

BORDERLESS PEOPLE

Oh, gambling old woman,
Dear grandmother Europe,
My friend,
You see, my beloved E.,
the problem is very simple:
it's been some time, a long
time, since you've looked
in the mirror.

Juan Gabriel Vasquez – novelist, essayist [Colombia/Spain]

INTRODUCTION

Danuta Glondys, PhD, Director of the Villa Decius Association

The year 2011 is exceptional. It marks the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, a milestone in the recognition of the rights of people displaced due to persecution and the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. But it is also the year when people all over the world are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of Fridtjof Nansen, the First Commissioner for Refugees at the League of Nations, who became a symbol of humanitarian help.

Each year numerous political and ethnic conflicts result in hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons. The 2010 UNHCR annual report shows that over 43 million people were uprooted, of which almost 16 million became refugees and asylum seekers, and 27 million were displaced internally within their countries by numerous and frequently long-lasting conflicts. Many of those who escaped have been hiding in shelters for years with no end in sight.

Over past decades the world has seen crucial developments in the field of human rights, refugee integration, equality and diversity. In Europe all the states have adopted and implemented the liberal democratic model incorporated in the Copenhagen criteria. Yet today, at the beginning of 21st century, and in the perspective of democratic transitions in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as climate crisis threats, it seems that more action is needed to promote and secure human rights, and prevent conflicts and the dissemination of intolerance. And not only in Europe.

The Borderless People conference is a joint initiative of the Villa Decius Association in Kraków and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Office in Poland. The conference will offer a space for reflection, rapprochement and provision of knowledge for the general public and professionals from the sector. Together with the experts we will try to analyse the political and cultural context of conflicts and legal actions which can be taken to protect human dignity and human rights in most extreme cases of helplessness. The conference programme will not only highlight the problems of those “borderless people” who are displaced, ejected from their lands or escaping persecution, but it will also present those “borderless people” who – like Fridtjof Nansen or Sergio Vieira de Mello – try to find solutions and assist refugees and stateless people in reaching a safe haven.

Conflicts – like history – can be controlled neither by a single person nor by communities, but empathy and solidarity are virtues that both individuals and communities all over the world have. Driven by these values, we ask if the question of “the borderless people” is only a question of willingness to act.

Welcome and opening

Prof. Aleksander Koj, Chairman of the Board of the Villa Decius Association

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we are celebrating the 150th birthday anniversary of Fridtjof Nansen, the 60th anniversary of The Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of the adoption of The Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Today also, we are opening our two most important events devoted to the idea of freedom and human rights, which are: “The Borderless People” conference and the ceremony of awarding The Polish Prize of Sergio Vieira de Mello, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

This year’s conference “The Borderless People” relates to the very painful and extremely topical issue of refugees, and its title can be interpreted within a context signalling certain limits on human migration. It is also very apt if you look at the economic crisis and the revolutions that are now swinging through North Africa and the Middle East. These phenomena are responsible for creating a climate that fosters migration, with people looking for jobs and a peaceful life.

Let me now address the National Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees with warm words of thanks. I would also like to thank the Villa Decius team for their initiative, elaborating the concept and the huge contribution they have all made towards these events.

Jan Borkowski, PhD, Secretary of State at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

This conference, which is dedicated to Fridtjof Nansen, was organised on the initiative of the Villa Decius Association and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Poland.

The conference participants will be happy to respond in their own way to the question: “Why do we have borderless people?” The participants will also discuss what can be done to improve the lives of those who either abandon their homes or have to flee persecution. These people, in consequence, face quite a challenge. They have to start their lives anew in a world they don’t know, a world that is difficult to live in and also very often unfriendly.

We cannot forget about one thing here. There are certain people and institutions helping and assisting refugees to adapt to new and sometimes daunting conditions. Sergio Vieira de Mello was continuing his predecessors’ work while serving



Aleksander **Koj**

as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the years 2002-2003, but died in tragic circumstances.

Respecting human dignity is the priority of Polish foreign policy and this is the foundation on which we build what we can. We do this by any possible means and tap into our experience. At the same time, we are trying to share our experience at a level that meets with our partners' acceptance, and there are many partners who are willing to work with us. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland is active in whatever initiatives appear, supporting people and activities that fight social exclusion and discrimination. These are the reasons for these people we are mentioning here today being borderless. This is why I am happy to see a representative of our Ministry sitting on the Award Panel and I would like to offer my thanks to the Villa Decius Association for the invitation that was issued to us to participate in the work of this Panel.

