which freedom of assembly and association are pressing concerns, the Human Rights House provided a venue, rare in Azerbaijan, where human rights organisations and victims of human rights violations could gather to debate issues of public interest. Since it opened in April 2009, the House has been used by an increasing number of human rights organisations and victims, as well as the media. In 2010 alone it held more than 250 events, received more than 6000 visitors, and raised public awareness through press conferences, round tables, film screenings, and seminars.

In February 2010, the head of Poland's Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Danuta Przywara, visited the Human Rights House to learn about new restrictions on freedom of association that the government had introduced, as well as to discuss joint activities and share experience of human rights work during a period of political transition.

Strengthening capacity and sharing knowledge

In December, HRH Baku launched English language courses for human rights defenders, to assist them to improve their communication skills in international meetings.

The partner organisations of HRH Baku held seminars for correspondents in the regions, who face particularly difficult conditions and have difficulty communicating with other journalists. The seminars focused on techniques of objective monitoring and presentation of information.

A Mobile Monitoring Group – composed of experts from HRHF, Article 42 of the Constitution (HRH Tbilisi), and the Ukrainian Helsinki Union (the emerging HRH in Kiev) - visited Azerbaijan during parliamentary elections in November. The Group's presence increased the credibility and visibility of Azerbaijani partner organisations. On election day, the experts acted in support of eight observers who were detained outside at night in Baku for over four hours without legal assistance. Working with the Institute of Reporters' Freedom and Safety, the experts alerted the OSCE office in Baku and stayed with those detained until the last observer had been released.



Together with the national human rights defenders, NHC, Article 19 and HRHF mark the Press Freedom Day on 3 May at the grave of editor Elmar Huseynov, whose 2005 murder remains unsolved.

Photo by: HRHF.



The world première of Erling Borgen's documentary *The Prisoner from Azerbaijan* was hosted by the Embassies to Lithuania of Finland and Norway. The documentary has since been shown by HRHN members in Oslo, Baku, Zagreb, Warsaw, Tbilisi and London. Photo by: HRHF.

Eynulla Fatullayev, the Prisoner of Azerbaijan

In association with the network International Partnership Group for Azerbaijan, HRHN took up the case of the imprisoned editor Eynulla Fatullayev. It asked the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers to discuss the Azerbaijani authorities' unwillingness to implement the ECHR ruling ordering them to immediately release Fatullayev. On 6 December the Committee of Ministers called upon the Azerbaijani government to "explore all possible means of ending the applicant's detention".

HRHF and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee accompanied the Norwegian filmmaker Erling Borgen to HRH Baku in May, where he held a master class in investigative journalism. During his stay, Mr Borgen made a documentary about Eynulla Fatullayev. As he was leaving Azerbaijan, he was stopped at the airport and his documentation and equipment was confiscated. The documentary's world première was organised successfully at HRHN's annual meeting in Vilnius in September 2010 and HRHN continues to promote the film in different countries.



Berit Lindeman, Norwegian Helsinki Committee (left), Azerbaijani human rights defender Malahat Nasibova (centre), and Ane Tusvik Bonde, HRHF (right), at the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly in January. Photo by: HRHF

Advocacy and raising awareness

To follow up a February round table on 2009 amendments to the NGO law, HRH Baku supported research by the Legal Education Society that examined restriction on freedom of association in Azerbaijan.

HRHF joined advocacy trips to the Council of Europe (CoE) in January and June 2010 to influence the content of resolutions on Azerbaijan by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) and reports on the country by PACE Rapporteurs and the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights. In January 2010, HRHF, the

Rafto Foundation and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee supported a visit to Strasbourg by the human rights defender and Rafto Prize winner Malahat Nasibova. Her goal was to ensure that the Rapporteur for Azerbaijan and the Commissioner for Human Rights covered the human rights situation in Nakhchivan in their reports. The PACE resolution on "The functioning of democratic institutions in Azerbaijan" highlighted threats to human rights defenders, detention of journalists, and official resistance to implementing judgements of the European Court of Human Rights. Article 19, HRHF, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee and the Institute of Reporters' Freedom and Safety had addressed these issues in their lobbying.

«Many things made the monitoring trip to Azerbaijan's parliamentary elections unique. Rather than just observing the voting, I was able to observe how NGOs work on election day and how they protect the rights of voters. Instead of being a passive witness, I was part of a group actively assisting journalists and observers. (...)

It is crucial to be with your colleagues in need: being able to support them at such a critical moment gives you a strong momentum to go on fighting for fair elections in our country.»

Dementiy Bily (Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union) from the Mobile Monitoring Group in Azerbaijan.

BELARUS

The situation of human rights defenders

The country's major human rights problems are enduring and seem even less likely to be addressed now that the government has returned to openly repressive practices. Having witnessed controlled liberalization through 2010, Belarus was shocked by the violent crackdown that followed presidential elections on 19 December.

After an election process that observers declared seriously flawed, incumbent President Aleksandr Lukashenko declared himself elected for a fourth term. More than 10,000 citizens protested at what national and international observers perceived to be a falsified result. 639 participants at a protest rally were beaten and detained, and later convicted of administrative offences. Hundreds served up to 15 days in detention; 30 face criminal charges. The offices of the Human Rights Centre Viasna, the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, Belarusian PEN in Minsk, and the Legal Initiative in Gomel region were searched.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION. Because the government has refused to grant registration, despite repeated efforts, the Human Rights Center Viasna continued to operate unofficially during 2010. Administrative obstruction of the right to associate carries a threat because, under Article 193.1 of the Criminal Code, members of unregistered organisations are liable to a two year prison sentence.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. Journalists and the independent media were harassed in the run-up to the elections: some newspapers were seized, some regional newspapers were banned, leaders of the Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) were interrogated. The government passed legislation to regulate the internet and blocked several websites during the election period.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY. The violent dispersal of protests following the presidential election prominently illustrated the restraints on freedom of assembly in Belarus. However, this right was not respected before the election either: peaceful public events organised by independent NGOs or political critics of the government were routinely banned or dispersed.

«The human rights community of Belarus is ready now for a higher level of cooperation. (...) Contrary to many other sectors of Belarus' civil society, human rights defenders were able to stand together and maintain good relations throughout all the recent years since the first Forum.»

Ales Bialiatski, leader of the Human Rights Center Viasna.



Building networks and institutions

The Belarusian Human Rights House in exile opened in Vilnius, Lithuania on 30 January 2007, at the initiative of human rights NGOs in Belarus and HRHF. It organises international meetings and cultural events and provides training and facilities for human rights defenders, NGOs, journalists, students and teachers.

In February 2010, Tatsiana Reviaka from the Human Rights Centre Viasna was elected President at the general meeting. In March 2010, a Board was appointed to improve transparency and decision-making.

After the Presidential election in December 2010 and the wave of repression that followed, a number of youth activists were forced to flee Belarus. Eight ended up in Vilnius and turned to the Belarusian HRH for assistance. The House provided them with shelter until a longer-term solution was found.

BELARUSIAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AGREE TO WORK ON A JOINT STRATEGY

Belarusian human rights defenders came together at the Belarusian Human Rights Defenders' Forum, organised by the HRHN and hosted by the Belarusian HRH in exile in Vilnius in September. 70 participants from 17 human rights organisations, both from Minsk and the regions, agreed upon a draft joint strategy that will be developed and implemented in 2011. The need for more cooperation and solidarity among human rights defenders, to which the Forum successfully contributed, became even more apparent after the December events in Belarus.



«Only the internal solidarity of the sector empowered it to survive repression.»

Tatsiana Reviaka, President of the Belarusian Human Rights House, Vilnius



Former Presidential candidate Vitaly Rimashevsky injured during the demonstration that followed the elections. Photo by: Siarhiei Balay.

Campaign for fair elections

Numerous groups and projects combined forces to observe the presidential elections in a non-partisan manner. "Election Observation: Theory and Practice", a long-term project of the Belarus Human Rights House in Vilnius and its Lithuanian partners, linked up with Belarusian partners Viasna and the Belarus Helsinki Committee.

They found that the election failed to meet international standards. While the pre-election period showed some improvement, the process quickly deteriorated on election day and almost immediately the campaign had to transform itself into a programme to assist victims of repression.



Due to the deteriorated situation on election day, project "Election Observation: Theory and Practice" had to transform itself into a programme to assist victims of repression. Photo by: Siarhiei Balay.

HRHN responded energetically to events in Belarus at the end of 2010. In 2011, HRHN has continued to work with Belarus and international NGOs to raise awareness within the diplomatic community of ongoing human rights violations in Belarus. For more information about HRHN's advocacy and response to repression in Belarus and protests following the elections in December, please refer to pages 12 of this report.

Strengthening capacity and sharing knowledge

The Belarusian HRH takes an active part in the International Law in Advocacy program through participation in the *Bring International Standards Home* project and the *Electronic Human Rights Education for Lawyers* project.

BISH is a project that strengthens the promotion, protection and enforcement of human rights in Belarus by building the practical skills of lawyers and human rights defenders through training, networking and cooperation. In February 2010, a group of 19 human rights defenders completed the project, improving their theoretical understanding of international and constitutional human rights law as well as their practical skills in applying it. In May 2010 a new group of 15 lawyers was selected for the educational programme, which will continue in 2011.

In 2010 five seminars were successfully carried out in the region, with the cooperation of Belarusian, Norwegian, Ukrainian and Polish members of HRHN. Building on the newly acquired knowledge, the alumni of the project ran a number of projects and were used as experts in seminars.



Meeting of partners of the *Bring International Standards Home* project. Photo by: HRHF.

RESULT OF BISH

In more than 100 trials, human rights defenders applied human rights provisions in the national courts, including the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Belarus; around 80 individual communications have been sent to the UN Human Rights Committee. Graduates have participated in the preparation of alternative reports to the UN Committee against Torture, conducted joint actions against the death penalty, and carried out education seminars in different regions of Belarus.

GEORGIA

The situation of human rights defenders

Defenders in Georgia are particularly preoccupied that the media and political figures are exploiting sensitive subjects such as the Russia-Georgia war, ethno-territorial conflicts, and minorities, to manipulate public opinion against human rights defenders and their work. In the last two years human rights defenders in Georgia have faced death warnings, threats of imprisonment on fabricated charges, physical and verbal assault, and intrusive official inspections. Journalists have been attacked by government officials verbally and physically; many have been harassed, had their equipment seized or destroyed, or faced other forms of illegal interference in their professional work. In none of these cases have perpetrators been brought to justice.

The (Not) to Enquire, (Not) to Record, (Not) to Expose: Human Rights Defenders Under Threat in Georgia

Prepared by the Human Rights Center with support from the European Commission and the South Caucasus Human Rights Defenders' Network, this report maps and analyses key trends and emblematic cases that reveal the methods which the authorities use to keep defenders from enquiring into, recording, and exposing human rights violations.



«HRH enables us to combine our resources with those of partner organisations and strive together to establish high human rights standards in Georgia. So Human Rights House Tbilisi is important for Georgian citizens who need protection and support, and for member organisations, to strengthen human rights institutions and ensure that organisations are sustainable.»

Nazi Janezashvili, Executive Director, Article 42 of the Constitution.



Nazi Janezashvili, Executive Director of Article 42 of the Constitution, and Ucha Nanuashvili, Executive Director of the Human Rights Center, during the Human Rights Week, organised by the Human Rights House Tbilisi in December 2010. Photos by: HRHT



Building networks and institutions

In 2010, five partners behind the Human Rights House initiative in Tbilisi focused on fundraising for the project and looked into the different options for purchasing a building. In the meantime, support from the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs enabled the group to rent a temporary meeting space and start functioning as a Human Rights House, holding trainings and conferences and screening films.

Strengthening capacity and sharing knowledge

In 2010 HRH Tbilisi marked the International Day against Torture on 26 June and organised a Human Rights Week in December to celebrate Human Rights Day. The Human Rights Week was extensively reported in Georgia's media, raising the profile of human rights significantly. Numerous film screenings, seminars and discussions addressed topics from the International Criminal Court to juvenile justice and domestic violence.

As the principal coordinator, in July and November 2010 the Human Rights Centre organised two regional confer-

ences for members of the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders in Tbilisi. Each involved more than 30 participants, who discussed the role of human rights defenders and considered tools that will increase the effectiveness of their national and international advocacy.

Advocacy and raising awareness

In June 2010 the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders organized a seminar in Tbilisi to prepare for Georgia's UPR review. At this event HRHF's Geneva Office provided training in the preparation of alternative reports.

Four Georgian NGOs - the Georgian Young Lawyers Association, the Human Rights Centre, Article 42, and the Educators' and Scientists' Free Trade Union – subsequently submitted a joint report on the human rights situation in Georgia between 2006 and 2010. Two of the four are HRHN members. HRHF and FIDH enabled representatives from the Human Rights Centre and the Georgian Young Lawyers Association to travel to Geneva in December to lobby delegations on the report's main recommendations.

«Because the UPR mechanism is new, Georgian civil society had particularly high expectations. The co-operation between Georgian NGOs with HRHF and FIDH produced positive results. Most of the recommendations that the NGO Coalition made - use of excessive force, lack of effective investigation, non-transparent media ownership and finance, intimidation of human rights activists and journalists, and independence of the judiciary - were cited and put forward by some member states at the Human Rights Council.»

Tamar Khidasheli, board member, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association.

POLAND

The situation of human rights defenders

No major problem arose with regard to the freedoms of association and assembly. However, freedom of expression remained a major issue. The main challenges concern criminal defamation, protection of sources, editorial and journalistic independence, lack of competence of the Public Broadcasting Authority, and insufficient media pluralism. At the same time, Poland's overall record has improved since the Observatory programme started in 2008 (see next page). The country was listed 57th in 2007 by Reporters Without Borders in its Press Freedom Index. In 2010 Poland was placed 32nd.



