



ISHR NEWSLETTER

February–April 2020 • **Coronavirus Edition**

IMPORTANT DATES

20 February

World Day of Social
Justice

21 March

International Day for
the Elimination of
Racial Discrimination

7 April

World Health Day

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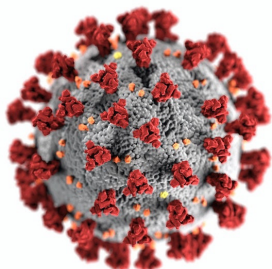
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

As Coronavirus Shuts down our World, It should open up our humanity and our hearts to solidarity with others

Dear ISHR community,

2020 is a year that would be forever remembered in annals of human history. For the first time in peacetime, the global economy was shutdown, to stave the wave of a massive pandemic occasioned by a new strain of the Coronavirus, COVID-19. Many of us were compelled to stay home and work from our home offices. Only the essential workers and services are necessarily open and on the frontlines of this pandemic, to save us from the ravages of this disease. We



Article continues on next page ...

have lost thousands of people across our world to this disease. The hospitals in many countries are overwhelmed. Fear reigns supreme across many societies. The lockdown cuts across every vista of our lives, across countries, and nations and societies.

The threat is real, the fear palpable.

We are grateful to everyone on the frontlines trying to help humanity stave off the ravages of this virus. Our doctors, nurses, hospital workers, emergency workers of every shade and hue, police men, soldiers, sanitary workers, journalists, and everyone helping every society across our world today battle this ominous threat to human existence.

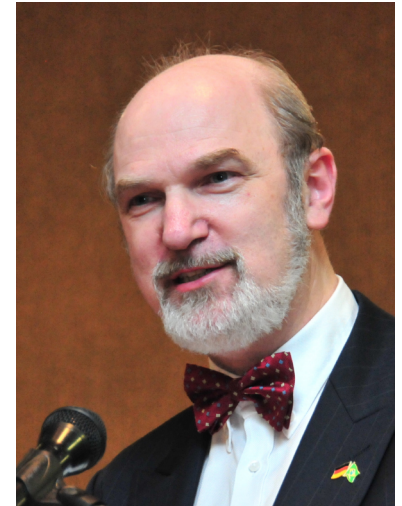
We are grateful also to everyone observing the social distancing, which is a necessary sacrifice if we are to win this battle against COVID-19. We applaud the huge outpouring of human solidarity, we have witnessed across societies, in this time. Neighbors are helping their less able neighbors; showing that we are in this together. Train and lorry drivers sacrifice their time every day to do their job of keeping our shops supplied with the essentials that we need. The Policemen are helping keep us safe. The soldiers have readapted to peacetime duties, helping in setting up emergency hospitals across board. The solidarity is huge and commendable. This shows that we are stronger, when we pull together. We applaud all these and urge that it continues, until we reach safe harbors.

We are not out of the woods yet. We urge all our members and everyone, to observe the directives from the health ministries and their various governments. Social distancing is the demand of the hour. We wish you all strength and discipline in observing this directive, as we stare down this virus. We hope we will all come out of this stronger than we went into it.

Our hearts go out to all those, whose means of livelihood are threatened. We urge the governments to do everything to ensure that help gets to those in need of it. We urge all of us to help our less able and less privileged ones, as much as we can, without breaking the rules social distancing that happens to be the only way of stopping the spread of this virus at the moment.

As we present you voices of some of our sections from their Coronavirus-induced-home offices, we wish you all life, love and happiness.

Happy reading!



Prof. Dr. Thomas Schirrmacher
President of the International Council of the ISHR
Emmanuel Onyemaechi Ogbunwezeh, Ph.D.
Managing Editor

THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

A Timeline of the Coronavirus Pandemic

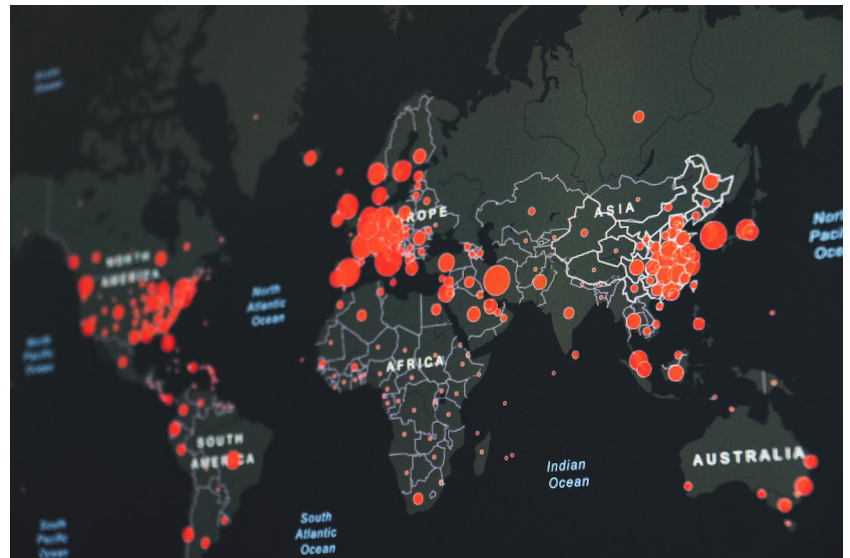
The coronavirus, which surfaced in a Chinese seafood and poultry market late last year, has spread to at least 171 countries, killing more than 38,000 and sickening hundreds of thousands of people in a matter of weeks. The World Health Organization has declared the situation a pandemic.

Here's a timeline of the outbreak so far:

DEC. 31: Chinese authorities treated dozens of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause.

JAN. 11: China reported its first death.

JAN. 20: Other countries, including the United States, confirmed cases.



JAN. 23: Wuhan, a city of more than 11 million, was cut off by the Chinese authorities.

JAN. 30: The W.H.O. declared a global health emergency.

JAN. 31: The Trump administration restricted travel from China.

FEB. 02: The first coronavirus death was reported outside China.

FEB. 05: A cruise ship in Japan quarantined thousands.

FEB. 07: A Chinese doctor who tried to raise the alarm died.

FEB. 11: The disease the virus causes got a new name.

FEB. 13: There were more than 14,000 new cases in Hubei Province.

FEB. 14: France announces the first coronavirus death in Europe.

FEB. 17: Chinese officials draft legislation to curb the practice of eating wildlife.

FEB. 19: Hundreds leave the quarantined cruise ship.

FEB. 21: A secretive church is linked to the outbreak in South Korea.

FEB. 21: The virus appears in Iran from an unknown source.

FEB. 23: Italy sees major surge in coronavirus cases and officials lock down towns.

FEB. 24: The Trump administration asks Congress for \$1.25 billion for coronavirus response.

FEB. 24: Iran emerges as a second focus point of the virus.

FEB. 26: Latin America reports its first coronavirus case.

FEB. 28: The number of infections in Europe spikes.

FEB. 28: Sub-Saharan Africa records its first infection.

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, confirmed its first case of coronavirus on Feb. 28. The patient was an Italian citizen who had returned to Lagos from Milan.

FEB. 29: The United States records its first coronavirus death and announces travel restrictions.

MARCH 03: U.S. officials approve widespread coronavirus testing.

MARCH 11: President Trump blocks most visitors from continental Europe.

MARCH 13: President Trump declares a national emergency.

MARCH 16: Latin America begins to feel the effects of the virus.

MARCH 17: France imposes a nationwide lockdown.

MARCH 17: The E.U. bars most travelers from outside the bloc for 30 days.

MARCH 19: For the first time, China reports zero local infections.

MARCH 21: Companies move to produce medical supplies.

MARCH 21: Hawaii's governor orders mandatory 14-day quarantine to arriving visitors and residents.

MARCH 23: Prime Minister Boris Johnson locks Britain down.

MARCH 24: The Tokyo Olympics delayed until 2021.

MARCH 24: India, a country of 1.3 billion, announces a 21-day lockdown.

MARCH 26: The United States leads the world in confirmed coronavirus cases.

MARCH 27: Trump signs coronavirus stimulus bill into law.

MARCH 28: The C.D.C. issues a travel advisory for the New York region.

MARCH 30: More states issue stay-at-home directives.

Culled from the New York Times. For a more exhaustive timeline, see:

<https://www.nytimes.com/article/coronavirus-timeline.html>

China's handling of the Corona Crises

ISHR is worried that Hidden case numbers, could endanger people worldwide

In many countries around the world, the number of cases of Covid-19 patients is rising rapidly every day. Official statistics from the People's Republic of China, however, announced today, for the first time since the outbreak of the coronavirus in December 2019, that no new local infections have been recorded nationwide. Experts, however, still assume that the number of unreported cases is high, partly due to a recent change in the way the Chinese authorities count the number of infected persons, according to the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR).