I would like to express my respect and gratitude to those who are to receive the award. Now, let me thank you for the invitation and offer my warm regards to the Villa Decius Association. I hope you are going to continue this work and you will be as successful as you have been so far.

Magdalena Sroka, Deputy Mayor of Krakow

It is my great pleasure to take part in the opening ceremony for "The Borderless People" conference for various reasons. It might seem that a small local government unit, even one in such a renowned city as Krakow, should not really deal with refugee issues. It could appear that dealing with these or improving the lot of refugees is not one of our priorities. But this is not the case. On the one hand, the local government does not really fulfil all the functions that are within the jurisdiction of central government, yet the local authorities should, and indeed must, take part in any discussion on how to improve conditions for refugees and their assimilation into our culture, as it is always the case that their status is dependent on the local community. So, without the local community's support, refugees will not be able to assimilate and lay down roots away from home.

Therefore, we need to look into the issues of humanitarian aid, but also some of the obligations we possess. The central authorities are not really a suitable platform for such a discussion on refugee issues. That might sound a bit controversial, but I think that an important aspect of this discussion and its very title, the "Borderless People," is that it can be understood as referring to people with no limitations, so people who are "limitless" in a way. The problem of refugees, as was the case in the history of Polish culture, is somehow an opportunity. It is indeed a chance for development, for the mutual exchange of ideas, for

intercultural inspiration and for developing certain ethical approaches, such as tolerance and acceptance. It is also an opportunity for economic growth, as Europe will have to face up to the challenge of diminishing population levels over the next 50 years. So if we fail to adapt our approach to the refugee phenomenon through regarding it as an opportunity rather than just a problem, we will not be able to reach a solution. I think it is worthwhile discussing this problem and thinking about the future opportunities that we can gain through our co-participation in the fight for human dignity, intercultural exchange and mutual inspiration.

This is quite simply the very basis of our city's participation in the ICORN network, a fact that proves that Krakow actually wants to be a place which lays foundations for the artistic development of gifted artists. These people would be important to culture whatever the circumstances, but these artists, these writers are also going to be important for Krakow, as they can influence the way we view the world and provide an impetus for literary creation. They can also influence the way we approach reality and become indispensable when it comes to learning about ourselves and our own identity.

Danuta Glondys

It is Fridtjof Nansen that this conference is dedicated to, as he certainly was a "borderless" person.

Before I ask Torbjorn Froysnes to speak, I would like to show you a Nansen passport. It is Jakub Świącicki's passport, which he got when he escaped to Sweden without any documents. Thanks to this very passport, he gained a legal identity, could live in a foreign country and travel. It was also the only ID he had at that time.

It was issued in Stockholm to a young political refugee from Poland.

Danuta **Glondys**



Remembering Nansen opening lecture

HE Torbjørn Frøysnes, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to the EU

It is only timely that we have gathered here in memory of the former League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Fridtjof Nansen. For too long, the international community has let a human tragedy keep unfolding. Year after year, the flow of people has continued, while Europe has remained insufficiently prepared. The Nansen strategy was a proactive strategy. Our present strategies have to a large extent been reactive. Nansen had a very determined character. He was a result- and solution-oriented person. When there were obstacles, he surmounted them with fortitude. It is this spirit that we should learn from, now that it is our turn to surmount the challenges that we face today.

Fridtjof Nansen was born on 10 October 1861, 150 years ago last Monday, and there are events all over Europe to commemorate this anniversary. Nansen was not only a High Commissioner for Refugees, he was also a champion skier, an explorer, a scientist, a diplomat, a great humanitarian and indeed a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. At a time when the interior of Greenland had never been explored, he crossed Greenland on skis from East to West in extreme weather conditions. He relied on his special philosophy, saying that you should “burn your boats” behind you so that there is no choice but to go forward – quite a demanding strategy. He spent a whole winter in Greenland, actually living, hunting and fishing with the indigenous population of Greenland, and afterwards wrote a book about life among the Eskimos, which for the first time told a story respectful of their traditions and values, their sound resource management and also their remarkable equipment and technologies they used in their daily life.

After the Greenland exploration, he focused yet more on scientific work, while already planning much bigger missions, this time to the Arctic. He devised a new revolutionary theory that ocean currents carry the polar ice from East to West. Nansen put his ship, the Fram (which means Forward), into the ice pack off Siberia on 22 September, 1893, after which it emerged into open water near Spitsbergen thirty-five months later, on 13 August, 1896. The ship is still to be seen in Oslo, stored in a big house of glass and receives hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. You can go inside and see the cabins that he and his crew lived in, which is really a remarkable experience.

