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International Human Rights **I H R E C** Education Consortium

IHREC Board

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Rita Maran - California
Michael McGowan – New Brunswick
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Reetta Toivanen - Finland

From the Secretariat

Message Posted April 2009

Recent IHREC Activities

Dear IHREC members,

It has been too long since I have sent a message to the membership. While the year to date has been extremely active with extensive travel, writing, and lecturing there is little excuse for this delay.

In October (2008) the Executive Board met in Utica to discuss the Consortium's future.

Later in this message I will address the issues that must be resolved in the coming months before the present Board's term ends in June.

In December, in honor of the Sixtieth Anniversary of the UDHR, several Consortium members including *Stephen Marks* (Harvard School of Public Health), participated in a seminar sponsored by the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute

(FERI) in Hyde Park New York. Efforts were made to prepare a memo for the then new U.S. leadership suggesting a human rights agenda for the Obama administration.

It should also be noted that an earlier visit made to Hyde Park with **Bert Lockwood** resulted in an agreement for the preparation of a new book on the future of the UDHR beyond its Sixtieth anniversary. Plans are now being completed for a group of contributors to present topic proposals to the editors.



European Events

After attending a conference on Genocide held at the University of Sheffield (UK), in January, I participated in a workshop arranged by **Reetta Toivanen** (IHREC Board member, University of Helsinki) and her colleagues of the **POGA network (The Language Survival Network)**. This group of linguists and human rights activists is involved in the effort to preserve threatened language. A year ago we met in Russia and we continued this effort by reconvening in Inari, (Lapland), Finland. Meeting at the Sami Cultural Central, the group began plans to draft a book on linguistic and minority rights and agreed to present drafts of chapter at another meeting to be held early 2010.



From Lapland I traveled to Helsinki and met with the IHREC members of the **University of Helsinki (Department of Applied Sciences of Education)**. In addition to having discussions as to the status of human rights education with **Eero Salmenkivi** we met with his graduate student about her human rights education research, and had a talk with education students preparing to teach pre-school children in a cross cultural setting. Discussion was held with the Dean of the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, Patrik Scheinin, as to the importance of human rights education.

While in Finland I met with the staff and faculty of the **Institute for Human Rights at Åbo Akademi**. In addition to discussions as their continuing efforts I had the

opportunity to lecture and hold discussions with their human rights students. We also discussed the possibility of a regional IHREC meeting in the near future to be held in Turku.

From Finland I went on to Tallinn, Estonia, where Consortium member **Merle Haruoja**, *Estonian Institute for Human Rights*, e-mail: info@eihr.ee, hosted a meeting of human rights educators. In attendance was **Aleksandr Aidarov**, Office of the Minister of Population and Ethnic Affairs, **Marianne Meiorg and Kari Käsper** (Human Rights Centre) and **Maret Haruoja**, volunteer for Estonian Institute for Human Rights. It is apparent that considerable effort has been done in preparing human rights courses for university teaching. The group expressed interest in joining with human rights educators in the Baltic region to share experiences and to jointly promote human rights education.

A meeting was held with the legal staff of the Estonian Office of the Chancellor of Justice in Tallinn. After a presentation as to the importance of human rights education an extensive exchange of views as to the important human rights issues was held.

India

The *Justice and Peace Commission* (JPC, Mumbai) under the leadership of IHREC Board member **Allwyn D'Silva**, human rights lawyer **Shweta Shalini**, along with the JPC staff arranged an extensive human rights education program for February and March 2009.

Mumbai

A workshop on *Custodial Torture and Violence* (sponsored by the *JPC*) for human rights advocates was held from 17-19 February at St. Pius College, Mumbai. The organizers arranged for Indian experts, advocates and lawyers to present material and discuss strategies to address a situation where torture and cruel and inhuman treatment is epidemic. Participants were representatives of a variety of NGOs from India and Sri Lanka. This intensive workshop was well received and was it felt by the organizers and participants to be an important step in eradicating practices that are contrary to human rights. An important outcome of the workshop was a new IHREC member, **Father Nandana Manatunga**, Kandy, Sri Lanka, suggested that a similar workshop be held this coming summer for human rights lawyers and advocates.



