



**HUMAN
RIGHTS
HOUSE**
FOUNDATION



ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

**16 Human Rights Houses connected across Eastern & Western Europe,
the Caucasus and the Balkans:**

Armenia (Yerevan); Azerbaijan (Baku, Nakhchivan); Belarus (exile in Vilnius); Crimea (exile in Kyiv); Croatia (Zagreb) Georgia (Tbilisi); Norway (Bergen, Oslo); Poland (Warsaw); Russian Federation (Grozny, Moscow, Voronezh); Serbia (Belgrade); Ukraine (Chernihiv); United Kingdom (London)

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RESPONDING TOGETHER



MARIA DAHLE, DIRECTOR HRHF

Our story for 2017 is not one of drastic changes to the world we live in, but of our response to the ongoing challenges we face. Time and again we saw how resilient, creative, and adaptable human rights defenders can be in the face of repression.

The challenges are well known: deepening restrictions on foreign funding for civil society, the spread of illiberal governments, systematic implementation of restrictions to fundamental freedoms, and a shift in the narrative on human rights defenders from protector of the people to enemy of the state.

We don't accept this challenging environment for human rights as the new normal. But we acknowledge the need to develop ways to achieve our goals within it. The key is how we adapt, how we resist, and how we use the network of Human Rights Houses.

The vibrant communities and partnerships we have helped to build for decades – Human Rights Houses – showed the strength of their potential in 2017. Together, we were visible and we increased our cooperation – in advocacy, in capacity building, and in protection – setting the stage to meet the challenges we face.

Looking to the long term, we took ownership in our response to worrying trends – reaching out to new and existing partners to build coalitions, and laying the foundations for engagement in our joint case studies, reports, and events.

Against the spread of ill democracies in Europe, HRHF responded together with six NGOs – four of them Human Rights Houses or their members. Among these organisations from Croatia, Hungary, Poland, and Serbia, we shared our expertise and perspectives to identify the main trends – the “playbook” – within ill democracies. To civil society, decision makers, donors, and others, we offered practices and strategies to resist.

At launch events and in our communications, we united behind joint messages and recommendations to the EU and national governments, and used our combined networks to make sure we were heard across Europe. This case study lays the foundations for our further engagement.

We also looked to a joint response as more and more countries are adopting laws and practices that hinder access to foreign funding for civil society. Inspired by the experiences of Human Rights Houses and their member NGOs, adaptive donors, and our partners, we published principles and recommendations for how international donors can continue to support organisations under increasing restriction. With this report “Funding Civil Society” as a basis, we will continue to advocate for the principles of sustainability, flexibility, coordination, and independence to guide donors in their allocation of grants for human rights activities.

More than joining together to address international trends, we came together in areas such as human rights education and capacity building. Through a newly established grant mechanism, HRHF supported 15 joint House-to-House projects to increase the sharing of knowledge and expertise among Human Rights Houses and their member NGOs.

As we come closer to the end of our five-year strategy (2014-2018), we have undertaken an external evaluation to inform our new strategy for the coming years. This includes self-reflection, input from our main stakeholders and partners, and advice on what works, what does not, and in what direction we should take our work. We look forward to remaining a dynamic, modern organisation that can respond to calls for assistance and to the environment we face.

It is essential that the human rights movement gets closer to the grassroots, communicating values and principles and how human rights have meaning for people in their daily lives, and reaching out with education on human rights. We must also get closer to civil society in countries we see backsliding on their commitments to human rights and democratic principles, such as in Central Europe. This leads us in 2018 to consider establishing new partnerships and offering support to new regions – to help meet the needs of human rights movements, and to energise our work and make us stronger as a network.

WHAT IS A HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE?

Human Rights Houses are founded on the enduring values of solidarity and cooperation. Adapted to local needs, they remain as important today as when the first House was established in Oslo in 1989.

The Houses are core to everything Human Rights House Foundation does – from advocacy and awareness raising, to capacity building and protection. All of our work is rooted in and linked to the Human Rights Houses.

A Human Rights House is a collaborative project of non-governmental organisations working in partnership to promote and advance human rights at home and abroad. Each Human Rights House is an independent institution, whose member organisations are individually and jointly involved in a wide range of activities and projects, and where there is room for debates, diversity of opinion and difference in methods.

In addition to being a community of organisations, a Human Rights House is usually a physical structure – a building or an office facility hosting the member organisations.

AIMS

The time and effort put into the establishment of a Human Rights House is an investment aimed at strengthening human rights defenders and their organisations, both financially and in terms of political influence and leverage.

Rather than focusing on support for specific projects or activities, a Human Rights House provides the infrastructure needed to carry out those activities. By providing a joint platform for organisations and human rights defenders, the Houses aim to improve respect for human rights in the countries in which they are based, and to influence the global human rights agenda with HRHF.

The purpose of establishing a Human Rights House extends far beyond the needs of each partner organisation. Human Rights Houses have a positive effect on the national capacity to uphold and protect human rights. By providing a stable and sustainable base of human rights activities, a Human Rights House benefits the human rights community as a whole.

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF HOUSES

Human Rights Houses are created by established human rights organisations that share the values of cooperation and believe in being stronger together. By joining a House, member organisations maintain their autonomy and continue their core human rights work. What they gain is a platform through which their causes are strengthened. Organisations within a House benefit from collaboration, networking, moral support and solidarity, reduced administration costs because of shared space, increased visibility on the human rights agenda, and increased protection from threats and harassment.

Member NGOs often work on different areas of human rights thus enabling the Houses to reflect the wider human rights community. What they share is common values: of universality of human rights, and commitment to defend and protect the rights of individuals and peoples.

REACHING OUT

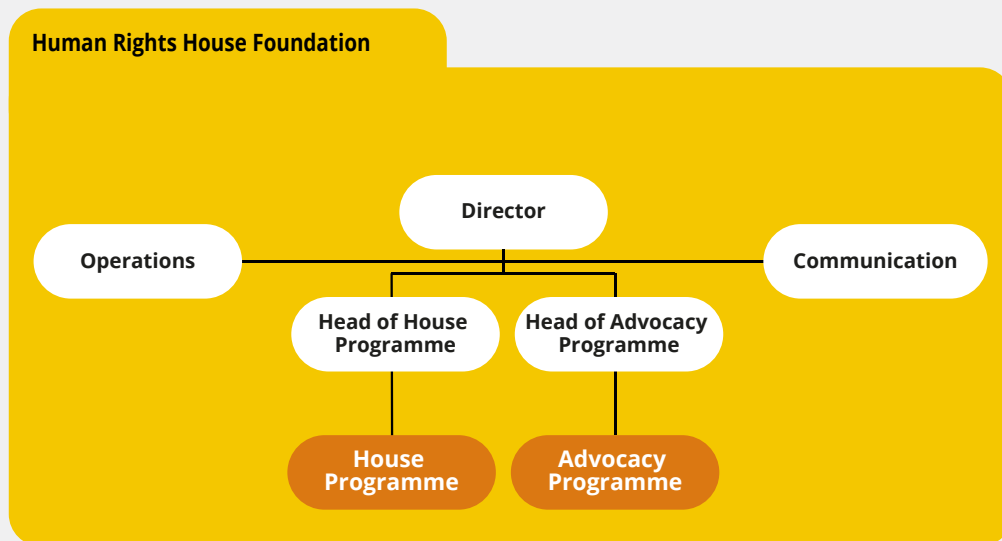
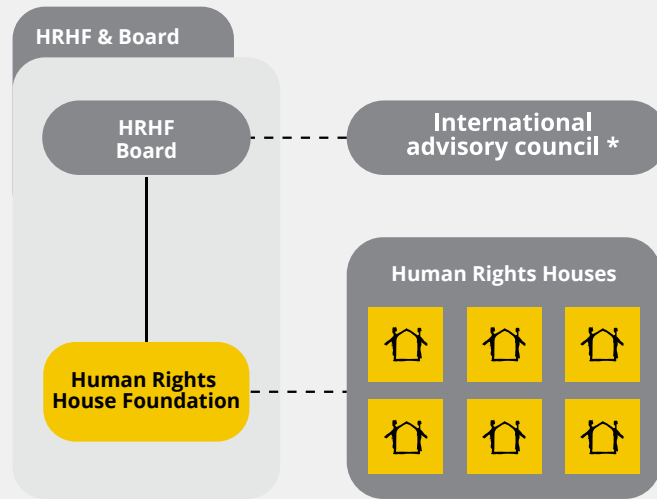
Although primarily a project of non-governmental organisations, a Human Rights House will attract the participation and attention of numerous people and institutions. For example, municipalities in some countries have provided office space at a low cost. In some cases, Human Rights Houses take part in law-making or policy processes.

Donor agencies are involved in funding the establishment of the House or some of the activities that take place in it, while national and international NGOs and research institutions are involved in activities such as workshops and projects.

On the individual level, victims of human rights violations, such as torture victims, may receive help and assistance from the Human Rights House through organisations working with legal aid, counselling or psychosocial care.

By gathering many activities and services in one place, Houses can help to make them more accessible to the public. This may be important for people who depend on NGOs for help, for victims of human rights violations but also for human rights defenders, activists, students, researchers, and others.

HRHF STRUCTURE



* To be established in 2018

WHERE WE ARE

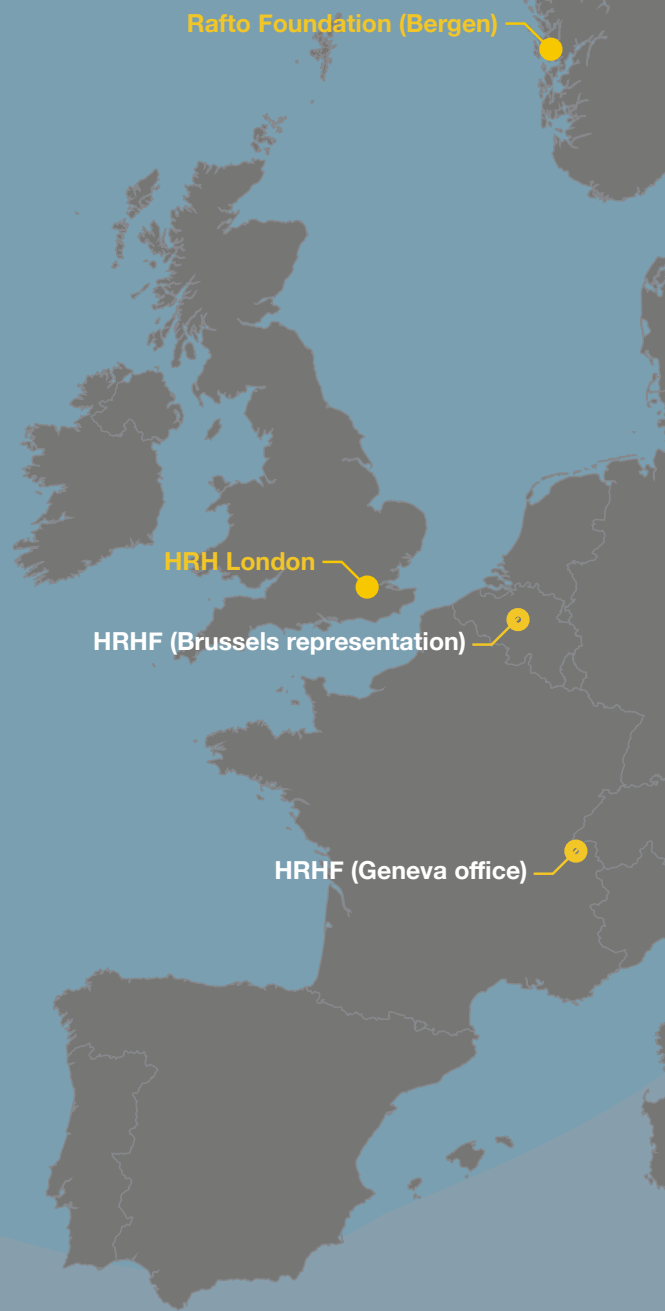
Since its establishment more than 25 years ago, Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF) has been striving toward its vision for a world where individuals and organisations can freely and openly work to protect and advance human rights at home and abroad.