After this expedition, he published six volumes of scientific observations between 1893 and 1896 and became a professor of oceanography at the University of Oslo.

In 1905, he interrupted his scientific work to promote the independence of Norway

from Sweden, and when World War I began in 1914, political affairs overtook his life. Nansen was sent to Washington by the Norwegian government to resolve the food shortage and he threw himself into international work in the humanitarian field. In 1919, he became the President of the Norwegian Union for the League of Nations. His long relationship with the League of Nations started then and it saw him triumph over many of the most pressing challenges the international community was facing at that time. Much credit has been given to his tireless efforts regarding the adoption of the League Covenant. However, his greatest challenges in the humanitarian field were still ahead of him.

The League of Nations commissioned Nansen to tackle one of the most difficult issues – the situation of prisoners of war. He was asked to repatriate those who were left behind the enemy lines of the warring nations. Most of these men were held in Russia. In order to repatriate them, Nansen navigated the strained inter-governmental relations and war-weary nations with his signature determination and ingenuity. In a year and a half, he managed to repatriate an astonishing 450 000 prisoners. Shortly afterwards, in June 1921, the Council of the League instituted its High Commission for Refugees and invited Nansen to run it. His time at the helm of the Commission brought Nansen his greatest successes in the humanitarian field. He invented the “Nansen Passport,” an identification document for the stateless refugees, which was eventually recognised by fifty-two states. Moreover, through his work in administering refugees, he developed numerous methods that remain the foundation of refugee work up until today; like the concept of repatriation, rehabilitation, resettlement and integration. With these concepts, he secured the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of refugees.

The task he was assigned to next exemplifies the true borderless mind that Nansen possessed: In 1921, the Red Cross asked Nansen to direct relief for millions of Russians dying in the famine of 1921 – 1922. Under very severe conditions, Nansen established the networks that were necessary to carry out the mission. He won the trust of the Russian authorities and, at times, Nansen would be the only person they would be willing to have talks with. Again, against the prevailing circumstances, Nansen succeeded in securing aid and supplies, and saved millions of lives. While it is difficult to assess the numbers, the estimates range between 7 and 22 million human beings. This was not only a humanitarian victory; it was a victory against mutual prejudice and distrust.

Among his further achievements, Nansen also took on the challenge in 1922 of helping Greek refugees after the war between Greece and Turkey, and helped with the settlement of over 50 000 Armenian refugees. He is still a great hero in those countries.

Nansen held the post of Norwegian representative to the League of Nations until his death on 13 May, 1930. His memory lives on through countless institutions, of which some bear his name and some just his spirit. His words and actions continue to inspire those who fight for justice today and persist in their quest for solutions. His spirit of determination, willpower, ingenuity and boldness lives on through the work of countless people.

Last week, at the UNHCR headquarters in Geneva, with appropriate fanfare which was televised all over Europe, the 2011 Nansen Refugee Award was presented to the Society for Humanitarian Solidarity in Yemen. This is an organisation which patrols the coastline to provide life-saving assistance to thousands of refugees and migrants who arrive on the shores of Yemen every year after crossing the Gulf of Aden by boat. Thousands of people have fled from the Gulf of Aden to the Mediterranean, as well as over land, creating a situation that illustrates the relevance of Nansen's approach and the importance of his legacy.

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, has called on Europe as a whole to offer a responsible, coordinated human-rights-compatible response. If this situation is not dealt with adequately, it may evolve into a migration crisis which will have the largest negative impact on the fundamental rights of the individuals concerned. A concerted national and international response is needed. It is of great importance that the actions of international organisations and institutions like the UN and EU, as well as regional organisations like the Council of Europe and international and local humanitarian organisations, are coherent. There should be cooperation at all levels. The Council of Europe is particularly focused on strengthening our cooperation with the European Union, which gathers together 27 of our 47 member states. The EU has established policies and norms to be followed and implemented by member states and has also developed operational capacities, through agencies such as Frontex, Europol and the European Asylum Support Office.

The main objective of our cooperation is to ensure that the Human Rights standards elaborated within the Council of Europe – considered to be the minimum essential – should be carefully considered, as well as being anchored in general EU policy. These standards are essentially derived from the European Convention on Human Rights and from the interpretation and case law given by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. All of the 47 European governments which are members of the Council of Europe have ratified that convention and are therefore legally bound to respect the human rights and freedoms enshrined in it. This is also true for a series of additional human rights conventions adopted in the Council of Europe, such as the Convention on the prevention of torture and

ill treatment and the convention against trafficking in human beings; both these conventions are relevant to the issue at stake today.

