



## GENEVA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS Global Training

GENEVE POUR LES DROITS DE L'HOMME  
Formation Internationale

# GHR ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT 2015

Adopted by the General Assembly – Geneva, 15 March 2016

## INTRODUCTION: THE CONTEXT

The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations (UN) was celebrated last year. In the field of development and human rights, **landmark agreements** in the framework of the UN marked 2015. A first momentous event took place with the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD3), held on 13-16 July in Addis Ababa, as Governments adopted a new global framework for *financing sustainable development*.

On 25 September, the General Assembly adopted the '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) launched in 2000 are now to be followed by the 2030 Agenda, '*an agenda for people, to end poverty in all its forms – an agenda for the planet, our common home*'<sup>1</sup>, which is composed of 17 goals and 169 targets to wipe out poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change over the next 15 years. These **global goals** constitute a universal, integrated and transformative vision for a better world.

And, on 14 December 2015, the so-called COP-21 Conference adopted the 'Paris Agreement on climate change', by which the international community rose to the challenge and took steps to curb emission and boost climate-resilient growth.

In Geneva, 2015 was also a fruitful year for the **Human Rights Council**, with an excellent President, Ambassador Joachim Rucker (Germany), who encouraged the 47 member States to adopt innovative steps, including a Panel to discuss the situation in a country, a lower number of Panels and of resolutions, and a voluntary calendar for thematic resolutions. At the beginning of his term, the President announced three priorities: to improve the efficiency, the effectiveness of the HR-Council and its relations with New York.

Thus, several informal meetings were convened with the High Commissioner, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, in-between the ordinary sessions, and the HR-Council held Special meetings with the President of Palestine and of Venezuela.

At the request of the European Union, on the first day of the 29<sup>th</sup> session (15 June), the HR-Council held an enhanced interactive dialogue (EID) on the human rights of migrants. This new work format should allow the HR-Council to respond in a timely and substantive manner to important global human rights concerns.

At the same time, with the support of the Bureau, the President pursued a sustained and unprecedented action to oppose any **reprisals** against civil society organisations and defenders participating in the work of the HR-Council. Last but not least, more attention was paid in the deliberations on the follow-up, the implementation in the field.

In 2015, the HR-Council extended all the Special procedures which had to be renewed. It created two new procedures, on the right to privacy and on the rights of persons with albinism, established a forum on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and recommended that the Secretary-General establish a Forum on People of African Descent. In 2015, the HR-Council also held two Special Sessions, respectively on the crimes committed by Boko Haram (1 April), and on preventing 'further deterioration of the human rights situation' in Burundi (17 December).

**However**, at the same time, 2015 marked **worsening crises** around the world, especially the civil wars in Syria and Iraq, and the unprecedented refugee flows it caused, the most dramatic outflow in Europe since WWII. With massive human rights abuses and conflicts in

<sup>1</sup> Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, UN News, 25 September 2015.

Libya, Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, millions displaced persons totally depend on humanitarian assistance, which no longer can meet the needs. With desperate attempts to keep the power, widespread corruption, exacerbated inter-ethnic tensions and lack of political will by the regional and world powers, the number of victims is likely to increase. Not to speak of the millions of climate refugees who will soon have to join the mass of forcibly displaced.

2015 was also a **year of horror**. The terrorist attacks in Paris, in January and November, will be remembered. Extremism and terrorism affected many other societies, in Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Indonesia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Denmark, Belgium, the USA. These crimes change the perception of security and social harmony, and challenged the basic values of democracies. It is critical to counter the threats posed by these groups, in particular Da'esh, Boko Haram, al-Shabab, but it has to be done in the respect of the Rule of Law. A major risk is to gradually demonize and scapegoat people on the basis of their religion, ethnicity or country of origin.

Unfortunately, the gap between international (UN) agreements, decisions and values, and these realities is still increasing. **Preventing** should be prioritized. However, in the UN human rights institutions, States decide. In the HR-Council, the hardliner States do not attend to promote human rights, but to avoid scrutiny. Thus, Burundi succeeded to be elected in the HR-Council: it has a vote to oppose decisions which a large group of States would like to take to prevent further massacres.

January 2016  
Adrien-Claude Zoller, President

## GENEVA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

As International Association under Swiss law (in conformity with articles 60 *et al.* of the Swiss Civil Code), *Geneva for Human Rights - Global Training (GHR)* obtained tax exemption status from the State of Geneva and Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

### Our Vision

The international community adopted many human rights declarations, conventions and dozens of monitoring mechanisms and procedures. On the spot, victims, witnesses, human rights organisations and defenders often work in difficult conditions. They all demand implementation of the international standards. Massive human rights abuses persist around the world. Indeed, there are still **gaps** between the standards of the United Nations (UN) and the follow-up of their decisions. It is **time for implementation**. And this has to be done by the country itself, which implies a need to develop national capacities.

### Our Objectives

Through training, study and protection, GHR, a **training organization**, aims to **bridge** these gaps, and to **empower** all those involved in human rights promotion and protection. Its *Global Training Department (GTP)* conducts each year dozens of Courses and Seminars in Geneva and in the regions. Monitoring and analyzing UN human rights meetings, its *Department of Human Rights Policy Studies (HPS)* supports these training activities.