HRHF protects, empowers and supports human rights defenders and their organisations. To accomplish this, HRHF brings organisations together in Human Rights Houses, and unites the Houses in an international network.

HRHF advocates with partner organisations to promote the freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, and the right to be a human rights defender at home and abroad, utilising its consultative status at the United Nations (UN) and participatory status at the Council of Europe (CoE).

Today, independent human rights organisations work together in 16 Human Rights Houses in 11 countries. The Houses are located in Eastern & Western Europe, the Caucasus and the Balkans.

HRHF is based in Oslo, with an office in Geneva and representation in Brussels and Tbilisi.



16 Human Rights Houses

11 Countries in Eastern & Western Europe, the Caucasus and the Balkans

04 Human Rights House Foundation locations

HRH Oslo
HRHF (Headquarters)

Russian Research Centre for Human Rights
(Moscow)

Barys Zvozkau
Belarusian HRH
(exile in Vilnius)

Helsinki Foundation
for Human Rights
(Warsaw)

HRH Voronezh
Educational HRH Chernihiv

Human Rights House Crimea
(exile in Kyiv, to be established in 2018)

HRH Zagreb

HRH Belgrade

Resource Centre Grozny

HRH Tbilisi
HRHF (Tbilisi representation)

HRH Yerevan

Resource Centre Nakhchivan

HRH Azerbaijan



IMPACT

1

Stronger governance and more sustainable Human Rights Houses

IMPACT

2

Increased cooperation with and among Human Rights Houses

IMPACT

3

Greater visibility and political influence on the human rights agenda

IMPACT

4

Better protection for human rights defenders and their organisations

TOGETHER WE HAVE IMPACT



16

HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSES
CONNECTED



23

HOUSE-TO-HOUSE
PROJECTS CONDUCTED



412

POLICY MAKERS
REACHED OUT TO



2

JOINTLY COORDINATED
REPORTS LAUNCHED



540

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS
TRAINED



18

TRIALS
OBSERVED

FUNDING CIVIL SOCIETY

Human Rights House Foundation launched the report “Funding Civil Society” in 2017, in response to more and more countries adopting restrictive and stigmatising laws and practices that hinder access to foreign funding for civil society.

The aim is to provide international donors with the means to adapt their working methods, as well as to encourage them to strengthen partnerships with NGOs, which crucially need international funds to work effectively.

“ Donors’ support for human rights and civil society is badly needed... so is their willingness to think outside the box.

Maina Kiai, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, (2011 – 2017)

The report offers practical recommendations based on four principles: sustainability, flexibility, coordination and independence. These principles and recommendations are inspired by successes and experiences collected from various Human Rights Houses and their partner and member NGOs, and international donors that have successfully adapted their working methods. They are also based on HRHF’s years of experience working with international donors and acting as a donor to Human Rights Houses.

Around the launch of the report in November, civil society representatives and international donors gathered at two events to discuss restrictions to foreign funding and share working methods. The first event came in Brussels and was co-hosted by the European Endowment for Democracy and HRHF. The second came on in Oslo, where the Norwegian Human Rights Fund and HRHF co-hosted an event at Fritt Ord.

States limiting civil society access to foreign resources is not a new phenomenon, from Indira Gandhi speaking out against the “foreign hand” influencing policies in her country in 1976, to Ethiopia’s adoption of the proclamation on charities and societies in 2009, freedom of association and the independence of human rights NGOs has been subject to restrictions.

Since 2012, the trend has intensified with almost 60 countries having adopted foreign funding restrictions, including the Russian Federation’s enactment of its “foreign agents” law, which has become the blueprint for states limiting NGO access to resources. Across the Balkans, Caucasus, and Eastern Europe, the regions where the Human Rights Houses are located, restrictions on foreign funding have been at the core of the measures taken by States to limit and silence NGOs. In June 2017, Hungary passed a law forcing any organisation receiving funding from abroad to register as an “organisation receiving foreign funds” and to display this label on all of its publications or face sanctions. Many international and European human rights institutions have already expressed grave concerns about this law, which aims at stigmatising and silencing organisations working on human rights issues.

The report provides best practices and recommendations on how to further improve how we support independent civil society under these very difficult circumstances.

The launch of the report was not just timely in terms of the challenge it addresses. It was published in the midst of ongoing discussions on the European Union’s new Multiannual Financial Framework, which will outline the main direction of EU funding expenditures after 2020 – translating political priorities into figures.

“Funding Civil Society” can serve as a source of inspiration and the principles that it outlines – sustainability, flexibility, coordination and independence – should be the guiding principles determining the allocation of the EU’s substantial financial contribution for human rights activities across the globe.



Events around the launch of "Funding Civil Society." Top: Speakers at event at Fritt Ord in Oslo (left - right); Sandra Petersen (Norwegian Human Rights Fund), Shahla Ismayil (Women's Association for Rational Development), Ivan Novosel (Human Rights House Zagreb), and HRHF's Maria Dahle. Bottom: Speakers at event in Brussels including Jerzy Pomianowski (European Endowment for Democracy, the hosts of the event).



IMPACT 1: STRONGER GOVERNANCE

Achieving stronger governance and more sustainable Human Rights Houses

While 2017 was a year in which HRHF focused on reviewing its governance and organisational structures and evaluating its strategy, it was also a year in which the Houses remained active and sustainable. This itself is a success, with some of the Houses and their member organisations facing significant threats – from restrictions on foreign funding and on association, to hate speech and intimidation, to detentions and arrests.

In this difficult climate, 15 of 16 Houses and their member NGOs continued activities, and of those with joint offices or meeting spaces, 100% successfully raised funds for their operation. Eight of the Houses employed joint strategies among their members, enabling them to cooperate strategically and effectively in their efforts to serve the human rights cause in their respective countries.

Due to the open nature of the Houses, their autonomy, and different models, it is difficult to gather consistently detailed figures for all of their activities. Yet, for those whose operations were supported by HRHF, we saw that they were indeed significant hubs for the human rights community. Human Rights Houses Chernihiv, Moscow, Tbilisi, Yerevan, and the Belarusian House held on average more than 20 events each in 2017, while the Belarusian House, Chernihiv, Moscow, and Yerevan welcomed more than 1,100 visitors on average.

Concluding feasibility studies for potential new Houses in 2017, we reached decisions on our engagement in Moldova and Azerbaijan. Following a mission to Chisinau and Transnistria in June, we decided not to proceed with the establishment of a House in Moldova at this point, but are keeping open communication lines for possible future engagement.

In Azerbaijan, we decided to focus on activities inside the country with a re-formed core group of member organisations, rather than establishing a Human Rights House Azerbaijan in exile. The new core group of three organisations was established in December 2017 following an open call for applications. These organisations all have activities inside the country and want to focus on dialogue with the authorities aimed at the re-opening of the House in Baku. They were all members of the previous core group of the House.

We continued progress toward establishing Human Rights House Crimea, working with a group of human rights organisations that are in the process of establishing a House in exile in Kyiv. Human Rights House Crimea is set to be fully established in 2018.



US Senator John McCain meeting Olga Skrypnyk and Tetiana Pechonchyk, during a 2017 Crimea-focused advocacy trip with HRHF. Skrypnyk and Pechonchyk's organisations, Crimean Human Rights Group and Human Rights Information Centre respectively, have formed a core group with Centre of Civil Education "Almenda" and Regional Centre for Human Rights. They are set to formally establish Human Rights House Crimea in 2018.

TOGETHER WE HAVE IMPACT



2

FEASIBILITY STUDIES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSES COMPLETED



100%

OF HOUSES HAD SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO COVER THEIR RUNNING COSTS



8

HOUSES HAVE JOINT STRATEGIES AMONG MEMBERS



23

EVENTS HELD AT EACH HOUSE ON AVERAGE*



1,109

VISITORS TO EACH HOUSE ON AVERAGE**

* Based on data from five Houses: Belarus, Chernihiv, Moscow, Tbilisi, Yerevan

** Based on data from four Houses: Belarus, Chernihiv, Moscow, Yerevan

SUPPORTING INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

At the beginning of 2017, Human Rights House Foundation launched a small-grants fund to support collaboration among Human Rights Houses.

With nine Human Rights Houses and their member NGOs taking up the opportunity, the House-to-House project fund enabled 15 successful joint projects during the year, impacting hundreds of people in areas such as human rights education, capacity building, and awareness and understanding of human rights.

The fund is motivated by HRHF's strategic aim of increasing cooperation among the Houses, and it is inspired by the many ideas conceived at the network meeting of Human Rights Houses – held at Human Rights House Belgrade in 2016.



It is difficult to solve serious problems in human rights without solidarity and support from partners. We open the doors to each other, because we are stronger together. Human rights have no borders.

Serhiy Burov, Educational Human Rights House Chernihiv

The fund embodies the solidarity and collaborative nature at the heart of the network of Human Rights Houses, strengthening and connecting the Human Rights Houses, encouraging knowledge and competency sharing, increasing their capabilities, and enhancing their impact on human rights. The fund is a success that HRHF continues into 2018.

HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMER SCHOOL IN TBILISI

Young people from across Georgia gathered at Human Rights House Tbilisi for an engaging programme of human rights education. Over four days in June 2017, they were taught by human rights defenders from Human Rights House Tbilisi and the Belarusian Human Rights House. These defenders helped to build the students' knowledge and understanding of human rights.

Andrei Paluda, trainer at the summer school, reflected on the training: "You see sometimes a person feels some kind of injustice,

that their human dignity or self-esteem were violated... but they do not fully realise this is about human rights. But when the person receives related information during educational activities, they immediately begin to realise, 'Ah, here you go, it was about human rights.'

DOCUMENTING VIOLATIONS OF FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Experts from four Human Rights Houses – Belgrade, Chernihiv, Yerevan, and Zagreb – and the International Law in Advocacy project met at Human Rights House Yerevan in March 2017, to train Armenian human rights defenders on how to document and report on violations to the right to assembly.

The training was prompted by high-profile cases of violations of the right to free assembly in Armenia in recent years. This includes the "Erebuni" mass protests and arrests in Yerevan in summer 2016, and the "Electric Yerevan" protests in summer 2015. These events exposed a need for Armenian civil society to strengthen their expertise in documenting human rights violations during mass rally dispersals.

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO KNOW THEIR RIGHTS

Initially developed by Educational Human Rights House Chernihiv, the traveling exhibition "Everyone has the right to know their rights" provided an innovative way to reach out to the public on human rights issues.