The Council of Europe has acquired substantial expertise in these matters, developed over the years through close follow-up of the implementation of these conventions in the member states. The conventions are indeed establishing monitoring mechanisms which allow for on-site inspections, ongoing cooperation with member states and the publication of reports. I am referring in particular here to the CPT, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, and GRETA, the Group of Experts against Trafficking in Human beings, which are very active in monitoring the observance of human rights in Europe.

The Council of Europe is making this expertise available to the member states, the EU and other organisations and stakeholders whenever there is a need to elaborate European norms and policies related to migration issues. For example: when Frontex is putting into practice its newly adopted Fundamental Rights Strategy, the Council of Europe could offer cooperation in establishing curricula and training programmes for border guards, Frontex officials and people from all over the member states. Similar joint activities could be carried out for administrations dealing with asylum requests, local authorities and others. This is an example of how European institutions can work together to improve practices and implementation procedures to comply with obligations already entered into by member states.

In its work to assist member states to respect human rights within the framework of their asylum and migration policies, the Council of Europe pursues two approaches:

1. The long-term approach consists of contributing to the democratic stability of the countries of origin. These are countries like Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, where the Council of Europe is cooperating, notably through the Venice Commission. Thanks to the cooperation with the EU, and funding from the EU, we can work more substantially together with the countries of the Southern shore of the Mediterranean in strengthening democratic capacities and institutions.

2. The short-term approach consists of ensuring that the fundamental rights of desperate people who put their lives at risk by crossing the sea in unsafe conditions are safeguarded. On the basis of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and the findings of the monitoring mechanisms (mainly the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance) as

well as those of the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe has been able to identify the areas where human rights protection is fragile. These include:

- Access to asylum procedures;
- Conditions of detention;
- Protection of vulnerable groups (minors, the elderly, women);
- Living conditions of asylum-seekers in member states pending the examination of their application;
- Forced return to the country of origin.

Sometimes, triggered by specific judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, the Council of Europe and EU join together in building new policies and practices that are more respectful to individual rights. Let me remind you of a most notable judgement issued by the European Court of Human Rights on 21 January 2011, in *M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece*, which was relevant to the role of Frontex. The Court found that Greek detention practices violated Article III of the European Convention on Human Rights, which prohibits inhuman and degrading treatment and that Belgium violated its human rights obligations by returning the applicant, an Afghan asylum seeker, to Greece. So the challenge ahead of us is actually to build a new culture of administering migration flows, while abiding by the legal obligation to respect essential rights and the dignity of individuals. This is an example of how the case law of the European Court of Human Rights can influence the practice and interpretation of law-making in Europe.

At this point, there is no need to devise new mechanisms or standards. In the European setting, we are blessed with a multitude of them. Instead, let us work together with what we already have and render our efforts into flawlessly efficient tools, enabling us to respond in adequate fashion to the migration challenges. However, many of the migrants, asylum seekers and refugees arrive in Europe without a name or trace of where they came from. It is a sad fact that today too many are still left to drift in Europe without a name or country to call home. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees believes that there are about 12 million stateless persons worldwide. The number in Europe is estimated to be around 640 000. Many of them are migrants.

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, has noted that the right to have a nationality compares to the “right to have rights.” Without identification, people are left vulnerable and open to abuse. In his words, “the persistence of ‘legal ghosts’ in today’s Europe is unacceptable.” He has stressed that the problem of statelessness in Europe should be given priority. Governments should realise that measures aimed at reducing and eliminating

statelessness can not only resolve but also prevent conflicts. The Council of Europe has adopted two highly relevant treaties to guide a rights-based approach towards nationality and statelessness. However, these have not been widely ratified. Only twenty Council of Europe member states have ratified the 1997 Convention on Nationality, and only five states have so far ratified the 2006 Convention on the Avoidance of Statelessness in relation to State Succession. Commissioner Hammarberg has made a strong appeal to all member states to sign and ratify these conventions and I am sure I will also find broad support here for this appeal, as well.

Faced with the increasing diversity in our societies, living together has in itself become a challenge in many countries. Against this background, the Council of Europe asked a Group of Eminent Persons, headed by Joschka Fischer, to analyse the situation in Europe, and make recommendations on how to deal with it.

