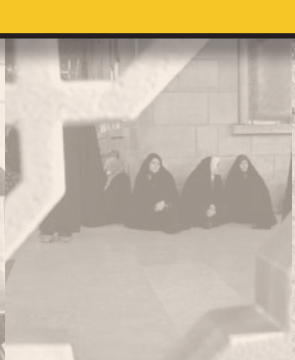


HUMAN
RIGHTS
HOUSE
NETWORK

Annual Report
2007



The Human Rights House Network

Mission

The Human Rights House Network's mission is to protect, strengthen and support human rights organisations locally, and unite them in an international network of Human Rights Houses.

UGANDA KAMPALA	KENYA NAIROBI	RUSSIA MOSCOW	BELARUS VILNIUS	AZERBAIJAN BAKU	POLAND WARSAW
Human Rights Network Uganda	Center for Law and Research International	Human Rights Network Group	Not specified for security reasons	Citizen's Labor Rights Protection League	Helsinki Committee in Poland
Refugee Law Project	Child Rights Advisory and Legal Center	Independent Psychiatric Association of Russia		International Society Human Rights – Azerbaijan	Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
Federation of Women Lawyers	Coalition on Violence against Women	Moscow Center for Prison Reform		Azerbaijan Young Lawyers Union	Young Journalists' Association "POLIS"
Hope After Rape	Federation of Women Lawyers	Moscow Helsinki Group		Democracy, Human Rights and Media Monitor	Viridarium Group
Women's International Cross Exchange	Kenya Human Rights Commission	Mother's Rights Foundation		Women's Association for Rational Development	The Association Initiative 33
Uganda Women's Network	People Against Torture	Organization "Right to Life and Human Dignity"		Center for "EL" Development Program	
Greenwatch	Release Political Prisoners	Regional Organization "Non-violence International"		Azerbaijan Human Rights Center	
African Center for the Rehabilitation and Treatment of Torture Victims		Regional Organization "Right of Child"		Society for Humanitarian Research	
Legal Aid Project		Social Partnership Foundation		Association for Protection of Women's Rights	
Public Defender Association – Uganda		Union of the Soldiers' Mothers Committees of Russia			
Legal Aid Clinic					

Strategies

- *Networking and capacity building: strengthen human rights defenders and their work.*
- *Human Rights Houses: build sustainable institutions.*
- *Lobbying, advocacy: generate political support for human rights defenders and organisations.*
- *Fundraising: secure financial stability for the Human Rights House Network*

ENGLAND LONDON

Article 19

English PEN

Index on Censorship

NORWAY OSLO

International Society
for Health and
Human Rights

Norwegian Helsinki
Committee

Norwegian P.E.N

Norwegian Tibet
Committee

The Norwegian
Burma Committee

The Norwegian Council
for the Rights of
Kurdish People

Nansen Dialog Project

Human Rights House
Foundation

NORWAY BERGEN

American Field Service
Bergen

Médicins Sans
Frontières

Egil Rafto House
Foundation

The Rafto
Foundation

Aung San Suu
Kyi's Room

Changemaker

BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA SARAJEVO

Helsinki Committee for
Human Rights in
Bosnia and Herzegovina

Women and Society

Revensans

Serb Civic Council

Foundation
CURE

MACEDONIA SKOPJE

Macedonian Women's
Rights Centre
– Shelter Centre

First Children's
Embassy in the World
– Megjashi

Association for
Democratic Initiatives

Helsinki Committee for
Human Rights in the
Republic of Macedonia

Movement Against
Disability
– Polio Plus

CROATIA ZAGREB

B.a.B.e
Women's
Human Rights Group

Croatian
Helsinki Committee
for Human Rights

Croatian Law Center



Ndifuna Mohammed is the National Coordinator of the Human Rights Network Uganda. This network has linked its 32 human rights organisations to the HRH Network and works to establish a Human Rights House locally. Mohammed represents East and Horn of Africa in the HRH Network's Advisory Board.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ndifuna Mohammed'.

“...the importance of networks and networking cannot be over-emphasised”

"Networking creates a greater willingness of all parties to be part of a human conduit to serve as energy and resource to one another. Sometimes you will give more than you receive and sometimes you will get back more than you give. It's not about keeping score."

Chris London, Manhattan Society

Civil society organisations easily recognize the significance of networks as they increase access to resources, enhance efficiency and allow for specialization. They provide solidarity and support, reduce costs and duplication of efforts, and increase visibility and credibility while reducing risk and isolation.

Compared to its counterparts in Europe, USA and Asia, civil society in East Africa is young. It remains beleaguered by competition for limited resources. Inadequate skills and hostile political environments combine to increase the risks run by human rights defenders in carrying out their legitimate work. NGOs in general, and human rights organisations in particular, find that their operating space is shrinking, particularly in situations of violent conflict, where excesses are directed against them with impunity.

In contexts like this, the importance of networks and networking cannot be over-emphasised. Luckily, there are efforts in the region to create and strengthen human rights networks. Indeed, a number of collaborative initiatives have emerged, particularly in the areas of training, technical exchanges and advocacy. HRHN continues to play a crucial catalytic role to strengthen networking and the development of an ethos for sustainable networks in the region. HRHN helps strengthen the willingness of members of other networks to remain part of a conduit through which the many benefits of networking are realised. Encouraging coalition building is bound to further all networks and networking processes.

Human Rights Houses are working communities where human rights organisations cooperate to support and strengthen human rights. These local communities are united in an international network called the Human Rights House Network (HRHN).

An International Advisory Board that consists of one member from each region in the Network is responsible for its strategic development. Its mandate and composition was formalized in March.



Lars A. Christensen

Chairperson of the Norwegian Board of the HRH Foundation



Srdjan Dizdarevic

President of the Helsinki Committee in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Ndifuna Mohammed

National Coordinator of HURINET Uganda



Henderson Mullin

Managing Director of Index on Censorship, London



Liubov Vinogradova

International representative of the Russian Research Centre for Human Rights



Maria Dahle

Secretary of the Boards, Ex. Dir. HRHF

The Network's secretariat is the Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF), located at the Norwegian Human Rights House in Oslo, founded in 1989 (see page 30). Its work is governed both by the International Advisory Board and the Norwegian Board.

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

An external evaluation has concluded that the Human Rights House Network:

- Increases solidarity and moral support between the members.
- Increases visibility for the local human rights organisations.
- Improves service for victims of human rights violations.
- Increases legitimacy and credibility on the national level.
- Improves access to international partners and funding.
- Increases protection and stability for the human rights defenders and their clients.
- The evaluation's conclusions were taken into account in the plan of action for 2006 - 2009.

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Annual Network meeting

- Hosted by the HRH Network Kenya.
- Brought together delegates from the whole HRH Network.
- Discussed and decided upon a regionally divided plan of action to be implemented from May 2008 to November 2010.

Two-day regional human rights defenders conference:

'Civil Societies at a Crossroads: Sustaining Human Rights Organisations in the East and Horn of Africa.'

- Over 100 delegates from most countries in the region and from throughout the HRH Network took part.
- Among these were 50 grassroots human rights defenders from all parts of Kenya.
- Included a session in which these defenders gave testimonies on their working conditions, protection and security.
- At the close of the conference, its participants unanimously agreed to back a press statement addressing current human rights issues in various countries in the East and Horn of Africa and urging their governments to take appropriate corrective measures.
- The conference was sponsored by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Freedom of Expression Foundation (Fritt Ord) Norway, and the Ford Foundation.



Agnieszka Mikulska, HRH Warsaw, and Srdjan Dvornik, HRH Zagreb, at the Annual Network Meeting.



Harriet Kuyang Logo, Faisal Albagir and Lemia Abubkr, all human rights defenders from Sudan attending the human rights conference.

Goals of the conference:

- Provide a consultative forum for civil society organisations in the region to reflect on their experiences.
- Learn from the experiences of other countries.
- Formulate strategies to enhance their operations and sustainability.

Based on various aspects of the sustainability of human rights organisations in the East and Horn of Africa, the conference discussions were split into four themes:

- Structural dimensions of HR organisations' sustainability.
- Issues of impact. Methods and priorities: Comparing notes on making a difference.
- Our values - our worth. A closer look at some of our unwritten rules.
- Environmental dimensions of HR organisations' sustainability.



Paul Opoku-Mensah, Associate Professor at the University of Aalborg, set the theoretical framework in his opening address.



Speakers at the conference included Minga Negash, Professor at the University of Witwatersrand; Dr. Mutuma Rutere, Dean, Kenya Human Rights Institute; Maina Kiai, Chairman, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights; Joseph Akwenyu Manoba, Expert on ICC Uganda, Erastus Wamugo, Human Rights Consultant Kenya, Maria Dahle, Executive Director, HRH Foundation, and here Morris Odhiambo, Team leader, HRH Network Kenya.



As the HRH Network's local contact person Martin Olouch coordinated the two events.



UGANDA — KAMPALA

Human Rights Network Uganda (HURINET-U)

- Is a national network of 32 human rights organisations.
- Clustered thematically into platforms focusing on economic, social and cultural rights, civil and political rights, child rights, women's rights, peace rights, and minority rights.
- HURINET-U hosts the initiative and offers technical support to the Human Rights House project.
- The members of the Human Rights House Network in Kampala have continued to lobby for support for the establishment of a Human Rights House in Kampala with a possibility of satellite houses in northern (Gulu) and western Uganda.

Human rights situation

Uganda continued to witness violations of the rights of pro-democracy activists, including the so-called PRA suspects (political activists linked to Kizza Besigye, the leader of the major opposition party FDC). The Constitutional Court granted the suspects bail, but the Government snubbed this ruling and has since kept them in custody. Some of the suspects are still languishing in prison. Others have lost their lives in custody or upon release. Mr. Kifefe Mamerito, Kizza Besigye's brother, lost his life soon after his release and his death is attributed to torture he endured while in custody. The state of Uganda has denied the claims.

Violations of the freedom of the media continued. Under pressure from the state, employers terminated the contract of Andrew Mwenda, a senior editor of *KFM Radio* and the *Monitor Newspaper*. Mwenda has since launched his own newspaper. Other media practitioners have been repeatedly summoned to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to answer for statements made both by themselves and guests on their talkshows.

