



# ISHR NEWSLETTER

May 2019

## IMPORTANT DATES

**15 May**

International Day of  
Families

**16 May**

International Day of  
Living Together in  
Peace

**21 May**

World Day for  
Cultural Diversity for  
Dialogue and  
Development (UN)

*“Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must — at that moment — become the center of the universe.”*

— Elie Wiesel

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### **We celebrate all those at the frontlines of human rights work, especially our very own!**

Kurdistan and Northern Iraq as well as Ukraine and China are the centers of the universe in this edition of the ISHR Newsletter. As Elie Wiesel famously said in the quotes above, wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race or political views must become the Centre of the universe for all right thinking men and women. We all are called upon to raise our voices to refute injustice and oppression. Not doing so, would be to succumb to the expiration of our own consciences. The Nigerian author and Nobel Prize laureate Wole Soyinka captured it succinctly: “The man dies in him, who keeps silent in the face of tyranny.” Martin Luther King Jr., also had similar position when he contended that “in the end, we will not remember the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends”. This is what the oppressed will forever remember. This is why we put in front of all our actions and aspirations for human rights, the plight of the victims. The victims of human rights violations should never be abandoned in their plight.

*Article continues on next page ...*

This is why this edition opts to celebrate the works and engagements of Katrin Bornmüller, of the ISHR Germany. This edition celebrates in particular, her 10th visit to the refugees in Kurdistan. One edition would be notoriously inadequate to do justice to all she has been to those victims of the Islamic State, and how she has been striving to give them hope, and comfort. We celebrate also Khalil Al Rasho and the great work he is doing for human rights in Nord Irak. We have not forgotten Dr Kerstin Holst, a dentist, Monika Gartner, chemical engineer and Maria Stickel, an ambulance worker, who all are helping the people in those refugee camps with their skills, enterprise and industry.

This edition also gives centre stage to the monitoring of human rights cases being done by the ISHR Ukrainian Section. We thank all of them and urge them not to relent. We also thank Manyan Ng for beaming the searchlight on the human rights violations in China.

We wish you the very best in all your endeavours.

Happy reading!

*Thomas Schirrmacher, Prof. Dr.  
President of the International Council of the ISHR*

## FROM THE SECTIONS

### ISHR Iraq

#### ***Katrin Bornmüller makes her 10th trip to the Refugee Camps in Kurdistan***

On the 13th of April, 2019, Katrin Bornmüller in the company of Muho Boga, flew to Kurdistan Iraq, on her tenth journey to the Refugee Camp there. Her trips to Iraq are a solid part of Katrin Bornmüller's humanitarian work. Her aim has always been to meet as many Islamic State victims as possible and help them with financial aid, hygiene products, domestic goods, medicine and food. Her 10th and most recent trip started on April 4th when she and Muho Boga flew to Kurdistan. Yazidi and engineer Khairo picked them up in Erbil and from there; they made their way through various refugee camps. Various ISHR members accompanied them during this visit.

They visited camp Mamrashan on April 15th where they interviewed victims and provided financial aid. In Camp Khanke they met a family with 8 children that suffer from hepatitis that Katrin Bornmüller supports and other IS victims to sit down and have conversations.



*Katrin Bornmüller with Khalil Al Rasho with some refugees kids in the camp. © IGFM / ISHR*

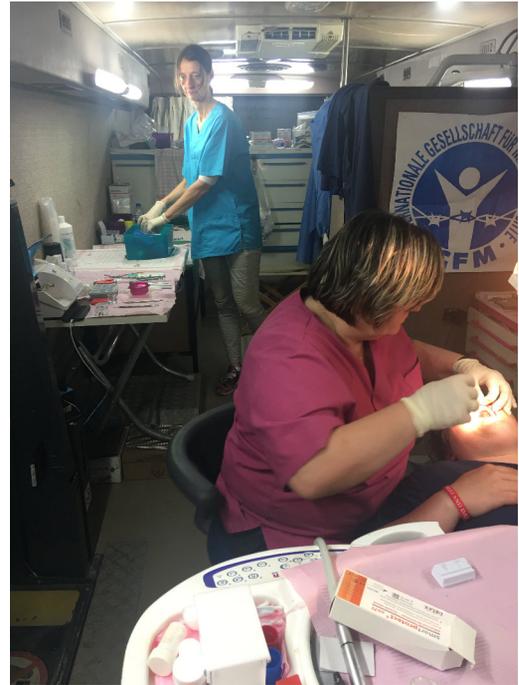
The tragedy caused by the Islamic state only becomes fully understandable when you get in touch with victims and listen to their individual stories. Young girls were kidnapped and abused as sex slaves by IS, impregnated by their abusers and had their children taken away from them. Freeing them is dangerous and risky for everyone involved and only works in some cases.

In this context, giving hope to the people stuck in refugee camps or improvised homes get all the more important. Katrin Bornmüller and her team introduced programs with the goal of long-

term positive impacts, like the sewing courses they visited in Camp Mamrashan. Once a woman completes her sewing training successfully, she receives the sewing machine as a gift which enables her to help her family.