In the wake of the spreading corona virus, the Chinese government has decreed draconian measures and largely sealed off Hubei province from the outside world. Measures such as driving bans or the sealing off of entire cities appear to be effective at first glance: The official statistics of the People's Republic show decreasing case numbers. Today, no further people are said to have been infected with Corona. Last week, Chinese government circles also hinted that the isolation of Hubei province could soon be over. The sixteen temporary corona hospitals were closed again, according to the Xinhua news agency of the Chinese government.



China's change in counting the infected

On the other hand, experts expect a high number of Covid-19-infected persons in China to remain unreported, because a change in the counting method of infected patients, which was introduced by the Chinese authorities in mid-February, led to a reduction in infections and deaths in government statistics. As a result, people who do not show symptoms, but who have been diagnosed as infected, are not included in the statistics, but are recorded elsewhere. Also, clinical diagnoses are not recorded statistically, as Chinese doctors only determine whether Covid-19 is present based on symptoms and a patient's history, and essential DNA testing is often omitted.

Chinese civil rights activist criticizes China's policy of cover-up

The People's Republic of China's handling of the coronavirus crisis has so far been characterized by numerous cover-ups, criticizes former political prisoner and Chinese civil rights activist Wei Jingsheng. "The rapid development and spread of the Wuhan virus in its initial phase was the result of the cover-up of the communist regime, which was carried out over a period of two months," criticises the civil rights activist, who is now based in the USA. He thus refers to the publication of a speech by Xi Jinping, which proved that the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party already knew about the novel corona virus at the beginning of January. It was not until two weeks later that he made a public statement.

Fast, transparent, successful: Taiwan's democratically legitimized corona policy

At an information conference on 13 March at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taipei, representatives of diplomatic and international organizations from over 60 countries and territories of Taiwan met to evaluate the efforts made so far to combat the coronavirus. One goal was to create transparency and learn more about the country's experience in order to further contain the spread of the epidemic. Health Minister Chen Shih-chung explained why Taiwan has relatively few cases of infection despite its geographical proximity to China. Compared to the People's Republic, Taiwan reacted quickly and, for example, has been conducting inspections of flights from the Chinese city of Wuhan since December 31, 2019.

Nigeria

COVID-19 and Leadership Deficit in Nigeria

There is no better warning about the growing confusion that seems to be gradually beclouding the federal government's response to the coronavirus challenge than the belief it betrayed last week that, perhaps, all it needs to calm the fears and apprehensions of Nigerians about its ability to halt the spread of the virus is to reel out a catalogue of activities President Buhari was said to have undertaken so far concerning the pestilence, whether the people felt their impact or not.

Now, if your family is starving badly, do you solve the rumbling signs of biting hunger in their stomach with some wild tales of the efforts deployed by you so far to feed them, or just keep quiet, give them food, and they will see and feel for themselves that you have played your role responsively and effectively? Or if you must talk, tell them something you have done whose benefits they can readily verify and identify with.

Indeed, some Nigerians are beginning to achieve the conviction that there must be something about being in government in this country that seems to diminish the reasoning ability of people once they get in there and deprives them of the capacity to realize when they have stopped making sense or even become downright annoying. This is very pathetic.

And so, last week, presidential spokesperson, Mr. Femi Adesina, issued a document entitled: "*COVID-19: What President Buhari Has Done And Is Doing.*" And, I suppose that with the release of that handout, the virus immediately received a deadly blow and vanished from the country! Aren't we so blessed? Why then are Nigerians not on the streets celebrating the unprecedented feat?

A prominent item on Mr. Adesina's list is the president's March 29 broadcast. And what exactly did the broadcast achieve? The two things I can readily remember now is that Gen Buhari had announced the continuation of the school feeding programme for pupils who are all at home now due to the closure of schools as part of the efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus. Probably, nobody remembered to inform him and his speech writers that school children were on compulsory holidays, or are they going to send the food to them in their homes? Or, perhaps, somebody is trying to find a justification for the billions of naira we will be informed later was spent on the exercise?