Situation for human rights defenders

Under a law enacted in 2006, it is feared that NGO leaders may be arrested and that NGOs critical of government policies may be deregistered. The law sets in place a bureaucratic system to bar national NGOs from interacting with grassroots communities without the explicit permission of the representative of the central government in the affected district. The Government denies political parties the right to peaceful assembly and association, and political activists belonging to the opposition increasingly face charges of

treason and a host of other crimes in what appears to be an attempt to criminalise political opposition. During 2007 HURINET-U and the members of the HRH project vehemently objected to such disturbing developments and issued a number of press statements. The human rights week in December was also used to lobby the Parliament on these matters.



Torture and inhuman and degrading treatment still exist in most parts of the country and is aggravated by impunity for the culprits. In its crudest form, this has been played out in Karamoja, in northeastern Uganda, where forceful disarmament of 'karacunas,' armed cattle herdsman, by military forces got out of control. Children and women are among those reportedly killed. Victims of torture demonstrate a common method (1), the bones, probably of a 'karacuna,' lie scattered on the ground (2), and Lt. Col. UPDF Brigade 504 Michael Ondoga, in charge of military operations in Karamoja (3). All photos: HRHF



National Coordinator, HURINET Uganda and member of the Advisory Board:
Ndifuna Mohammed
Contact: executive@hurinet.or.ug

- HURINET: www.hurinet.or.ug
- Refugee Law Project: www.refugeelawproject.org
- Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Uganda
- Hope After Rape: www.har.interconnection.org
- Women's International Cross-Exchange (ISIS-WICCE): www.isis.or.ug
- Uganda Women's Network (UWONET): www.uwonet.org
- Greenwatch: www.greenwatch.or.ug
- Legal Aid Project: www.uls.or.ug/legalaid.asp
- Public Defenders Association of Uganda
- Legal Aid Clinic
- African Center for the Rehabilitation and Treatment of Torture Victims (ACTV): www.actvuganda.org





KENYA - NAIROBI

Kenya Human Rights House Network

The Kenyan human rights sector has experienced that institutional cooperation, effective networking, increased geographical coverage, and sharing of skills and experiences are critical to the impact and overall success of their work. In their cooperation efforts, member organisations of the Kenya HRHN have shared data, information and skills from their areas of speciality.

Failure of the constitutional reform efforts

Kenyans, against their expectation, went to the 2007 general elections without a new constitutional dispensation. The government even resisted the call by opposition political parties for minimum reforms.

Fight against corruption

The Anglo-Leasing, Goldenberg and other economic scandals have demonstrated that the government should not be left to deal with corruption networks with impunity engrained.

Police excesses and the right to life and security

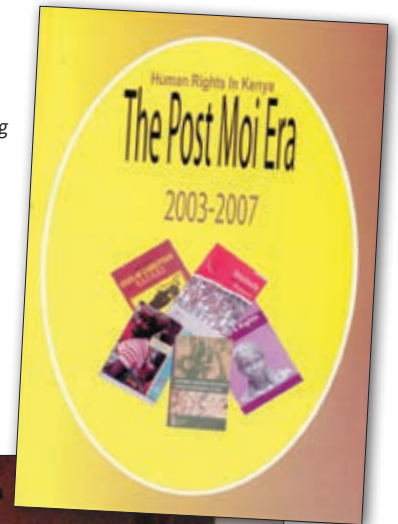
The year 2007 saw the pinnacle in extrajudicial killings by the police. Despite much touted reforms in the police force, extrajudicial killings of innocent citizens by police continued unabated and became the hallmark of human rights violations during the year. The report from an independent investigation by the state-established and -funded Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), revealed a trail of premeditated murder by the police of close to 500 young Kenyans between June and October 2007.

Joint Projects

The seven organisations jointly produced a report called 'Human Rights in Kenya. The Post Moi Era 2003 – 2007.'

The findings of the report indicate that although the protection and promotion of the rights of Kenyans progressed in a positive direction during the reviewed period, inadequate political will and commitment was shown by the Government to ensure effective protection and promotion of those rights. The report made a broad set of recommendations that the organisations behind the report hoped should be at the heart of the work-plan of whatever Government was to come out of the 27 December parliamentary and presidential elections.

Jane Onyango, Executive Director of Federation of Women Lawyers - FIDA, at the press conference launching the report, read the press statement that emphasized some of the violations addressed in the report.



Director of the Human Rights House Project:
Morris Odhiambo, Executive Director of CLARION

Contact: clarion@swiftkenya.com



Financial and legal assistance to human rights defenders

The HRH Network has accorded financial and legal aid to human rights defenders who have been arrested and charged in courts of law in the course of doing their work. This has mainly involved those who participated in peaceful demonstrations but were nonetheless arrested. The Network also provided legal representation and paid court bond to special cases of victims of human rights violations.

Individually and jointly, members of Kenya HRH Network were part of various election monitoring initiatives that were mounted by civil society organisations and the international community. They mobilised staff and acted as poll observers that were at the forefront in the documentation and exposure of the irregularities that took place during the elections. Here in the pictures, represented by the well-known human rights defender Beatrice Kamau, leading voter training in the build-up to the elections.

Human rights defenders

Both individual human rights defenders and organisations continued to face many challenges including diminished funding. For instance, one member organisation of the Kenya HRH Network, People Against Torture, was forced to suspend its operations due to lack of funding. While there has not been incessant harassment of human rights defenders as in previous periods, human rights defenders, including journalists, suffered harassment and intimidation at the hands of politicians and other state representatives. A number of them were threatened with deregistration because of their advocacy activities.



Member organisations:

Kenya Human Rights Commission

- Focuses mainly on respect of human rights and promotion of democratisation, accountability and good governance in Kenya. www.khrc.or.ke

Centre for Law and Research International

- Revolves mainly on legal and related research that sustains and enhances human rights, democratisation and policy processes in Kenya. www.clarionkenya.org

Coalition on Violence Against Women in Kenya

- Committed to the eradication of all forms of violence against women and promotion of women's human rights. www.covaw.or.ke

Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya

- Committed to the creation of a society that is free of all forms of discrimination against women through provision of legal aid, women's rights monitoring, advocacy, education and referral. www.fidakenya.org

Release Political Prisoners

- Champions for the rights of 'political' and other prisoners through awareness raising and advocacy.

Child Rights Advisory, Documentation and Legal Centre

- Promotes, protects and enhances the legal status and human rights of children with particular emphasis on the girl-child.

People Against Torture

- Seeks the eradication of torture in Kenya through advocacy, lobbying, research, documentation and litigation.
- Not able to operate in 2007 due to lack of funding.



RUSSIA – MOSCOW

The Russian Research Centre for Human Rights (RRCHR)

- One of the oldest non-government organisations in Russia.
- Established in 1992 as a coalition of human rights organisations.
- Its 15-year anniversary was celebrated this year.
- Runs activities in almost all regions of the Russian Federation.
- Seeks to protect the rights of the most vulnerable groups of the population: military servicemen, families of the deceased soldiers, orphans, prisoners and juvenile delinquents in penitentiary institutions, people with mental disorders and refugees.
- Provides free of charge consultations for citizens on human rights issues and legal assistance to more than 6,500 people each year.
- Takes part in lawmaking activities; monitoring current legislation and demanding federal and local authorities to improve legislation to bring it into line with international standards.
- Conducts educational seminars (in particular for

employees of regional Human Rights Ombudsmen's offices).

- Publishes books on human rights issues and prepares reports for international bodies.

Human rights and human rights defenders

In 2007, the opposition almost disappeared from political life. Mass media and human rights organisations were under strict and total control of government and authorities. There were attempts to close down some organisations through the courts, such as the *Youth Movement for Human Rights*. A very common method of paralysing NGO activity was the seizure of computers under the pretext of clamping down on the use of unlicensed software.

Due to the mass media campaign engineered to discredit the work of human rights activists the image of NGOs has been seriously damaged in 2007. They have been represented in the media as 'West helpmates' or 'jackals' who ask for help from foreign embassies and foundations.

The most visited human rights web in Russia www.hro.org run by the *Human Rights Network Group* was attacked by professional hackers and for almost two weeks its work came to a standstill. At the end of the year some of the web-site's sections were still not accessible.

At the end of 2007 the 10 organisations forming the institution the Human Rights House in Russia are still not located at the same place. Some organisations had to move offices twice this year and the main office may be taken over by Moscow authorities. In November the *RRCHR* received a letter from the Moscow Department of Property, informing the *RRCHR* to vacate the office on 31 December. A very active campaign to challenge the decision ensued and many appeals and statements were sent to the Department. Ombudsman Vladimir Lukin met with one of the officials from the Department of Property, asking him to renew their contract and let the *RRCHR* stay in the building.

Joint projects or events in 2007

- *Centre for Prison Reform* made 29 visits to educational systems in prisons dealing with prison education in five regions.
- The most important one 'Woman in the system of criminal justice' focused on the development of rehabilitation programmes and monitoring of conditions in female prisons.



Coordinator:

Liubov Vinogradova
(until 10 April),
and Salam Kurbanov
(until 31 December)

Contact: info@npar.ru

- The Russian Research Centre for Human Rights (*RRCHR*) consists of 10 NGOs:
- *Moscow Centre for Prison Reform*: www.prison.org
- *Right of a Child Organization*: www.pravorebenka.narod.ru
- *Mother's Right Foundation*: www.hro.org/ngo/mright
- *Moscow Helsinki Group*: www.mhg.ru
- *Independent Psychiatric Association of Russia*: www.npar.ru
- *Social Partnership Foundation*: www.socialpartnership.ru
- *Human Rights Network Group*: www.hro.org
- 'Right to life and civil dignity' Society, (*Chechen Journal DOSH*): www.doshdu.ru
- *Union of Soldiers' Mothers Committees of Russia*: www.ucsmr.ru
- Regional organisation 'Non-Violence International'





In September, Valentina Melnikova, Chairwoman of the RRCHR and Head of the Union of Soldiers Mothers' Committees of Russia, received the Glass of Reason award from Germany for promoting tolerance and for persistence in protecting human rights.



This is the Journal 'Smolensk' and it shows some of the children-orphans, who are under protection and care of local authorities in Smolensk region and the organization 'Right of a Child.' The organisation won a million-ruble Presidential Grant for their project aimed at reducing the number of orphans in Russia.