Kjetil Haanes, a Norwegian journalist and UNESCO member, at the Observatory's international conference on *Media Ownership, Freedom of Speech, and the Democratic Debate*.
Photo by: HFHR.



Danuta Przywara, President of the Board of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (third left), and Lenur Kerymov, Coordinator of the Human Rights Training Centre at the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (second left), meeting Azerbaijani human rights defenders at the Human Rights House Baku. Photo by: HRHF



Observatory published a total of 21 information bulletins.

Building networks and institutions

The House of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in Poland was established in 1993. Five human rights organisations work out of the building. The Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights was asked to provide advice and training in 2010 by the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders, a network of human rights organisations in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Advocacy and raising awareness

Responding to the need for more public debate about freedom of expression, in November 2008 the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights started the *Observatory of Media Freedom* in Poland. The main goal of this two year programme is to improve respect for freedom of expression in Poland, as well as media standards. The project is jointly implemented by the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (House of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Poland), Article 19 (Free Word Centre, UK), and HRHF (HRH Oslo, Norway).

The Observatory's activities have been organised around three themes. It has monitored freedom of speech, both locally and nationally. It has initiated and participated in strategic litigation and given journalists legal assistance. And it has organised regular debates and conferences on key problems that the media face.

In 2010 the Observatory:

- Conducted research into media freedom which revealed that 583 people were convicted of crimes related to freedom of expression in Poland between November 2008 and November 2010.
- Participated in 11 cases of strategic litigation, the majority of which were successful. In some cases the Observatory was a party; in others it monitored court hearings or found pro bono lawyers to assist victims.
- Organised nine debates and conferences, each attended by up to 60 people. With the University of Warsaw's Department of Human Rights, it organised seven open lectures for about 50 people.
- Held an international conference on *Media Ownership, Freedom of Speech, and the Democratic Debate* in October. Kjetil Haanes, a Norwegian journalist and UNESCO member, moderated one panel while Gregory Shvedov, editor of *Caucasian Knot*, was a speaker.
- Published 21 bulletins and updated the website (www.observatorium.org) on a daily basis.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The situation of human rights defenders

Human rights defenders in the Russian Federation are at risk of being beaten, threatened or killed. In most cases these crimes are not investigated properly and those responsible avoid punishment. Though the Russian government declared in 2010 that it was more open to international co-operation, numerous human rights violations continued to occur and the statements made by President Dmitry Medvedev in support of human rights and judicial independence were not supported by action to implement them.

Arbitrary detention and abduction were reported in the Chechen Republic, and in the Republics of Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan. Widespread violations of rights (including torture and other forms of ill-treatment) continued to occur in military and other closed establishments across the country.

CO-OPERATING TO IMPROVE STANDARDS IN RUSSIA'S CLOSED INSTITUTIONS

The project *Prevention of torture and violent treatment in closed institutions of Russia* is an initiative of the Russian Research Center for Human Rights (RRCHR, HRH Moscow). It develops tools and approaches to prevent torture or violent treatment or punishment in closed institutions of the Russian Federation, such as military barracks, mental institutions and prisons. RRCHR's ten members work on the project together, each addressing a specific element – violence in the military, in prisons, in mental institutions, etc. – enabling the project to develop a systematic and effective approach to policy and lobbying. In addition to monitoring, the organisations hold round-tables and train staff in closed institutions.



Mozhaysk colony for men. Photo by: Moscow Center for Prison Reform.



Novyi Oskol colony for women. Photo by: Ivan Mitin.



In 2010, RRCHR representatives called for an impartial investigation into the death in custody of the lawyer Sergei Magnitsky in 2009

Building networks and institutions

The Russian Research Center for Human Rights (RRCHR) hosts ten independent human rights organisations at the Human Rights House Moscow. A new human rights NGO – the Center for Caucasian Initiative – joined RRCHR in 2010. Established by the editors of DOSH magazine, it addresses problems of human rights and freedom of expression in the North Caucasus region.



The editors of DOSH magazine established a new NGO – the Centre for Caucasian Initiative – and joined the RRCHR.

Strengthening capacity and sharing knowledge

The project *Electronic Human Rights Education for Lawyers*, in which RRCHR participates with Azerbaijan, Belarus and Georgia, is creating a network of lawyers, experts and human rights defenders across the region (see pages 10). Participants in this programme come from many parts of the Russian Federation - from Murmansk in the North to Buryatia in the South.

In 2010, HRHN came to the support of two human rights activists from Buryatia, Nadezhda Nizovkina and Tatiana Stetsura, who had participated in EHREL. They were accused of inciting hatred against the Russian authorities and the Russian Army. HRHN wrote letters of concern to the Chief of Buryatia Khural and some international bodies, drawing attention to the case. As a result of lobbying, Nizovkina and Stetsura were fined rather than imprisoned, as earlier feared.

With HRHF's support, the editors of DOSH participated in an OSCE Review Conference in Warsaw in October 2010, where they spoke about the killing of journalists in the Russian Federation and discrimination and attacks against Chechen minorities in Kazakhstan. In Warsaw, the editors and HRHF marked the fourth anniversary of the unsolved murder of human rights defender Anna Politkovskaya.

Advocacy and raising awareness

Together with the International Youth Human Rights Movement – one of the organisations behind the initiative to establish a regional Human Rights House in Voronezh - HRHN organized a side event on 'Human Rights Defenders in the NIS Region: Common Threats and Strategies of Defence', at the OSCE Review Conference in Warsaw, where representatives from human rights organisations in Georgia, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan made policy recommendations to OSCE on how to protect human rights defenders. The side event called on the OSCE to develop its own guidelines for human rights defenders and to involve national human rights defenders from the CIS region in their expert groups.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The situation of human rights defenders

Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) continued to fall short of implementing international human rights standards. Concerns included sexual and racial discrimination; harassment of human rights defenders; failure to protect freedom of expression and the status of the national human rights institution; and poor protection of the rights of children, women, national and sexual minorities, and people with disabilities. In addition, the rights of internally-displaced and missing persons were insufficiently protected.

Assaults on human rights defenders increased in 2010. Attacks were made against individuals and organisations defending human rights and the rights of sexual minorities, as well as journalists and activists investigating human trafficking, corruption and crime. These attacks and the legal persecution of journalists undermine freedom of expression and raise questions about the quality of the country's democracy. Some family members of human rights defenders were also targeted, forcing them abroad. Overall, these trends have created a mood of fear and intimidation, and had the effect of undermining the work of human rights defenders.



I'M A ROMA WOMAN

On 8 April, World Roma Day, the regional campaign "I'm a Roma Woman" was presented at the Human Rights House in Sarajevo. The campaign video shows four Roma women from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia. They talk about the prejudice and discrimination they face, but also the need for education and employment. They are a new, positive image of the Roma and other minority populations.

«This campaign points to the discrimination and prejudice against Roma, especially Roma women. On the other hand ... throughout the country and region, there are extremely capable and strong Roma women, who have much to contribute to BiH society and the societies from which they come.»