Also, the president proclaimed the lockdown of Lagos and Ogun states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). And when he was through, he returned to his hideout – where only a few privileged eyes and ears see and hear from him, and then come out to tell us what they think he has said or done.

Now, what exactly was the lockdown meant to achieve? Okay, as social interactions are reduced, the chances of spreading the virus decrease. Yes, but what else? Has anyone seen any evidence that there were any plans to use the stay-at-home period to access the people and step up medical tests to determine how many people have become infected with the virus and how they could be attended to?

The government that was boasting that it was “adequately prepared” to tackle the virus was later to prove when the virus eventually arrived that it was only making empty claims as usual. A country of 200 million people has yet to demonstrate any capacity to test even a reasonable fraction of one percent of her population. And somebody is publishing a document to tell us what the president was supposed to have done or is doing. As if such boring tales will remove the cloud of gloom hovering over Nigeria?

Again, in a country where electric power is just an unaffordable luxury for many, how can a leader just lock down some states and return to his hideout to continue his “vacation” that was rudely interrupted by the loud, persistent and widespread demands that he should address his country even though some other presidents were doing daily briefings and leading the war against the virus from the front? As the markets closed and movements became restricted, how are those who could afford to buy and stock food items at home preserve them without electric power?

What of the greater population which depend on daily earnings for their survival? What is the government’s plan for them? Okay, we are hearing of palliatives that have been extended to this category of people and the billions of naira that have already been transferred to their accounts? Now, who has encountered the happy recipients of the twenty thousand naira (N20,000) said to have been given to each of them? Are there really existing data showing the social and economic status of every Nigerian which is in the possession of the authorities? So, all the “poor and vulnerable” Nigerians now have bank accounts whose details are known to the government? So, why then are too many Nigerians very suspicious of these claims as shown in their social media comments? And why is such a rare display of kindness by this government not being celebrated? Or have the funds (if indeed any were shared) ended up in the hands of the same people who have more than enough to need them while those who are genuinely deprived remain terribly famished?



Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari © Chatham House CC BY 2.0

Already, the biting hunger out there is forcing a growing number of people to defy the no-movement decree and soon, the whole effort might be defeated, and the country will return to square one. Information Minister, Mr. Lai Mohammed, is threatening that the lockdown may be extended if Nigerians fail to behave themselves. But what he should rather have done is to hasten to school himself to realize that there is always a price to pay when leaders leave the country they claim to be governing in great disarray only to suddenly wake up when there is an emergency to grope for fix-quick solutions.

A few days after the president's broadcast (that is, Tuesday, March 31), *Daily Independent* carried a front page lead story about 26 Americans who came into the country through the Murtala Mohammed International Airport and headed to Calabar without being screened. Now, who cleared their trip to the country and why were there no health officials available to screen them and ensure they were quarantined for 14 days before being allowed to fly to Calabar? Is it because they are Americans or clients of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) or both? Does that automatically exempt any of them from being a carrier of the virus which is presently ravaging their own country? What kind of government claims to be fighting a virus with one hand and using the other hand to be undermining the efforts being deployed to contain it?

Okay, the Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire, has just announced that an 18-man Chinese team of medical "experts" will soon arrive the country to "assist" Nigeria in the fight against the coronavirus. Now, is it the federal government that asked China for help or was it China that volunteered their assistance? Indeed many Nigerians are vehemently opposed to this gesture at this time. Our own local medical experts have not shown any signs of being overburdened by the work, so what difference are these 18 Chinese doctors and nurses going to make? Will they, like the 26 privileged Americans, also be given express entry into the country or will they be isolated for 14 days as should be the case, before they would be allowed to start rendering their "assistance"?

Do we really need this Chinese gift now or is it that the government lacks the liver to politely decline their offer of help, despite the widespread apprehension among the citizenry about their involvement (since many Nigerians, harbour strong fears that the gesture might turn out a Greek gift)? Even the umbrella body of Nigerian doctors, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), has come out to strongly oppose the coming of the Chinese medical team. Is it that our government is too intimidated to say NO to China's offer probably because it has yoked itself so much with crushing debts due to its excessive borrowings from them – debts, whose positive effects on Nigerian lives many are yet to see?