- RRCHR has its own programme on Radio Russia named Oblaka ('Clouds'), where the most vital issues on the rights of prisoners are discussed.
- Mother's Right Foundation provides legal support in courts to parents whose children were killed in the army and wins about 20 cases per year.
- Specialists from the Independent Psychiatric Association, with support from the Human Rights Ombudsman in Russia, investigated some discredited cases concerning the use of psychiatry against human rights defenders and helped to release some of these defenders.
- A journalist and human rights activist, Larisa Arap, was forcibly placed in a psychiatric clinic. After a few months she was released with the help of the Ombudsman, Russian and foreign human rights organizations
- Moscow Helsinki Group monitored the violations committed against NGOs in the framework of new Russian legislation and provided victim organisations with legal assistance.
- The Public Reception Room where citizens whose rights have been violated may get legal assistance or advice from a specialist, was reopened.
- The Union of Soldiers' Mothers Committees of Russia conducted 12 online press conferences for regional mass media.
- Liubov Vinogradova, the former Director of the RRCHR and Member of the Advisory Team of the HRH Network, gave introductory speeches at the OSCE meetings in Warsaw and Vienna.
- RRCHR also conducted a joint project, 'Mass media and human rights', with the support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, holding internet conferences with regional journalists and preparing the publication *Human Rights and Mass Media*.
- In December the RRCHR organised a Jubilee Conference at the museum and public centre named after Andrey Sakharov. More than 40 human rights activists, journalists from Moscow and 12 regions of Russia, and authorities and representatives from foreign embassies attended. The conference was devoted to new challenges human rights activists face in Russia, and to developing new strategies necessary for survival in the current climate, where freedom of speech and free expression are increasingly under threat.



The independent Chechen journal DOSH ('A word'), registered with the organisation Right to Life and Civil Dignity, published its English Digest in October supported by the Norwegian MFA, recounting the traditions, history and tragedies in Chechen people's lives. The English Digest was presented in Paris, Brussels and Oslo and gave European journalists and human rights activists a great opportunity to meet independent Chechen journalists and get firsthand information about the situation in the Northern Caucasus.



A concert was held, with the music of the Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg, on the anniversary of the assassination of Anna Politkovskaya, the Russian journalist of Novaya Gazeta who was shot dead 7 October 2006. Students from Gnesini Music Academy held the concert at the Journalists' House in Moscow. Similar events were held in cooperation with several other houses in the Human Rights House Network (see also page 29).





BELARUS – VILNIUS

The Belarusian Human Rights House in Vilnius

The House was opened in January. Due to the hostile climate towards human rights in Belarus, the House had to be opened in exile, in Vilnius, Lithuania. The House serves as an open meeting place for human rights defenders and organisations from Belarus and the entire region. On the opening, Andrej Dynko, the editor of the independent Belarusian newspaper *Nasha Niva*, quoted from the poem of the Belarusian poet Janka Kupala, ‘Every nation has its own house, Belarusians do not,’ and concluded by stating that ‘now we have an impressive one’.

At its opening in January, the human rights defender Ales Bialiatski called the Belarusian Human Rights House an ‘Island of Liberty.’ Representatives from several countries and partner organisations were present. Among others Maria Dahle, Executive Director of the Human Rights House Foundation and Renatas Juska, Head of Democracy Promotion Division at the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



The Belarusian HRH was made possible with the support of Civic Belarus/Transition, the Swedish Helsinki Committee, the Dutch Embassy in Poland, National Endowment of Democracy and the Norwegian Freedom of Expression Foundation.

Pressure on human rights defenders

Human rights organisations continued to be banned and repression of activists continued. In March, five members of the unregistered organisation *Young Front* were charged for doing human rights work without registration. Activists from all over the country conducted mass hunger strikes, pickets, and flash mob actions in support of the activists. As a result of massive international and national pressure, the young activists received only small fines by the court in May. Criminal prosecution remained one of the harshest means of repression against human rights activists. Activists who engaged in election observation during the 2007 local councils’ election campaign were detained and fined in various cases.

Registration

The Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Court rejected the appeal for re-registration of the Public Human Rights Association *Viasna* in October, despite the opinion of the UN Human Rights Committee, which declared the ban of *Viasna* illegal and pointed out that it violates the individual’s right to freedom of association. The human rights association *For Freedom* was also denied registration in September and December. The recommendation regarding the organisation *Helsinki XXI* was also rejected. The only positive sign regarding the freedom of association was the decision by the Ministry of Justice to withdraw the suspension claim in the case of the *Belarusian Helsinki Committee*.

International pressure

The UN General Assembly’s November resolution expressed deep concern about ‘the failure of the Government of Belarus to cooperate fully with all the mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights, in particular with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus.’ The resolution outlined real concern with the continuous use of criminal persecution and arbitrary detentions as a means of silencing political opposition and human rights activists, and regarding closed trials over the leading representatives of the opposition and human rights defenders. Belarusian authorities once again refused to acknowledge the concerns



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raised and declared that the document 'has neither legal, nor political grounds.' At the same time Belarus attempted to secure a seat on the Human Rights Council. Forty international human rights organisations, including the *Human Rights House Network*, took part in the campaign against Belarusian membership. On 17 May, the UN General Assembly rejected Belarus' application for membership.

Human rights activities in exile

Since organising large gatherings in Belarus is risky and could result in criminal charges, human rights activities like conferences, seminars and other educational arrangements are bound to be held outside Belarus. Since February:

- About 50 events have been organised in the house.
- More than 30 different organisations have used the premises.
- Around 300 participants have attended the human rights seminars, international meetings and cultural events in the house.
- The programme of the house included week long human rights schools, master classes for young writers and educational programmes on international law in advocacy.
- At all the training seminars, experts from more than seven Belarusian human rights organisations participated.
- Several experts from the Czech Republic, Russia, Ukraine, Norway and Poland also gave lectures during the year.



The solidarity action on 16 of every month was marked with cultural events, speeches and the lighting of candles.

Honorary Diploma

The Ihar Hiermianchuk Memorial Diploma For Adherence to the Principles of Freedom of Speech was given to Iosif Syaredzich, Editor-in-Chief of *Narodnaya Vola*. The Norwegian PEN and the HRFH, together with the Belarusian Association of Journalists, founded the Honorary Diploma. This year, the award ceremony took place on the International Solidarity Day of Journalists, globally celebrated on 8 September.

On 7 October, a memorial concert for Anna Politkovskaya took place at the house. More than 30 human rights defenders listened to the speech of the Belarusian Association of Journalists' leader, Zhanna Litvina, and the music of Edvard Grieg (see also page 29). Here, Zhanna is together with Maria Dahle, Executive Director of HRFH.



On 13 December, a group of human rights activists consisting of the deputy chair of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Ales Bialiatski, the human rights activists Alena Laptionak, Valiantsin Stefanovich and Siarzhuk Sys passed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus thousands of origami cranes as part of an international human rights campaign initiated by Amnesty International for the liberation of the political prisoner Zmitser Dashkevich.



Several days before the European March, police detained over 20 activists in different towns of Belarus; regional human rights defenders were imprisoned from 2 to 7 days. The special services carried out a mop-up among youth activists.



AZERBAIJAN – BAKU

Human rights situation

Oil-rich Azerbaijan is a country with limited space for basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. In 2007, freedom of speech was reduced in Azerbaijan. The number of arrests, criminal punishment of journalists and fines paid by the media were ten times higher than in 2005. Ten journalists known for their severe criticism of the government were arrested; one was later released and five were pardoned by the Presidential Decree in late December. Four journalists, Eynulla Fatullayev, Sakit Zahidov, Mushfig Huseynov and Ganimat Zahid, remain in prison sentenced for inciting national, religious and ethnic hatred. In addition, *Radio Liberty* correspondent Ilgar Nasibov was imprisoned for three months for writing a letter to the President about police harassment of his wife and himself, but was released after three days by the appeal court. Radio and TV channels remain under government control and members of the opposition are given no opportunities to appear on television.

The right to freedom of assembly has been non-existent since the 2005 post-election rallies. Any attempt to hold a protest action was violently deterred and organisers were persecuted. Despite numerous appeals, protest against the arrest of the journalist Eynulla Fatullayev was never approved. Faina Kungorova, a former activist of the Democratic Party, died in the hospital of Shuvelan prison in pre-trial isolation on 18 November after a hunger strike. She had been detained several weeks earlier, when she was stopped suspiciously close to the highway along which the

president's cortege passed. Police found a photograph of ex-parliament speaker and leader of the Democratic Party, Rasul Guliyev, in her bag. She was charged for alleged possession of narcotics. Faina Kungorova was a former political prisoner arrested for hooliganism in 2002 and pardoned in 2004.

The situation for human rights defenders

The deterioration of the human rights situation in Azerbaijan and the growing concern over next year's presidential elections has resulted in a significant consolidation of human rights defenders. One example of this was the Solidarity Marathon for the support of imprisoned journalists' families, organised by the *Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety*. The event united hundreds of representatives of the media, NGOs, political parties and activists.

The Director function is rotating between the member organisations.

Shahla Ismayilova is the coordinator of the group of organisations that form the *Human Rights House Azerbaijan*.

Contact: azerbaijan@shahla.org

- *Association for Protection of Women's Rights after D. Aliyeva*
- *Azerbaijan National Group of International Society for Human Rights*
- *Azerbaijan Young Lawyers' Union:* www.aylu.az
- *Centre for 'EL' Development Program*
- *Citizens' Labour Rights Protection League:* www.clrpl.org
- *Democracy Monitor:* www.democracymonitor.org
- *Human Rights Centre of Azerbaijan:* www.aihmm.org
- *Society for Humanitarian Research:* www.humanrights-az.org
- *Women's Association for Rational Development:* www.ward.az



Fuad Hasanov, head of Democracy Monitor, presented a statement on the media situation in Azerbaijan at OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw in October. The statement was issued by HRH Azerbaijan member organizations.





The nine organizations meet with representatives from the HRH Foundation in the office of Association for Protection of Women's Rights after D.Aliyeva in Baku in May. Photo by Shahla Ismayilova

All nine member organisations of HRH Azerbaijan are significant actors in the human rights community of Azerbaijan, contributing to education, monitoring, protection and advocacy of human rights. The organisations have always been represented in key meetings with respected international organisations such as the big delegation from Henrich Boell Foundation in October and the Human Rights Watch meeting with its director in Azerbaijan in July.