Another important aspect of their work is medical support in which Dr Kerstin Holst, a dentist, Monika Gartner, chemical engineer and Maria Stickel, an ambulance worker play a crucial role. They tour through camps with a mobile dentist office and provide qualified treatment for everyone. This is highly required considering the catastrophic medical facilities in the refugee camps and always met with thankful reactions.

Khalil Al-Rasho accompanied Katrin Bornmüller on most of her trips through Kurdistan and they managed to get an impression of the current situation for the Yazidi population. The problems are diverse and grave but the humanitarian help provided by organisations like the ISHR manages to improve those bit by bit.



Dr. Kerstin Holst providing dental care to Refugees in Kurdistan. © IGFM / ISHR

## ISHR Ukraine

### *Monitoring of the case of Pavel Volkov*

On March 27, 2019, exactly one and a half years after the start of the criminal prosecution, the verdict in the case of journalist Pavel Volkov was announced in the Shevchenko district court of Zaporozhie.

Recall Pavel Volkov was charged with encroachment on the territorial integrity of Ukraine and informational assistance to terrorists through journalistic activities. The case of Pavel Volkov has been monitored by the International Society for Human Rights since August 2018.

Volkov was arrested on September 27, 2017, and spent 13 months in remand prison. Every 60 days, the prosecutor filed a request to extend the measure of restraint in the form of detention, citing the absence of an alternative preventive measure in Ukrainian legislation and the existing risks when changing the measure, without justifying their existence. In the summer-autumn of 2018, 80% of the evidence in the case was declared by the court as apparently inadmissible due to the violation by the prosecution of the Code of Criminal Procedure of Ukraine and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. On October 25, 2018, due to the replacement in the panel of judges, the process of consideration of the case was restarted. However, the court board found it possible to cancel Volkov's measure of restraint. In November 2018, the Swiss international human rights organization "Solidarity Network" sent letters to the government of Ukraine demanding to stop the political persecution of the journalist Volkov and recognized him as a prisoner of conscience.

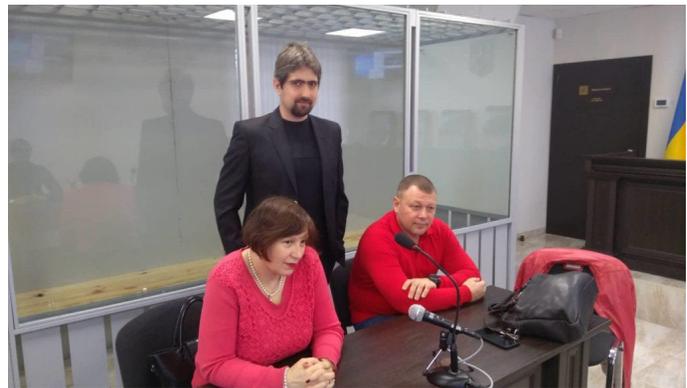
The second consideration of the journalist's case took 5 months. Most of the evidence in the case was found obviously inadmissible, and it turned out that during the defendant's stay in the remand prison on his behalf from his computers, seized during the search, correspondence of a provocative nature with third parties was carried out.

From February 2019, representatives of right-wing radical groups C14 and "National Squads" began to appear at the court sessions. They insulted the defendant, his relatives and lawyers on

national and political grounds, demanded Lynch's trial, entered into arguments with lawyers and repeatedly violated order at sessions.

On March 27, 2019, at the announcement of the verdict, which lasted about three hours, representatives of the ISHR, UN, OSCE were present. The court found Pavel Volkov innocent on all charges. Absolutely all the evidence obtained during the search was inadmissible. The court found that the investigation had violated the legislation of Ukraine and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms since the moment of actual detention. In addition, the court noted that during the court review, the court was not provided with information on the basis of which statements, materials of law enforcement or other agencies and on the basis of what revealed facts of committing or preparing to commit criminal offenses procedural decisions were taken on the start of pre-trial investigation; why the investigation considered it was P. Volkov who was involved in criminal activity, and the prosecution ignored the experts' conclusions that Volkov's journalistic materials do not contain signs of the alleged crimes.

The verdict also states that as a citizen of Ukraine and a journalist Pavel Volkov, according to Art. 34 of the Constitution of Ukraine has the right to carry out his professional activities and express his own subjective thoughts, value judgments, freely express his views and beliefs. The journalistic publications and video files created by him and incriminated to the prosecution in their content do not threaten the interests of national security, territorial integrity or civil order; do not contain calls for unrest or crimes. Therefore, the materials of the journalist are not subject to the restrictions of Part 3 of Art. 34 of the Constitution of Ukraine.



Also, the Constitution of Ukraine proclaimed that public life in Ukraine is based on the principles of political and ideological diversity, which is one of the fundamental principles of life of Ukrainian society, based on the unquestioning recognition of democracy, human and civil rights and freedoms. Accordingly, adherence to the principles of ideological and political pluralism in society is an important guarantee of freedom of thought and speech.