IHREC member and coordinator for the *Mumbai Initiative for Human Rights Education (MIHRE)*, **Bella Das**, arranged a meeting with the students and faculty of the

Vile Parle Law School. The half day session was an engaging interchange with students many of whom are enrolled in human rights courses. Subsequent to the meeting a planning session was held among *MIHRE* members. Clearly the MIHRE has become an important player in expanding the teaching of human rights in Mumbai and has become an example for other regions in India.

IHREC member *Antony Dias*, a member of the St. Xavier College faculty arranged for me to give a presentation for MBA students entitled- "*The Corporate Actor's Duty to Protect Human Dignity- Human Rights Issues for Business*". Dr. Dias who has previously lectured on environmental issues at Utica College (Spring 2008) is active in encouraging business students to address contemporary issues such as global warming. Utica College has accepted one of St. Xabier's MBA students to study human rights and business in the Fall of 2009.

Ahmedabad

I joined *Allwyn D'Silva* in participating in another two day workshop on Torture, held at the *Centre for Human Rights, Justice and Peace*, Ahmedabad. This workshop organized by Director *Fr. Cedric Prakash* generated considerable interest with a call for further action to address the problems of custodial violence that is clearly a problem in the Gujarat region. Fr. Cedric indicated a keen interest in joining with other Indian human rights advocates in coordinating in a national effort to eradicate the practice of torture and other cruel and inhuman treatment that is so problematic for India.

Goa

In Goa a Human Rights Seminar was held for local advocates at the Institute Piedade, Panjim. In attendance were human rights advocates from the region. Of particular interest to the group were the human rights problems associated with environmental and development issues. Many of the human rights problems in Goa deal with India's economic goals to develop tourism. Governmental projects and policies have impacted the local people with many being displaced for either environmental concerns or for the development of the tourist industry.

Another concern for the people of Goa is the large number of economic refugees who have come to the region from other parts of India seeking employment. Clearly the human rights issues are complex and require considerable effort on the part of the human rights community. Those in attendance at the workshop shared experiences and discussed strategies to deal with a rather serious situation.

Jamshedpur

In Jamshedpur, the industrial city that is the home of the Tata steel company, *JPC* attorney and IHREC member *Shweta Shalini* and I gave a number of lectures. At the Co-operative Law College we discussed the "Rule of Law, Human Rights and Terrorism": from an international and Indian perspective. In addition to addressing the faculty and students we gave a number of interviews to newspapers and TV interviewers. We also participated in a public forum on terrorism at the Tata Archives and Auditorium where

members of the local bar joined us in a public discussion on the issues that surround an India concerned about their safety and security in the wake of recent terrorist attacks.



While in Jamshedur we had the opportunity to meet with students from the *Jamshedpur Women's College* and the women's Graduate schools. Among the topics discussed were the human rights issues surrounding the concerns of violence against women. Participating in these events were particularly fulfilling for both us. What began to become abundantly apparent is the interest of young women students as to their rights within Indian culture. Concerns about domestic violence that they have witnessed or been victimized by is a glaring human right problem requiring attention on the part of the human rights community and the government.

The *Jamshedpur Women's College* has an active human rights curriculum with well prepared faculty offering several human rights courses offered to their students.

NEW CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

We want to welcome:

Jamshedpur Women's College in Jamshedpur India. They have indicated their intent to join the Consortium and our South Asian Desk is anticipating their formal application form to arrive.

In describing their institution they provided the following:

Please allow me to say a few words about our College which is a Constituent unit of Ranchi University which impart education of Masters in 18 subjects. Established by Tata's in the year 1953, this college has traversed many a glorious path to reach its present position of being adjudged as the best college of Ranchi University for higher education of women in the State of Jharkhand. Privileged to be the first college of women in Jharkhand to be awarded by College with Potential for Excellence by University Grants Commission, New Delhi in 2006, it acquired the state of Autonomy conferred by UGC and the University in 2008. With 6640 students enrolled for 22 subjects and 18 Vocational and Add-on-courses of UGC, our College is first in the region to start MBA for women only. Our Education Faculty is going to start M.Ed from the next session and in pipeline is the project to start an Institution of Law for women only.