Official registration achieved

The major accomplishment for the Human Rights House Azerbaijan in 2007 was its official registration as the international branch of Human Rights House Foundation at the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan Republic, following one year of intensive efforts. Complicated, time-consuming bureaucratic procedures and certain difficulties in fulfilling the requirements for state registration usually hinder the work of human rights defenders. For example, *Democracy Monitor* received official registration only after its seventh application to the Ministry of Justice this year.

The official registration of the HRH Azerbaijan strengthened its international position in the national and international arena and opened the space for sufficient human rights work. It should be emphasised that throughout the period

of registration, HRH Azerbaijan was supported by a number of international bodies, including OSCE, Council of Europe, and Norwegian, British and US Embassies in Azerbaijan. Following registration, the official status of the Human Rights House Azerbaijan began to be recognised by the government as well. As an example, high ranking officials of the Ministry of Justice had a meeting with representatives of the HRH Azerbaijan after the registration, during which the hopes and plans for future cooperation were voiced.

Activities of HRH Azerbaijan

The establishment of the Human Rights House is considered a significant investment in the sustainability of human rights work, as it links the Azerbaijan-based human rights defenders with an international human rights network.



The Norwegian Helsinki Committee and HRH Foundation nominated Turan News Agency for the Gerd Bucerius Award 'Freie Presse Ost Europa.' The award is given by the Norwegian Freedom of Expression Foundation and the German Zeit Stiftung. The Agency's Director Mehman Aliyev gives the acceptance speech at the Nobel Institute in Oslo in June. Photo by Turan Information Agency



Attempts to hold protest actions were often met with police violence and several organisers have been persecuted. During the protest on the World Press Day (left) the police tried to detain Yeni Musavat's correspondent Elshad Mammedli, who was there officially covering the protest. A solidarity action was organised to support the imprisoned editor Eynulla Fatullaev (right). The Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety (IRFS) seeks to protect and support journalists and freedom of expression. Photo and text: IRFS.





POLAND – WARSAW

The Human Rights House in Warsaw

The house was established in 1993, when two leading and long-established organisations, the *Helsinki Committee in Poland* and the *Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR)*, decided their shared aims of working towards democracy and the protection of human rights would more readily be achieved by working together and joining the *HRH Network*. Today three more organizations are a part of the HRH Warsaw, the *Association of Young Journalists ('POLIS')*, *Association Initiative 33* and the *Viridarium Group*. Cooperation with larger and more experienced members of the network allow them to make more of an impact and they also benefit from assistance provided by the framework of HRH Warsaw.

Human rights in Poland

In 2007, the right to respect for family life, the right to a fair trial, respect for freedom of assembly and the prohibition of discrimination were key issues. A discussion on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights was re-convened

Poles seeking justice in Strasbourg

Poles sought the help of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg in nearly every area covered by the Court. The number of cases presented to Strasbourg was the second largest, superceded only by that of Russia. Polish citizens often reported excessive remand periods, pre-trial detention and legal proceedings lasting years. At the end of the year, the ECHR examined the problem of pre-trial detention in Poland and approached the government, inquiring whether it is true that a 'system of groundless excessive detention of individuals suspected of committing a crime' is commonly applied. This case is unprecedented - prior to 2007 the Strasbourg Court had never approached a state with an inquiry that covers all aspects of a particular process or practice. The ECHR also issued several very important

judgments for Poland. *HFHR* lawyers undertook cases mentioned above. In the case of *Alicja Tysiac vs. Poland*, the Court announced that Poland violated Article 8 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (the right to respect for family life) and stated that the country should establish an independent organ, to which an appeal against the refusal to perform an abortion may be lodged.

In May the judgment in the case of the Equality March 2005 (*Baczkowski and others vs. Poland*) was announced, stating that Poland violated Article 11 (Freedom of Assembly and Association), Article 13, and Article 14 (Prohibition of Discrimination) of the Convention. The judgment was the first verdict issued by that Court relating to discrimination. Those working to eliminate discrimination due to sexual orientation were able to bring about judgment by employing the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly Article of the EU Charter. Similar marches organised to promote equality have been banned in recent years in both Riga and Moscow. The judicial decisions passed by the Court in Strasbourg made it evident that existing laws in Poland, many of them inconsistent with the European Convention, must be improved.

Joint actions

- The Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights was honoured by the Ecumenical Foundation Tolerance for outstanding achievements in promoting tolerance.
- *POLIS* and the *Viridarium Group* created the educational programme 'Warsaw Diversified: Youth Program aimed at Accepting Differences.' Students and teachers from Warsaw schools were given access to strategies for learning tolerance to difference. Within the confines of the programme, the project 'Living Library' was launched.
- Under the auspices of the *HFHR* and within the framework of the Council of Europe Campaign 'All different-all equal', *POLIS* organised a journalist competition entitled 'The Different One.'
- *HFHR* launched a programme, 'Human rights and settlements with the past' to counteract the negative consequences arising from the publication of the report on the Military Information Services (*WSI*) and the Lustration law. The programme includes undertaking strategic litigation, legal assistance for individual victims, as well as educational and informational activity.
- *HFHR* inaugurated a new project entitled 'Strengthening the rule of law and human rights protection in Poland

Coordinator: Danuta Przywara,
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through involvement of business entities, civil society groups and individuals in strategic litigation activities.'

- The HFHR Film Library - educational films regarding human rights and civil liberties produced by the HFHR - became available to the public online.

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR)

- Established in 1989.
- One of the most experienced and professional non-government organisations involved in the protection of human rights in Europe.
- Active both in Poland and Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Caucasus and Central Asia.
- Monitors and advises on violations of civil and political rights.
- Works to implement educational programmes to NGOs and state institutions.
- Cooperates closely with the *Sejm's Research and Analysis Office* and parliamentary commissions. www.hfhr.org.pl

Helsinki Committee in Poland

- Founded by a group of intellectuals in 1982.
- The team currently managing the *Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights* is one of the few groups that were able to switch from underground activity to functioning openly under democratic conditions.
- Established the *Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights*.
- Meets during monthly assemblies, fulfils the role of the Programme Council of the *Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights*.
- Published in 2007 its opinions on the stance of Polish authorities regarding the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the lustration process, standards of parliamentary procedures and the principle of the presumption of innocence. www.hfhr.org.pl

Association of Young Journalists ('POLIS')

- Established in 1995.
- Publishes the newspaper POLIS and online festival newspapers.
- Organises workshops and journalism camps for students, as well as meetings with recognised journalists.
- Develops and supports the acquisition of journalism skills.
- Disseminates the principles of democracy, market economy and human rights. www.polis.youthpress.org

Viridarium Group

- Formed in 2001.
- Cooperates with the *Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights* and *The Open Republic Association against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia*, focusing on crucial problems of anti-Semitism and xenophobia in a multicultural society.
- Organises lectures and meetings with distinguished Polish publicists, journalists and scholars in order to familiarise the public with the issues of human rights and the relations between nations, cultures and religions coexisting in Poland and Europe.

- Organised a meeting devoted to the anniversaries of two tragic events – the manslaughter in Jedwabne (10 July 1941, Poland) and the massacre in Srebrenica (11 July 1995, Bosnia & Herzegovina) in 2007.

Association Initiative 33

- Founded in 2004.
- Observes and analyses the present situation of public issues in Poland and promotes goals of the civil society and the democratic state.
- Concentrates its activities on organising social, educational and scientific meetings and events.



Discussion on the death penalty was reopened towards the end of the year. Member organisations of the HRH Warsaw were involved in organising the European Day against the Death Penalty in Warsaw on 10 October. An installation was staged in front of the main office of the Representative of the European Commission in Poland. The campaign's aim was to express solidarity with the abolition of the death penalty; about 2000 people signed the letter to the authorities of the European Union and the Council of Europe, demonstrating that there was a significant part of the Polish society opposing the death penalty.



One of the independent observers and mediators at the nurses and midwives' protest in Warsaw in June, was Professor Andrzej Rzeplinski from HFHR.



On 30 November, a lecture pro memoriam Marek Nowicki (1947-2003), the first President of the Board of the HFHR, was given by Judge Aharon Barak, former President of the Israeli Supreme Court. Photo by Lukasz Kraszynski, HFHR





NORWAY – OSLO

Human Rights House Oslo

The Human Rights House in Oslo (HRH Oslo) was set up in 1989 and is the first house in the network. Since 2004 it has been co-located with *Amnesty International Norway* in downtown Oslo.

Human Rights in Norway

During recent years Norway has been criticised for insufficient protection of religious freedoms in the school system. In 2007 national standards were established in order to guarantee that all religions are covered not only in the curriculum, but also in practice.

At the end of 2007, the Government proposed to amend the penal code so that Norway can no longer function as a safe-heaven for persons suspected of involvement in genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Norwegian authorities disregarded UN protection guidelines on asylum seekers from a number of regions. To ensure them a fair appeal, eleven NGOs requested the Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion to change the working methods of the Norwegian Immigration Appeals Board (UNE). On the positive note changes of practice have been made at the Trandum Aliens Holding Centre due to massive criticism.

Joint projects and events

HRH Oslo has become a focal point for the Norwegian civil society working on human rights. The Norwegian NGO Forum's meetings are generally held at the house. The *Norwegian Helsinki Committee* is the coordinator. The forum defines recommendations on human rights areas for the Norwegian government to focus on in the UN every year.

In 2007, the house was visited by, among others, the Iranian human rights lawyer and Nobel Laureate, Shirin Ebadi, the

Uighurs' spokesperson and Rafto Laureate, Rebiya Kadeer, the threatened Somalian journalist, Omar Faruk Osman Nur, and from Western Sahara Rafto Laureate, Sidi Mohammed Daddach.

Members of the HRH Oslo also cooperate on running *Voice of Tibet*, a radio station that broadcasts news and cultural programs daily in Tibetan and Mandarin.

Events 2007

The Norwegian China campaign was launched at the Human Rights House in Oslo on 7 August. The *Norwegian PEN*, the *Tibet Committee*, the *Norwegian Union of Journalists* invited the journalist Philip Lothe and Tove Paule, President of the Norwegian Confederation of Sports, together with *Amnesty International Norway*.