The 25 displays feature statements by famous people and young activists defending human rights, photographs and drawings illustrating key issues, information on historical facts related to human rights, and quotes from documents and decisions of international human rights bodies. The exhibition provides a platform for discussion of the philosophy, history, and evolution of human rights, and of standards protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The project fund facilitated the translation and adaptation of the exhibition for the contexts in Belarus and Georgia, and for member NGOs of the Belarusian Human Rights House and Human Rights House Tbilisi to exhibit it locally.



Exhibition "Everyone has the right to know their rights" held by Human Rights House Chernihiv in the Donetsk region of Ukraine. Some 900 people attended the exhibition during its two weeks on display.



Participants of human rights summer school at Human Rights House Tbilisi.

IMPACT 2: INCREASED COOPERATION

Increasing cooperation with and among Human Rights Houses

Attesting to growing knowledge of our work and recognition of our role as a trusted partner, we saw a significant increase in the number of times HRHF was contacted with requests for action or expertise. The source of these requests ranged from member NGOs of Human Rights Houses, to partner NGOs, to diplomats, politicians, and inter-governmental organisations – especially the UN and EU.

Significantly, following Norway's joining of the Community of Democracies, HRHF was invited to participate as a "focal point" for Norway at the international organisation. This included participation in a ministerial meeting in Washington DC and later an invitation to join the Community as a full NGO participant. This brought us closer to trusted international, regional, and national NGOs and granted greater access to decision-makers and high-ranking officials. Participation in the Community of Democracies is also a good opportunity in view of potentially extending the network of Human Rights Houses to new countries.

HRHF continued reform within the International Law in Advocacy (ILIA) programme, which focuses on education in international human rights standards. This reform aims at decentralising the management of the programme and handing over its ownership, responsibilities, and educational and online resources to the Houses.

Nevertheless, the programme trained 540 human rights defenders in international human rights standards, a significant number bolstered by Houses using available resources for trainings at the national level. Positively, three quarters of people trained continue to cooperate and share their knowledge with the Human Rights Houses and their member NGOs.

The Houses are also leading a process to standardise the courses and materials that make up the online education component of the ILIA programme.

Within ILIA, two projects stood out during the year. Launching an online course in Ukraine for lawyers and judges, ILIA's Ukrainian partner – Human Rights House Chernihiv – ran a pilot project using ILIA online resources and IT support. Also, six ILIA experts joined staff to lead training as part of the Council of Europe's HELP programme on human rights standards. Some 37 lawyers undertook the educational programme.

For the network of Human Rights Houses, 2017 was an exceptional year for cooperation. This was in part due to HRHF establishing a fund to support House-to-House projects, which provided mini-grants to encourage knowledge and competency sharing, joint projects and pooled resources.

The interest in the fund exceeded all our expectations, with 15 projects financed through the fund and successfully implemented throughout the year. Out of a total of 23 joint projects undertaken by the Houses and their member NGOs, HRHF had a role in the implementation of only nine of them, demonstrating the ownership and autonomy of the Houses in carrying out projects within the network.

In 2017, HRHF commissioned an external evaluation of the Human Rights House concept and its advocacy component. HRHF raised the question whether 25 years on, in a different and fast changing world, existing Human Rights Houses respond to local needs and whether different House models are still fit for purpose to serve the human rights cause, as part of the effort to strengthen civil society as a whole.

TOGETHER WE HAVE IMPACT



15

JOINT HOUSE PROJECTS
SUPPORTED THROUGH
HOUSE-TO-HOUSE FUND



1

EXTERNAL
EVALUATION



108

TIMES CONTACTED FOR
ACTION AND EXPERTISE



77%

OF TRAINED
DEFENDERS SHARE
KNOWLEDGE
WITH HOUSES

RESISTING ILL DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE

Coming at a crucial time for civil society and democracy, we launched the case study *Resisting Ill Democracies in Europe*, as this issue continues to spark important debates across Europe.

The study was published by seven human rights organisations – five of them part of the network of Human Rights Houses. Together, we were able to bring diverse national perspectives and different realities: from Hungary and Poland to identify the main trends within ill democracies; from Serbia to show how ill democracy can be disguised behind the will to become a member of the European Union; and from Croatia to highlight how one can successfully resist an illiberal government. The case study also offers practices and strategies for civil society to resist.

This work includes in-depth research into the “playbook” of illiberal governments at the country level, but the aim is broader: to identify common trends within ill democracies and build understanding to inform early action.

Exemplifying the strength of the Human Rights House concept, the case study combines respected, credible national voices to build understanding and insight internationally.

It demonstrates not only the benefits of sharing knowledge and experience, but also the strength of country-based independent voices uniting to project internationally informed joint messages and recommendations.

Significantly, the idea for the study was also born out of the Human Rights House concept, beginning with discussions at the network meeting of Human Rights Houses in Belgrade in November 2016 as a follow-up to an idea that emerged at the Human Rights House Zagreb. At the network meeting, speakers raised the actions of illiberal governments and called for a joint response. The case study also brought us into partnership with organisations in Hungary, strengthening the findings, enabling us to expand the reach and impact of our work, and providing opportunities for further cooperation.

We published the case study in six languages – adding English and Russian to the four local languages. With well-attended launch events, we engaged decision-makers and civil society actors in countries experiencing first-hand the effects of illiberal governments, and put ill democracy on the agenda of stakeholders in Brussels and elsewhere.

Authors of the case study *Resisting Ill Democracies in Europe*.





Presentation of “Ill Democracies in Europe” at the European Parliament. Speakers (left - right): MEP Frank Engel (EPP), Marta Pardavi (Hungarian Helsinki Committee) MEP Sophie In't Veld (ALDE), and moderator Florian Irmingier (HRHF).



Discussion on illiberal democracy and articulate strategies of resistance against authoritarian trends at the launch in Zagreb (left - right): Journalist Ivana Dragičević; Žarko Puhovski, professor of philosophy of politics and a political analyst; Jadranka Kosor, former Croatian Prime Minister; Vesna Pusić, former Croatian Minister of Foreign and European Affairs.

IMPACT 3: GREATER VISIBILITY AND INFLUENCE

Advocating for freedom of assembly, association, expression, and to be a human rights defender

HRHF achieved good progress towards greater visibility and influence on the human rights agenda in 2017. More than 70% of our advocacy efforts undertaken with the Human Rights Houses were followed up by interventions and actions by national and international policy makers, showing the targeted strength of our interventions. On top of this, our 15 rounds of advocacy enabled us to reach out to 412 policy- and decision-makers, double the number than in 2016. These advocacy rounds focused on country situations or on freedom of assembly, association, expression, and the right to be a human rights defender.

Our campaigns also contributed to our visibility and influence. Together with Human Rights Houses and partner NGOs, we published two joint reports and held launch events across Europe as part of campaigns on Ill Democracies and on Funding Civil Society.

We also campaigned in favour of the adoption of a resolution to mark the 20th anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders at the UN General Assembly. This is the continuation of our long-time engagement on resolutions on human rights defenders. As part of this, we worked with the Norwegian MFA on drafting the resolution text and provided guidance and support. We also organised advocacy rounds in New York.

As our fourth campaign, we advocated for the release of now political prisoner Azerbaijani photojournalist Mehman Huseynov. Our timely response on the day he was sentenced included: an article and social media posts to inform, provide information, and communicate our position; a video interview to explain our calls and the situation for journalists in Azerbaijan; promotion of our statement at the UN Human Rights Council to anchor our credibility; and visual materials for others to share and use. This quick and varied action helped to raise awareness of Mehman Huseynov's situation and the wider situation for journalists in Azerbaijan.

We also continued working with the Office of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to set up a mechanism to address reprisals and intimidation against defenders engaging with the international organisation. We intensified our engagement with the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, hosting alongside the Representation of Switzerland the very first civil society thematic briefing to the Committee of Ministers to which all member States were invited.


In total, we delivered more than 283 external communications during 2017, employing a more visual, multi-channel approach in many of them.

Moving to country focuses in advocacy, we made solid progress as Human Rights Houses Azerbaijan and Crimea both adopted national advocacy strategies with HRHF. Our joint project with People in Need also contributed to our strong focus on Crimea thanks to advocacy rounds in Washington DC and New York. During these, we gained good access on Capitol Hill and visibility as our Crimean partners were featured in a Washington Post editorial.

An advocacy round at the Council of Europe focusing on Azerbaijan in January began our successful work throughout 2017 aimed at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe resulting in the adoption of a strong resolution on the human rights situation in Azerbaijan. This is part of our long-term approach systematically informing members of the Parliamentary Assembly and requiring strong resolutions on Azerbaijan.

On Belarus, we were able to quickly respond to mass detentions and arrests in the spring – including of some of our partners – by alerting various international mechanisms on the arrests, particularly on the targeting of activists and human rights defenders. UN mechanisms reacted upon receiving information from HRHF, particularly the UN Special Rapporteur on Belarus. On the special rapporteur mandate itself, we advocated strongly and successfully for it to be renewed.

TOGETHER WE HAVE IMPACT




73%

OF JOINT ADVOCACY EFFORTS FOLLOWED UP ON BY POLICY- AND DECISION-MAKERS



15

ROUNDS OF ADVOCACY



21

SUBMISSIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL BODIES



2

JOINTLY COORDINATED REPORTS LAUNCHED



4

CAMPAIGNS



283

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

PROTECTION THROUGH RECOGNITION

Armenian human rights defender Mamikon Hovsepyan was awarded the Bob Hepple Equality Award for 2017, by UK-based Equal Rights Trust. Hovsepyan is the founder and director of Pink Armenia, member of Human Rights House Yerevan. He won the award for his work promoting equality, combatting discrimination, and protecting the rights of the LGBTIQI community and other vulnerable groups in Armenia, despite facing regular threats and harassment.

“ I am so touched that my work with PINK Armenia has been noticed. It makes us stronger and prouder of the work we do and we share this with our community, our supporters and allies. It encourages me in my fight as an activist and to continue empowering others to join and make the world a better place for everyone.

Mamikon Hovsepyan, Director, PINK Armenia

As a part of its protection work, Human Rights House Foundation utilises human rights awards as tools to support human rights defenders, and to increase the visibility of the work and the situations in which they operate.

Recognition in the area of human rights can serve as a protection measure for threatened human rights defenders and their organisations. Receiving an award raises the international profile of the winners and increases their protection at home, as well as often providing opportunities in the way of funding and meeting new colleagues as a result of the increased profile.

Award winners nominated and co-nominated by HRHF in previous years

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
DOSH magazine (Russia) Fritt Ord and Zeit Stiftung Gerd Bucherius Award	Intigam Aliyev (Azerbaijani lawyer) Homo Homini Award Ales Bialiatki (Belarusian human rights defender) Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize	Objective TV (Azerbaijan) Fritt Ord and Zeit Stiftung Gerd Bucherius Award	Centre for Civil Liberties (Ukraine) Lindbrække Prize Intigam Aliyev (Azerbaijani lawyer) IBA Human Rights Award	Jelena Milashyna (Russian journalist) Fritt Ord and Zeit Stiftung Free Media Award

HRHF nominates both individuals and organisations that are under threat in countries where HRHF and the Human Rights Houses work – for whom an award would contribute to increased credibility and visibility, and thus reduce risk and provide protection at home. HRHF also seeks to promote candidates whose work is associated with the mutual thematic priorities of HRHF and Human Rights Houses such as; imprisoned human rights defenders, women human rights defenders, ill democracies, human rights lawyers, defenders from remote areas, and those working on sensitive cases or in conflict zones.