### Themes of GHR Courses

In all its Courses and Seminars, in Geneva and in the regions, GHR trains defenders on:

- the fundamentals of international law, international human rights law, humanitarian law and criminal law, including the tools of transitional justice);
- the trends in international relations;
- the inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) and the structure of the UN;
- the UN structure and its main bodies (incl. ECOSOC's thematic Commissions);
- the Human Rights Council (*'HR-Council'*) and its mechanisms;
- the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and the contribution of the civil society;
- the Special procedures and the drafting and submission of communications;

- the treaty monitoring bodies and the preparation of shadow reports;
- the Office of the High Commissioner (*OHCHR*), its priorities and field operations;
- the preventative measures and strategies to protect human rights defenders;
- the strategies to raise issues and situations at regional and international level;
- the national implementation strategies: implementing all the UN decisions and recommendations (resolutions, Special procedures, UPR, concluding observations of treaty bodies); elaborating and realizing public policies and national plans of action and in the field of human rights; the national institutions.

### **GHR Courses and Seminars in Geneva**

In Geneva, GHR conducted many Courses and Seminars for defenders from the regions:

- **thirty-six** (2-4 weeks) **Geneva Courses** during UN main human rights sessions (Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission, ECOSOC, the 2009 Review Conference on Racism, and all the ordinary sessions of the HR-Council);
- **nineteen Experts Seminars** on Caste Discrimination; the HR-Council; International Humanitarian Law (2); Transitional Justice; Minorities (2); Enforced Disappearances (3); Religious Freedom (3); Business and Human Rights (4); the World Conferences on Human Rights and of Indigenous Peoples; and International Criminal Law;
- **fourteen Seminars and briefings** during the sessions of the **UPR Working group**;
- **several specific ‘On-Demand’ Courses:**
  - ✓ several Courses for NGOs coalitions from the regions:
    - from **Kazakhstan** (at the request of *Soros*),
    - **Dalits coalitions** (request of *CCFD* and *Cordaid*),
    - from **Mozambique** (request of *UNDP* and the Swiss *SDC*),
    - for **Uyghurs** Representatives,
    - for **Burmese lawyers** (request of the *International Bar Association*).
  - ✓ seven Courses for diplomats (with the *Graduate Institute, IUHEI, Geneva*);
  - ✓ nine Courses for humanitarian actors (eight for the *ICRC*);
- GHR **also lectured for partner organizations**, including *OHCHR*, the *World Council of Churches*, *UNITAR*, the Universities in Galway, Lyon, Paris-2, Lund, Nijmegen and Padova, the *German NGO Forum* and the *F. Ebert Foundation* (Berlin), *Forum Asia* (Bangkok), the *German Network on Papua*, the JPIC Commissions of the *Spiritans*, the *International Bar Association*, *Cordaid* (The Hague), and *Progressio* (London).

### **GHR Courses and Seminars in the field**

In the regions, GHR already conducted:

- **ten On-Demand Regional Courses** in Africa, Latin America and Asia;
- **fifty-one In-Country Courses and Seminars** in Latin America (15), in Africa (4), in the Russian Federation (7), and in Asia (25);
- and, at the request of the *Swiss and Mexican Governments*, from 2004 to 2008, a comprehensive **training and mediation program** in Mexico to support the process of the national implementation Programme; a similar project was launched in Botswana.

### **What we achieved in 2015:**

- **three Geneva Courses** on the occasion of the ordinary sessions of the Human Rights Council in March, June and September 2015;
- **three Expert Seminars**, on Business and Human Rights (with the *F. Ebert Foundation*); on Religions and gender-related rights; and on Religions, Conflicts and Minorities (with the *University of Padova*);
- a specific **Geneva Course for Burmese Lawyers** (with the *Human Rights Institute of the International Bar Association*);
- **several courses and briefings** during the sessions of the **UPR Working group**;
- the animation first global pilot of the Institute ‘**Women’s Institute on Peace and Security**’ (with *Cordaid*, January 2015, **Istanbul**);
- **a dozen lectures** for our partners, in particular universities and the *OHCHR*.

## GLOBAL TRAINING DEPARTMENT

It is not easy for **defenders in the regions** to follow the UN negotiations and the trends in the UN Reform, the HR-Council, the special procedures, the treaty bodies, and the action of OHCHR. GHR Courses have to bridge these information gaps, to meet the needs and priorities of these defenders, and to enable them to adapt their work to these new realities.

GHR Global Training Department has set up three training programmes. The Geneva Courses and Seminars are part of the Programme on the HR-Council. The Experts Seminars are prepared by our HPS Department, which is composed of fellows and students from several universities. For its Geneva Courses and Seminars, GHR received in 2015 financial support from the Governments of Liechtenstein and the Netherlands.

### 1. THE GENEVA COURSES OF GHR

*In 2015, GHR conducted its three Geneva Courses during the ordinary sessions of the Human Rights Council.*

#### Profile of the Geneva Courses

- The Geneva Courses are **advanced** Courses to train trainers. They constitute a unique **intensive and interactive training**, combining the **theory**, the exchanges of experience between participants (**field situations**) and the **exposure** to the multilateral **reality** (in the HR-Council), which the trainees monitor.
- Since its creation, GHR has realized this Course at each session of the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission, at sessions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and **at each ordinary session of the HR-Council**.
- **Each Geneva Course has two parts:**
  - ✓ **the General Course** (Week-1) to introduce the international system (international public law; international relations; UN bodies; HR-Council and its mechanisms, including the UPR; special procedures; treaty bodies);
  - ✓ **the daily morning classes** (second part of the Course) each working day, from 08:15 to 12:00, to introduce the themes of the day on the agenda of the HR-Council, and summaries of OHCHR' and Special Rapporteurs' reports submitted to the HR-Council; and to analyze the proceedings of the HR-Council; each afternoon, the trainees attend the session of the HR-Council.
- **Conditions for the certificate**
  - ✓ To obtain the Course's certificate, trainees have to submit a note on the main patterns of human rights abuses in their country; several summaries of the debates in the HR-Council; summaries of the morning classes; and a draft communication to a UN thematic procedure on a case of grave human rights abuses. Many summaries and draft letters to the Special Rapporteurs are read out, discussed and improved during the morning classes.
  - ✓ The trainees also stand **weekly tests** on the teaching of the previous week. This helps the trainers to ensure that their teaching is well understood, and to monitor the level of each trainee. It incites participants to review the Course and read several reports. Those getting an insufficient mark in the first test receive additional (separate) briefings from the trainers.