Norwegian Burma Committee

- Supports the Burmese democracy movement through information, advocacy and support to Burmese organisations and projects.
- 2007 represented a turning point in Burma. The dominant picture is the peaceful demonstrations that ended in the violent crushing of protests in September where hundreds of monks, students and others were arrested. The protests represent the strongest show of opposition to the ruling military junta since 1988. www.burma.no

In order to express support for the demonstrators in Burma, the Norwegian Burma Committee gathered more than 3000 Norwegians and Burmese living in Norway in a mass demonstration 28 September in Oslo. The Human Rights House Oslo participated in and supported the demonstration. Photo: Simen Myrberget

Coordinator: Bjørn Engesland,
Secretary General at
the *Norwegian Helsinki Committee*



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Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC)

- Monitors compliance of the human rights within the OSCE's signatory states.
- Provides election observation, information, education, international processes and democracy support to NGOs and independent media.
- Coordinates HRH Oslo, the NGO Forum for Human Rights and Norwegian NGOs involvement in projects supported by the EEA and the Norwegian financial mechanisms. www.nhc.no

Norwegian Tibet Committee

- One of the largest and most active Tibet support groups in Europe (<1500 members).
- Participated in the Team Tibet campaign to make the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics a catalyst for change in China.
- Raised the kidnapping of Panchen Lama in 1995, and the Tibetan refugee children that were arrested in relation to the shooting at the Nepalese border by Chinese border police with the UN Human Rights Council.
- The well-known Tibetan female writer, Tseving Woesser, was awarded the Norwegian Writers' Union's Freedom of Expression Prize 2007. www.tibet.no

Nansen Dialogue Network

- Has ten dialogue centres staffed by local workers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo.
- Aims to contribute to sustainable peace and reconciliation by promoting interethnic- and religious dialogue.
- Towards the end of the year, the Oslo based staff joined their colleagues at the Nansen Academy and Dialogue Centre at Lillehammer. www.nansen-dialog.net

Norwegian Council for the Rights of the Kurds

- Spreads information and supports initiatives toward constructive dialogue among conflicting Kurdish parties to stimulate a pluralist Kurdish community in Norway and abroad.
- Hosted several seminars and published two editions of the magazine *Tema Kurdistan*. www.kurdistan.no

International Society for Health and Human Rights (ISHHR)

- ISHHR's secretariat has moved from Oslo to Sydney, Australia.
- Its next conference, in Peru in 2008, will focus on health, justice and transitions.
- Runs the Internet database 'Health and Human Rights Info' that aims at making reports and experiences regarding health care, specifically mental health care, more accessible to groups exposed to severe human rights violations. This is developed in collaboration with the Mental Health Project. www.hhri.org

Norwegian PEN

- As a section of *International PEN*, the global association of writers advocating freedom of expression, *Norwegian PEN*

- monitors free expression and defends writers, journalists and publishers with a special focus on Turkey, Belarus, Tunisia, Afghanistan, China and the Middle East.
- Through the Writers in Prison committee, it writes protest letters to authorities and letters of support and solidarity to prisoners' families.
- Coordinates the Norwegian network for Cities of Refuge for persecuted writers. www.norskpen.no

Human Rights House Foundation

- Is the secretariat of the *Human Rights House Network*.
- Seeks political support and secures financial stability for the HRH Network (see page 30). www.humanrightshouse.org



On the Tibet committee's initiative several members of the Human Rights House Oslo and Amnesty International, took part in the Oslo Marathon to highlight the Olympic campaign and that Tibetans are denied participation in the Olympic Games same as Palestinian, Taiwan and Hong Kong.



NHC granted the Andrei Sakharov Freedom Award 2007 to Svetlana Gannushkina, founder of the Russian organisation Civic Assistance Committee, and head of the refugee program of Memorial. The Laureate receives the Award and is congratulated by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' State Secretary, Raymond Johansen. Photo: NHC

In October, one year had passed since the Russian journalist, Anna Politkovskaya, had been killed. The Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Norwegian PEN, the HRH Foundation, all of them members of the HRH Oslo, together with the Norwegian Union of Journalists and the Support Committee for Chechnya gathered some 200 listeners at the Noble Peace Centre (see also page 29).



NORWAY – BERGEN

Member organisations:

The Rafto House was established in 1997 and has become a vital nexus for human rights activities in Bergen. The Rafto House had its 10th anniversary in September. This was celebrated together with the organisations' cooperating partners and supporters. The Bergen branch of Amnesty International Norway is also located in the Rafto House and is an active partner in different projects.

AFS Intercultural Learning, Bergen

- Promotes knowledge about other cultures through an exchange student programme.
- Run by committed students; the organisation's activity at the Rafto House has been high. www.afs.no

Medecins Sans Frontières, Bergen

- Continued its support of its mother organisation through fund-raising and information activities.
- Points of focus are areas of war, conflict, and natural disaster. www.msf.no

Changemaker, Norwegian Church Aid's youth

- Joined the Rafto House in 2007.
- Engaged in activities on the fundamental reasons for injustice.
- Members come together every week to discuss current issues, with a North-South perspective.
- Organised demonstrations and open seminars.

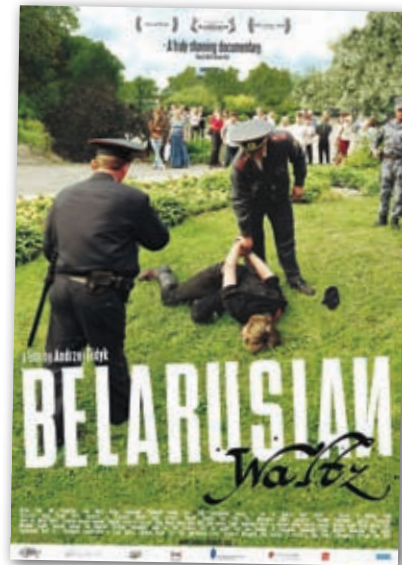
www.changemaker.no

Rafto House Foundation

- The two main objectives are to manage the Rafto Human Rights House and to engage in educational and informational activities.
- High school students visit the Rafto House to be informed about its work, and about human rights in general

- On behalf of the Municipality of Bergen, the Rafto House Foundation introduced democracy issues to the members of pupils' councils at higher levels, as well as principals and teachers. www.raftohuset.no

As part of the courses on human rights, school classes participated in a role-play at Espeland, which was used by the Nazis during World War II. The young participants were subjected to classical methods of power abuse, with the purpose of giving them a small glimpse of what it means to be deprived of basic rights and freedoms. 'I did not have any name after I entered the camp. From then on I was only prisoner number 33.'



Cooperation with Piraya Film continued last year's success of 'On a Tightrope' that has been an important medium in informing students about human rights violations taking place in China. The success was followed up by another striking feature on human rights, 'Belarusian Waltz' (see poster above) that tells the incredible story of a Belarusian painter and performance artist, Alexander Pushkin, as he bravely challenges President Lukashenka's authoritarian regime. The film has received impressive reviews throughout Europe. Photo: Piraya Film



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Rafto Foundation www.rafto.no

The 2007 Rafto Prize was awarded to the Indian organisation the *National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)* for their work to protect the rights of Dalits.

Dalits are refused equal access to education and health services, experience harsh discrimination in social and religious life, and are excluded from all but the most menial of jobs.



Of India's one billion citizens, around 167 million are labelled as 'impure', 'outcast' or 'untouchable.' These people have named themselves Dalits, meaning 'the oppressed.' The identity of the Dalit people, and their struggle for dignity and basic human rights, has been formed through thousands of years of humiliation, discrimination, and exclusion.
Photo: Timothy Gill



The 2007 Rafto Prize laureate, the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, represented by Vincent Manoharan (from the left), Dr. Vimal Thorat and Paul Divakar. The prize ceremony at the National Theatre of Bergen on 4 November, 2007.
Photo: Sean Murray



Parsapu Suresh Kumar and Francis Swarna Sabarina play the traditional drum instrument 'dappu', which is an important part of the Dalit culture. Here during the Rafto symposium. Photo: Sean Murray



Panel debate at the Rafto symposium 'We are not Untouchable: The Dalit Struggle for Human Rights.' From the left: Dr. Andrew Wyatt (University of Bristol), Dr. Vimal Thorat, Co-Convenor, Vincent Manoharan, Secretary General, Paul Divakar, Convenor from NCDHR, Dr. Smita Narula (New York University School of Law), Dr. Ashwini Deshpande (University of Delhi). Photo: Sean Murray

Checkpoints 2007

A partnership with the Bergen International Film Festival, which included a new initiative, Checkpoints 2007 consisted of 23 documentaries on human rights issues. The aim of Checkpoints is to use film as a medium to raise awareness about human rights.



On the occasion of the one-year memorial event of the murder of Anna Politkovskaya, a memorial concert and a documentary film on press freedom in Russia were organised. This is from the Human Rights Plaza outside the Rafto House. (see also page 29)
Photo: Daniel Strietzel

EU Turkey Civic Commission (EUTCC)

The Rafto Foundation co-organised the fourth International Conference on EU, Turkey and the Kurds at the European Parliament in Brussels in December 2007. Human rights defenders, writers, academics, lawyers and experts participated. The aim of the EUTCC is to monitor Turkish compliance with EU accession criteria and to promote a peaceful, democratic and long-term solution to the Kurdish issue.



Due to last autumn's series of dramatic events in Burma, showing solidarity and support to the Burmese society in Bergen and abroad, became a main focus for organisations at the Rafto House. Besides the weekly demonstrations for Burma every Saturday, a mass demonstration was organised on 10 December. A photograph of the event was made into a post-card and signed by the people of Bergen. It was sent to General Than Shwe in Burma. Photo: Hans Jørgen Brun





ENGLAND - LONDON

The organisations in the house are *ARTICLE 19*, *Index on Censorship* and *English PEN*. Three other organisations, *The Hay Festival*, *Music in Detention*, and *Privacy International* are also located on the premises, but are not formal members of the house.

Joint projects

Plans for the organisations to join with five other UK organisations are still underway, with plans for the Consortium to further develop in 2008.

In November 2007, *PEN*, *Index* and *Article 19* developed a new approach to monitor the situation in the UK by setting up a high level group of experts responsible for auditing the FoE impact of the government's forthcoming laws, legal amendments, policies or practices.

Organisations in the house worked closely on a number of projects and activities over the year. In February, *English PEN* and *Index on Censorship* joined *Amnesty International* and a number of Armenian organisations in London to pay tribute to murdered Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink. *Article 19*, *Index on Censorship* and *English PEN* drafted several joint letters over the year, including a joint press release expressing concern over proposals to amend the Freedom of Information Act and an open letter and 10-point plan to Gordon Brown, appealing to the incoming Prime Minister to honour his commitments to open government.