Jadranka Milicevic, feminist activist group Cure



Advocacy and raising awareness

During the year HRHN was able to help enforce UN human rights mechanisms, promote work on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and lobby at the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

Bosnia and Herzegovina's Universal Periodic Review took place in February 2010. The Head of the Human Rights House Sarajevo represented the UPR NGO coalition. All the main issues that NGOs raised were taken on board by states responsible for the review. They included the protection of journalists and human rights defenders, investigation of cases of assault, and strengthening the independence of the Ombudsman. Though it was reluctant to accept some, the government accepted many of the recommendations made. For national NGOs this creates an opportunity to monitor and campaign for their implementation.

CERD's review of Bosnia and Herzegovina took place in August 2010. A large coalition of national NGOs prepared for the review, and a representative from the Roma community travelled to Geneva to brief Committee members. In its Concluding Observations, the Committee noted that Roma remain the most vulnerable group in Bosnia and Herzegovina and requested the government to address discriminatory provisions in the Constitution, the return of refugees and displaced persons, ethnic tensions, and hate speech. NGOs will continue to monitor the government's response, nationally and locally.

States appreciated the contribution of local human rights defenders to both reviews. The NGO coalition contributed about 40 per cent of stakeholder contributions to the UPR review. CERD experts referred to the coalition's shadow report.

CROATIA

The situation of human rights defenders

Human rights defenders in Croatia face many challenges, the most important among which include discrimination, and restraints on freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. In May, notably 150 activists were arrested during peaceful protests against a corrupt project that Green Action and the Right to the City organized in Zagreb. Many of those arrested were from HRH Zagreb.

JOINT ACTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

In 2010, Croatia's human rights activists lobbied very actively in support of the Anti Discrimination Act which was approved on 1 January 2009. Wanting to make sure the law is implemented, NGOs made strenuous efforts to introduce and explain the law's provisions to vulnerable groups all over the country, and worked with the Ombudsman's office to organise research, campaign, and provide training. Lawyers, prosecutors and judges were asked to introduce provisions of the law to other relevant stakeholders. To our knowledge, three complaints have been submitted under the law: two allege hate speech and discrimination based on sexual orientation, and one alleges discrimination based on privileged social status. Human rights NGOs and professionals are waiting for court decisions before evaluating how the law has been implemented.

SUCCESS STORY

A TV editor, Duška Jurišić was subjected to hateful and racist statements by Fahrudin Radončić, a politician who owns a weekly magazine and TV station. Ms. Jurišić was fired from the federal TV but, after numerous statements of support and with help from HRH Zagreb lawyers, had her rights restored in court. We are monitoring the decision's implementation.



Norwegian Ambassador Terje Hauge, left, and Slobodan Uzelac, Deputy President of Croatia, middle, at the opening of HRH Zagreb in December 2009.

Building networks and institutions

HRH Zagreb was registered in 2008 and officially opened on 10 December 2009. It hosts six human rights organisations that actively protect and promote the human rights of different marginalized and discriminated social groups in Croatia. In 2010, the organisations provided legal assistance to over 1200 people and organised 200 events, such as roundtables, seminars, training courses, etc. HRH Zagreb works to strengthen human rights NGOs and their role in Croatia, provide a platform for dialogue and co-operation, and support the work of human rights defenders. HRH Zagreb became fully operational in September 2010, when all its member organisations moved to its two buildings.

Strengthening capacity and sharing knowledge

HRH Zagreb was deeply involved in preparing Croatia's Universal Periodical Review (UPR) in November 2010. Work began in February 2010 when ten organisations held a workshop (organised by the HRC in collaboration with HRH Zagreb) that established two coalitions: an NGO group coordinated by B.a.B.e. (Be active Be emancipated, a member of HRH Zagreb), and a second group linked to Croatia's national human rights institution. The NGO group prepared a shadow report, planned activities running up to the UPR, shared tasks, and set priorities. The HRHF introduced the UN system and helped with advocacy and drafting of the NGO shadow report.

Advocacy and raising awareness

Croatian NGOs highlighted the UPR because they anticipated that the government would send a high-level delegation to Geneva – as it did. In advance of the hearing, the Head of HRH Zagreb, representing Croatia's NGO coalition, spent several days lobbying government delegations in Geneva. The NGO coalition contributed about 20 per cent of the points made in the non-State background paper prepared for the UPR; another 20% were provided by the Ombudsman's Office, with which the NGO coalition coordinated closely. Our efforts reminded the public and international organisations of human rights issues in Croatia. The major points made by the NGO coalition were mentioned at the UPR and in the recommendations.

Our next step must be to work in a similar way with European Union human rights mechanisms.

Follow-up to the UPR has begun. Members of the coalition met early in 2011 to develop a follow-up strategy and Croatian NGOs went to Geneva in March 2011 to participate in the Human Rights Council. The Chair of HRH Zagreb's board spoke on behalf of the NGO coalition at the final session of Croatia's UPR.

In 2011 we aim to develop a methodology for documenting human rights abuses in Croatia. HRH will coordinate this process in collaboration with other human rights NGOs, and from 2012 will start to produce annual reports on the status of human rights protection in the country.

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

The situation of human rights defenders

In **Uganda**, freedom of expression remained under attack. Intimidation and threat, including legal harassment, generated a media environment characterised by fear and self-censorship. The Ugandan authorities continue to charge media professionals, though they seldom take them to court. Some media outlets were censored and others closed after publishing or broadcasting material to which officials objected. The government proposed a new media law in 2010 which, if adopted, will further restrict freedom of expression. The authorities also introduced a new bill that will allow the police to regulate public meetings, constraining the right to assemble. After bombings in July in Kampala, anti-terrorism legislation was used to charge a Kenyan human rights activist with terrorism, murder and attempted murder. His lawyer was arrested and deported. The authorities also used 'security units' to disappear individuals for periods of time, mostly to 'safe houses' where some were subjected to torture. Sexual minorities and their defenders continued to be targets of intimidation and threats, and most attacks on LGBT individuals were made with impunity.

Repression in **Eritrea** did not ease in 2010. Arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and deaths in custody persisted. Thousands of Eritreans have been incarcerated without charge, trial, or right of appeal. They are denied access to lawyers and family. The government releases no information about numbers

of prisoners, their place of confinement, whether they remain alive, or why they are being held. Numerous detainees, including human rights defenders, have simply disappeared.

For the third year running, Eritrea was ranked last of 175 countries listed in Reporters Without Borders' press freedom index. At least 30 journalists remain imprisoned. Many have not been accounted for since their arrest and may be dead. Because freedoms of expression, organisation and assembly have been suppressed along with the right to be a human rights defender, no independent human rights sector survives in the country.

In 2010 the government of **Ethiopia** implemented policies that significantly set back respect for human rights and the work of human rights defenders. A new law regulating civil society directly targets human rights organisations and independent human rights NGOs have been forced to reduce their activities or reform their mandates to work in less contested areas. More journalists are quitting Ethiopia than any other African country. Those who stay and continue to work may be sentenced to long prison sentences and risk torture and inhumane and degrading treatment. Ethiopia's review by the UN Committee against Torture confirmed the extent of repression against human rights defenders and those who do not choose to join the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, the main political party.