#### Trainers in the Geneva Courses 2015

As in previous years, all GHR trainers worked *pro bono*. For the three Geneva Courses of 2015, the two full-time trainers were Edward Flynn (Ireland, *Vivat International*) and Adrien-Claude Zoller (Switzerland, GHR).

Four other experts lectured during these courses: Ms. Danica Finger (Germany), René Kosirnik (Switzerland), Ruki Fernando (Sri Lanka), and Rogier Huizenga (the Netherlands, *Interparliamentary Union*, IPU).

**35<sup>th</sup> Geneva Course (GSC-35)**  
2 – 13 March 2015

*17 defenders attended GHR 35<sup>th</sup> Geneva Course conducted during the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the HR-Council*

**There were eleven defenders from the regions:** from **Cambodia (2), Taiwan, Philippines, (West) Papua, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, Brazil, Guatemala, Uruguay.** The other trainees were students from Australia, Finland, Italy, Switzerland, and the USA (2).

The General Course took place from 2 to 7 March, with the full-day class on Saturday 7 March. Special Courses were given on the work of the HR-Council; the Special procedures (and how to write to thematic mandate holders); women's rights; religious freedom; the international human rights standards; the UPR; and treaty bodies.

During the second week, after the analysis of the reports submitted to the Council and of the Council's debates, the trainers gave additional courses during the daily morning classes on human rights defenders and civil society; International Humanitarian Law; International Criminal Law; Transitional Justice; and economic, social, and cultural rights.

The **recapitulation of the course** and GHR course on **implementation in the countries** were presented during the last class on Friday 13 March. The farewell dinner with the certificates took place on Friday Evening 13 March. All 17 trainees received a certificate.

During the Course, GHR trainers met individually with the trainees from Cambodia, Guatemala, (West) Papua, and Uruguay to discuss their specific follow-up initiatives. The participant from Uruguay attended several meeting on human rights and environment, and the one from Guatemala met with the Assistant of Special Rapporteur on transitional justice.

**36<sup>th</sup> Geneva Course (GSC-36)**  
12 – 26 June 2015

*17 defenders attended GHR 36<sup>th</sup> Geneva Course during the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the HR-Council*

The **17 participants** included **4 defenders from the regions: Myanmar, India (2) and Sri Lanka.** Other participants were students, nationals from Spain, Italy-Morocco, Italy, France (2), Norway (2), Switzerland-Korea, Switzerland-Portugal, Switzerland (2), and the USA.

The General Course started on Friday 12 June with an introduction to human rights standards. It continued on Monday 15 June with the opening of the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the HR-Council and the course on the tools of the Council. During this first week, the trainers gave special courses on the UN and Human Rights; the use of Special Procedures; the right to freedom of expression; the UN and Freedom of Religion and Belief; the UN and Women's Rights; the UPR; and the OHCHR.

Additional Courses during Week-2 were given on business and human rights; International Humanitarian Law; country situations and strategies; transitional justice; and implementation inside countries.

All the trainees also participated in GHR Expert Seminar on religions and gender (18 June). The trainers had individual meetings with the trainees from Burma, Sri Lanka and India. All the trainees obtained the Course's certificate.

**37<sup>th</sup> Geneva Course (GSC-37)**  
14 - 25 September 2015

*17 defenders attended GHR 37<sup>th</sup> Geneva Course conducted during the 30<sup>th</sup> session of the HR-Council*

**Thirteen defenders came from the regions:** from **Bosnia Herzegovina, Namibia, Tanzania (2), Mali, Philippines (2), (West) Papua, Armenia (2), Nicaragua, Guatemala, Colombia.** The other participants were students and members from partner organisations from Austria, Ireland, Romania, and Hungary.

The General Course took place from 14 to 18 September, with the full-day course on Tuesday 15. The special courses concerned enforced or involuntary disappearances; the OHCHR; the use of the special procedures; and the UN and women's rights.

Additional Courses were given during the second week on the UPR; justice in transition; the UN and indigenous peoples; country situations in the HR-Council; Sri Lanka (Commissions of inquiry and OHCHR); International Humanitarian Law; International Criminal Law; and Human Rights Treaty Bodies.

The trainers held private meetings with the trainees from Namibia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Guatemala, Tanzania, Philippines, Armenia and (West) Papua to discuss their follow-up initiatives in their countries. All the trainees obtained their certificate.

## 2. GENEVA SPECIFIC SEMINARS DURING THE UPR

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a crucial additional tool to implement human rights inside countries. GHR actively supported the creation of UPR-Info.org, a new documentation and communication tool for the stakeholders. GHR remains involved in this new mechanism. GHR elaborated a **specific training scheme**, covering all the stages of UPR, and highlighting the importance of bolstering the cooperation with the States, with the special procedures and the treaty bodies.