ARTICLE 19 (A19)

The year 2007 saw some important achievements for A19 and its partners. Recommendations put forward in A19's legal analyses were used to successfully lobby for improvements in Afghanistan, Cayman Islands, Macedonia, Moldova, Mexico, Kenya, southern Sudan and Thailand. The organisation has also built advocacy support for new

legislation in Bangladesh, Brazil, Iraq, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal, Thailand and Yemen and has successfully put a halt to retrogressive measures aimed at restricting freedom of information legislation in Bulgaria and the UK.

Aside from legal work, A19 undertook a variety of capacity-building and advocacy activities. In December 2007, A19 launched a strategic set of maps and related resources charting defamation legislation and practices across the globe. In Africa, it set up a Centre of Excellence in Media and Broadcasting at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. In Asia, it embarked on a three-year project in Bangladesh on access to information as a tool for poverty empowerment. In Europe, together with Russian partners, it has set up a new organisation, the *Mass Media Defence Centre - Dagestan*, which provides free legal consultation and representation to journalists. In Latin America and the Middle East, it has more than doubled its efforts to respond to threats to freedom of expression advocates and has collectively released some 35 advocacy statements in support of freedom of expression advocates under threat.

www.article19.org

Index on Censorship

In late 2006, *Index on Censorship* welcomed a new editor to the magazine. Jo Glanville's first issue, 'What new labour did for free speech', looked at the climate of free expression in the UK. The magazine featured, among other articles, a series of manifestos asking experts on free speech to say what was needed to improve the state of free expression in the UK. Next the magazine turned its focus to the Middle East and the issue of science and censorship, and 'Cyberspeech' was the last issue of the year, looking at free expression online and featuring writing from Ethiopia, Iran, and an article from the Human Rights House in Vilnius on Belarus.

In spring 2007, a group of eight Iraqi women and a six year old child participated in the Open Shutters project. Using digital photography, the women set out at considerable risk to make deeply personal photo stories of their lives in Iraq. The women's photographs were featured in 'Index' in May, and exhibited in Damascus in late summer, followed by a London exhibition at The Scoop venue on the River Thames in October. There are plans to tour the exhibition in Europe and parts of the Middle East in 2008.

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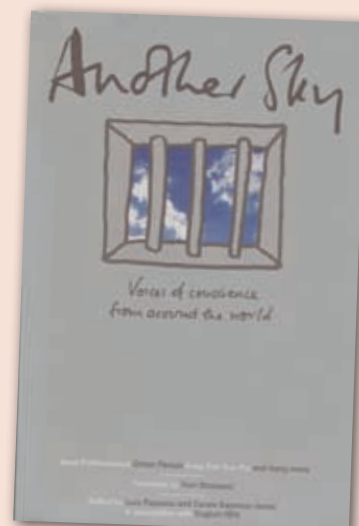




Photograph by Sarab from Baghdad, part of the Open Shutters project.
© Index on Censorship/ Open Shutters



Invitation card for ARTICLE 19's freedom of information event in Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 2007



Cover of *Another Sky: Voices of Conscience from around the World*, edited by Lucy Popescu and Carole Seymour-Jones, launched at the National Theatre, London

Index Arts saw two major projects delivered in 2007. The international festival of homeless arts featured theatre, painting, performance, video installation, and sculpture from Japan, Argentina, Colombia, the Netherlands, and seven other countries. They also launched a website, <http://tenfeetaway.wordpress.com>. Index Art's imagine art after project brought together artists and filmmakers who left their home country and now live in London with those who stayed in their country of origin. Artists from Ethiopia, Serbia, Iran and the UK were among those who participated. The completion of its first stage culminated with an exhibition at Tate Britain in October. www.indexoncensorship.org

English PEN

The year saw a full programme of work across the breadth of *English PEN's* activities. The Writers in Prison programme was characterised by high profile responses to violations of the rights of journalists and writers around the world. During 2007, as part of International PEN's campaign against Insult and Defamation, a number of appeals focused on writers penalised under laws that treat 'insult' and defamation as a criminal rather than a civil offence. An English PEN petition in April called for the abolition of articles in the Turkish Penal Code used to harass and intimidate Turkish writers, and the deputy chair of the group prepared a report on insult and defamation laws in Egypt. *The English PEN* anthology of writing by imprisoned and persecuted writers, *Another Sky: Voices of Conscience from around the World*, was launched in April and successfully promoted at literary festivals around the UK.

The Writers in Translation programme promoted a range of cutting-edge international writers, notably Egyptian Alaa Al-Aswany, author of *The Yacoubian Building*. A total of eight

books were supported in 2006-7, including Samir Kassir's *Being Arab* (winner of the 2007 Index on Censorship Book Award for Freedom of Expression).

PEN's education programme, Readers & Writers, continued to place leading writers face-to-face with some of the UK's most disadvantaged children and adults. In 2007 the programme worked with 28 partner sites across the country, including schools and prisons. www.englishpen.org

Free expression in the UK

Free expression advocates in the United Kingdom continue to focus the majority of their work internationally, turning their attention to the health of free expression in countries with restrictive media laws, repressive governments, or unstable political situations. But issues such as self-censorship, access to information, the right to protest, privacy and the politics of offence continue to command the attention of UK-based freedom of expression organisations. The introduction of the Human Rights Act means that people living in the UK have a right to free speech that is legally enforceable. However, other legislation introduced by the Labour government over the last ten years has seriously impinged on freedom of expression, such as the Terrorism Act, which relates to proscribed organisations, and the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act. The rise in criminal proceedings against some types of Internet use has been at the forefront of critical debate on free speech in the UK, and the perceived link between terrorism and downloading material poses a genuine challenge for those working in this field. Funding for human rights work continues to be precarious and difficult to procure, and though most organisations are forced to work with limited resources and staff, they are still able to achieve positive results.



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – SARAJEVO

The Human Rights House provided space and facilities to support member organisations' joint work, promote the exchange of experiences and communication, and initiate new programmes.

Human Rights Situation

The political and social atmosphere is shaped by delays in the implementation of much-needed reforms and ongoing complicated political relations due to the issues of ethnicity. Despite this, BiH initiated the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union, which introduced possibilities for the acceleration of reform processes, including those aimed at establishing rule of law and respect for human rights and freedoms. Following the announce-

ment of the verdict by the International Court of Justice in the lawsuit of BiH vs. Serbia and Montenegro, ethnic tensions increased. It should be noted that the scheduled reforms of the institution of Ombudsman of



*The Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was not adopted yet.
Photo: Danilo Krstanovic*

*The only step forward made after the Mostar Declaration on the principles of implementation of police reform was initiating the Stabilization and Association Agreement of BiH with the European Union.
Photo: Danilo Krstanovic*



BiH was not completed in 2007, although the final deadline for this was 31 December 2006. The fact that the only institution created to protect human rights in BiH exists only on paper is a source of prolonged and constant frustration and pain. This reflects the authorities' lack of interest in human rights and in the establishment of appropriate mechanisms and institutions for their protection.

Human Rights Activists

In October, there were painful reminders of the period leading up to the bloody events of the early 1990s. Hate speech, intolerance and threats, as well as mass protests and the stirring of ethnic passions, were all reported. The Republika Srpska Prime Minister Milorad Dodik and party officials often verbally attacked journalists and representatives of the independent media and civil society in public and media. These actions deserve the strongest condemnation. They represent a dangerous and serious threat to the fundamental values of democracy and open society.

Women and Society Centre

- Focused on the implementation of gender equality.
- Published and promoted a book 'Gender equality' together with 'Women in Black' from Belgrade, with the aim of raising the public's awareness of the importance of secularism in women's rights. These activities were conducted as democratic and feminist responses to fundamentalism.
- Work on gender sensitive education.

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights

- Explored the state of human rights in local communities across BiH through conducting fact-finding missions in local communities and sent the reports to all involved in the dialogue process, as well as to relevant institutions at higher levels of government.
- Organised human rights schools for youth and public debates on current constitutional provisions and to what extent they take human rights and freedoms into consideration.
- Was a partner in projects dealing with regional cooperation in development and European integration, as well as in the promotion of democratic practices in the Balkans with aims toward improving accountability of governments, participation of citizens and anti-discrimination practices.

www.bh-hchr.org



President of the Board of the House:

Srdjan Dizdarevic, President of the Helsinki Committee in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

Contact: m.pandzic@bh-hcher.org





Both the Helsinki Committee and Women and Society Centre played essential parts in the process of drafting and lobbying for The Law against Discrimination in. Here Nada Ler Sofronic and Srdjan Dizdarevic present The Law against Discrimination for Public.

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

- Provided help for the return of displaced persons and refugees.
- A thematic conference was organised to determine future activities needed for the implementation of the constitutional amendments in BiH. The conference also marked the 10th anniversary of the organisation, and of the initiative for the equality of all people in BiH.
- During the celebration of the Serbian Orthodox Easter and Christmas, the *Serb Civic Council* organised the distribution of aid for families with lower income and from disadvantaged social groups, as well as distributing school equipment to a number of children whose parents could not afford the necessary learning materials.

Association of women (Renaissance)

- Ran the project 'Capacity Building Strengthening in BiH.'
- Organised numerous workshops and lectures to raise awareness among women on issues surrounding breast cancer.
- During October, the International Breast Cancer Awareness month, *Renaissance* organised and was part of various campaigns. www.renansansa.com.ba



Foundation CURE

- Organised three international events in Sarajevo: PitchWise, the First Festival of Women Engaged in Arts included film, music, exhibitions, workshops and performances. Photo: CURE
- Second international event was 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. This is a global campaign initiated by the Centre for Women Global Leadership (NY, USA).



Photo: Danilo Krstanovic



The Legal Aid Department continued rendering free legal aid to citizens. Finding and identifying missing persons has been greatly delayed and constituted a violation of the rights of members of their families.