HRHF nominates candidates for awards given by independent and inter-governmental organisations and international parliaments, not by governments or national governments.

Mamikon Hovsepyan was among several candidates that HRHF nominated for awards in 2017. Other winning candidates included Meydan TV and Anton Naumlyuk, both of whom were awarded the Fritt Ord Foundation and ZEIT-Stiftung Free Media Award.

Meydan TV was awarded for its courageous and objective reporting from and about Azerbaijan, and was co-nominated by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, and HRHF.

Russian Journalist Anton Naumlyuk was co-nominated by the Human Rights Information Centre of Ukraine and HRHF for his reports on the Russian judicial system’s cases against citizens of Crimea, especially Ukrainian political prisoners and Crimean Tartars.

// I am so touched that my work with PINK Armenia has been noticed.

MAMIKON HOVSEPYAN
DIRECTOR, PINK ARMENIA



IMPACT 4: BETTER PROTECTION

Supporting human rights defenders and their organisations

The protection programme for the network and its members was solidified in 2017, as HRHF and Human Rights Houses Chernihiv, Tbilisi, and the Belarusian Human Rights House, prepared guidelines for everyone within the network undertaking protection work

HRHF and the Houses have proven to be among the fastest in responding to urgent protection cases in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. This is due to the fact that we have the infrastructure – Human Rights Houses – and mechanisms in place to be able to react and provide help within hours.

However, our experience in protection revealed a need for standardising this work to ensure that there is a balance between the necessary background checks in each case, the time it takes to respond, and the clarity of conditions for both the protection provider and the beneficiary. As a result, HRHF and Human Rights Houses Chernihiv, Tbilisi, and the Belarusian Human Rights House decided to revise our protection guidelines in 2017. This focused on standardising our work and giving practical guidance and support to people working on protection cases in the Houses. These guidelines are made available to all Houses in the network, to ensure that expertise that has been built up over the years is shared.

Throughout 2017, HRHF and Houses both supported protection cases and worked on referring some cases further to other organisations working on protection. We organised 18 mobile group visits, mostly trial observations in Azerbaijan.

Nominating seven human right defenders and organisations for human rights prizes, three of our nominees were successful and were awarded. Significantly, we nominated for the Bob Hepple equality award for the first time, with the suggestion coming from one House for a human rights defender in another House. The nomination was successful, with Mamikon Hovsepyan, Pink Armenia and HRH Yerevan, winning the award.

Following nominations from HRHF and partners, Azerbaijani independent media outlet Meydan TV and Russian journalist Anton Naumliuk won international human rights prizes by Fritt Ord and ZEIT-Stiftung.

PROTECTION WORK

Work done by HRHF and the Human Rights Houses is aimed at supplementing rather than duplicating the activities of NGOs that focus mainly on protection and relocation. Our protection efforts are to first and foremost fill in the gaps and protect our own members and close partners. The unique strength of the protection work undertaken by Human Rights Houses and HRHF is our ability to react and take action immediately, in a matter of hours, and offer flexible support. This is possible due to: the institutional presence of the network of Human Rights Houses across Europe; a large pool of in-country expertise; close connections and a network of people who know and trust each other; and solidarity and pre-existing cooperation among the Human Rights Houses.

Our support to both individuals and organisations may include: relocation; national and international advocacy; trial observations; human rights awards; emergency mobile group responses; and protection services of individual Houses.

TOGETHER WE HAVE IMPACT



100%

OF REQUESTS FOR
PROTECTION ANSWERED



18

TRIALS
OBSERVED



3

PRIZES AWARDED BASED
ON HRHF NOMINATIONS



1

SET OF REVISED PROTECTION
GUIDELINES DEVELOPED

A YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) passed a new resolution on human rights defenders in December 2017 by consensus, in preparation for the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders in 2018. Achieving consensus at the UNGA was not easy, and came after several years of bitterly contested resolutions.

Back in 1998, the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders was the first legal instrument that recognised the importance and legitimacy of the work of human rights defenders, as well as their need for better protection. The Declaration was a clear commitment on the part of all UN member states to respect the rights of human rights defenders at the national and international levels. The Council of Europe adopted a similar Declaration in 2008.

Subsequent resolutions have been passed by the UNGA and by the UN's Human Rights Council (HRC) on a regular basis. Since 2013, the resolutions have aimed at building stronger international standards for the protection of human rights defenders. However, consensus has been broken in recent years, and States such as Russia and China have sought to oppose the passage of resolutions.

Nevertheless, these resolutions have continued to develop standards associated with the protection and support of human rights defenders, for which HRHF and various Human Rights Houses advocated. This includes a resolution in 2013 setting forth 20 standards based on international human rights law and specifically on women's human rights defenders in 2015.

Advocating for the international community to recognise the importance of human rights defenders – through such resolutions – is a priority for HRHF, as is working with Human Rights Houses to promote the implementation of resolutions at home.

The 2017 resolution has created a favourable context for a positive narrative around human rights defenders and their achievements in 2018.

HRHF will promote and build understanding of the standards, and provide tools to help Human Rights Houses and others hold their governments accountable to them. We will also do our part in reporting to the UN General Assembly on the situation of human rights defenders in the countries where we work.

20 years of international standards on human rights defenders

1998 – 2008

UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.
Council of Europe declaration on human rights defenders.

2011 – 2013

First resolution on human rights defenders adopted by UN Human Rights Council.
HRHF supports resolutions with strong standards, adopted at UN Human Rights Council.

2014

HRHF campaign illustrating international standards, to raise awareness of resolutions on human rights defenders.
HRHF creates photo exhibition of women human rights defenders from various Human Rights Houses.

2015 – 2017

International community reaffirms call to protect human rights defenders, especially women human rights defenders.
UN General Assembly organises first ever high-level event on human rights.

2018

20th anniversary declaration underlines valuable role of defenders, setting the scene to promote a new, positive narrative on human rights defenders.



Portrait of Lela Tsiskarishvili (Human Rights House Tbilisi) by photographer Daro Sulakauri, the winning entry in a 2014 photo contest on women human rights defenders, organised by the network of Human Rights Houses.

FACING A GLOBAL DECLINE IN FREEDOMS

Promoting and advancing human rights does not happen in a bubble. To do so effectively and have impact – and guide work to where it is most needed – we must consider exactly what kind of world we live and work in, understanding both national situations and wider international trends.

Unfortunately, the overarching trend is one of global decline, in which governments in many countries are restricting fundamental freedoms and implementing a crackdown on civil society. Together with partner NGOs from the Human Rights Houses, we continue to identify the trends leading this decline in the regions where Human Rights Houses operate: the Caucasus, Western and Eastern Europe, and the Balkans.

Harmful trends include systematic violations of freedom of assembly and of association, and authorities developing and employing wide and effective tools to silence human rights defenders and their organisations, as well as those that defend them such as human rights lawyers.

We also see attacks on the key principles of the universality and indivisibility of human rights, also reflected at the international level. Leading political figures are also undermining the legitimacy of domestic and international human rights mechanisms.

Developments over the past year in Poland provide a grim illustration, with the rule of law at risk and a government aiming to restrict key freedoms.

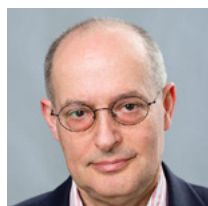
As these developments occur in Poland, authorities in Azerbaijan lead a continued crackdown on human rights defenders, while no human rights improvements are occurring in Belarus. A global discourse against human rights is spreading.

Yet, there are opportunities to protect, empower, and support human rights defenders and to defend fundamental freedoms.

Together with Human Rights Houses and other partners – from NGOs to donors – we sought to address some of the key challenges for human rights in 2017.

The spread of ill democracies and restrictions to foreign funding are major trends affecting civil society, which is essential to the protection and advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Taken together, the context surrounding these trends provides a good basis to understand the world in which we live and work. We hand over to two prominent international experts contributing to this work to provide the context.

COUNTERING ILLIBERAL USURPATIONS OF DEMOCRACY



Extract of the foreword by Miklós Haraszti, to the case study Resisting Ill Democracies in Europe.

See the new Berlin Wall erected: the “foreign agent” type anti-NGO regulations. This time, the divides are built of legal provisions, not concrete and steel. But their function is the same: to eliminate the indivisibility of human rights, proclaimed by the international community after WW2 – and in fact, the main lesson of WW2.

In recent years, an epidemic of anti-civil society laws has been hitting many new democracies on several continents. These laws are made to tighten the conditions for government-independent citizen activities. The latest legislative fashion is unrolling internationally, based on models designed in the Kremlin. It punishes global networking of civil endeavours or international sponsoring for non-profit activism, by labelling its actors as “foreign agents.”

The spreading of these restrictive regulations is a clear sign of the degradation of the freshly attained liberal constitutionalism toward illiberal or outright authoritarian governance. It is more than just a side-effect: the crusade against “unofficial” civil associations is basic household cleaning for illiberal regimes.

They have set out to transform democracy from a cooperative and pluralistic enterprise into a disguise for a game where the winner sets the rules.

The illiberals have a reason. Civil activism is the nearest thing to the raw energy that fills and regenerates freedom in any society. Citizen activities are both the beginning and the finest fruits of a democracy.

When we see them purposefully hindered, cynically vilified, and even criminalised, this is in fact done to stop them from reaching out to society or from monitoring the government. We should remember that both these public roles are inherent to their independence.

Because populist power grabs are “democratically” justified (“we have elections, don’t we”), it is not immediately clear for the public just how central the assaults on civil society are for the illiberal outcome.

The watchdogs need to be silenced so the illiberal actions can go on, such as: the elimination of transparency in the use of public money; the subordination of all branches of power to the executive; the systematic thwarting of autonomies; the streamlining of the judiciary; and the curtailing of the rights to free assembly, association, and media pluralism.

I suggest we take the rage of the illiberals against independent civil society at surface value. When the illiberal rulers stamp NGOs as foreign agents, they do not simply seek to diminish criticism using a nationalist ideology.

The illiberals want the citizens to see the government not just as temporary and partial representatives of the nation – they want the government to be identified with the nation, and squeeze out independent activism as alien and even hostile to the nation.

So let’s react accordingly. Civil power, unhindered NGOs – just as a pluralistic media – are the ultimate frontiers in defending freedom in society. Unfortunately, under illiberal regimes, the traditional political process is not anymore able to correct the systematic distortion of competition rules, or put checks and balances back to work.

This is because the populist illiberals and autocrats have utilised those guarantees to first get to the top and then to eliminate the built-in barriers to absolute power.

Where can help come from, when the economy has been turned into a nepotistic fiefdom, political parties into parliamentary padding, and the media into mere decorations of preordained elections? Change could only come from the remaining unchecked, globally rooted social forces, the mercurial civil society, and its increasingly Internet-based communications strategies.

Miklós Haraszti is a Hungarian author, academic, and human rights promoter. Currently, he is the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus.