In all its Courses, in Geneva and in the regions, GHR explains the UPR, and sensitize on the potential NGO contribution at each stage of the UPR process (contribution to the State's report; preparation of the 'stakeholders' reports; review of the country by the Working group; adoption of the report by the group, and then by the HR-Council; follow-up in each country). GHR teaches the **long-term perspectives** and the links between UPR and the process of implementation of all rights for all in each country. Obviously, each training on UPR has to address the **specificity of the situation** in each country.

As many NGO coalitions come to Geneva to attend the review of their country, since December 2008 GHR offers briefings and orientation at each UPR session. GHR main training activities during the UPR sessions in 2015 were:

- Briefing to NGOs from Laos (20 January);
- Briefing to NGOs from Honduras (with *Misereor*, 12 March);
- Briefing to the NGO delegation from Honduras (convened by the *F. Ebert Foundation*, 8 May);
- During the 10<sup>th</sup> UPR training for civil society organisations, conducted in Geneva by *CIPHEDOP* from 27 October to 2 November, 30 trainees attended the **course given by Adrien-Claude Zoller on the UPR mechanism** (27 October); the trainees came from **Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo, DRC, Ivory Coast, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Malaysia, Nepal, Hawaii, Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Moldavia, Ukraine, Canada and Switzerland**;
- Chairing the side-event of FES with Nepalese NGOs (on the occasion of UPR, 4 November 2015);
- Briefing to **Australian** partners (9 November 2015).

## 3. TRAINING FELLOWSHIP FUND FOR DEFENDERS FROM THE REGIONS

Since 2006, GHR has a special Training Fellowship Fund for Defenders from the Regions to offer fellowships to be trained in the *Geneva Courses*. A fellowship for a defender from the regions covers the registration fees for the *Geneva Course*, the travel expenses to and from Geneva, and to the cost of living in Geneva. GHR Executive Council and its Bureau award the scholarships following the recommendations of GHR advisors and partners in the regions. In 2015, UEM (Wuppertal), Bread for the World (Berlin), and Vivat International (Geneva) contributed to this Fund. **Seven fellowships** were awarded to trainees from **Cambodia** (2), **Burma**, **Namibia**, **Guatemala**, **Tanzania** and **Armenia**.

## 4. IN-COUNTRY AND IN-REGION COURSES

Lack of funding prevented GHR to conduct In-Country Courses in 2015. Planned Courses in Botswana, India, Nepal and Guatemala had to be postponed. The only course realized in 2015 concerned the animation of the 'Women's Institute on Peace and Security in Istanbul.

***Women's Leadership Institute on Peace and Security***  
*(Istanbul, Turkey, January 20-24, 2015)*

Convened by Cordaid and CREA, a feminist human rights organisation based in New Delhi, the Women's Leadership Institute on Peace and Security was a weeklong course designed to build **transformative leadership** of activists in fragile and conflict-affected areas. It

combined reflection on the political landscape, on past organising strategies for women's rights and raising women's voices in conflict and post conflict settings, and also reflected on fundamentalisms across the world and their influence on women's rights and security.

36 leaders of women's organisation attended, coming from **Burundi, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya (3), Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon (2), Syria, Turkey, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India (3), Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan (3) Armenia, Macedonia and Serbia.**

Resource persons were Srilatha Batliwala, Fahima Hashim, Hussainatu Abdullah and Sreekala (CREA), Stephanie Joubert and Dewi Suralaga (*Cordaid*), John Paul Lederach, Samuel Kofi Woods, Mavic Cabrera-Balleza (GNWP) and Adrien-Claude Zoller (GHR).

## **5. PROGRAMME 'IMPLEMENTATION NOW!' (INP)**

***GHR has a special programme to promote the implementation of human rights in specific countries through training, mediation, advisory services and teaching strategies. In 2015, GHR continued its training efforts on Sri Lanka and West Papua.***

### **5.1 Learning from our experience in Mexico**

The Programme INP finds its origins in Mexico. At the request of the Mexican Ministry of Interior ('*SEGOB*'), and with the support of the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*FDFA*), GHR contributed to the elaboration and the first stages of the implementation of Mexico's national Programme for human right (2004-2008). As Mexico joined the OCDE, development funds were no longer available. In 2007, the *FDFA* ceased its assistance to several countries, and phased-down its Programme Mexico. At the same time, the Swiss Federal Council stressed the importance of GHR work, declaring:

***'Switzerland will be withdrawing from its commitment in Mexico at the end of 2007. The process described above has made a significant contribution towards the urgently required implementation of a uniform national plan for the promotion of human rights. The fact that a Swiss human rights organisation has successfully acted as mediator between civil society and government and supported the Mexican Ministry of the Interior through the provision of expertise represents a good example for implementing similar projects in other countries'.***

(DFAE, 'Peace and human rights in Switzerland's foreign policy - Report 2006' approved by the Swiss Federal Council on 15 June 2007, p. 18)

The Mexico Programme was evaluated (2007) to learn from this experience and elaborate similar programmes in other countries. GHR launched activities in Colombia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Timor Leste, (West) Papua, Burundi, Tunisia, Botswana and Morocco. Our *Geneva Courses* offer a unique opportunity for defenders from the regions to elaborate implementation strategies, in which all the UN recommendations, of UPR, special procedures, treaty bodies, and UN programmes, are critical.

### **5.2 Follow-up activities regarding other countries**

#### **Sri Lanka**

GHR remains committed in strengthening the capacity of Sri Lankan human rights NGOs and coalitions. GHR was actively involved in the Hague Consultation (2008) and conducted training Courses on the spot.