The Report contains a number of proposals for combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe. Some of the key suggestions are:

- Bolder use of the institution of citizenship as a tool for integration;
- Extension of voting rights in local elections to all foreign residents in all Council of Europe States;
- Stronger focus on combating hate speech;
- Introduction of more harmonisation and coordination in immigration policies by countries in Europe;
- Strengthening of humanitarian standards for asylum seekers;
- Expansion of Europe’s cooperative links with her neighbours in the Mediterranean, Middle East and Central Asia, offering them the chance to participate “with an appropriate status” in European institutions and conventions;

And this last point is actually being followed up by both the Council of Europe and the European Union. A comprehensive Europe-wide follow-up process is now underway, consisting of consultations involving all the member countries, and the major institutions and organisations.

We think that influencing public attitudes should be considered as particularly important. Therefore, the report identifies the main actors able to bring about the necessary changes in public attitudes: educators, schools, the mass media, employers and trade unions, civil society, churches and religious groups, celebrities and “role models,” towns and cities, member states, and European and international institutions. So the message is basically that we all can make a difference. To conclude, in the still young 21st century, the circumstances we face today are challenging, but indeed no more challenging than those Nansen faced, without

Torbjørn Frøysnes



a mobile telephone or the Internet, without our means of communication during and in the aftermath of the First World War. We have eschewed many inhumane practices of times past. In the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, 800 million citizens have their rights and freedoms – though still too often violated and neglected – anchored in the European Convention on Human Rights and supported by the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

And still there are fears that can be seen in almost all countries in Europe. Many of our citizens feel that our societies are under threat from the multitude of social, political, cultural, religious and other tensions which foment mistrust and fear. We must therefore continue to build a culture of living together as a basis for concrete political action. The opposite is a dangerous option.

Even if it is not so common any more to look to China for good political quotations, as it used to be, for example in 1968, I would offer a quotation from Deng Xiao-Ping that still seems to be relevant. He said, at the time: “No country that will develop today can practise a closed door policy” – I believe this is still valid.

We can rest assured that migration will bring prosperity and wealth to Europe as the age of populations and birth rates fall, and we can hope that the injection of new cultures into the European scenery may increase innovation and creativity. But we should be mindful that these benefits will also hinge upon the effective integration of this new part of the population.

The Council of Europe is trying to make a contribution to sustainable integration. Our mandate is to safeguard the moral and legal ground for European unity, not only between states, but more importantly between peoples, cultures and religions. Our task is to see to it that Europe is not a fertile ground for extremism, but a fertile ground for political action on a pan-European level. Equal rights for all are the most fundamental principles at the heart of the European project. It guarantees unity based on shared values within our societies. This must be our point of departure.

This is why we have to take on the challenges of refugees, of migration, of statelessness and of cultural diversity in the spirit of Fridtjof Nansen, and to go together in the only direction known to him: Forward – as in the name of his ship, Fram.

Human Rights without Borders special lecture

Dr Bernard Kouchner, Co-founder of Médecins Sans Frontières and Médecins du Monde

I have put in a great deal of work trying to follow the course set by Fram, Nansen’s famous ship, like when we decided to save the boat people from Vietnam. Together with Nansen’s son and other Norwegian ships, we wanted to help those people on the boats.

Indeed, it was with great determination that Nansen devoted himself to human rights and even when the situation was not easy and conditions adverse, when it was hard to cooperate with various governments and institutions, he was there – determined to do his best and to convince others. When the Nobel Prize was awarded, during the celebration in Norway, one could meet all these people who worked to save and help the boat survivors.

There is a difference between those who are refugees, those who are asylum-seekers and those who are fleeing because of religious or political persecution. Such a situation makes it impossible for them to later get back home. As you know, the Geneva Convention defines certain tasks and obligations in this field. However, it is very inefficient.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees is working for the benefit of those estimated 40 million refugees throughout the world. But, let us also remember the others. There are refugees, who have fled their countries for economic reasons and they are knocking at our door and are not well received in European countries. We also deal with environmental refugees who have run away due to natural catastrophes, such as tsunamis. There were hundreds of thousands of people who were seeking help for this reason. These are the three main groups of refugees and we need to remember they are not alike. And it is not easy to deal with such a delicate and sensitive issue, especially when their status is very often illegal. Should we then change something in the Geneva Convention? Let’s consider the last group, the IDP, the Internally Displaced People. Who in fact are they? They are internal refugees. Officially, the Commissioner does not offer them any help but in fact, he does. This makes the situation all the more complex and frequently results in racism.