- Third event was the coordination of V-day that is a global movement to end violence against girls and women, founded by Eve Ensler, author of The Vagina Monologues.
- CURE participated in various street actions organised in cooperation with other groups on 8 March, 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) and 29 November (International Women Human Rights Activists' Day, Food, not Bombs! demonstration). www.fondacijacure.org





MACEDONIA – SKOPJE

The Human Rights House Skopje was established in 2006, when five organisations prioritised joint activities in order to offer an improved service to more clients. By joining the HRH Skopje, organisations committed to the promotion and protection of human rights in the country and abroad, strengthening the position of human rights defenders in Macedonia. The organisations joined the *HRH Network* with the prospect of sharing experiences and initiating new joint programmes to strengthen the position and representation of all member organisations of the HRH Skopje.

Macedonian Women's Rights Centre – Shelter Centre

- In 2007, the Macedonian Women's Rights Centre continued the struggle against domestic violence by opening new free legal aid offices in Macedonia.
- Through several campaigns, their activities focus on breaking the taboo around sexual harassment at work.
- In the Year of Equal Opportunities, three projects were undertaken to raise awareness about equal rights and help bring about the creation of alternative responses to problems of sexual harassment, accepting it as a social phenomenon that involves not only the victims but the whole community as well. www.mwrc.com.mk

First Children's Embassy in the World – Megjashi

- Organised the annual Global Campaign for Education, an activity that is coordinated by Global March Against Child Labour on an international level, under the motto 'JOIN UP Education rights now.'
- The motto is a reminder that education is a compulsory legal obligation and a basic human right, and is intended to prompt officials to fulfil their promises to provide free and compulsory basic education for all people, especially for children. www.megjashi.org.mk

Association for Democratic Initiatives-ADI

- As part of the framework of the project 'Establishment of gender mainstreaming in the work of media, government, police and courts', in 2007 ADI hosted a regional conference to discover what has been done in terms of gender mainstreaming in national institutions after the collapse of communism in transition countries like Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo and Bulgaria. www.adi.org.mk

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in the Republic of Macedonia

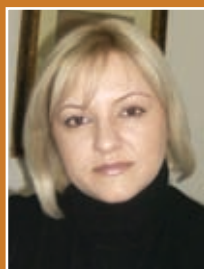
- Works to promote and protect human rights in the Republic of Macedonia.
- Continued monitoring and providing free legal aid to address violations of civil and political rights, in addition to their work implementing educational programmes, for the most part aimed at state institutions (the police, the judiciary, the prison system). www.mhc.org.mk

Movement Against Disability – Polio Plus

- In 2007, the Year of Equal Opportunities, Polio Plus established a coordinating body for information exchange composed of representatives from governmental and non-governmental sectors, as well as experts working in the field of human rights in the Republic of Macedonia. The group's aim was to continue their joint work developing and supporting anti-discrimination legislation and policy in the country.
- A publication laying out a strategic framework for joint action to combat discrimination in Macedonia was promoted.
- Through activities like networking, expert analysis, trainings, study visits, and lobbying, the wider coalition (represented in the coordinative body) aims to achieve the

President of the Executive Board of the Human Rights House Skopje:

Dabeska Daniela, President of the Macedonian Women's Rights Centre – Shelter Centre



Contact:

contact@mwrc.com.mk



Dusko Minovski (left) – State Secretary at the Ministry for Labor and Social policy is a part of the Coordinative body for developing the concept for creation of the anti-discrimination legislation and policy in the country.



Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia meets Polio Plus and discusses the enactment of the Law on protection of the rights and dignity of people with disabilities in Macedonia. This law is in Parliamentary procedure.



adoption of national non-discrimination legislation and its ultimate goal is the creation of a human rights institution. As part of this, a campaign, Next to Each Other – Different but Equal, was launched on 9 December.

www.polioplus.org.mk

Human rights defenders in Macedonia do not face harassment or violence by state bodies and agencies. Most human rights violations are perpetrated in the course of everyday life and also in administrative and judicial systems. Also, in practice, due to the overall social-cultural environment, there are no adequate mechanisms to enable a full implementation of human rights legal provisions. The lack of adequate structures and monitoring procedures make it difficult for citizens to be aware and to protect themselves from any violations of their rights. So human rights organisations in Macedonia are essential tools for the process of protecting human rights in Macedonia.



Macedonian Women's Rights Centre visits the Police Station in Gronongen, Netherlands and had presentation on police units working on cases of Domestic Violence.

Global Action week implemented in Macedonia every year by the Children's Embassy was celebrated with forming a "Chain" in which over 6000 children took part, linking with hands on City Squares in Skopje, Tetovo, Veles, Kumanovo. They all have hats with the motto 'JOIN UP Rights for education now.'



Human Rights House Skopje opens the 6th international NGO fair in Skopje, forum event on topic 'Equal opportunities for all'.



Human Rights House Skopje organizing the Campaign activities in the Year of Equal opportunities of all member organizations.



CROATIA – ZAGREB

Three prominent NGOs decided to establish a Human Rights House in 2001 and have, since 2001, worked closely with the *HRHF* to achieve this aim.

Be active. Be emancipated (B.a.B.e.)

B.a.B.e is a feminist advocacy and lobbying organisation established on 1 April 1994 in order to affirm and implement the rights of women. *B.a.B.e.* lobbies for the recognition and improvement of women's rights, Specific attention to the right to be free from violence, the right to reproductive choice health, with whom and how to raise children, the right to equal and full participation in all aspects of society, especially in leadership roles and important decision-making bodies. www.babe.hr

Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights (CHC)

Involves outstanding public personalities committed to protection and promotion of human rights works on the daily protection of human rights (approximately 2000 new cases, i.e. 3000 to 5000 persons annually). It has five field offices also included in that activity: Eastern Slavonia (Osijek and Vukovar), Karlovac, Knin, Split, and Dubrovnik. Every year schools of human rights for the youth, civil society activists, and future decision-makers take place. Public actions of the Committee are dedicated to sensitising the public to violations of human rights and to advocate for legal norms and improvement of political culture to the benefit of human rights. www.hho.hr

Croatian Law Centre (CLC)

Since its establishment, in 1994, *CLC* has acted as an independent think-tank, gathering legal experts and acting towards general public. It targets vulnerable and marginal groups such as asylum seekers, victims of

trafficking, Roma people, refugees, mentally and physically disabled. *CLC* has a focus on protection and development of human rights, judiciary, public administration and education. It has devoted a significant part of its activities to the project 'Protection of Rights of the Asylum-Seekers in the Republic of Croatia and in the Region.' And to the enactment of a new Law on Asylum and free legal aid to assure that their rights are protected. www.hpc.hr

The initiative for a new legislation against discrimination

As a follow-up to the International Conference on discrimination and anti-discrimination policies that took place in Zagreb in November 2006, under the auspices of the Human Rights House International Network, the 3 NGOs initiated a new legislation against discrimination in Croatia. The HRH members, together with the Serb Democratic Forum and the Centre for Human Rights, formed an informal working group, which developed the basic principles for an anti-discrimination legislation. The principles were communicated to the Government and presented at the roundtable that took place on 27 September. The enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Law can be expected in 2008.

Defenders of human rights in Croatia do not encounter harassment by state bodies and agencies, or violence by intolerant nationalists, as used to be the case until the early part of this decade. However, their appeals on behalf of the victims of violations of human rights are often ignored. Furthermore, the most outspoken are exposed to hate speech in public when they draw attention to the unpleasant truths resulting from the process of redressing the gravest violations of human rights having occurred during the 1990s and the following years. Most human rights violations take place as a part of the everyday functioning (or non-functioning) of public administration, the welfare system, and other systems, which are not capable of guaranteeing civic, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and other human rights. There are many serious violations unresolved, and the defenders who raise them in public are still met with resistance, hate, or public slander. Regarding the overall position of civic activism, organisations dealing with human rights, as well as their donors and sponsors, do not enjoy any kind of tax exemption or other public benefits.

Coordinator: Srđan Dvornik,
Executive Director of the *Croatian
Helsinki Committee*

Contact: hho@hho.hr



Expanding the network

The Human Rights House Network experienced an increased international interest and call for further expansion in 2007. However, in the aftermath of the external evaluation in 2005/2006, a greater focus has been given to internal affairs like reorganising, setting new strategies and plan of actions to reduce our scope and level of activities for a while. The consequence is that the network could not follow up more than a few local invitations in 2007.

Angola

In cooperation with a local coalition of human rights organisations in Angola and the *Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa* (NiZA), HRH Foundation has lobbied for a human rights house, a protection programme and capacity building in Angola. UNHCHR's local office strongly supports the initiative.

In 2007, an abbreviated version of the manual to establish a Human Rights House has been translated into Portuguese, the human rights environment in Luanda has been carefully mapped and a feasibility study has been conducted by NIZA. Different models of a Human Rights House have been discussed locally, and a plan of progress has been agreed to, with a view to have the Human Rights House up and running within three years.

Ukraine

The *Ukrainian Helsinki Union* is a national network of 25 human rights organisations. They have been engaged in both the capacity programme 'Bring international standards home' for training lawyers and human rights defenders in Belarus, and planning of a future human rights house in Ukraine. HRHN had meetings with several representatives from the *Ukrainian Helsinki Union* to elaborate on options for establishing a human rights house.

Geneva

Efforts to establish a Human Rights House in Geneva are progressing, with a funding scheme in place, a plot identified and detailed plans for the House itself under development. The ambition is that a Human Rights House in Geneva will provide the entire HRH Network with new opportunities to lobby and advocate at international level and help accelerate the competence sharing and capacity building.

The Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi has visited the Human Rights House Oslo several times, reporting on the human rights situation in Iran. We are now fundraising for a human rights award in 2008 for the human rights advocates in Iran. See Shirin Ebadi's call for support and protection at page 31.



Afghanistan

A fact-finding mission to Afghanistan was carried out in cooperation with the Norwegian PEN in April. A reference group consisting of three women organisations, one freedom of expression and one network of civil and human rights organisations identified the building of international and regional networks and exchange of knowledge as the core issues to support. Dr. Samay Hamed, a well-known writer, doctor, organiser and composer, acted as coordinator. Top most picture is from one of the mission's official meetings; Elisabeth Eide and the Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Dadfar Spanta. Above, two representatives from the reference group established; Marya Akrami is the Director of the Afghan Women Skills Development Centre and Orzala Ashraf is the Director of the Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children in Afghanistan.



From the left: Dr. Farida Saida (doctor from Herat) Noor Marjan (Afghan Women Skills Development Centre), Shukria Barakzai (Member of Parliament) Deniz Kandiyoti (researcher, School of Oriental African Studies (SOAS), London), Elisabeth Eide (moderator), Jan-Petter Holtedal (Norad/ NMFA) and Masi Sikandari (Aghan Youth Association).