Building networks and institutions

HRHF responded to calls from Ethiopian and Eritrean diaspora organisations, as well as individual human rights defenders living abroad, to help launch international advocacy networks on both countries. Following its efforts to participate to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2009, in 2010 the European Network of Eritrean Civil Societies decided to explore the formation of a permanent advocacy network in more detail. HRHF has also been in contact with key actors on Ethiopia, abroad and inside the country, and will help them bring organisations and defenders to Geneva in 2011 to launch an international advocacy network.

HRHF worked closely with diaspora organisations to express concern about the quality of Norwegian and Swiss aid programmes to Ethiopia, which do not consider human rights sufficiently. The Swiss and Norwegian parliaments both debated this issue early in 2011.

Strengthening capacity and sharing knowledge

In 2010, HRHF signed a contract with the Norwegian Peace Corps (FK Norway) establishing an internship exchange programme. HURINET Uganda is FK Norway's primary partner; other partners have been selected in Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania. HRHF is the programme's partner in the North. At the start of 2011, HRHF sent an intern to the Peace Tree Network in Kenya and welcomed a HURINET intern to HRHF in Oslo.

In 2010, HRHF continued to assist its partners in the East and Horn of Africa region to strengthen their international advocacy. Responding to a request from a coalition of Rwandan civil society organisations and the UN,



FK staff and partner organisation representatives finalise the internship exchange agreement. Jinja, Uganda, July 2010. Photo by: HRHF



Florian Irminger, Head of International Advocacy and HRHF Geneva Office, presenting a statement at the UN Human Rights Committee's review of Ethiopia. Due to the new and stricter NGO laws in Ethiopia, local organisations were unable to participate. Photo by: HRHF

HRHF contributed to a workshop that assisted Rwandan civil society organisations to prepare for the country's UPR hearing in 2011. HRHF also assisted a group of Somali NGOs to edit their UPR submission to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Advocacy and raising awareness

In 2009, HRHF supported Ethiopian human rights organisations in their advocacy work around Ethiopia's UPR. Because repression of human rights defenders and their organisations prevents them from speaking openly, HRHF intervened at the UN on two occasions in 2010 to raise concerns on their behalf about the human rights situation. In its presentations to the Human Rights Committee in July and the Committee Against Torture (CAT) in November, HRHF stressed that it took the floor only because local NGOs can no longer do so.

WESTERN EUROPE

The situation of human rights defenders

In Norway and the United Kingdom, human rights defenders live and work in relative safety. However, violations of the rights of national minorities, asylum seekers, LGBT persons and other marginalized social groups occur. Their relatively safe working conditions allow human rights defenders to concentrate on human rights concerns in other parts of the world as well as domestic concerns regarding immigration, minority rights, racism, women's and children's rights, and religious, health and welfare rights.

Increasing protection through recognition

For HRHN, human rights awards recognise the work of human rights defenders and organisations while the international visibility they confer simultaneously increases their protection. In 2010, Index on Censorship from the Free Word Centre announced its tenth annual Freedom of Expression Awards, which honour those who, often at great personal risk, voice issues and stories from around the globe that would otherwise pass unnoticed. Among the winners were Rashid Hajili from the Media Rights Institute in Azerbaijan, and two Azerbaijani bloggers, Emin Abdullayev and Adnan Hajizade.

HRH Oslo, in consultations with HRH Baku, HRH Tbilisi and HRH Moscow, nominated eleven human rights defenders and organisations from the Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia for the 2010 Fritt Ord and Zeit Stiftung Free Press Award. Among the seven winners were Mikhail Beketov from Khimkinskaya Pravda, the newspaper Arsenjevskije Vesti from the Russian Federation, the online journal Liberali from Georgia, and ANTV Online TV from Azerbaijan. All four were nominated by HRH Oslo.



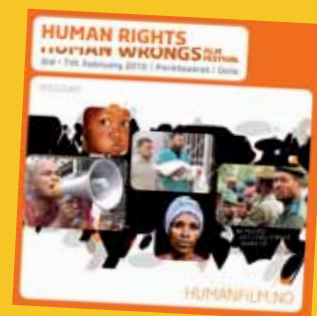
«It opened my eyes dramatically about what is possible and what can be done in using film as a significant human rights tool and I am way more committed now than before».

Maina Kiai, an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya

HUMAN RIGHTS HUMAN WRONGS FILM FESTIVAL – OSLO

Human Rights Human Wrongs is Scandinavia's only documentary film festival devoted exclusively to human rights. It is jointly organized by Oslo Dokumentarkino and HRH Oslo. Started in Oslo in 2008, it aims to generate debate on human rights issues, raise awareness about violations of rights by corporations and governments, demonstrate the vitality and importance of human rights documentary film-making, and provide a platform for activism and further engagement.

25 films from 12 countries were screened at the 2010 festival. The films focused on four themes: business and human rights, migration and human wrongs, worlds without witnesses, and impunity vs. justice.



Among the seven international guests who participated in thematic discussions were Maina Kiai, an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya and the former and founding Chairman of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. He introduced a film in the impunity vs. justice category and took part in a debate that attracted a large audience as well as media attention.



The Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Amnesty Norway, the Human Rights House Foundation and Bellona organised Solidarity 31 in front of the Parliament on 31 October 2010 to support the right to freedom of assembly in the Russian Federation. Photo by: Amnesty Norway

Building networks and institutions

HRHN has three members in Western Europe: the Rafto House in Bergen, Norway, the Free Word Centre in the United Kingdom, and the Human Rights House Oslo, Norway. In addition to working on the human rights situation in their countries, these Human Rights Houses primarily work internationally.

Advocacy and raising awareness

Focus on Azerbaijan

In 2010 several organizations at the Rafto House in Bergen, the Free Word Centre and Human Rights House Oslo devoted much attention to the human rights situation in Azerbaijan.

In January, HRHF and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee organised a joint mission to the winter session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) in Strasbourg, accompanied by Malahat Nasibova, who was awarded the Rafto Prize in 2009. The delegation drew the attention of PACE members to the grave human rights situation in Nakhchivan as well as the media situation in general in Azerbaijan.

The “International Partnership Group for Azerbaijan” is composed of ten international human rights and freedom of expression organizations, including members of the Free Word Centre, and coordinated by Article 19. In September it launched a three-day freedom of expression mission to Azerbaijan, during which international NGOs highlighted their serious concerns about freedom of expression in the country and published a report titled *Free Expression under Attack: Azerbaijan’s Deteriorating Media Environment*.

In October, eleven international freedom of expression organizations, including organisations from HRH London and HRH Oslo, submitted an open letter to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev calling for the immediate and unconditional release of imprisoned Editor-in-chief Eynulla Fatullayev ([for more, see page 18](#)).