This is a difficult time for Europe and the European Union. Many countries see the EU as a sick organisation, because in spite of high unemployment, it remains open and keeps receiving refugees who will compete with European citizens on the job market. Still, we need to remember that, though we are not happy to see them, we need to receive refugees.

When you are fighting for human rights and you are involved in the activities of a humanitarian organisation, then everything seems straightforward: you think that the villains are in the government and that you should open your doors to everybody. Unfortunately, this is impossible and inadvisable. I have friends among the Kurds and I have done a lot to help them to be well received in my own country. Unfortunately, it is difficult, as there are those seeking only work and jobs and those, persecuted in their countries, applying for asylum according to the Geneva Convention.

Let us change the perspective and see the situation from the point of view of those in the government. From this vantage point, people sometimes say that if a person has no legal documents, his/her status has to be regulated somehow and that you have to act reasonably. I would like to quote Michel Rocard, the heavily criticised PM of France who said: “France cannot absorb the whole poverty of the world.” This was true then, but it was also very difficult for people involved in human rights issues to accept such a statement. Sometimes we forget the rest of his statement: “We cannot absorb the whole poverty of the world but we should take in more than others do, and we should use our capacity to the maximum.”

Now, I would like to pay tribute to my friend, Sergio Vieira de Mello, at the same time expressing my joy in the fact that I am here. I would like to thank you for this possibility. Yesterday, at dinner, I met many of my friends who live here and made the following point: I won't accept any more prizes or awards. I don't want to offend anybody, but I simply don't want to look like a Soviet general with all those medals, crosses and other regalia. Still, in spite of this, I will accept the Polish Prize of Sergio Vieira de Mello, because he was not only my friend but, as they say in Africa, he was also my brother.

Sergio was one of a kind – the only true activist. He was politically determined and aware of what he was doing. When I met him, he was studying philosophy in Paris at the Sorbonne and he was one of those activists that go out to the street and protest and make themselves heard. He also was the only one among those activists fighting against colonialism and those involved in 1968 who achieved such a high rank, and the only one who responded to the French intellectuals, my friends at that time. Sometimes he responded very angrily and this is why I mentioned the difference between the activists from NGOs and others. When you are involved in a NGO you can and should say whatever you want, because NGOs should be critical and demanding. And, if you are a High Commissioner for Human Rights like Sergio, you should remember that.

We accompanied each other very often in Africa and I also remember well what

happened in the Balkans. At that time, many people said that it is the international community that is responsible for what is going on. And yes, the international community should have done something, and was heavily criticised for its failure to act. Sergio was among those criticised and he tried to respond by saying: “Follow me, have a look at what a refugee camp looks like and what a peace mission looks like. You cannot simply protest and cry out to the heavens above. That is not enough. You should do more.”

I think there was a kind of understanding between me and Sergio, because we were on two sides of the barricade, as activists and as people who were responsible. I was in the government, he was in the UN. Who was right? I don't know. We continued to work for those who asked for our help. Certain things got banned, but we worked, we acted. I remember an exchange of prisoners in the Balkans. It was all informal and I was the person responsible for it. Sergio did not break the law. I did. I thought that if we can exchange 500 for 500, then 1000 people would be saved. Agreements between Croatia and Serbia were being elaborated... When we were in Africa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo or at the war in Lebanon, we were again together trying to help people in refugee camps. And suddenly, one day, peace arrived. Peace always arrives after a war. But maybe we should consider achieving peace before a war starts? Unfortunately, that seems impossible. It may be about people's struggle for power or male hormones, but whatever the reason, it exists. Sergio was trying to prevent war. We had many things in common, including the women who worked with us. The way we were perceived also had a certain common aesthetic aspect, but I will not go into details.

We should prevent wars and hatred. In 90% of cases, hatred is related to religious views. There is always this animosity and that is why it is difficult to prevent such unfortunate events. We tried to work with the French doctors' organisation, and before we were entitled to do so, as the organisation was acting beyond its legal jurisdiction at the time. Slowly political movements started up. We wanted borders to be gone in the name of freedom and access to medical help. In 1988 and 1990, we managed to adopt the UN Resolutions introducing the obligation to intervene and the right to act in the name of humanitarian intervention. Taking preventative action was important. Protective measures must be taken before the situation becomes irreversible.

We were also in Benghazi and protected it from Gaddafi's bombardment. We were successful and the international community was efficient. The UN Resolution was also used in Kosovo. However, we never managed to protect Syria. As I speak, Syrian citizens are dying. There are about 3000 victims so far. India and

China vetoed our plans at that time and we were unable to act.