REIMAGINING THE ROLE OF DONORS



Extract of the foreword by Maina Kiai, to the report Funding Civil Society.

Donors’ support for human rights and civil society is badly needed in all corners of the globe at the moment. But so is their willingness to think outside the box.

The support of governments, foundations, private individuals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or others has been indispensable in advancing human rights over the past generation, and will remain so far into the future.

The problem is that the old model for funding human rights and democracy initiatives is not working in the current environment. And we are all aware of just how dire that environment is: A recent CIVICUS report, for example, documented serious threats to civic freedoms in over 100 countries. A number of democracies have been tarnished by the election of extremist leaders who have little respect for human rights.

Meanwhile, violence, intimidation, arbitrary detention and murder remain a daily reality for activists in many corners of the globe. In a real sense, we are in a world where intolerant fundamentalisms – from market fundamentalism, nationalist fundamentalism, cultural and religious fundamentalism, and security fundamentalism – are reigning in a way not experienced in decades.

These new challenges need new approaches, from activists, civil society and governments dedicated to freedom and dignity. At present, despite all of the money spent and all of the effort expended, we are always on the defensive. We are focusing almost exclusively on maintaining ground, when we should be fighting to regain it. In this context, the time is ripe for institutional donors to reassess their role in the human rights business model, even as civil society also recalibrates its approaches.

I believe we need to start this process by looking at the reasons for the current system's rigidity. It derives initially from donors' (relatively recent) desire to easily evaluate their contributions and to immediately quantify successes – basically by borrowing tools used to assess development and service-delivery NGOs. This has been formalised through log-frame based designs and “indicatorism”, whereby project success is defined by “achieving” an indicator (which often wrongly assumes causality between donor-funded activity-driven projects, and desired outcomes).

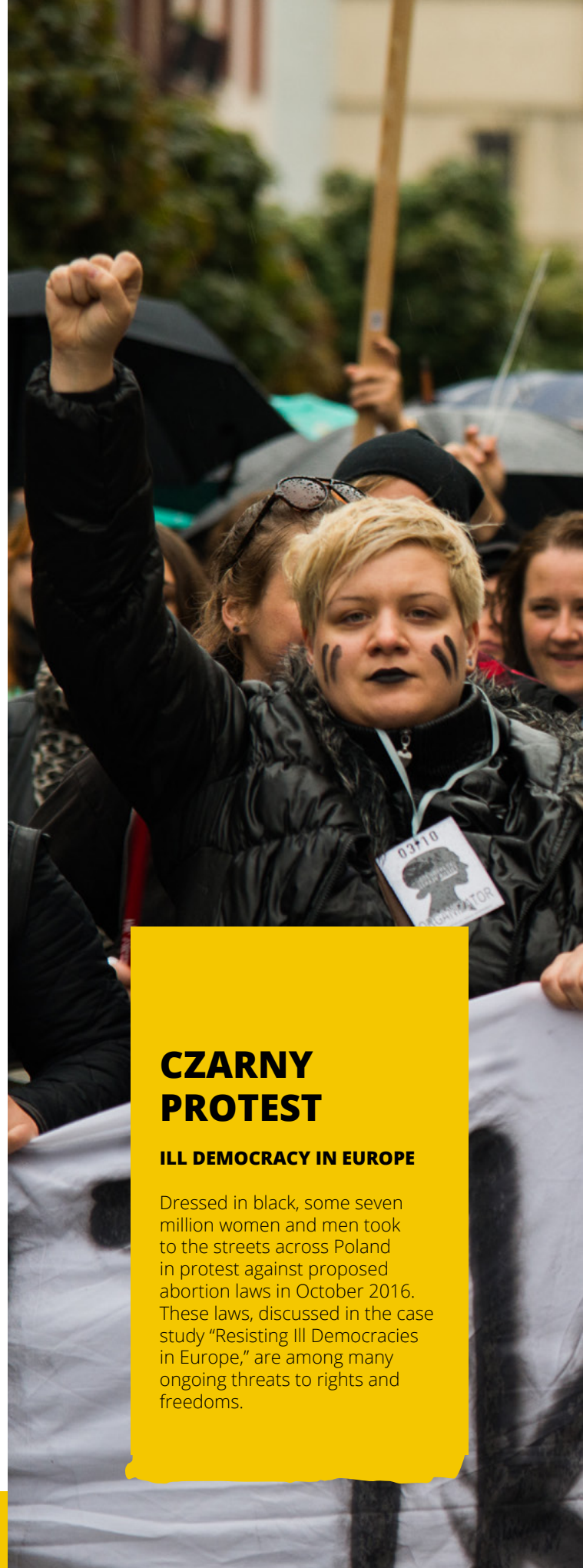
Meanwhile, the only indicator that really matters – the decline of democracy and respect for human rights – is painfully obvious for us all to see.

Real change can only happen when donors realign their priorities towards supporting long-term struggles for social justice. Progress in achieving human rights cannot be captured in quarterly reports; sometimes it takes generations. Moreover, when working in human rights and democracy, process is just as important as results and final impact. Process is about changing attitudes, increasing numbers at protests, empowering people to stand up.

Results eventually flow from that, but it can take time. Take Martin Luther King, Jr., who started his activist work in 1955. His first “deliverable” was in 1965, with the passage of the Voting Rights Act. In between it was all process: marches, writing, time in jail, trainings and so on – but no one can say these ten years were not useful. So too with the Hissène Habré case: it took 17 years of dogged, relentless work to get the result of a jail term.

Social change, by its very nature, is driven by the people and their associations; they must retain control over the shape, aspirations and tactics. The chain of change cannot be cast in stone.

Maina Kiai, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, serving from 2011 until 2017.



CZARNY PROTEST

ILL DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE

Dressed in black, some seven million women and men took to the streets across Poland in protest against proposed abortion laws in October 2016. These laws, discussed in the case study “Resisting Ill Democracies in Europe,” are among many ongoing threats to rights and freedoms.



EVALUATION: HOUSE CONCEPT REMAINS HIGHLY RELEVANT

The network of Human Rights Houses was founded more than 20 years ago during the “decade of hope” in the 1990s. Since then, the climate for civil society and human rights defenders has changed dramatically, with the rise of systematic violations of freedom of assembly and of association in several of the countries where Human Rights Houses exist, and a global crackdown on civil society. Also, during this time, human rights organisations have developed and become more professional.

In this new climate, it is only right that we take steps to ensure that the Human Rights House concept is still fit for purpose – to meet the challenges faced by the human rights community and wider civil society, and to make the most of new opportunities.

In 2017, HRHF commissioned an external evaluation of the Human Rights House concept to assess its relevance and effectiveness, and to offer recommendations to update the concept to maximise its potential positive impact. The evaluation findings will inform our strategy for 2019 – 2023.

More specifically, the evaluation considered whether the Human Rights House concept and the different House models are fit for purpose: to serve the human rights cause, to strengthen civil society as a whole, and to meet new challenges on the path to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also looked at the Houses and HRHF’s role in being actors for change, as part of the advocacy component developed in the last decade.

HRHF last undertook an external evaluation in 2006. Since then, new Houses have been established, the context in which many of the human rights houses operate has changed, and new opportunities and challenges have emerged. For example, the communications and social media revolution is changing the way human rights work is done, and new human rights actors are emerging and challenging the dominance of established NGOs. The selection of the external evaluator followed an open call for proposals. The evaluation was undertaken by an independent

consultant, who interviewed more than 100 stakeholders, including HRHF staff, stakeholders of Human Rights Houses, key international human rights actors, donors, and House beneficiaries.



The Human Rights House concept maintains its relevance as a platform that promotes collaboration, drives innovation, and empowers civil society for the advancement of human rights and dignity for all.

NINO KHURTSIDZE
External consultant

THE EVALUATION

Some of the findings:

- The Human Rights House concept remains highly relevant, both in terms of alignment with local human rights and development needs.
- The Houses are flexible and responsive to the underlying needs of civil society organisations on the ground.
- While the Houses are responsive to the changing local and global contexts, there is a need to be more relevant to the needs of local populations. There is readiness among the Houses to do more outreach to citizens.
- Enhancing solidarity among member and non-member civil society organisations, the Houses improve human rights protection in their countries, including through collaborative advocacy at national and international levels.
- Through their protection programme, the Houses and HRHF have a direct positive impact on the lives of human rights defenders under siege. This is helped by HRHF’s efforts to establish standards for States to create an enabling environment for human rights defenders.



In February 2018, representatives of all Human Rights Houses gathered for a network meeting in Tbilisi to discuss the evaluation and the new five-year strategy.

- Educational programmes increase human rights knowledge of beneficiaries and inspire them to undertake more human rights work.
- HRHF's international advocacy support enhances the effectiveness of Houses.
- There is a clear systemic impact achieved through successful advocacy for the mandates of the UN Special Rapporteurs on Belarus, on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Some of the recommendations:

- The Houses and their member NGOs need to address the challenge of availability to citizens... and should take more active steps to communicate with external stakeholders and the public.
- HRHF should continue the good practice in its advocacy work of defining the Foundation's international advocacy priorities, as well as working with the Houses to develop country-specific advocacy strategies... to engage national authorities to effect positive changes.
- HRHF is advised to look carefully into opening up the network of Human Rights Houses by establishing Houses in other regions of the world.
- For the external communication to be effective, HRHF and the Houses need to address the internal confusion about the concept,

as well as to clarify the role or the roles of the Foundation, so that there is a clearer understanding of the relationship between the Foundation and the Houses.

NEW STRATEGY (2019–23)

HRHF sees significant value in self-reflection as a way to learn, improve, and adjust the course of action when needed. In addition to internal evaluations, we aim to undergo a more extensive external evaluation every few years, to check whether our theory of change is still relevant and whether the work that we do has the intended impact. It is only through assessing the needs of stakeholders and whether we are meeting them that we can engage and increase our impact, whether it is among the Human Rights Houses and their member NGOs, or among politicians, diplomats, donors, partners, and beneficiaries. Ultimately, our relevance and sustainability rely on our ability to re-evaluate and adjust.

Aided by the findings and recommendations of the external evaluation, and with input from the Human Rights Houses, all HRHF staff are participating in developing a new strategy for 2019–2023. Through jointly creating and building ownership of this strategy, we aim to ensure that we are successful in implementing it in the coming years.

HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSES

An overview of Human Rights Houses, their member organisations, and joint work in 2017



Some of the people that make up Human Rights House Tbilisi.

Human Rights House Zagreb

ESTABLISHED:
2008 – Croatia
8 organisations

TEL: +385 15 513 395
WEB: kucaljudskihprava.hr

E-MAIL: kontakt@kucaljudskihprava.hr
ADDRESS: Selska cesta 112c, HR-10000 Zagreb, Hrvatska/Croatia



Consequences of the 2016 illiberal government are still very present. Damage done is not remedied and repaired, and human rights are not on the political agenda. Croatia is in an illiberal limbo.

IVAN NOVOSEL
Director of Programs
Human Rights House Zagreb

COUNTERING ILLIBERAL TRENDS

Human Rights House Zagreb is a human rights watchdog and advocacy organisation founded in 2008 as a network of civil society organisations, with a goal to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. The House’s vision is to build a democratic, pluralistic and inclusive society based on the values of human rights, the rule of law, social justice and solidarity.