....our college is the first college in Jharkhand to start a Certificate Course in Human Rights and Duties & Values in Education sponsored by University Grants Commission, New Delhi.

Contact: Email : kumar.purnima@rediffmail.com

Ms. **Alvaro Triana Trujillo** a human rights teacher from Bogotá D.C., Colombia alvarotrianatrujillo@gmail.com requested membership in the Consortium. Ms. Trujillo is an anthropologist with some studies in social psychology and a Master in intercultural Encounters from the University of Helsinki in Finland. former student of Dr. REETTA TOIVANEN who suggested me to join the IHREC She is working as a Human Rights teacher in a public institution in Colombia which works with military personal and prisoners.

MEMBER NEWS AND EVENTS:

I am certain that much more than I am reporting has been pursued by our membership and has not been brought to the Secretariat's attention. It would be valuable if you could forward to the Secretariat a report of your human rights education activities so that we can include notice of recent and forthcoming events in the next message, which will be sent before our annual Executive Board meeting scheduled to be held at Utica College October 10-11, 2008.

Information such as the publication of new books, lectures, awards, promotions, training programs, etc. that you feel would be of interest to Consortium members are welcomed. While the Secretariat will of course continue to post the information on the web page, it would be useful if I could include it in this message.

Below is some recent information that has been received:

Europe:

Finland:

Reetta Toivanen (Helsinki) alerts IHREC members of the following event:

*Europeanized Criminal Justice project, together with the Centre of Excellence on Global Governance and Centre of Excellence on Foundations of European Law and Polity presents a conference on **TERRORISM: MYTHS, AGENDAS AND RESEARCH** On 7-8 May 2009 at the University of Helsinki, Main Building (Unioninkatu 34) Finland.*

Terrorism is a severely contested notion, starting from how it should be defined. The concept is often translated for political purposes and impressions and pictures about terrorism that are presented in the media or in policy papers tend to be one-sided.

This conference examines critically the common knowledge on terrorism and current counterterrorist policies. The invited speakers are leading researchers of terrorism from the fields of political science, anthropology and law.

The conference is open for all interested students, researchers and policymakers. Participants are kindly asked to pre-register by 4 May 2009 (leena.malkki@helsinki.fi)

Albania

Marubi Film and Multimedia Academy, Tirana Albania, postpones the Fourth International Human Rights Film Festival for the Fall of 2009.

Kujtim Çashku of the ***Marubi Film and Multimedia Academy, Tirana, Albania*** announced that due to a dispute between the government of Albania and his school over the use and ownership of the school's buildings the Fourth Annual International Human Rights Film Festival (IHRFFA) will not be held until the Fall 2009. Plans are now under way for the Fourth Edition of the IHRFFA. For more information about participating in the IHRFFA contact: Klesta Alikaj, klesta@ihrffa.net and/or Kujtim Cashku kujtim@marubifilmschool.com.

North America:

Berkeley, California

Rita Maran, IHREC Board member, completed a article on the "The Algerian War" with respect to torture for the Oxford University Press's forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Human Rights* (5 volumes), to be published June 2009.

Cincinnati Ohio

Howard Tolley, (Prof. of Political Science), ***University of Cincinnati*** visited Bilkent University, Ankara Turkey in March. He was involved in faculty development, workshops and presentations on Human Rights.

Marcel Kittissou, of Union Institute and University, has contributed to a book on African Security, "*Violent Conflicts, Fragile Peace: Perspectives on Africa's Security Problems*", edited by Norman Mlambo (of South Africa). Kofi Annan wrote the introductory chapter with his chapter concluding the book.

Utica, New York

IHREC member Professor ***Beverly Quist***, Mohawk Valley Community College, Utica New York has begun a community effort to study the possibility of creating a Human Rights Commission for Oneida County, New York.

Utica College has accepted a human rights exchange student upon the recommendation of IHREC member **Antony Dias**, St. Xavier College, Mumbai, India. Ms Priyanka Dhingra, a candidate for a MBA degree, will be participating in the Human Rights Seminar and taking related courses this fall at *Utica College*.