Yet we should act and be involved and help others the way we would help ourselves. It is often not easy, even for doctors. People think there is a division into “us” and “them” on two sides of the border. There are many peoples in Europe, for example the English, who were not involved in all the campaigns. But what we should remember is that Europe should be a leader. The emerging countries cannot always offer their support.

Let us look at Libya. We do not have an impact on what is happening there. It is the Libyans that should act right now. Much as we wanted to, we could not change the way the Chinese think, and we were certainly not going to declare war on them. But in Bosnia and Kosovo, people said that we were not going to declare war on the Soviet army, yet in a way we did, and the situation was soon under control. People sometimes did not believe that we would be successful. I am not saying that so as to encourage you to declare war, but rather to make you aware that what we need to do is to prevent the outbreak of hostilities.

These days we are talking about Tunisia, Libya, the Maghreb. And the situations are different in each of these countries. In Morocco, there is a constitutional monarchy, but in Nigeria, we have a more complex situation and things are not getting better there. Let's look at Tunisia: they rebelled of their own volition against their elected dictator. But then they accepted Libyan refugees and you have to remember that Tunisians are a poor nation. They organised themselves to the best of their ability and they did what they could to protect refugees.

We need to act before a massacre takes place and I was trying to show you what I and Sergio did. He was always an intellectual and a philosopher and approached things in the very same manner. He wanted to be close to what was happening, yet sided with the international community at the same time. He was also a very elegant person with great personal charm. He was handsome and charming intellectually. Even when he was upset or truly angry, he would still speak in an elegant manner. He was surrounded by friends who were loyal to him and had a great family – a wife and children. And he was never with them, which goes for most of us. It was a subject that I discussed sometimes late at night with Sergio. We were happy and satisfied with what we had achieved. We were sometimes even content with what we had tried but failed to arrange, because we tried to help those who trusted us and believed in us.

A tribute can be a kind of throwaway act, but right now I am trying to pay a genuine tribute to Sergio and I am simply aware that we believed in certain

values – he and I, and we believed in them from the 60s. Often we were criticised because we never stuck to what they call a civil society. We were accused of being seduced by honours, by prizes. We need to remember one thing though. Sergio was a great UN High Commissioner, no matter what he was doing, a very serious, solemn and responsible man who was also aware of the need to comprehend the economic side of things. I have observed many things at meetings. You could see how people were very aggressive towards one another in difficult situations, yet he often managed to manoeuvre things in his favour when faced with two opposing parties. He would step in and convince those parties that his position was the most solid option. He was an excellent UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

I still see him as a living person. I am writing a book about him. The title might be rendered in English as “The Champion for Peace”, and Sergio certainly richly deserves this appellation. I remember when he left Kosovo. The next day I took his position in Kosovo and he went to Geneva and later to Timor. But we could call each other. So he called me every week and we discussed the difficulties that we were facing. Despite being politically and geographically different, Kosovo and Timor seemed to face problems of a similar nature. So we were like brothers. We would call each other at any time and describe our defeats and victories to each other.

At one point, I suggested to Kofi Annan that I could go to Iraq but he didn't let me, saying that Sergio would go there and I would follow. He left for Iraq with many friends and people from my office in Kosovo. When I am talking about Sergio's death, I would like to mention some names: Fiona Watson, Jean-Sélim Kanaan and Nadia Lunes. But there were many others. The UN building was attacked and Sergio died in the ruins. All my friends died with him as well. Sergio did not die immediately. He survived the attack and struggled to survive, but he was defeated. For many of us, it was the end, because we were friends with him. Yet, death did not take this friendship away from us. There was this certainty and strength in the fact that we worked together, that we thought alike. And also there was our common youth. This is what I miss most now.



Peace always arrives
after a war. But maybe
we should consider
achieving peace before
a war starts?

Bernard Kouchner

Ceremony of awarding the Polish Prize of Sergio Vieira de Mello to Dr Bernard Kouchner

Communication from the Award Panel of the Polish Prize of Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2002-2003)

Minister Henryk Wujec, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Poland, Member of the Award Panel

On 15 September 2011, Villa Decius in Krakow held the 8th meeting of the Award Panel of the Polish Prize of Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2002-2003), which is awarded annually to people and organisations for their active contribution toward peaceful co-existence and cooperation among communities, religions and cultures.