In 2015, GHR actively participated in NGOs efforts to obtain a clear decision from the UN Human Rights Council to seriously address the massive human rights abuses committed in the past. A special focus of GHR was the fate of thousands of enforced disappeared. On 13 March, GHR intervened during the side-event of Amnesty on Sri Lanka to raise this facet of the problem. The case of Sri Lanka was also presented during each Geneva Course.

#### **(West) Papua**

In 2015, GHR continued to support international efforts to sensitize the opinion on the Indonesian repression in Papua. It provided orientation and strategic advice to the *ICP*, the

International Consultation on Papua, in which both Edward Flynn (Geneva Representative of *Vivat International* and GHR member) and Adrien-Claude Zoller participate.

Together with *Franciscans International*, Edward Flynn was instrumental in the preparation and submission of several communications to the UN special procedures. During the 30<sup>th</sup> session of the HR-Council, the *World Council of Churches* welcomed the Papuan delegates present in a reception (16 September 2015).

GHR attended the ICP Coordination Board (May in Brussels, November in Wuppertal) and Assembly (May in Brussels). Adrien-Claude Zoller chaired the Conference on Papua at the *European Parliament*, which took place on the occasion of the ICP Assembly (5 May). GHR also joined several NGOs side-events on Papua.

## 6. PROGRAMME 'TRAINING SPECIFIC STAKEHOLDERS' (TSS)

In 2015, GHR gave a series of lectures and briefings during international conferences and for specific partners, in particular:

### ***FES – OHCHR Course for NHRI staff*** *(Geneva, 4 May 2015)*

During the Annual Course of the *NHRI-ICC* and the *F. Ebert Foundation* for the **National Human Rights Institutions** (NHRI), Adrien-Claude Zoller gave a Course on the treaty bodies system (Geneva, 4 May).

### ***Courses for students of the University of Padova*** *(Geneva, 19 May & 21 September 2015)*

In 2015, GHR conducted two courses to students from the *University of Padova*:

- A briefing to students from Padova on the UN human rights institutions, in particular the Office of the High Commissioner (Geneva, 19 May);
- A Course to twenty students of the *University of Padova* during their one-week study trip in Geneva, on the international system and the developments in the OHCHR (Geneva, 21 September). The Course focused on the international context of the decision-making in the HR-Council, the diplomatic significance of the UPR mechanism, the new role of the OHCHR, the challenges for NGOs, and the need to better listen to victims in order to prioritize implementation.

### ***German partners' Conference on the HR-Council*** *(Geneva, Palais des Nations, 5 - 6 October 2015)*

GHR participated in the (annual) International Conference of the *Ebert Foundation*, the *Forum Human Rights* and the *German Institute for Human Rights*. Theme was: 'Blind spots of the Human Rights Council Agenda: ways to move forward'. This expert meeting analyzed not only the HR-Council's efficiency and effectiveness, and it focused on several challenges like climate and environment issues. Adrien-Claude Zoller chaired two panels and presented the concluding remarks of the expert meeting.

### ***IBAHRI Course for Burmese lawyers*** *(Geneva, 7 October 2015)*

During the training **Course for Burmese lawyers** conducted by the *Human Rights Institute of the International Bar Association*, Adrien-Claude Zoller gave a Course on the international system and on the UN human rights procedures (Graduate Institute, Geneva, 7 October).

### ***GHR Course for the Spiritans' JPIC*** *(Le Bouveret, 9 October 2015)*

Edward Flynn and Adrien-Claude Zoller animated the Course of GHR on the international human rights mechanisms for the *Commissions Justice, Peace and Integrity of the Creation (JPIC)* of the Spiritans. The Course took place in Bouveret, Switzerland, on 9 October. Participants were JPIC Secretaries from **Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.**



***Training on Minorities for OHCHR***  
*(Geneva, 17 – 18 November 2015)*

Adrien-Claude Zoller conducted GHR annual Course to OHCHR staff and Minority Fellows on: 'Minority rights in the international system'.

During Day-1, he reviewed the different strategies followed by the international community to protect minorities, in the League of Nations and then in the UN. Day-2 was devoted to the current system of minority protection, in particular the Special Rapporteur, the Minority Forum, treaty bodies (especially the CERD) and the OHCHR.

The eight Fellows were from the following minorities: Uzbek (from **Kyrgyzstan**), Christian (**Pakistan**), Madeshi (**Nepal**), Assyrian (**Iraq**), Tamil (**Sri Lanka**), Afro-American (**Colombia**), Itsekiri (**Nigeria**), and Roma (**Albania**).

***Other Courses and briefings***  
***for partners in 2015***

- Course to Students of the *University of Paris-2* (15 January 2015, CAGI, Geneva).
- Briefing to Advisors of the **Dutch Parliament** (16 January 2015, Geneva).
- Chairing the side-event on Tibet (16 March).
- Course for Students of the **Lund University** (UN Library, 25 March 2015).
- Briefing on the UN human rights institutions for the *School of Journalists of Neuchâtel* (Palais des Nations, 27 March).
- Lecture for religious congregations (Nijmegen, 14 July). Lecture at the *University of Nijmegen* to 22 members of religious congregations.
- Brainstorming on the future strategy of Forum Asia (19 November 2015).
- Conference on the advocacy strategy on the situation in Laos for the *Alliance for Democracy in Laos* (Swiss Press Club, 3 December 2015, 120 participants).