I raise these points because, although, Nigeria has recorded one of the lowest deaths from coronavirus, it was the stubborn refusal of the government to close our borders when it became very necessary and urgent (and despite calls from well-meaning Nigerians) that led to the explosion in the number of confirmed cases that the country has recorded today. In saner climes, the government should have profusely apologized for that terrible miscalculation that is costing the nation so much now. But it now has another opportunity now to gratify the yearning of Nigerians and reject the Chinese offer even if it is well-meaning and the fears about it are misplaced.

Now, what lessons is the government taking away from the scourge of coronavirus? Will they see the need to equip our hospitals this time and upgrade at least few of them to world standard

now that they have realized the folly of always waiting to use public funds to send themselves and their families abroad to treat even minor ailments? For the first time in Nigeria, the naïve and largely misguided Nigerian leaders have found out that it is not always safe to seek solutions for health challenges outside the country and that there is after all no place like home. This is hoping that the lesson will endure and be redemptive.

**Ugochukwu Ejinkeonye is a Nigerian journalist and writer (scruples2006@yahoo.com)*

APPEALS

Northern Iraq

ISHR's Appeal to Refugees in the Camps in Northern Iraq

We are grateful to our indefatigable colleagues, Mr. Khalil Al Rasho and Mrs. Katrin Bornmüller for the great work they have been doing for humanity and the ISHR in the refugee camps in Northern Iraq. We are grateful for this appeal, directed at the refugees in those camps, aimed at halting the spread of the Coronavirus in those places. Their appeal received a wide resonance in Kurdistan. Here is a reproduction of that appeal:

Appeal to all people in the camps

Good afternoon dear everyone,

We as the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) have been working in the camps for about 5 years. Today we do not have the possibility to be there, so we appeal to you here via social media, this is our task. As we everyone has already noticed, the Coronavirus is a dangerous virus. It spreads like wildfire. If a population is affected, then many will be infected before anyone notices. At the moment I am in Frankfurt, and here about 100 people already infected, 2 of them dead. God sees us all, it is possible that I will be affected by it and it may cost me my life. Everyone should feel individually responsible to pass on this message.

As we see it, the virus has spread very much, in Germany, Italy, Spain, France etc. It is not possible to list them all individually; even Iraq and Kurdistan are affected. The healthcare systems in the above mentioned countries are very good. The same cannot be said about the refugee camps. Compounding the problem is the fact that, if one person tests positive, it does not mean that he is the only one who is infected. He can at least infect some others.

The virus can be transmitted through nasal and oral droplets; and infected people can only begin to show the symptoms after about 2 weeks. During this time the virus has spread in the lungs.

On 1th of March, 2020 the ISHR Annual General Meeting took place. We had a lot of contact to other people. At the moment we are in some of self-isolation, and all pay attention to further contacts to others until the end of the month. Even to my family I observe self-isolation and keep my distance. It is sad to note that many of our people in the refugee camps don't take this issue seriously. As long as some of them are not affected by it themselves, they will not take the whole thing seriously.

At this point I ask all of them to take this issue seriously, and to pay attention to hygiene, both for themselves and for their children, environment etc. Further contacts with others should be limited to the barest minimum. Visits are not recommended at this time, nor are group meetings. Avoid cafes and bars. Funerals are also to be avoided; A lot of these things could also be done by telephone.

If someone sets a high value on work or wages, the person should also think of the whole world. Health should be a factor that comes first. I urge you all to observe the social distancing and self-isolation, which are all designed to help us defeat this disease. There will be no lack of food during this time. Collaborating with the government is very important in these times.

Today I was contacted by phone and I informed that the police discovered some holes in the fences, which were being used as entrances and exits for some. These have been sealed. I would like to personally thank the police, the administration and the health staff. This is an indication that the government takes care of you. Such was also the case in Erbil. Some people felt that being quarantined was an act of discrimination. I want to tell all of you, that there is no one who is against you, or who would want to discriminate against you at this time. I urge us all to look at the positive side of what the government is doing now, be it curfew, closing of public shops etc. They are all designed towards keeping us safe, and saving us from the ravages of this virus.

One can never overemphasize the fact that this virus is dangerous. This is like a time bomb in the house of every family that has 20 members; you never know when it will go off. We urge you all to be very careful, take care of yourself and other people. We are all individually and collectively responsible for all of us. We all have to be very attentive. Over here in our office in Frankfurt for example, only 2 out of 10 people here work daily; and we also stay in our offices.

