

Introduction by the IRCT President, Dr Bhogendra Sharma

The funds available for rehabilitation activities globally are entirely insufficient – and have been further reduced through the EU decision to move funds previously dedicated to torture victims to projects aimed at the prevention of torture. The latter is of course a perfectly legitimate concern, but the decision to prioritise prevention should not have been to the detriment of assistance to torture victims.

As a consequence, fewer torture survivors can now be offered rehabilitation, and many centres are facing grave financial problems.

Therefore, the IRCT Executive Committee decided to grant 500,000 USD of the Hilton Humanitarian Prize, which the IRCT received in 2003, to rehabilitation centres. Further, the OAK Foundation has made a grant of 400,000 USD aimed at direct financial assistance to rehabilitation centres.

However, 900,000 USD will not compensate the reduction (around 10 million EUR) in the EU support since 2002.

The global need for rehabilitation services is estimated to around 30 million USD – funds which can only be mobilised by governments and international bodies. And only a professional campaign can secure that the funds are made available. This objective can only be met if the whole rehabilitation movement works closely together. The entire network, the IRCT Council, Executive Committee and Secretariat must stand united in pursuing this objective, which will also be the first priority of the future IRCT Secretary-General.

Mercuri Urval has been contracted for the recruitment process of the Secretary-General, and the position as will be announced by the end of March 2004.

The IRCT advises Uganda on the writing of the country's first UN CAT report

At the time of writing, over 100 of the 134 States Parties to the UN Convention against Torture are overdue in submitting a report to the UN Committee against Torture (CAT). Of those 38 countries, whose initial reports to the CAT are overdue, Uganda is the country the most in arrears, as the country's initial report was due on 25 June 1988.

A USD 50,000 grant from the Royal Danish Embassy in Kampala has made it possible for the IRCT to implement the project "State Party Reporting by Uganda to the UN CAT", which will facilitate the submission of an initial report by Uganda to the CAT. The initial report to the CAT is particularly important as it is often the first time that the principles of the Convention and the measures necessary for their implementation are considered in any depth by the national authorities.

The process of writing the report and gathering relevant information and statistics increases awareness of Convention obligations throughout the administration. In many cases, gaps in the implementation of the Convention in national law and policy are identified while writing the report, and therefore remedial measures can begin to be taken even before the report is submitted.

The project is intended to equip the Ugandan Government with the knowledge and resources necessary to prepare the report. It is, however, essential in developing this expertise that the Government itself takes responsibility for the drafting and submission of the report.

Members of a Ugandan Inter-Ministerial Group participated in a five-day seminar on 12-16 January 2004, where also leading government officials and NGO representatives

working in the field of torture prevention participated. Two legal experts, Ms. Anna-Lena Svensson-McCarthy from the International Commission of Jurists and Mr. Edouard Delaplace from the Association for the Prevention of Torture, conducted the training together with IRCT Medical Consultant and member of the CAT, Dr. Ole Vedel Rasmussen. The Ugandan Minister of State for International Affairs, Hon. Tom Butime and the Danish Ambassador to Uganda, Mr. Stig Barlyng opened the seminar.

Thanks to the efforts of everybody involved, the Inter-Ministerial Group was able to finalise a draft report on the last day of the seminar, when a brief account of the work was made in a plenary session. Thus Uganda is expected to submit their initial report to the CAT before the Committee meets in Geneva in May 2004.

New Global Directory constitutes a unique resource tool

The most recent IRCT publication: "Rehabilitation of Torture Victims – Global Directory of Centres and Programmes 2003-2004" contains information about 177 rehabilitation centres and programmes in 75 countries. The Global Directory is available in a printed version and on the IRCT website (www.irct.org).

Both versions feature a wide range of detailed information about each rehabilitation centre and programme listed in the Directory, including the centre or programme's contact information, the services offered, primary objectives, treatment, training, research, documentation, prevention, information and ad-

vocacy, networking, funding and future plans.

All information in the Global Directory is based on submissions received from the centres and programmes themselves.

The Directory represents a useful resource tool for anyone who wants to find out more about the field of torture rehabilitation, and it will help to facilitate collaboration between centres and programmes and raise general awareness of the work and funding needs of the individual centres and programmes.

The online version of the Global Directory is continuously updated and features an advanced search function,

which enables website users to select subsets of centres or programmes, according to e.g. their geographic location, network membership and/or the rehabilitation services offered. Using selected search criteria, it is possible, for example, to identify all centres and programmes in Asia which offer legal assistance to torture victims.

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