**DEPARTMENT OF  
HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY STUDIES**

The HPS Department supports all GHR training activities. It **monitors** international human rights negotiations, **covers** all meetings of UN human rights bodies, **analyzes** the main trends, and **informs** our trainers and partners in the field. Logically, HPS is entrusted with the preparation of *GHR* brainstorming sessions and Expert Seminars.

**1. UNITED NATIONS MONITORING (UNM)**

In 2015, HPS monitored all the ordinary and special sessions of the HR-Council and its mechanisms, treaty bodies and the briefings organized by OHCHR. The Department drafted analytical summaries of the UN sessions and compilations for GHR Courses. HPS also issued documentation kits for the *Geneva Courses* and the In-Country Courses. From July 2014 to June 2015, Ms. Danica Finger (Germany) coordinated the Department.

**2. GHR EXPERT SEMINARS IN GENEVA (GSS)**

Defenders and NGOs in the regions work under difficult conditions. The 1997 consultation process with partners in the regions highlighted their demand for immediate implementation of the international standards, and their **specific concerns** for humanitarian law; macroeconomic issues (economic system as source of violations); the struggle against impunity; and the protection of defenders. Other main concerns emerged more recently in our working relations with partners: indigenous peoples' rights and violence against women. All these issues are critical in all GHR Courses and Seminars.

To sensitize actors at the HR-Council on such issues, GHR convened since 2009 **Expert Seminars in Geneva** on Caste Discrimination (2009), International Humanitarian Law (September 2010, June 2011), Trends in the HR-Council (March 2011), Transitional Justice (September 2011), Minorities (November 2011), Enforced Disappearances (Nov. 2012, Nov. 2013, September 2014), Religious Freedom (December 2012), Business and

Human Rights (May and December 2013, December 2014), the Anniversary of the World Conference (June 2013) and International Criminal Law (May 2014).

*In 2015, GHR Expert Seminars focused on  
Business and Human Rights, Religions and gender-related rights,  
and Religions, Conflicts and Minorities*

The lack of funding prevented GHR to realize three other Seminars planned on enforced disappearances, indigenous peoples (follow-up to the World Conference) and criminal law.

***Brainstorming session on Business and Human Rights  
'Access to Justice and Extraterritorial Obligations'  
(Geneva, CICG, 26 February 2015)***

After the successful GHR Seminar of December 2014, a second brainstorming was required to facilitate ongoing talks in Geneva on the preparation of the first session of a new UN Working Group to envisage the drafting of a legally binding instrument for business. This Seminar was convened together with the **Ebert Foundation** (FES). 50 experts, diplomats and non-governmental representatives participated.

Ms. Penny Parker (*Minnesota Advocates*, member of GHR Executive Council) chaired the session. **Opening remarks** were made by Hubert Schillinger, Director of the FES Geneva Office. After the **key-note address** of Prof. Shane Darcy (*Irish Center for Human Rights*), experts contributed to the debate in two panels.

Gerald Staberock (director OMCT) chaired the **First Round-Table** on: 'Access to Justice for Victims and Human Rights Defenders'. Panelists were Michael Ineichen (on HR Defenders, ISHR), Marie-Laure Guitlan (SHERPA), and Richard Meeran (*Leigh Day*).

The **Second Round-Table** was on 'Extraterritorial Obligations'. It was chaired by Felix Kirchmeier (FES). Two experts intervened: Ian Seiderman (ICJ), and Sigrun Skogly (*Lancaster University, ETO consortium*).

The Seminar concluded with **comments made by several delegations**, including Ecuador, South Africa, France and Switzerland.

***Expert Seminar on Religions and Gender-related rights  
(Geneva, Palais des Nations, 18 June 2015)***

As a recent report of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief noted, the relationship between freedom of religion or belief and gender related rights displays many facets and is exposed to numerous political, jurisdictional, theological and philosophical controversies. Sometimes, the two human rights norms are wrongly perceived as standing in general opposition to one another, he wrote.

This is why gender-related rights were the focus of GHR second Expert Seminar on freedom of religion or belief. Sponsored by the Government of the Netherlands, attended by more than 100 persons, the Seminar took place in the Palais des Nations on Thursday afternoon 18 June 2015.

The **Chair of the Seminar**, Amb. Roderick van Schreven, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, introduced the deliberations, which were divided into three parts.

Theme of the **first session** was: 'Dialogue on Synergies and conflicts between of freedom of religion or belief and gender related rights'. It was chaired by Edward Flynn (*Vivat International*). **Key-note address** was made by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Prof. Heiner Bielefeldt. He was followed by Amb. Maurizio Enrico Luigi Serra (Italy), Ms. Diane Alaj (*Baha'i International Community*), and Ms. Honey Tan Lay Ean (*Bar Council Malaysia*). **Comments** were made by the **Delegations** of Sweden, Brazil, Uruguay and the Netherlands, before several questions were addressed to the speakers.

Mark Barwick (*Human Rights Without Frontiers, HRWF*) chaired the **second session** on 'Dialogue on Overcoming religious and gender stereotypes'. The **Key-note address** was made by Willy Fautré (*director HRWF*) on 'attempting to Bridge the Gaps'. The experts were John Fischer (*Human Rights Watch*), André du Plessis (ILGA), and Ms. Ani Zonneveld (*Muslims for Progressive Values*).

The **last session** on the perspectives for the dialogue on freedom of religion and gender rights was chaired by Adrien-Claude Zoller (GHR). Three experts intervened: Edward Flynn, Mark Barwick, and Willy Fautré. Prof. Heiner Bielefeldt concluded the Seminar.