Ted Orlin, *Utica College*, completed for *The Encyclopedia of Human Rights*, (Editor in Chief: David Forsythe), Oxford University Press, New York, a submission: The Right to Privacy.

For the Human Rights Quarterly, The John Hopkins University Press, Volume 31, Number 1, February, 2009, he wrote a movie review: The Films of the Third International Human Rights Film Festival, Albania, (IHRFFA), 2008. The Festival is presented annually by IHREC partner, the *Marubi Film and Multimedia Academy*, Tirana, Albania.

The Future of the IHREC

Nearly four years ago, June 2005, at our international meeting held in at the University of Roehampton (UK), it was decided that the IHREC would become an incorporated entity. The Consortium, which began as an informal organization in April 1999 (University of Dayton, Ohio) and organized in 2000 at a meeting at *Utica College*, had grown and reached a point where it seemed appropriate that it formalize its organization. Evidence of that growth was an exceedingly successful conference held at *St. Thomas University*, (Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada in 2001) where our international membership was greatly expanded. Our membership began to cooperate with one another and we established a web page to assist in communications.

At the Roehampton meeting an Executive Board was elected and it was decided that the Secretariat be established for four years at Utica College, Utica New York. In support of the Consortium Utica College with the aid of funding of a Chair established by Tom Clark, an alumnus of the College, provided office space and services, secretarial support, and funds for travel for the development of the IHREC.

The IHREC, since 2005, a not for profit New York corporation, has seen considerable activity and cooperation among its membership.

At our Board meeting held this fall at Utica College there was extensive discussion as to its future. As per our policy the Board understood that a new site for the Secretariat must be determined by June. A number of alternatives were discussed, with no final determination as to where the Secretariat will be housed. Discussions continue as to where the Secretariat will be moved.

At that Board meeting it was determined that under the leadership of **Allwyn D'Silva** that from hence forth the South Asian Desk (Mumbai, India) would function as a quasi independent body under the umbrella of the IHREC. The rationale for this decision was based on the extensive activity on the sub-continent and its distance from the Secretariat.

In addition, after June there will need to be elected a new Executive Board. As for the election of the new Board a nomination committee was established consisting of several Board members. All IHREC members who are interested should forward their intention to run for the Board accompanied by a short vita.

As for my continued involvement with the Consortium, while the funding of the Clark Chair will likely not permit me to travel as extensively as I have for the last four years, I will remain on the Board as immediate past President and will continue to be active in Consortium activities. The extent of my participation will be dependent on the new chosen leadership and the availability of resources. I will continue my teaching and research in human rights and continue my activities associated with the long functioning Human Rights Advocacy Program (HRAP) of Utica College.

In conclusion to this message I want to thank all the members of the Consortium who have been helpful in the work of the IHREC. I thank the many who I have visited and work with in North America, Europe and Asia for their hospitality and cooperation. It has been a great pleasure to meet and work with so many dedicated human rights advocates and educators. I especially owe a debt of gratitude to the IHREC Board members, both past and present, who gave their time and energy for the promotion of human rights education around the globe. I along with the Consortium extend thanks and gratitude to Utica College and Tom Clark, the donor of the Clark Chair, for their support of our work.

While at times I was disappointed that more could not be accomplished in these four years, I am consoled with the understanding that human rights educators and advocates have with great dedication worked to accomplish the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) whose preamble provided our agenda; “...*that every individual and every organ of society...shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms...*”

Until my next and last message as IHREC President,

Sincerely,

Ted Orlin

International Secretariat

Utica College, Utica, New York, USA

Upcoming - IHREC EVENTS:

July 21- 28 2009 – Workshops on the Prohibition of Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment, Kandy, Sri Lanka,

Contact: Nandana Manatunga nandmana@gmail.com

September 2009 – International Human Rights Film Festival

(IHRFFA) For more information about participating in the IHRFFA contact: Klesta Alikaj, klesta@ihrrffa.net and/or Kujtim Cashku kujtim@marubifilmschool.com.

Important Announcement

The IHREC is attempting to create an accurate data base of its members. Unfortunately the information forms posted on our webpage do not always have the correct mailing addresses. If you have not already done so, please forward to the Secretariat your correct mailing address. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.