The House contributes to the development of better-quality law and public policies through research and reporting, monitoring activities, and public advocacy. Through informal education, it raises awareness among pupils, students and youth on social issues and empowers them to be active and responsible citizens.

In 2017, the House focused on countering illiberal trends and policies and advocating for the protection of whistleblowers. The House also started its Young Human Rights Advocates educational programme. This work continues in 2018, with an added focus on promoting the work of human rights defenders.

Centre for Peace Studies
cms.hr

B.a.B.e. Be active. Be emancipated
babe.hr

Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past
documenta.hr

Civic Committee for Human Rights – CCHR
goljp.hr

The Association for Promotion of Equal Opportunities – APEO
upim.hr

The Association for Promotion of Mental Health “Svitanje”
udruga-svitanje.hr

The Croatian Youth Network
mmh.hr

CROSOL – Croatian Platform for International Citizen Solidarity
crosol.hr



Photos clockwise from top: “Whistleblower” mural on the wall of the House; launch of “Resisting Ill Democracies in Europe” case study in Zagreb; human rights education for young people.

Human Rights House Belgrade

ESTABLISHED:
2012 – Serbia
5 organisations

TEL: +381 11 3284 188
WEB: kucaljudskihprava.rs

E-MAIL: teodora@gradjanske.org
ADDRESS: 4 Kneza Milosa Street, 11000
Belgrade, Serbia



In light of the continuing trend of closing space for civil society, Human Rights House Belgrade's existence as a hub for human rights defenders and organisations is even more important.

MAJA STOJANOVIĆ
Executive Director
Civic Initiatives

A HUB FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Supporting civil society, Human Rights House Belgrade has a focus on economic and social rights, discrimination, hate crime, minority issues, and access to justice. The House supports human rights defenders, providing free legal aid in the first instance. It is also a leader in Serbia's EU negotiation process, coordinating with the National Convention on the EU – the platform for discussion on Serbian accession – as a genuine civil society movement for reforms and further EU integration.

The House supports other civil society organisations in exercising freedom of assembly and association. The special focus for 2017 was awarding journalists for their responsible reporting and fight for freedom of expression. The House will continue to fight against the trend of closing space for civil society, especially having in mind the rise of populist and nationalistic trends in Serbia.

Civic Initiatives
gradjanske.org

Policy Center
policycenter.info

The Lawyers' Committee For Human Rights (YUCOM)
yucom.org.rs

Belgrade Centre for Human Rights
bgcentar.org.rs/bgcentar/

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia
helsinki.org.rs



Photos clockwise from top: "Youth brings on enlightenment" conference; celebrating international human rights day; training for NGOs; YUCOM 20th anniversary celebration.

Human Rights House Yerevan

ESTABLISHED:
2012 – Armenia
4 organisations

TEL: +374 10 329 032
WEB: humanrightshouse.org/members/armenia
E-MAIL: hrhyerevan@gmail.com
ADDRESS: 119/2 Hovsep Emin street, Yerevan 0012, Republic of Armenia



With closing space for civil society, particularly for human rights defenders, the House creates a safe and supportive environment for civil activists to share their concerns and ideas, to find allies, and to join efforts in response to challenges.

HOVHANNES MADOYAN
Chairperson
Human Rights House Yerevan

“HUMAN RIGHTS TALKS”

Human Rights House Yerevan is committed to a safe, accessible, and common space for activists, civil society organisations, movements, civic initiatives, and human rights defenders, who are often targeted for the work they do. Its mission is to protect, empower, and support human rights defenders and organisations in Armenia. The House’s daily work is based on the principles of proactivity of all members, the absence of privileges, the reduction of vulnerability, and everyone’s equal protection. Human Rights House Yerevan completed the purchase of a joint work premises in 2016, and is awaiting renovation permits from the Yerevan municipality.

The House has developed its strategy plan for 2018–2020 defining the main activities for the coming years. This includes strengthening its institutional capacities and implementing strategic programmes. One such programme is the already launched “Human Rights Talks” series of periodically organised meetings, which provide a platform for discussing the concerns and challenges of human rights defenders in Armenia.

Public Information and Need of Knowledge (PINK Armenia)
pinkarmenia.org

Real World, Real People
realwrp.com

Women’s Resource Center
womenofarmenia.org

Socioscope NGO
socioscope.am



Photos clockwise from top: Visit from US Ambassador to the House; strategic meeting; HRH Yerevan family portrait.

Human Rights House Azerbaijan

ESTABLISHED:

2007 – Baku, Azerbaijan
3 organisations

WEB: humanrightshouse.org/members/azerbaijan



The main goal of the core group is to continue joint efforts for opening the Human Rights House, and to strengthen the national network of human rights defenders around this institution.

ANAR MAMMADLI
Head of Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center

RE-ESTABLISHED, EYES ON REOPENING

Three independent human rights organisations formed a new core group for Human Rights House Azerbaijan in December 2017. With HRHF, they aim to continue a policy of engaging constructively with the Azerbaijani authorities, with a view to re-launching the activities of the House in Baku.

Human Rights House Azerbaijan provided a vibrant space in central Baku for dialogue, discussion, and education on human rights until March 2011, when Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Justice ordered the House to cease all activities. HRHF continued to work with member organisations following this, even increasing its support. The member NGOs remained visible and active, taking over activities over the House.

In 2013, members of the House reviewed criteria for new members and in 2014 looked to reopen. However, the growing crackdown on civil society led to the imprisonment of the heads of several of the organisations. Following their release in 2016, the processes started in 2013/2014 were again taken up – to revise criteria, close the old group, and establish a new core group.

The three organisations in this core group work on, respectively, protecting women’s rights, engaging in legal education and representing cases at the European court of human rights, and promoting democratic elections and institutions. To varying degrees, they face challenges in continuing their human rights work, such as travel bans or restrictions on activities and funding.

The organisations are developing plans for activities inside the country, but are reliant on the authorities allowing the House to reopen.

Women’s Association for Rational Development
facebook.com/Womens-Association-for-Rational-Development-WARD-542540899191883
info@ward.az

Legal Education Society
legal@azeurotel.com

Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center
smdtaz.org
info@smdtaz.org



Photos top: Liudmila Ulyashyna (HRHF) and Intigam Aliyev (Legal Education Society) meeting Mónica Pinto, the special rapporteur on judges and lawyers in 2016; Shahla Ismayil (Women’s Association for Rational Development) speaking at “Funding Civil Society” launch event in Oslo 2017.

Human Rights House Tbilisi

ESTABLISHED:
2010 – Georgia
5 organisations

TEL: +995 32 2 38 20 18
WEB: humanrightshouse.org/members/georgia
E-MAIL: tbilisi@humanrightshouse.org
ADDRESS: 11a Akaki Gakhokidze
0160 Tbilisi, Georgia



We are proud that the House is becoming a regional focal point for protection, able to help human rights defenders, activists and journalists at risk.

NATIA TAVBERIDZE
Coordinator
Human Rights House Tbilisi

JOINTLY ADVOCATING FOR PROTECTION

Human Rights House Tbilisi unites five Georgian civil society organisations working in different fields of human rights. They share a physical space, enhancing co-operation and joint activities and jointly advocating for better protection of human rights. The member organisations provide legal and psychological services, work to improve legislation, unite in advocacy, and host educational events on human rights. They focus on protection of human rights defenders, activists, and journalists at risk, particularly from Azerbaijan.

The case of Afgan Mukhtarli was a challenging focus for the House in 2017. Mukhtarli is an Azerbaijani journalist and beneficiary of the House protection programme, who was allegedly abducted in Tbilisi. The House is also aware of surveillance and threats to other Azerbaijani activists and journalists living in Georgia. Together with providing legal support, the House took immediate action to organise advocacy and lobbying activities. The House will continue to stand up for the rights of others.

Article 42 of the Constitution
article42.ge

Georgian Centre for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (GCRT)
gcrt.ge

Human Rights Centre (HRIDC)
hridc.org

Media Institute
facebook.com/Instituteofmedia

Union Sapari - Family without Violence
sapari.ge



Photos clockwise from top: Protest against the abduction of Azerbaijani journalist Afgan Mukhtarli; workshop on trial monitoring for Armenian and Georgian observers; joint summer school at Human Rights House Tbilisi with Belarusian Human Rights House.

Resource Centre Grozny

ESTABLISHED:
2016 – Chechnya, Russian Federation

CONTACT: For security reasons, contact with the resource centre should be made through HRHF.
hrh@humanrightshouse.org

DETERIORATING SITUATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

“It was a difficult year, 2017. We had to wade through a number of obstacles. We also had to let go of some of our dreams due to the difficult situation in the region. Nevertheless, we managed to implement our main activities, and we are very happy about that.

The socio-political and human rights situation in Russia, in the North Caucasus and in Chechnya, is deteriorating. This has a serious negative impact on the work of independent media and human rights organisations. Still, we hope that our security strategy, which includes adapting to changing circumstances, will allow us to realise and implement all of our planned activities in 2018.”

– representative of the Resource Centre.

Resource Centre Nakhchivan

ESTABLISHED:
2013 – Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan

CONTACT: malahat.nasib@gmail.com

DOORS CLOSED, BUT HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

The Resource Centre in Nakhchivan was opened in 2013 as a place where local human rights defenders, journalists and organisations could work on improving the human rights situation in the Azerbaijani enclave, and was unofficially called a “House of Hope” by locals in the region.

It was forced to cease its activities when Malahat Nasibova, head of the centre, and her husband Ilgar were forced to flee the country in December 2014. This followed an increasingly violent and dangerous situation for independent media and organisations working on human rights. On 21 August 2014, three men raided the centre and severely beat director of the centre Ilgar Nasibov. While under House arrest, they were not able to access sufficient medical expertise. “It was a horrible time,” said Malahat Nasibova in 2015, “My husband was suffering and I feared for his life.”

The doors of the House of Hope may be closed, but it is still there, and Malahat and Ilgar Nasibov, now living in Norway, dream of one day returning to Nakhchivan and re-opening the centre as a home for the local civil society to thrive.

Barys Zvozkau

Belarusian Human Rights House

ESTABLISHED:
2006 – Vilnius, Lithuania
7 organisations

TEL: +370 5 212 77 03
WEB: humanrightshouse.org/members/belarus
E-MAIL: belarus@humanrightshouse.org
ADDRESS: Latako str. 3,
LT-01125 Vilnius, Lithuania



The situation in Belarus deteriorated sharply in 2017, confirming that only systemic changes at the legislative level can prevent the authorities from arbitrarily using repressive tools that instantly turn “soft practices” into “cruel suppression”.

TATSIANA REVIKA
President, Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House

STRENGTHENING BELARUSIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

Supporting the human rights movement in Belarus, the Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House focuses on four strategic areas: human rights advocacy; protection of human rights defenders and support to victims of repressions; human rights education; and capacity building and empowering human rights defenders and their organisations. Due to the impossibility of operating in Belarus, the House was opened in Lithuania.

Mass repressions hit Belarusian civil society in the spring of 2017. The House tried to help mitigate the consequences and focused on strengthening the human rights community, facilitating its professionalisation, building capacity and creating safe working conditions.