London-based NGOs also put much effort into helping two imprisoned Azeri bloggers, Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizade, who were released shortly after parliamentary elections in the country.

«The current state of freedom of expression in Azerbaijan is alarming. We are undertaking this mission to put a spotlight on this situation, which should be considered among the most pressing human rights priorities in Azerbaijan.»

Agnes Callamard, Executive Director of Article 19.

HOUSES AND MEMBER ORGANISATION OF HOUSES

MEMBER HOUSES

AZERBAIJAN – BAKU

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Manager of HRH
Azerbaijan

- Association for Protection of Women's Rights (APWR)
- Azerbaijan Human Rights Centre (AHRC) www.aihmm.org
- Azerbaijan Lawyers Association www.aha.az/backup/index.html
- Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety (IRFS) www.irfs.az
- Legal Education Society www.monitoring.az
- Media Rights Institute www.mediarights.az
- Society for Humanitarian Research (SHR) www.humanrights-az.org
- Women's Association for Rational Development (WARD) www.ward.az

BELARUS IN EXILE - VILNIUS

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President of the
Belarusian HRH

- Belarus Watch (ByWatch) www.belaruswatch.org
- Belarusian Association of Journalists <http://baj.by>
- Belarusian Helsinki Committee <http://belhelcom.org>
- Human Rights Centre Viasna www.spring96.org
- Public Association "Centar Supolnasc"

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – SARAJEVO

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President of the Board
of HRH Sajarevo

- Association of Female Citizens "Renaissance" www.renesansa.com.ba
- Foundation CURE <http://fondacijacure.org>
- Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina www.bh-hchr.org
- Regional Coordinator for Youth Groups www.humanrightsschools.org
- Serb Civic Council
- Woman and Society Centre

CROATIA – ZAGREB

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Sanja Sarnavka
Chair of the Board of
HRH Zagreb

- Association for Promotion of Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities
- Association for Protection and Promotion of Mental Health Svitanje www.udruga-svitanje.com
- B.a.B.e. - Be Active, Be Emancipated www.babe.hr
- Centre for Peace Studies Zagreb www.cms.hr
- Civic Committee for Human Rights www.goljp.hr
- Documenta www.documenta.hr

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Chairman of the Board
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- The Human Rights Centre (HRDC) www.humanrights.ge
- Article 42 of the Constitution www.article42.ge

- The Georgian Center for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture
- Victims (GCRT) www.gcrt.ge
- 'Saphari' - Family Without Violence
- The Caucasian Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Studies (CAUCASIA)

NORWAY - BERGEN

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Therese Jebsen
Executive Director of the
Rafto Foundation

- AFS Norway www.afs.no
- Medecins Sans Frontieres www.leger-uten-grenser.no
- Rafto Foundation www.rafto.no
- Changemaker www.changemaker.no

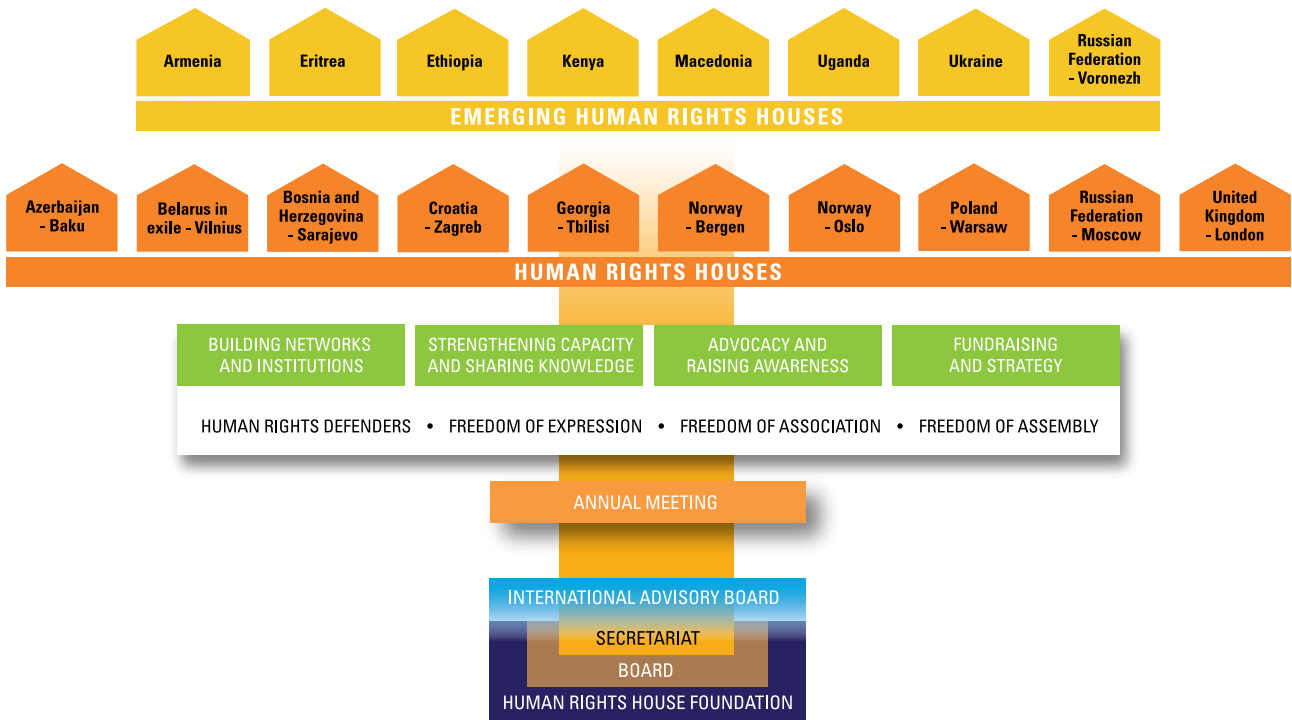
NORWAY – OSLO

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Nora Sveaass
Chair of the Board of
HRH Oslo

- FoodFirst Information and Action Network (FIAN) www.fian.org
- Human Rights House Foundation www.humanrightshouse.org
- International Society for Health and Human Rights www.hhri.org
- Norwegian P.E.N www.norskpen.no
- Slug – The Norwegian Coalition for Debt Cancellation www.slettgjelda.no
- The Norwegian Burma Committee www.burma.no
- The Norwegian Helsinki Committee www.nhc.no
- The Norwegian Tibet Committee www.tibet.no
- Voice of Tibet www.vot.org



Designed by: Plain Sense.