In November, HRHF held a seminar on the women's role in Afghanistan together with the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee and a Network of NGOs focusing on women and Development called Forum for Women and Development. The female human rights defenders from the reference group established in April in Kabul were invited to lead the discussions. A conclusion was made that it is premature to establish a human rights house in Kabul due to the security situation and risk for the defenders. However, the advice is to support already existing networks, like the Afghan Women Network and the Civil Society and Human Rights Network, by engaging in capacity building and exchange of knowledge. The need for establishing links to communities of women in other countries in order to break their historic isolation was emphasized and the Afghan Women's Parliamentary and Civil Society Network was mentioned in particular.

Networking and capacity building: International Law in Advocacy

- The first part of the project, 'Bringing international standards home', was initiated in 2006 and aims to improve implementation of international human rights standards in Belarus.
- Consists of training seminars for lawyers and human rights defenders on application of international provisions in domestic litigations.
- As many as 23 human rights defenders from all regions of Belarus, as well as two young Ukrainian lawyers received theoretical and practical training.
- Experts from Belarusian, Ukrainian and Polish NGOs associated with the *Human Rights House Network* contributed by giving lectures and evaluating the participants.
- Experts from other Belarusian and Czech NGOs and universities lectured on the rights of freedom of expression, associations and assembly.
- Participants prepared legal essays, articles on human rights protection, constitutional complaints and individual communications to the UN Human Rights Committee.
- The first seminar of the course was held in Chernigov in

Ukraine, while the five other seminars were conducted in the Belarusian Human Rights House in Vilnius.

- The human rights defenders and lawyers who completed the course were invited to visit the Council of Europe in March 2008.
- Supported by Development Cooperation Ireland/ Irish MFA, *OSCE/ODIHR*, *Marshall Foundation*, the Czech organisation *Civic Belarus/Transition* and the *Ukrainian Renaissance Foundation*.

Expanding the project

- The Human Rights House Network saw the need for a follow-up for lawyers and attorneys in other CIS countries.
- The framework for the programme 'International Law in Advocacy' was defined in a regional meeting with representatives from Russia, Poland, Belarus, Norway and Ukraine in the Human Rights House in Vilnius in June.
- The European Humanities University in Vilnius is the main partner institution and facilitator for the electronic distance-learning program.



Six seminars were held in Chernigov, Ukraine and at the Belarusian Human Rights House in Vilnius from February to October. The Norwegian Ambassador Steinar Gil attended one of the seminars in June.



Nomination to the Gerd Bucerius Award 'Freie Presse Ost Europa'

- Receiving awards protects the work and lives of human rights defenders by the international attention, recognition and legitimacy it provides. Therefore, the *HRH Network* puts effort into nominating those who contribute the most in defending fundamental freedoms.
- Together with the *Norwegian Helsinki Committee*, *HRHF* nominated the *TURAN Agency* from Azerbaijan and the *Kavkaski Uzel* from Russia to the Gerd Bucerius Award, given by the *Norwegian Freedom of Expression Foundation* and the *German Zeit Stiftung*. All three candidates from Russia, Azerbaijan and Belarus were awarded and took part in the prize ceremony in Oslo in June.
- Andrei Dynko (see left) from the Belarusian newspaper *Nasha Niva* also received the prize. *HRHF*, the *Norwegian PEN*, the *Norwegian Helsinki Committee* and the *Rafto Foundation*, nominated the Belarusian newspaper.



Information

Information continued to be the HRH Network's largest joint project in 2007 because it is essential for:

- Mobilising support.
- Contributing to change.
- Raising awareness about human rights defenders' working conditions and security.

The Network's joint website

www.humanrightshouse.org contains links to and information from member organisations, human rights related news and background information from the countries and regions covered by HRHN.

A considerable technical upgrading of

www.humanrightshouse.org was initiated. The upgraded site will see the introduction of both Norwegian and Russian pages. The new site will be launched by June 2008.

Based on a selection of stories from

www.humanrightshouse.org, five newsletters were distributed to approximately 9000 recipients, including authorities, national, regional and international organisations, media, donors and human rights defenders- and researchers.

Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF)

Secure financial stability for the *Human Rights House Network*

Funding figures for 2007	NOK	Euro
Norwegian MFA	3 650 000	456 250
Fritt Ord	2 050 000	256 250
Marshall Foundation	69 173	8 647
Irish MFA	226 499	28 312
OSSE	14 921	1 865
Donations to Voice of Tibet	2 450 052	306 257
Other income	10 150	1 269
Income	8 470 796	1 058 849
Annual Meeting and Conference in Nairobi	1 320 565	165 071
Networking, Capacity Building, Lobbying, Advocacy and Fundraising	1 488 054	186 007
Information	1 555 137	194 392
Joint Projects	328 421	41 053
Voice of Tibet	2 450 052	306 257
For projects in 2008	1 164 903	145 613
Expenses	8 470 796	1 058 850

Local Human Rights Houses and the *HRH Foundation* produced and facilitated the spreading of statements and appeals to authorities, mainly in relation to violations of freedom of speech, assembly and organization, and the right to be a human rights defender.

All Human Rights Houses recruit and employ a local contact person to facilitate the dissemination of internal and external information.

- The contact persons are employed locally
- HRHF provides their funding and training.
- Contact persons facilitate distribution of statements and appeals on human rights from members of the network to the relevant bodies, and publish these on www.humanrightshouse.org.
- The local contact persons received training in technical, editorial and ethical aspects of web journalism at the work-shops in Belgrade and Vilnius.

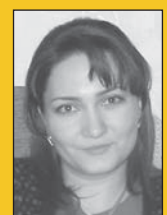


The Rafto Human Rights House in Bergen launched the idea to use the 100th year commemoration of Edvard Grieg's death to hold memorial concerts in honour of Anna Politkovskaja. This was done simultaneously in Moscow, Vilnius, Oslo and Bergen on 7 October, the day she was shot. This is from Moscow.

Contact Persons in 2007:



Bergen
Gunta Venge



Baku
Shahla Ismailova



Moscow
Inna Komar



London
Natasha Schmidt



Nairobi
Martin O. Oluoch



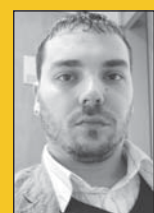
Skopje
Rodna Turnovalieva



Zagreb
Goran Milakovic



Warsaw
Agnieszka Chmielecka



Sarajevo
Mirsad Pandzic



Oslo, editor
Niels Jacob Harbitz

Minsk
for security reasons, this contact person's name and contact details cannot be revealed



Members of the Norwegian Board of HRH Foundation

- **Lars A. Christensen** (Chairperson), Supreme Court Lawyer and Senior Partner of the law firm Wikborg, Rein & Co
- **Karin Dokken**, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Oslo (from mid 2007)
- **Elisabeth Eide**, Associate Professor of Journalism, Oslo University College
- **Bente Erichsen**, Executive Director, Nobel Peace Centre, Chairperson of the Board of Amnesty International Norwegian (until mid 2007)
- **Bernt Hagtvet**, Professor of Political Science, University of Oslo
- **Knut U. Kloster Jr.**
- **Mette Newth**, Author, Illustrator, Translator and Lecturer (until mid 2007)



Lars A. Christensen



Karin Dokken



Elisabeth Eide



Bernt Hagtvet



Knut U. Kloster Jr.

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Administrative Consultant



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Project Manager, East and Horn of Africa / website editor



Nina Luhr
Project Manager, information / network



Liudmila Ulyashyna
Project Coordinator, International Law in Advocacy

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HRHN wishes to thank the following persons associated with the HRH Secretariat in 2007:

- **Marijke Bohm**, Volunteer
- **Agnieszka Cholewinska**, Volunteer
- **Øistein S. Galaen**, IT Consultant, Technical Support
- **Joshua Patras**, Volunteer
- **Daiva Petkeviciute**, Volunteer
- **Ralph Plumert**, Project Assistant
- **Cindy Robles**, Volunteer
- **Lily Sandstrom**, Volunteer
- **Alice Wasonga**, Project Assistant
- **Adisa Zebic**, Volunteer



Shirin Ebadi *Attorney at Law*

September 16, 2007

I, Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Prize winner of 2003, am a human rights defender. In my country, human rights defenders are constantly harassed by the government. I personally have been confined to prison for one of the cases that I have defended. My very good colleagues, Messers Nasser Zarafshan, Abdolfattah Soltani and Mohammad Ali Dadkhah have also been imprisoned by the government in the recent years for having defended political and ideological defendants. At the present time a number of journalists and human rights defenders are in prison.

Approximately five years ago, me and a few of my colleagues founded the Center for Defense of Human Rights. This Center is non-governmental and non-profit.

Our mission is to provide pro bono defense for political and ideological defendants and prepare quarterly reports on the status of Human Rights in Iran. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran, has failed to register our center contrary to the laws that have been passes by the same government and continues to harasses the center. We also continue to perform our duties although we are not registered.

In light of the above, the Human Rights House Network can be very effective in supporting our mission. Through the Human Rights House Network we can convey news of human rights violations in Iran to the rest of the world and we can also reflect the problems that human rights defenders face. We have found our friends and supporters and will work with more confidence in the future. I wish good luck and success for all of those who work for the Human Rights House Network and endorse their activities. The success of the Human Rights House Network is our success.


Shirin Ebadi

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, 2003





Human Rights Houses are working communities where human rights organisations cooperate to support and strengthen human rights. Ideally office facilities are shared.

These local communities are united in an international network called the Human Rights House Network.

The International Advisory Board consists of one member from each region in the Network and is responsible for both strategic development and representation of the Human Rights House Network. Its mandate and composition was formalized in March 2007.

The Network's secretariat is the Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF), located at the Norwegian Human Rights House in Oslo, founded in 1989 (see page 30). The Norwegian Board monitors its work.

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

An external evaluation has concluded that the Human Rights House Network:

- Increases solidarity and moral support between the members.
- Increases visibility for the local human rights organizations.
- Improves service for victims of human rights violations.
- Increases legitimacy and credibility on the national level.
- Improves access to international partners and funding.
- Increases protection and stability for the human rights defenders and their clients.

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Editor: Nina Luhr Design: Hvarings | siri Trykk: Allservice as