The court notes that censorship is prohibited in Ukraine, the right to openness and availability of information, the freedom to exchange information, and the impossibility of persecution for making judgments are guaranteed. A state cannot assert one or more mandatory ideologies and no one can be prosecuted or punished for adhering to one or another idea or opinion. It is unacceptable for the state to use coercive means to combat freedom of speech, which the ECtHR has repeatedly stated in its decisions on criminalizing journalists ("Lingens v. Austria", "Castells v. Spain", "INFORMATIONSVEREIN LENTIA and others v. Austria", "Jersild v. Denmark", etc.).

The panel of judges agrees with the arguments of the defense about the presence of signs of inadmissibility of the evidence considered, but indicates that this is not decisive for the decision, which is taken by the court in essence, since the established absence of a criminal offense in the actions of the accused is of priority importance for his acquittal on the basis of paragraph 3 of part 1 of article 373 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine. The court decided to acquit Pavel Volkov on charges of committing crimes under Part 2 of Art. 110 and Part 1 of Article 258-3 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, due to the lack of evidence of his guilt. It became known to the members of the ISHR monitoring group that the prosecutor had announced his intention to appeal. Experts from the International Society for Human Rights will continue to monitor this trial in the event of a referral to the court of appeal.

## CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

### China

#### *World Champion in Human Rights Abuses and Deception*

##### **The World Champion in Abuses**

Many people may know that China under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party, CCP, is a world champion in death penalty. The exact number is a state secret. Estimation from NGOs indicate 1200 to 3000 per year, more than the rest of the world. Not everyone knows that the communist regime is also world a champion in human rights abuses.

From the very beginning of the CCP ruling 1949, the history of this regime is a history of persecution. In order to take over the control of economy, the elite of Chinese economy in agriculture and industries were persecuted if they refused to hand over their property in the name of joint venture between the state and private enterprises. They were humiliated in mass rallies, beaten to death, jailed for fake reasons and tortured. Many committed suicide for being humiliated.

CCP wanted absolute power, i.e. not just political and economic power but also the control of culture and faith. Cultural workers, from writers, artists to professors became the target of the persecution. The CCP wanted to replace all these “bad elements” with their trusted comrades. The ten year long tragedy of the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” brought numerous deaths and broken families.



*A peaceful demonstrator beaten by policemen at Tiananmen Square. © Manyan Ng*

The communists suspect that people with faith can be righteous and steadfast and thereby not obedient to take part in the evil deeds of the party. This is why all communist regimes persecute faith groups. CCP not only is no exception but does it thoroughly. Faith groups such as Tibetans Buddhists, Uyghur Muslims, house Christians, Falun Gong and other logically became target of suppression and brutal persecution.

##### **World Champion in Deception**

In 1950 CCP signed an agreement with the Tibetan local government promising autonomy to Tibet and that Dalai Lama could continue his function as before. We all know today how autonomous Tibet is and that Dalai Lama was even expelled by force only a few years later.

CCP promised the whole world when Hong Kong was returned to China, Hong Kong will remain unchanged with a high degree of autonomy. Only 5 years after the hand-over CCP pressured the Hong Kong local government to change the law so that any organization claimed by CCP to be illegal in mainland China, the same organization in Hong Kong would be automatically be illegal. This article 23 was designed mainly to stop Falun Gong practitioners in Hong Kong to carry out clarification campaign to expose the persecution by CCP.

In 2002, Chinese Olympic delegation attending the final debate and voting in Moscow to decide if China should hold the 2008 Olympics, Chinese minister promised the world China would improve human rights and fight hard against human rights violators. Their deception

ended in the speech “a vote for China is a vote for human rights!” Aren’t they qualified for the title World Champion in Deception?

In 1999, the Beijing regime promised the US to abide international rules in trade in order to become member of WTO. They promised and they signed the WTO agreement 2001. China could enjoy the open free market of the world but kept the Chinese market only selectively open. They ignored intellectual property rights, they stole and steal intellectual property and flooded the world with cheap products subsidized heavily by the Chinese state.

How much is a commitment by CCP worth? CCP rules the country by deception. CCP wins the economic war against the free world by mastering the art of deception. With the trillions of dollar they made through their economic warfare they could finance and continue to finance their politics of suppression and persecution.

Human rights have no border. If the democratic free world does not wake up, one day we may find ourselves living in the system described by George Orwell in his book 1984. We shall not think that only the Chinese people are under surveillance. If your computers, smart phones or iPad are connected to any Chinese hardware or software such as Huawei, Lenovo, WeChat, Alibaba, Alipay etc, all information about you will be available for the state security of the People’s Republic. You get also ranked in a social credit system. Watch out before it is too late!



*A demonstration in Hong Kong: Stop the persecution of Falun Gong. © Manyan Ng*

*Manyan Ng  
ISHR Germany*

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