***International Seminar 'Religions, Conflicts and Minorities'***  
*(Padova, Aula Archivio Antico, 10-12 September 2015)*

At the end of the Summer, GHR realized another Seminar on religions, this time together with the *Human Rights Centre of the University of Padova*. This Seminar on '*Religions, Conflicts and Minorities*' took place in Padova on 11 and 12 September 2015. It coincided with the meeting of the Academic Board of a new joint PhD Programme of five universities on '*Human Rights, Society and Multi-level Governance*'.

The Expert Seminar was opened in the '*Aula Archivio Antico*' by Prof. Marco Mascia and Prof. Giuseppe Giordan (both from the University of Padua).

Prof. Elena Pariotti (University of Padua) chaired the **first Round-table** on: '*Religions and minorities: framing the challenges*'. The two **key-note speakers** were:

- Willy Fautré (HRWF, Brussels) on '*Religions and minorities: Framing the challenges*';
- and Adrien-Claude Zoller (GHR) on '*Trends in minority rights and religious freedom*'.

The **Second Round-table** focused on **case studies** and was chaired by Prof. Paolo De Stefani (University of Padua). The following experts presented an overview of the specific situation in Italy, Croatia, Greece, Romania and Australia: Prof. Giuseppe Giordan (University of Padua), Prof. Siniša Zrinščak (University of Zagreb), Prof. Stelios Perrakis (Panteion University, Athens), Prof. Costantin Preda (University of Bucharest) and Prof. Sev Ozdowski (University of Western Sydney). Other experts, dozens of students and local authorities attended.

### **3. INTERNSHIP & FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME (IFP)**

HPS has a multidisciplinary and cross-regional team. Unpaid Internships and fellowships are from 3 to 6 months. GHR selects students and graduates in international relations, international law, human rights, political science and economics, who are motivated in the promotion and protection of human rights and social justice.

For GHR, an internship is a **training**. The interns participate in the weekly study meetings and in the *Geneva Courses*. In addition, long-term interns are assigned specific study projects corresponding, where possible, to the theme of their forthcoming *thesis*, and coinciding with *GHR* thematic priorities. GHR also ensures the necessary follow-up to these long-term internships, by facilitating their placement in specialized institutes for their PhD and their search for jobs. In 2015, *HPS* welcomed the following 28 interns and fellows:

a) Interns from the regions:

**Maria Luiza Belo** (Brazil, *University Rio de Janeiro*), **Fiona Hsin-Yu Liao** (Taiwan, *Columbia University*), **Djénéba Dembélé** (Mali - France, *University of Montreal*), **Christine Sarah Kalibbala** (South Africa), **Janelle Inojales** (Philippines, *Webster University*), **Asya Karapetyan** (Armenia, *Humboldt University, Berlin*), **Marina Voronenko** (Russian Federation - Switzerland, *University of Geneva*).

b) Interns from Northern countries:

**Noémi Penzes** (Hungary, *Corvinus University of Budapest*), **Andreea Uluceanu** (Romania - USA, *University of Groningen*), **Duin Ghazi** (Kurdistan - Finland, *Lund University*), **Marianne Angvik** (Norway, *Norwegian Centre for Human Rights*), **Eivind Digranes** (Norway, *Norwegian Center for Human Rights*), **Ruth Moore** (Ireland, *Irish Centre for Human Rights*), **Roberta Santagati** (Italy, *University of Firenze*), **Elisabeth Garcia Vilaplana** (Spain), **Maria Cristina Montefusco** (Italy, *Graduate Institute Geneva*), **Claire Marguerettaz** (Italy, *University of Grenoble*), **Salomé Landel** (France, *University of Lyon*), **Mélanie de Matos Chaves** (Portugal - Switzerland, *University of Geneva*), **Stéphanie Carneiro Nunes** (Portugal - Switzerland, *University of Geneva*), **Paula Ibañez Lacruz** (Spain, *Universidad de Valencia*), **Quentin Dorian Hyun Fayet** (Switzerland, *Graduate Institute Geneva*), **Andrea Graber** (Switzerland, *University of Geneva*), **Davy-Kim Lascombes** (France, *University of Geneva*), **Margarite Louise Clarey** (Australia, *Graduate Institute Geneva*), **Tyler King** (USA, *Graduate Institute Geneva*), **Sydney Helton** (USA, *Boston University*), and **Emily Samson** (USA, *Boston University*).

## THE ORGANISATION OF GHR

As an International Association under Swiss law (in conformity with articles 60 *et al.* of the Swiss Civil Code), *GHR* obtained tax exemption status from the State of Geneva as from the financial year 2005 onwards. On 10 November 2010, the State of Geneva renewed this status for a period of 10 years. On 27 July 2009, *GHR* obtained Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (*ECOSOC*).

### 1. GHR GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On 31 December 2015, the Association was composed of 47 individual **members** and 4 observers<sup>2</sup>. Twenty-one are trainers or teachers. Many participate *pro bono* in *GHR* training activities. Recently appointed members include Prof. Theo Van Boven (Netherlands, former Special Rapporteur on Torture, former member CERD); Thomas McCarthy (Ireland, former advisor OHCHR); Prof. Paolo de Stefani (Italy, Human Rights Institute and Faculty of Political Science of the University of Padova); and Félix Kirchmeier (Germany, Geneva Academy for Humanitarian Law and Human Rights).

*GHR General Assembly* holds its ordinary session once a year. The most recent Assemblies took place on 12 January 2006, 29 March 2007, 13 March 2008, 6 March 2009, 19 March 2010, 19 September 2010, 10 March 2011, 8 March 2012, 7 March 2013, 6 March 2014 and 5 March 2015.