The House plans on developing a comprehensive support and protection programme for human rights defenders in Belarus in accordance with the House’s strategy for 2016 – 2020. It is planned that the program will include all aspects of security: digital, physical and psychosocial.

The Belarusian Association of Journalists
baj.by

Belarusian Helsinki Committee
belhelcom.org

Viasna
spring96.org

Belarusian PEN Centre
pen-centre.by

Lev Sapieha Foundation
sapieha.org

Francišak Skaryna Belarusian Language Society
tbn-mova.by

Legal Initiative
legin.by



Photos clockwise from top: Students of “Bring International Standards Home”; discussion at the 4th Belarusian Human Rights Defenders’ Forum in Vilnius; exhibition about human rights and freedoms, held by Viasna.

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

ESTABLISHED:

1993 – Warsaw, Poland

TEL: +48 22 556 44 40

WEB: hfhr.pl

E-MAIL: hfhr@hfhrpol.waw.pl

ADDRESS: Zgoda 11 Street,
00-018, Warsaw Poland



Poland saw huge changes to the justice system in 2017. Unfortunately, not for the better – significantly weakening the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law.

DANUTA PRZYWARA

President of the Board
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

RIISING TO POLAND'S CHALLENGES

A long-time actor in human rights protection, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR) works to develop a culture based on respect for human rights in Poland and abroad. It is one of the oldest non-governmental organisations acting in the field of human rights protection in Poland. HFHR's main areas of activity are: international and national education; strategic litigation; and providing legal assistance to Polish citizens, refugees, and members of national minorities. HFHR also carries out research and monitoring projects related to human rights protection.

HFHR's work in 2017, despite the deteriorating conditions, brought many positive results, such as new regulations improving the situation for disabled and elderly persons – something for which HFHR has been fighting for years.

One of the biggest challenges for 2018 will be the closing civil society space in Poland. Some legislative works are underway which may subsequently limit the ability of NGOs to perform their role.



Photos clockwise from top right: HFHR's legal team; celebrating 20th anniversary of the Polish Constitution; human rights classes at a school in Warsaw; HFHR at NGO's picnic in Warsaw.

Human Rights House Voronezh

ESTABLISHED:
2009 – Russian Federation
11 organisations

TEL: +7 (473) 254-55-29

WEB: hrdom.hrworld.ru

E-MAIL: hrdom@hrworld.ru

ADDRESS: Tsyurupy, 34, Voronezh
Voronezhskaya oblast' 394036
Russia



We have worked hard to coordinate and support civil initiatives. In 2017, the House was part of the working group for implementing the Strategy of the Voronezh Region, in the field of development and protection of human rights for 2016–2025.

ALYONA OB'EZDCHIKOVA
Deputy Chairperson of the Board
Human Rights House Voronezh

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Enhancing awareness of human rights, Human Rights House Voronezh targets the local community through hosting and organising public events inside and outside of the city. Its regular operations include providing human rights education for young people, work on public oversight, and offering legal aid to victims of human rights violations.

In 2017, the House worked to renew its team and presence in the region. The House provided 1,670 free legal consultations, brought cases to European Court of Human Rights and the Constitutional Court, and held training for regional lawyers, students and activists. It held the annual “City of rights\City is right” festival as well as the regional “Acting Figures” award for activists.

In 2018, the House will focus on improving communication with local audiences. The upkeep of the premises will be the biggest challenge for the people in the House, but they are determined to keep their heads up and the dream alive.

Civic Initiatives Development Center
cidc.vrn-net.org

Memorial
hrdom.hrworld.ru/ru/voronezhskii-memorial

Olga A. Gnezdilova, independent lawyer
hrdom.hrworld.ru/ru/advokatskii-kabinet-olgi-gnezdilovoi

Confederation of Free Labor
hrdom.hrworld.ru/ru/konfederacia-svobodnogo-truda

Youth Human Rights Movement
fond-mpd.ru

Youth Human Rights Group
hrdom.hrworld.ru/ru/molodeznaa-pravozasitnaa-gruppa

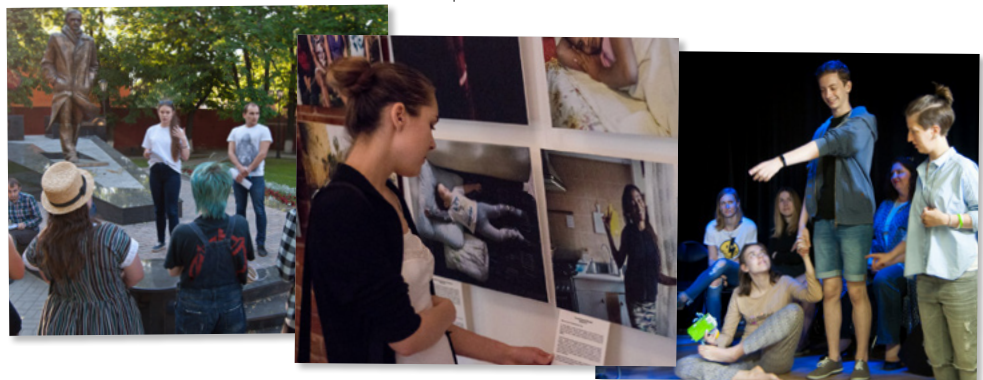
Russian Union of Writers
hrdom.hrworld.ru/ru/profsouz-literatorov

Interregional Human Rights Group “Voronezh-Chernozemie”
irhrg.ru

Lawyers for Labor Rights
hrdom.hrworld.ru/ru/uristy-za-trudovye-prava

Charitable Foundation “For environmental and social justice”
article20.org

Free University
students.yhrm.org/msps



Photos: Activities at the “City of rights\City is right” from left to right: Festival; debate about feminism; “Not passing witness” photo exhibition; Forum theatre performance.

Russian Research Center for Human Rights

ESTABLISHED:

1992 – Moscow, Russian Federation
9 organisations

TEL: +7 (495) 625 0667
WEB: humanrightshouse.org/members/russian_federation
E-MAIL: HRightscenter@gmail.com
ADDRESS: 101000 Luchnikov Lane
Building 4, Doorway 3, Suite 2
Moscow Russia



Despite facing increasing challenges, we are inspired to continue because our citizens are in urgent need of our work, our aid, and our protection.

LIUBOV VINOGRADOVA

Executive Director
Independent Psychiatric Association
of Russia

SUPPORT IN A CHALLENGING CLIMATE

The Russian Research Center for Human Rights (RRCHR) plays a key role in supporting its member organisations, who cooperate, support and defend one another amid a climate in which human rights organisations are often under threat.

The House also strengthens civil society as a whole, and helps some of the most vulnerable people by providing access to experts such as lawyers and psychiatrists.

In 2017, RRCHR celebrated its 25th anniversary with a human rights conference in St. Petersburg. It also provided legal aid to more than 1,000 people as part of the project “Protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens,” and held a seminar on national and international mechanisms of protection.

RRCHR observed that in 2017 human rights were often compromised in favour of “traditional values,” while individuals and organisations defending human rights faced increasing criticism.

In view of current strained relations between Russia and the Council of Europe, it is as important as ever that RRCHR continues its work.



Human Rights Network Group
hro.org

Independent Psychiatric Association of Russia
npar.ru

Moscow Center for Prison Reform
prison.org

Moscow Helsinki Group
mhg-main.org

Right of the Child
right-child.ru

Right to Live and Have Civil Dignity

Social Partnership Foundation

Union of the Committees of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia
vk.com/ucsmr

Initiative Center for the Caucasus
doshdu.ru



Photos clockwise from top: In commemoration of Natalia Estimirova; Moscow Center for Prison Reform collecting books for prisoners, training for minor offenders, organised by Moscow Center for Prison Reform.

Human Rights House Crimea

TO BE ESTABLISHED IN 2018:

In exile in Kyiv, Ukraine
4 organisations

TEL: +380 999 589 410

E-MAIL: andrey.v.zubarev@gmail.com



The right to education for Crimeans, as well as education in the field of human rights, is needed to guarantee the future effective reintegration of Crimea.

VALENTINA POTAPOVA

Head of the Centre of Civil Education "Almenda"

STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS WORK IN CRIMEA

Set to be formally established in exile in Kyiv in 2018, Human Rights House Crimea will develop, strengthen, and coordinate the capacity of organisations involved in human rights protection in Crimea, ensuring more effective and systematic human rights work. It will focus on promoting and observing the human rights of all citizens on the occupied peninsula.

Human Rights House Crimea's priorities will be to provide assistance to Crimean human rights defenders, activists, and lawyers, as well as victims of human rights abuses and their families, and to prepare documentation, statistics and other information materials on the situation of human rights on the peninsula. It will also aim to offer legal aid to victims of human rights violations and conduct strategic litigation, carry out advocacy at the national and international level, and develop mechanisms of legal education for the residents of Crimea.

Centre of Civil Education "Almenda"
almenda.org

Crimean Human Rights Group
crimeahrg.org

Human Rights Information Centre
humanrights.org.ua

Regional Centre for Human Rights
rchr.org.ua



Photo: Tetiana Pechonchyk (Human Rights Information Centre) and Olga Skrypnik (Crimean Human Rights Group) at the United Nations in New York, with HRHF.

Educational Human Rights House Chernihiv

ESTABLISHED:
2014 – Chernihiv, Ukraine
11 organisations

TEL: +380 462 610 508
WEB: ehrh-ch.org.ua

E-MAIL: ehrh.che@gmail.com

ADDRESS: Lugoviy lane 1-G Vil. Kolychivka
Chernihiv region 15563 Ukraine



We focused on the development and support of educational initiatives and informal online education. The House also supported human rights activists and their activities.

SERHIY BUROV
Executive Director
Educational Human Rights
House Chernihiv

EDUCATING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

A centre for Ukrainian organisations, Educational Human Rights House Chernihiv is a modern and well-equipped educational conference and resource centre with accommodation facilities. It was founded by organisations from different regions of Ukraine, and welcomes civil activists and organisations engaged in civil and human rights education.

In 2017, the House hosted 985 participants at 51 educational events, including seminars, workshops, training sessions, strategy planning sessions, meetings, conferences, and exhibitions. The House also supported organisations and initiatives aiming to address Ukraine's territories under conflict and occupation. The House strengthened its cooperation with other Human Rights Houses in protection work.

The House's focus in 2018 includes continuing the educational programme "We Understand Human Rights," building capacity and cooperation among member organisations, and strengthening the House, its organisational structure, and financial policies and procedures.

Ahalar
ahalar.org

Almenda
almenda.org

Association of Ukrainian human rights monitors on Law Enforcement
umdpf.info

"East-SOS" Charitable Foundation
vostok-sos.org

Chernihiv public committee of human rights protection
protection.org.ua

Human Rights Information Centre
humanrights.org.ua

NGO "Mart"
mart-ngo.org.ua

No Borders Project
noborders.org.ua

Postup
postup.lg.ua

Transcarpathian Public Center

Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union
helsinki.org.ua



Photos clockwise from top: All-Ukrainian Human Rights School for young activists; Human Rights Educational Fest 2017; meeting of the "Cinema in the House" documentary club for school children.