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Danuta Przywara
President of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

- Association of the Young Journalists POLIS <http://polis.youthpress.org>
- Helsinki Committee in Poland
- Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights www.hfhrpol.waw.pl
- The Association Initiative 33
- Viridarium - Polish Students Group against anti-Semitism and xenophobia

RUSSIA – MOSCOW

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Liubov Vinogradova
International representative of the Russian Research Centre for Human Rights

- Civil Society and Freedom of Speech Initiative Center for the Caucasus
- Human Rights Network Group www.hro.org

- Independent Psychiatric Association of Russia www.npar.ru
- Moscow Centre for Prison Reform www.prison.org
- Moscow Helsinki Group www.mhg.ru
- Mother’s Rights Foundation www.mright.hro.org
- Regional Organisation Non-violence International
- Regional Organisation Right of the Child www.pravorebenka.narod.ru
- Right to Live and Have Civil Dignity
- Social Partnership Foundation www.openweb.ru/sociopart
- Union of the Committees of Soldiers’ Mothers of Russia www.ucsmr.ru

UNITED KINGDOM – LONDON

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Rohan Asoka Jayasekera
Associate Editor and Deputy Chief Executive

- Article 19 www.article19.org
- English Pen www.englishpen.org
- Index on Censorship www.indexonensorship.org

EMERGING HOUSES

ARMENIA - YEREVAN

Coordinator
Armenian Helsinki Association
www.hahr.am

ERITREA

Cooperation with diaspora organisations

ETHIOPIA

Cooperation with diaspora organisations

KENYA

Dialogue with groups of NGOs in Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa

MACEDONIA - SKOPJE

Coordinator
Macedonian Women’s Rights Centre – Shelter Centre www.mwrc.com.mk

RUSSIAN FEDERATION – VORONEZH

Coordinator
Youth Human Rights Movement
www.yhrm.org

UGANDA - KAMPALA

Coordinator
Human Rights Network Uganda
www.hurinet.or.ug

UKRAINE - KIEV

Coordinator
Ukrainian Helsinki Union
www.helsinki.org.ua

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

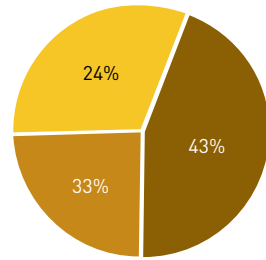
1 EURO = 8 NOK

Networking and Capacity Building - income	NOK	EURO
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2 458 188	307 274
Freedom of Expression Foundation, Norway	100 000	12 500
Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe	155 776	19 472
EEA grants/Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights	68 274	8 534
The Netherlands Helsinki Committee	16 405	2 051
The Nordic Council of Ministers	393 916	49 240
EC/Human Rights Center (HRIDC) (Georgia)	16 717	2 090
Peace Corps internship exchange	245 129	30 641
Sub total income	3 454 405	431 801
Networking and Capacity Building - expenses		
Networking and capacity building, HRHN	357 803	44 725
Annual meeting and international conference	828 271	103 534
International Law in Advocacy	1 488 131	186 016
South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders	120 584	15 073
HRHN contact persons	404 106	50 513
Peace Corps internship exchange	6 661	833
Sub total expenses	3 205 556	400 695
Lobbying and Advocacy - income		
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	4 762 782	595 348
Freedom of Expression Foundation, Norway	300 000	37 500
Sub total income	5 062 782	632 848
Lobbying and Advocacy - expenses		
Lobbying and advocacy, HRHN	3 269 432	363 270
Monitoring of closed establishments, Russian Federation	622 184	69 132
HR documentation and monitoring, Russian Federation	368 985	40 998
Sub total expenses	4 260 601	473 400
Institution Building - income		
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	4 538 087	567 261
Freedom of Expression Foundation, Norway	200 000	25 000
Sub total income	4 738 087	592 261
Institution Building - expenses		
Building institutions, HRHN	1 060 000	132 500
Belarusian HRH in exile	348 737	43 592
HRH Azerbaijan	833 858	104 232
HRH Tbilisi 2009/2010	147 116	18 390
Sub total expenses	2 389 711	298 714
Total income	13 255 274	1 656 909
Total expenses	9 855 868	1 095 096

This financial report presents the annual accounts of the Human Rights House Foundation. Human Rights Houses and their member organisations also contribute to the HRHN programmes by fundraising locally. These financial contributions are reflected in the accounts of the Human Rights Houses and their member organisations.

In 2010, the Human Rights House Foundation had the total income of 13.255.274 NOK (1.656.909 EUR, when 1 EUR=8 NOK). It included project support allocated in 2010, as well as the remainder of 3.503.167 NOK (437.896 EUR) from 2009, earmarked for the implementation of specific projects. HRHF ended 2010 with a surplus of 42.874 NOK (5.359 EUR) and 3.442.776 NOK (430.347 EUR) remainder, earmarked for the implementation of the projects in 2011.

EXPENSES BY PROGRAMME



- NETWORKING AND CAPACITY BUILDING
- LOBBYING, ADVOCACY AND FUNDRAISING
- INSTITUTION BUILDING

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the donors who in 2010 generously contributed to the development of the Human Rights House Network, HRHN annual meeting and the international human rights conference. We would also like to thank all donors and supporters of the individual Human Rights Houses and their member organisations.

Special thanks to our colleagues for joint activities:

- European Humanities University, Belarusian University in exile in Vilnius
- Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, Oslo
- People in Need, Prague
- Civic Belarus, Prague
- International Service for Human Rights, Geneva
- Centre for Political and Civil Rights, Geneva
- International PEN, London
- Human Rights Watch
- UPR-Info, Geneva
- Amnesty International
- International Centre for Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (IRCT), Geneva
- Caucasian Knot, Russian Federation
- Oslo Dokumentarkino, Oslo
- FK Norway, Oslo
- Norwegian NGO-forum for Human Rights, Oslo
- International Federation of Human Rights, Geneva, Paris



THE HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE CONCEPT

WHAT IS A HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE?

A Human Rights House is a collaborative project of non-governmental organisations that work in partnership to promote human rights in their own country and abroad. Houses are independent of one another and their member organisations engage in a variety of activities and projects. Each organisation in a House participates as an independent partner, retaining its autonomy. Houses are run and managed according to democratic principles of equal participation and representation. They allow room for debate, diversity of opinion and differences of method. They share common values of human rights and are committed to defend and protect the rights of individual people. Houses are non-partisan, are not affiliated to any religious organisation, and do not discriminate with regard to victims they represent.

In addition to being a community of organisations, a Human Rights House can be a physical structure. Depending on local needs and funding, it can host the offices of member organisations (like HRH Zagreb), be a joint meeting space for member and outside organisations (like HRH Baku), or a meeting place and temporary home (like the Belarusian HRH in exile in Vilnius). A country may have more than one Human Rights House (like HRH Bergen and HRH Oslo).

Joining a Human Rights House enriches the range of informal relations between

partner organisations and people, generates valuable synergies, creates opportunities for cooperation and coordination, and increases the visibility of human rights defenders, thereby enhancing their protection.

WHEN TO ESTABLISH A HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE?

A Human Rights House should be established only after assessing and concluding that such a project will add value to the organisations involved and to human rights work at large. Establishing a Human Rights House is a lengthy process and requires commitment. In general, organisations are required to show that: the House is needed and there is local demand for it; that the organisations setting up the House are prepared to work with each other in a spirit of trust and co-operation and will respect HRHN's Code of Conduct and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and that there are prospects for raising sufficient funds. The Human Rights House Foundation, which is the Secretariat of the Human Rights House Network, offers information and advice to organisations wishing to establish a Human Rights House.