Ms. Penny Parker chaired **GHR 14<sup>th</sup> General Assembly** of 5 March 2015. The Assembly examined and approved *GHR* Narrative Report 2014, the Action Plan for 2015, the Financial Report 2014 audited by the auditing firm *Comtesas + Gerficom*, and the budget for 2015 and 2016. The mandate of the Executive Council members was extended.

### 2. GHR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

#### Composition

In 2015, the Executive Council was composed of the following members:

- **Suhas Chakma** (India)
- **Alain Dick** (France, member Bureau)
- **Jean-Pierre Huber** (Switzerland, Treasurer)
- **Guillermo Kerber Mas** (Uruguay)
- **Ms. Penny Parker** (United States of America)
- **Prof. Bertrand Ramcharan** (Guyana)
- **Eric Revillet** (Switzerland, member Bureau)
- **Adrien-Claude Zoller** (Switzerland, President).

In its 5 March meeting, the Council adopted the financial measures prepared by its Bureau and the annual reports and draft for action plan, which were submitted to the Assembly on the same day.

#### Review of GHR programmes

The Council also held a **retreat** in the house of Alain Dick (Divonne-les-Bains) on 29 and 30 May 2015 to **review GHR training programmes**. As a main trainer of *GHR*, Edward Flynn was invited to this meeting, as well as the staff members and Guillermo Kerber, who was co-opted in the Executive Council.

The Council insisted on **strengthening the institutional identity of GHR, which is linked to training**. The talks highlighted that:

- *GHR* cannot be separated from its training programmes;
- *GHR* is a bank of knowledge, a knowledge-based organisation;
- *GHR* is a school for human rights training;
- the perspectives of the victims is key (their needs and priorities; and teaching together with listening to them);
- The Geneva Courses remain GHR core activity;

<sup>2</sup> Nationalities of the members: Congo (1), Senegal (1), India (2), Armenia (1), Russian Federation (2); Colombia (2), Haiti (1), Guyana (1), Canada (1), United States of America (1), Malta (1), Germany (3), Belgium (1), Finland (1), Ireland (4), Italy (1), France (1), Netherlands (2), United Kingdom (1), Switzerland (19). Nationality of the observers: Timor Leste (1), Russian Federation (1), Bolivia (1), Switzerland (1).

- The follow-up activities are critical, and GHR is better in implementation;
- GHR should make a better use of modern technologies.

The Council decided that, as from 2016, the implementation programme (INP) and In-Country Courses will be merged; the new programme will be based upon the need for implementation of all the UN, international and regional recommendations (Special procedures, treaty bodies, UPR, UN programmes); models will be elaborated for public policies and national plans of action.

### **Bureau and financial difficulties**

In 2015, the Bureau of the Executive Council (Alain Dick, Eric Revillet, Jean-Pierre Huber and Adrien-Claude Zoller) worked hard on financial and administrative issues. Reason has been the dramatic decrease in GHR income. During its meeting of 29 May 2015, the Bureau of GHR Executive Council examined the consequences of negative replies received from (Governmental) donors to GHR funding applications for 2015. In view of the financial situation, it decided to stop all expenses per 30 September 2015, as long as additional income would be received.

GHR Executive Council was informed on the same day, at the beginning of its retreat of 29 – 30 May. The Council noted that the situation of GHR was not unique; that such problems should not be viewed as part of the assessment of GHR; and that the Bureau had reacted rapidly to the unforeseen situation. The Council insisted that it was critical to keep a Secretariat to continue with basic activities, in particular the *Geneva Courses*.

Since then, the Bureau and the Council monitored each month the situation on the basis of a monthly memorandum prepared by the President and the Treasurer.

## **3. GHR SECRETARIAT**

### **GHR employees**

GHR Secretariat has three Departments: the Global Training Department (GTP), the Department of Human Rights Policy Studies (HPS) and the Technical Department. Since 2010, the **bookkeeping** is entrusted to an external accountant, Mr. Cesar Mercado.

The employment of the two paid employees, Ms. Danica Finger (full-time) and Nicolas Zoller (part-time) came to an end at the end of the first Semester. Since then, GHR Secretariat continued to work with volunteers only.

At the end of June 2015, Danica Finger took a position in the *Justice Rapid Response* (JRR), an inter-governmental initiative in Geneva to bolster the implementation of criminal law. Danica Finger is available on her field of expertise: she became a member of GHR.

And Nicolas Zoller announced his decision to continue working 'pro bono' for GHR Secretariat (planning, organization, informatics).

### **Senior Management Team**

Since 2008, GHR Secretariat is directed under the authority of the Bureau by the Senior Management Team (SMT), which meets once a week. The SMT is composed of the Head of the Departments and a few long-term interns. During the first Semester 2015, the **permanent SMT members** were Adrien-Claude Zoller (Coordinator GTP), Danica Finger (Secretariat Coordinator) and Nicolas Zoller (Coordinator Technical Department).

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester, our main challenge was to ensure GHR training activities without our paid staff. This was done by involving more interns in our SMT: for the July-August period: Ms. Melanie Chaves (Portugal), Eivind Digranes (Norway), and Quentin Fayet (Switzerland); for the August-September period: Ms. Andreea Uluceanu (Romania) and Ms. Noémi Péntzes (Hungary); and for the October-December period Ms. Ruth Moore (Ireland).

To further reduce the expenses of the Administration, on 17 December 2015, GHR Secretariat moved to the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva.

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