Index on Censorship

ESTABLISHED:
1972 – London, United Kingdom

TEL: +44 0207 963 7262
WEB: indexoncensorship.org

ADDRESS: 292 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1V 1AE
United Kingdom



We published and promoted the voices of censored writers, jailed journalists, silenced academics and persecuted artists. This is vital work as the challenges to free speech and thought come from all directions.

SEAN GALLAGHER
Head of Content
Index on Censorship

DEFENDING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Index on Censorship is a non-profit organisation that campaigns for and defends free expression worldwide. It publishes work by censored writers and artists, promotes debate, and monitors threats to free speech. Index's vision is that everyone should be free to express themselves without fear of harm or persecution – no matter what their views.

As part of its mission to strengthen freedom of expression globally, Index awards four fellowships each year to help nurture and expand the skills of human rights activists. Winners in 2017 included: Chinese cartoonist Rebel Pepper; censorship monitor Turkey Blocks; Russian opposition and LGBTIQI activist Ildar Dadin; and media outlet Maldives Independent.

Index's event Stand Up for Satire brought together comedians, including Al Murray, in support of freedom of expression in 2017.

Index on Censorship will launch a campaign to promote greater understanding and public support for freedom of expression as a fundamental, universal value. It will spearhead targeted advocacy efforts to promote protections of online freedom of expression, and expand and improve its media monitoring efforts.

Index on Censorship is presently the only member active as part of Human Rights House London, which was established in 2003. The House is in a process to revitalise and seek new members in 2018.



Photos from left: Winners of the 2017 Freedom of Expression Awards Fellowship; comedian Al Murray entertaining the audience at Stand Up for Satire.

Human Rights House Oslo

ESTABLISHED:
1989 – Oslo, Norway
6 organisations

TEL: +47 468 48 850
WEB: facebook.com/
HumanRightsHouseOslo
E-MAIL: hrh@humanrightshouse.org
ADDRESS: Kirkegata 5, 5th Floor
0153 Oslo, Norway



In recent years, we have seen that the political freedoms many take for granted have been toned down around the world. We need to join hands in using human rights as a tool for real political change to open up and secure liberal freedoms.

AUDUN AAGRE
Head of The Norwegian Burma Committee

HUMAN RIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD

Founded in 1989, during a time of great change and hope for human rights in Europe, Human Rights House Oslo is today home to six diverse organisations. The organisations champion a variety of thematic and geographical human rights issues, which range from women's rights in Norway, to the human rights situations of Burma, Tibet, Eastern Europe, and the entire African continent.

Each year at the Human Rights Human Wrongs film festival, Human Rights House Oslo's member organisations raise human rights issues from around the world on the big screen, by supporting films and debates at the festival.

More than 5,000 people attended the festival in 2017, which spanned six days and included 25 documentaries, 32 live events, and 23 international and 67 local guests.

Health and Human Rights Info
hhri.org

Human Rights House Foundation
humanrightshouse.org

The Women's Front
kvinnefronten.no

The Norwegian Council for Africa
afrika.no/fellesradet

The Norwegian Burma Committee
burma.no

Voice of Tibet
vot.org



Photos from top: Kvinnefronten demonstration in Oslo; A view from the Cinema (photo by Monica Løvdahl); Fellesrådet for Afrika debate at the 2017 Human Rights Human Wrongs film festival.

Rafto Foundation

ESTABLISHED:
1986 – Bergen, Norway

TEL: +47 55 21 09 30

WEB: rafto.no

E-MAIL: rafto@rafto.no

ADDRESS: Menneskerettighetenes plass 1
5007 Bergen, Norway



Human rights defenders are to a larger degree being subjected to threats, imprisonments, surveillance and legislative changes. The 2017 Rafto Prize laureates Parveena Ahangar and Parvez Imroz from Kashmir know this reality too well.

JUSTEIN HOLE KOBBELTVEDT
Executive Director, Rafto Foundation

AWARDING SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

Raising recognition for human rights defenders, Rafto awards the annual Professor Thorolf Rafto's prize for human rights work. This helps to bring the work of human rights defenders to an international audience, and to promote human rights globally. Rafto continues to support the work of laureates through funding and organisation of projects, and carries out other work such as human rights education, with 3,300 people participating in 2017. Of the 31 human rights defenders that have received the award, four have later received the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Rafto Prize gained attention in Kashmir in 2017, and was described as an important inspiration for civil society in the region.

In December, Rafto met with Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar and called on her to acknowledge the human rights violations against the Rohingya people. The Foundation established a new masters course on business and human rights at the University of Bergen together with the Institute on Human Rights and Business.

In 2018, the Rafto Foundation will focus on business and human rights, arrange workshops with grassroots women human rights defenders and continue human rights education to students and teachers in Norway. Rafto will announce the 2018 Rafto Prize on 27 September, and will also mark the 70th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights through various events in 2018.



Photos clockwise from top right: Rafto Foundation challenges the CEO of Telenor on their approach on human rights; torchlight procession in Bergen with Rafto prize laureates Parveena Ahangar and Parvez Imroz; human rights education for high school students at the Rafto House.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

For fiscal year ending 31 December 2017

In 2017, Human Rights House Foundation's expenses totalled 23 234 382 NOK (2 491 062 EUR) based on the average 2017 exchange rate of Norges bank 1 EUR= 9,3271 NOK). HRHF ended the year with a 81 898 NOK (8 781 EUR) surplus.

The financial data has been summarised from the annual accounts of HRHF.

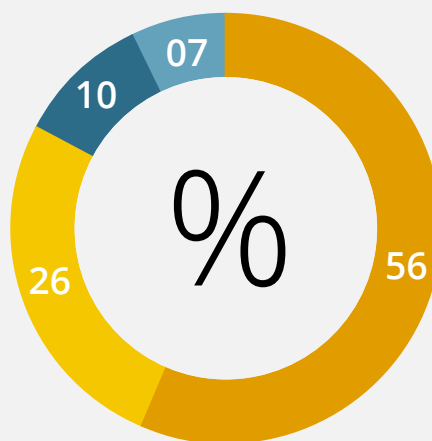
A complete copy of the annual accounts and the independent audit report are available on the website www.humanrightshouse.org and can be sent upon request.

TOTAL EXPENSES PER PROGRAMME

23 234 382 NOK

2 491 062 EUR

- Establish, support and connect Human Rights Houses
- Advocate with and for Human Rights Houses
- Communication
- Sustainability



With Gratitude to our Donors

We would like to thank all donors and supporters of the Human Rights Houses and their members. HRHF offers our sincere thanks for the generous contributions we receive. Our work to protect, empower and support human rights defenders and their organisations would not be possible without it.



Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department for Foreign Affairs FDFA



Thanks for in kind-support from Wikborg Rein and DLA Piper.

GOVERNING BODIES

HRHF Board

The Board of the Human Rights House Foundation meets four times a year. It oversees the work of Human Rights House Foundation, guides its strategy and direction, and approves its budgets. The Board is comprised of academics, lawyers, civil society representatives and experts, such as in psychology.



BERNT HAGTVET (CHAIRPERSON)

Professor,
Department of Political Science, University of Oslo / Bjørknes University College, Oslo



CHRISTOPHER HANSTEEN (DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON)

Partner,
Grette law firm



MOHAMED HUSEIN GAAS

PHD fellow in development studies,
Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)



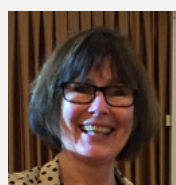
MINDA HOLM

Research fellow with the research group on foreign policy and diplomacy,
Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)



PÅL LIEUNGH

Partner,
Thommessen law firm



HILDE LUNDEBY

Psychologist, Senior Advisor,
Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service



ANE TUSVIK BONDE

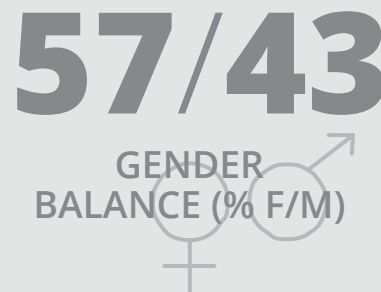
Staff-elected Board member / Senior Advisor,
Human Rights House Foundation

Changes to governance structure

Over time, as HRHF's governance structure was tested, some challenges became apparent. In particular, there was some confusion around decision-making processes and the overlapping roles and authority of the HRHF Board and the previously established bodies the "Network Assembly" and "International Advisory Board."

These issues have now been clarified: HRHF's Board remains the highest decision-making body of HRHF. Replacing the two other bodies, the Board will establish in 2018 a new mechanism that will give advice and input to the Board concerning HRHF's strategies and priorities. This "advisory council" will include people from the Human Rights Houses together with international human rights experts close to the network.

STAFF OVERVIEW 2018



Maria Dahle (Oslo)
Director
maria.dahle@humanrightshouse.org

House Programme



Daiva Petkeviciute (Oslo)
Head of House Development and Support
daiva.petkeviciute@humanrightshouse.org



Ane Tusvik Bonde (Oslo)
Senior Advisor
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Liudmila Ulyashyna (Oslo)
Advisor in International Law in Advocacy
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Kety Abashidze (Tbilisi)
Human Rights Officer for Eastern Europe
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Advocacy Programme



Florian Irminger (Geneva)
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European Advocacy Officer
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Matthew Jones (Geneva)
International Advocacy Officer
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Position to be filled in 2018 (Geneva)
Programme Administrative Assistant



NATIONALITIES



LANGUAGES



LOCATIONS

Communication



Kaja Haldorsen (Oslo)
Communication Manager
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Craig Jackson (Oslo)
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Christian Parker (Oslo)
Communication Officer
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Doriane Anfrie (Geneva)
Advocacy Project Coordinator
doriane.anfrie@humanrightshouse.org

Project staff 2018

Operations



Position to be filled in 2018 (Oslo)
Head of Operations



Iryna Pavlovska (Oslo)
Project Controller
iryna.pavlovska@humanrightshouse.org



Thomas Engebretsen (Oslo)
Financial Accountant
thomas.engebretsen@humanrightshouse.org

Thanks to our former colleagues!



Rupert Abbott
Manager, Institutional Development
June 2016 – Feb 2018



Andhina Kusumawidjaja
Administrative Officer
May 2014 – Sept 2017



Charlotte Robert
Advocacy Operations Assistant
Nov 2017 – March 2018



2017 IN PHOTOGRAPHS
MEMORIES FROM AROUND THE NETWORK OF HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSES





Since its establishment more than 20 years ago, Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF) has been striving toward its vision for a world where individuals and organisations can freely and openly work to protect and advance human rights at home and abroad.

HRHF protects, empowers and supports human rights defenders and their organisations. To accomplish this, HRHF brings organisations together in Human Rights Houses, and unites the Houses in an international network.

HRHF advocates with partner organisations to promote the freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, and the right to be a human rights defender at home and abroad, utilising its consultative status at the United Nations (UN) and participatory status at the Council of Europe (CoE).

Today, independent human rights organisations work together in 16 Human Rights Houses in 11 countries. The Houses are located in Eastern & Western Europe, the Caucasus and the Balkans.

HRHF is based in Oslo, with an office in Geneva and representation in Brussels and Tbilisi.



Human Rights House Foundation
Org. no. 976 055 365

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Kirkegata 5
0153 Oslo, Norway
hrh@humanrightshouse.org

Geneva
Rue de Varembé 1, PO Box 35
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland
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humanrightshouse.org