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE NETWORK

The Human Rights House Network is an informal network of Human Rights Houses. Established and emerging Human Rights Houses can seek to become



Human Rights House Sarajevo

members of the network by submitting a membership application to the Human Rights House Foundation. Applications are considered by the International Advisory Board, which requests applicants to strengthen and resubmit their application, or grants associate or full status. Once membership status is granted, the House is entitled to use the name and logo and open a page on the HRHN website.

THE ROLE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE FOUNDATION AS HRHN'S SECRETARIAT

The Human Rights House Foundation is a non-governmental organisation, legally established in 1992. Its principal activities are to run the Secretariat of the Human Rights House Network. The Foundation has offices in Oslo, Norway, and in Geneva, Switzerland. The HRHN Sec-



Belarusian Human Rights House in exile in Vilnius

retariat is legally supervised by the Human Rights House Foundation's Board.

The Foundation provides expert services that underpin the work of the network and its members. To begin with, it promotes and supports the formation of Human Rights Houses. The Foundation's objective is to establish Houses that are autonomous, self-financing and organisationally self-sufficient, and to this end it provides expert support and training on organisational development. Since 1992, the Foundation has helped to establish 15 Human Rights Houses across four regions. Several new Houses are in the process of being formed.

Secondly, the Foundation is involved in the network's advocacy and protection activities. It frequently lobbies with and on behalf of Houses and member organisations, at national level as well as in the European institutions and UN human rights fora. It associates itself with many of the Houses' campaigns, notably those that address the Network's priorities. It supports and administers a fund to provide protection and short term protection to human rights defenders who find themselves in immediate danger. It also provides logistical support and political advice to help Houses represent themselves effectively at international level and organise international visits to their countries. Some of the HRHF's advocacy activities in 2010 are described in the country reports;

others are highlighted on pages 11-12. The Foundation plays key leadership or support roles in many projects. It initiates projects, particularly cross-border projects that involve several Houses, but its participation takes many forms – from advising and providing expertise, to monitoring and reporting, via fundraising and co-ordination. As an international NGO, the Foundation can make a unique contribution to the work of the Houses: it is able to assemble international contacts and secure the support of international funders; access contacts at high level, or help create conditions in which government and civil society organisations can co-operate with more confidence; and involve international actors in advocacy, capacity building, and knowledge sharing.

The Secretariat makes a crucial contribution to fundraising across the network. Where grants are made to the network or to projects with which the Foundation is associated, the Foundation is legally responsible for financial oversight and reporting. The Secretariat also helps Houses to fundraise for their own work, and may assume fiduciary responsibilities. The resources raised and spent by Human Rights Houses collectively are far greater than the budget of the Human Rights House

Network (see the accounts on page 40). The Executive Director and staff of the Foundation spend a good part of their time on accompanying fundraising initiatives, preparing requests, auditing expenditure, and fulfilling reporting requirements.

Finally, the Secretariat provides a range of general administrative and co-ordinating services to the Network, in support of shared activities, major events, communications, training programmes, and the annual assembly. This largely invisible layer of work is crucial to the sound development and governance of the network as a whole.

The Foundation acts in accordance with HRHN's plan of action, which is approved by the Network's members at the annual meeting of the Human Rights House Network. The Foundation exercises no control over Human Rights Houses or partner organisations of the Houses. It is accountable to two boards: to the Network's International Advisory Board with regard to the Network's policies and overall direction; and to the Foundation's Board with regard to legal matters and administration and financial oversight of the Oslo and Geneva offices.

ADVISERS, BOARD, STAFF

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD OF HRHN

HRHN's International Advisory Board consists of one member from each regions in which the Human Rights House Network is active. The Board guides the Network's strategic development.



HRHN SECRETARIAT
Lars A. Christensen
 Chairperson of the Norwegian Board of the HRHF, Supreme Court Lawyer and Senior Partner of the law firm Wikborg, Rein & Co.



EASTERN EUROPE AND CAUCASUS
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 Executive Director of Independent Psychiatric Association of Russia.



EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA
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 National Coordinator of HURINET Uganda.



WESTERN EUROPE
Rohan Jayasekera
 Associate Editor and Deputy Chief Executive, London, United Kingdom.



WESTERN BALKANS
Sanja Sarnavka
 Chair of the Board of HRH Zagreb and President of B.a.b.e. (from September 2010).



WESTERN BALKANS
Srdjan Dizdarevic
 President of the Helsinki Committee in Bosnia and Herzegovina (until September 2010).

BOARD OF THE HRHF

The Norwegian Board of the Human Rights House Foundation meets bi-monthly and monitors the work of the Secretariat.



Anne Hege Simonsen
 Senior lecturer in journalism, University College Oslo (from December 2010).



Bernt Hagtvet
 Professor of Political Science, University of Oslo.



Elisabeth Eide
 Associate Professor of Journalism, Oslo University College (until June 2010).



Karin Dokken
 Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Oslo.



Knut U. Kloster Jr.
 Chairman of Navimar Holding.



Lars A. Christensen (Chairperson)
 Supreme Court Lawyer and Senior Partner of the law firm Wikborg, Rein & Co.

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Laure Bonjour
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We wish to thank the following persons for their
valuable contributions in 2010:



Márta Varga
intern, HRHF Geneva Office.



Yanet Bahena
intern, HRHF Geneva Office.



Renee Lewis
volunteer, HRHF Oslo Office.



Lotti Rose Douglas
intern, HRHF Geneva Office

«I have been extremely impressed by the work of the Human Rights House Network. Contributions by the Network to the establishment of human rights houses provide practical and much needed support to individual human rights defender organisations and to networks of defenders.»

Hina Jilani, former UN Special Representative to the UN Secretary General
on the situation of human rights defenders.

«The Human Rights Houses provide shelter - both in a metaphysical and in a physical sense
– to those who need shelter because of their struggle for human rights.»

Jan E. Helgesen, Professor at the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo
and First Vice-President of the Venice Commission, President of the Scientific Council.

«Networks of human rights defenders exchange strategies, challenges and practices ... raise the profile of defenders, and enhance their security and protection ... as well as contribute a sense of solidarity. The Special Rapporteur considers that networks (national, regional and international) of human rights defenders and NGOs not only contribute to a sense of solidarity between such organizations, but also significantly contribute to their effectiveness by exchanging strategies, challenges and practices,. In this regard, the Special Rapporteur commends initiatives such as the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders and encourages the expansion of membership of this and similar initiatives. Networks of human rights defenders are also important in raising the profile of defenders and contribute to enhancing their security and protection.»

Margaret Sekaggya UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders
after her visit to Armenia in 2010.

2010/2011

Cover photo: Azerbaijani blogger Adnan Hajizade conditionally released from prison on 18 November 2010. Adnan Hajizade and his fellow blogger Emin Milli were imprisoned on 10 July 2009 on fabricated charges and sentenced to two and two and a half years of imprisonment. Photo by: IRFS

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