So far, there is no known treatment or vaccine. Until now, organizations have supported you, but this will not be the case in this situation. Neither the wealth nor the social status is important here, the virus is no respecter of wealth or status. It also does not discriminate. It can be life-threatening for everyone, but most especially for people with pre-existing conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, etc.

My last request to all of you is that everyone should take care of their own families and take this issue seriously. We pray to God that it will end as soon as possible. I wish this for the whole world.

I thank all of you, as you heed this advice.

*Khalil Al Rasha and Katrin Bornmüller
ISHR, Germany*

Appeal to Erdogan

The ISHR and the GFBV and many other groups and individuals jointly co-authored a letter of appeal, to the Turkish President, Mr. Erdogan, the entire Turkish government and all the members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM).

In the letter, they directed an urgent appeal to Mr. Erdogan, and the Turkish government to grant immediate amnesty to all political prisoners in Turkey.

Below is a copy of the letter for your information!



For human rights. Worldwide.



Society for
Threatened Peoples

06.04.2020

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Human Rights Organization
with consultative status at
the UN ECOSOC and with
participatory status at the
Council of Europe

Covid-19: Amnesty for political prisoners

Appeal to the President of the Republic of Turkey, the entire Turkish Government, and to all members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM)

Dear Mr. President, dear Sirs and Madams,

The Society for Threatened Peoples (STP), the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR), and several other signatories are sending you this appeal to urge you to release all political prisoners and prisoners on remand from custody immediately.

Prisoners are particularly at risk due to the Covid 19 pandemic – which is affecting more and more people also in Turkey – as they live in extremely cramped and often unhygienic conditions in the prisons, so that it is usually impossible for them to maintain a necessary safe distance and follow the hygiene rules. Their access to medical care is limited as well. If there was a disease outbreak in a prison, countless lives would be in danger.

We welcome the fact that the Turkish Government is planning to release up to 100,000 prisoners. However, the plans do not include a release of those detained under the anti-terrorism laws, prisoners on remand, or convicts with pending appeal proceedings.

This includes imprisoned journalists, writers, human rights activists, politicians, mayors and lawyers. However, persons imprisoned for political reasons should be released from prison as well.

The tens of thousands of political prisoners in Turkey would not be of any danger if they were to be set free. On the contrary, an amnesty could – at this time, in the face of such a monumental challenge – work as a sign of reconciliation and solidarity between all ethnic groups. In freedom, these people could make an important contribution to strengthening the promoting public health in the country.

At the same time, this measure would relieve pressure on the judicial system. There would be space available in the prisons, allow the remaining prisoners to observe social distancing, thus perhaps saving lives, and would also help to keep the security personnel safe. A humanitarian catastrophe could be averted. On the part of the Turkish state, this would free resources that are urgently needed to ensure sufficient healthcare for the society in Turkey during the coming months.

Please release all political prisoners from the prisons! In doing so, you are making an important contribution to the well-being of all people in Turkey.

With kind regards,

Martin Lessenthin, Spokesman of the Board of the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR)

Ulrich Delius, Director of the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP)

Donations Account

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IBAN: DE07 2512 0510 0000 5060 70
BIC: BFSWDE33HAN

Business Account

Sparkasse Göttingen
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For human rights. Worldwide.



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Human Rights Organization
with consultative status at
the UN ECOSOC and with
participatory status at the
Council of Europe

The appeal is supported by:

- Albrecht Kieser, journalist, Cologne.
- Alevi Cultural Center Cologne-Porz and surroundings.
- Ali Bostanci, teacher, Neuss.
- Ali Zülfikar, Art / Painting, Cologne.
- Armanc Nêrweyî, journalist, Berlin.
- Bayram Ayaz, writer, Bonn.
- Berivan Aymaz, Member of Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia, Alliance 90 / The Greens.
- Clemens Ronnefeldt, consultant for peace issues at the German branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.
- Democratic Social Center of the Kurds, Cologne.
- Dogan Akhanli, German-Turkish writer, Berlin.
- Dr. Gisela Penteker, Turkey representative for IPPNW.
- DR. H.C. HERBERT SCHMALSTIEG, retired mayor that of the Lower Saxony state capital Hanover.
- Erkan Pehlivan, journalist, Frankfurt am Main.
- Father Wolfgang Jungheim, Jesuitenplatz 4, 56068 Koblenz.
- Fatih Akin, film director, screenwriter, actor and producer, Hamburg.
- Faysal Dagli, German-Kurdish journalist, Hamburg.
- Heidi Merk, former Minister of Justice of Lower Saxony.
- International Journalists Association, Offenbach.
- Jazyza Shahin, journalist, Berlin.
- Jürgen Grässlin, Federal Spokesman for the German Peace Society - United Opponents of Military Service (DFG-VK).
- Kimiea Shahverdi, pharmacist, Hürth.
- Kurdish Culture and Education Center, Cologne.
- Memo Sahin, managing director of the dialogue group "The time has come for a political solution in the conflict between Turks and Kurds", Cologne.
- Metin Incesu, Chairman, NAVEND - Center for Kurdish Studies, Bonn.
- Nevin Kamilagaoglu and Hüseyin Mat, Co-Chair of the Alevi Union Europe.
- Prof. Dr. h.c. İsmail Çoban (visual artist), Wuppertal.
- Şakir Bilgin, writer, Cologne.
- Şêro Zeidan, activist, Berlin.
- Şivan Perwer, Kurdish artist, musician and songwriter, Bonn.
- Süleyman Ateş, pensioner, Cologne.
- Vartan Lulukjan, restaurant manager, Cologne.
- Vasilis Pavegos, employee, Cologne.

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BIC: NOLADE21GOE

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under VR 1804



VOICES FROM THE LOCKDOWN

We got some emails from our members across various countries, giving us all a shout out, with an inkling into what their situations at those frontlines look like. Below is a reproduction of some of those emails. They are to encourage us all.

Spain

From Spain, the epicenter, writes ISHR member in Spain, Ida Sufi that our Solidarity should extend to those invisible to the system!

She writes:

Hello Everyone,

As ISHR Spain 02/04/2020 is the third day of the bank of food and clothes campaign we are running aiming to help people in need as a result of the Coronavirus situation.

There are a lot of people that before this situation were working in the informal labor market and as a result, will face a very difficult situation during the rest of the months because it will be hard to restart the economy of our countries.

The government is taking measures to help people with different kinds of subsidies but it will be unreachable for the people that are “invisible in the social and health system.”

So it would be very necessary for the help of each other and overcome this situation.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Enerida

Australia

From Australia, writes the ISHR member Marie Gerrard, thus:

Dear ISHR Community,

Australia is currently in lock down like the rest of the world. At this stage the numbers of this infected with Covid-19 is still relatively low and many of those infected are either travelers or have had contact with travelers. The numbers are however rising steeply.

From a human rights angle I believe we should be concentrating on the welfare of our susceptible populations both locally and internationally. Many countries in our region have little ability to practice social distancing. Many country health systems are very vulnerable to becoming overwhelmed. The people of these countries should not be overlooked while we deal with our own local crisis. Especially vulnerable will be the very large numbers of refugees from war living in totally inadequate accommodation.

It is also important to look to the future particularly as many countries are passing laws to deal with disaster legislation and financial management. It is important that we go forward into a fairer future. It could be an opportunity to build an economy that will give everyone a safer and more equal future.

Marie Gerrard

Kenya

From Kenya, writes Bishop Kimani as follows:

We need help!!!

Dear brothers and Sisters in ISHR fraternity,

We are all fine God has kept us protected. The Coronavirus has made life very difficult in Kenya. All school has been closed as protection measures. There is a daily curfew from 7pm to 5am, and people as asked to stay indoors at home, and keep clean by washing their hands often, social distancing, and no shaking of hands to avoid spread of the virus. The Government is trying very hard to disinfect markets, bus stages, streets, educating the citizens of the way forward, etc.

However, we are indoors and following the Governments instructions, not to congregate in any in form of assembly, church, or otherwise meeting in groups. This is good because lives will be saved. With this epidemic many people are suffering lack of essential commodities, hence hunger, as many families would sleep without food.

Please let me know whether the ISHR International Community has some support to offer. I make this appeal to the Bishop, who is the Current President of ISHR.

Mr. Karl Haffen has my bank account and if not available with him, I can send to the Bishop the president. We need some money that can buy food stuffs.

God bless you with Isaiah 26:20–21.

Yours in Christ,

*Hon. Bishop Joseph K. Kimani
National Chairman,
ISHR - Kenya Section,
P.O. Box 10096,
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Unless otherwise stated, the photos in this issue are taken from unsplash.com.

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