The Panel stated that there were 29 nominations for the Prize, including: 16 applications in the “person” category and 13 applications in the “NGO” category and that all the nominations fulfilled the criteria which underpin the Prize.

The Panel decided that in this exceptional year, when the international community is celebrating the 150th birthday anniversary of Fridtjof Nansen, the first High Commissioner for Refugees at the League of Nations, the special Honorary Prize will be awarded to **Bernard Kouchner** in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to international community. The Panel noted that Bernard Kouchner, a doctor of medicine and co-founder of the Médecins Sans Frontières and the Médecins du Monde, initiated the breakthrough resolution of the UN related to the right of humanitarian intervention. The decision to award him the Prize is due recognition of exceptional services rendered in the area of human rights and the protection of human dignity, for his organisation and participation in humanitarian missions to the sites of humanitarian catastrophes and conflicts and also his efforts to promote international responsibility for victims and refugees.

After discussing candidates nominations in the “person” category, the Panel decided that the Polish Prize of Sergio Vieira de Mello will go to **Mr Hassan Omar Hassan** of Nairobi for his contribution and activities aimed at protecting human rights and dignity, improving the standard of conditions in refugee camps based in Kenya and fighting ethical, religious and cultural divisions in his country.

Then the Panel decided that in the “NGO” category, the Polish Prize of Sergio

Vieira de Mello will go to the **Halina Nieć Legal Aid Centre** in Krakow for granting free of charge legal assistance to refugees and other foreigners seeking legal aid in Poland as well as those who are here to escape prosecution and breaches of fundamental human rights, and also for adopting initiatives aimed at integration and peaceful co-existence of communities, while eliminating intercultural conflicts.

The above statement was signed on 15 September 2011 by the Award Panel.

Now, let me say a few personal words.

I feel very privileged and very happy that the Honorary Prize is going to Bernard Kouchner and that he has honoured us with his presence here in Poland. On behalf of all old members of the Solidarity, I would like to thank him for coming here.

Solidarity was an organisation that I have always been emotionally associated with. I was there from the very beginning, I helped to create it. I am sure that Bernard Kouchner is a “Man of Solidarity”, understood in a broader sense and encompassing not only Polish but also international solidarity. The kind of solidarity that is there to help, to save people, to change mentalities and to teach us that we can make a difference and change politicians’ decisions to save people.

Doctor Edelman, our national hero, used to tell me about Bernard Kouchner and I remember when we met in Sarajevo, where Edelman sent us together with Janina Ochojska and the Polish Humanitarian Action.

The fact that Bernard Kouchner is here with us today is also proof that Solidarity, which was started in 1980, is now “sans frontières” and is arriving in other parts of Europe. Hopefully, slowly but surely, it will change the mentality so that we can save people from misery.

Jan Piekło, Director of PAUCI Foundation, Member of the Award Panel

This is a very moving moment for me, for personal reasons too, as I spent a large portion of my life in the Balkans at the time of Bernard Kouchner’s mission there. During the war, I related and described the conflict, and after the war, I tried to describe how people got back to normality.

I will not speak any more on behalf of the Panel, or reiterate the words that were read by Minister Wujec just a moment ago. I just want to remind you that in 1990 Mr Kouchner became the first Special Representative of the UN and the Head of the International Administration in Kosovo. He was a candidate for the UNHCR and then a candidate for the head of the WHO. Twice, he was a minister in the

French government, once a Minister of Health, and on the other occasion, the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Let me add a few words about Bernard Kouchner's links with Poland. First of all, there is a special and dramatic relationship, connected with the fact that his grandparents died in Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.

My second point is of a completely different nature. In 2011, Bernard Kouchner received The Cross of Merit, the highest civilian award from the Polish State. Let me congratulate you Sir and express the hope that you will continue to work tirelessly for others. Without you and without Sergio, without people like you, the world would be a much more difficult place to live in, for millions of people.

**HE Carlos Alberto Simas Magalhaes, Ambassador of Brazil, Member of the Award Panel
Honorary Patron of the Prize**

I would like to congratulate Dr Kouchner on this award, because receiving such an award is a really important moment in anyone's life. I would like to congratulate him on behalf of all Brazilians. Mr Kouchner has been very important to us throughout his career and has touched us through his work and as a diplomat.

I know a great deal about Sergio, as I had the pleasure of knowing him personally. I know that Sergio was always a person who never sought honours and grand recognitions. Therefore, it was a great privilege to know him personally. He was really doing what he was supposed to do without any additional assistance. He also had a great deal of respect for the United Nations Organisation.

Now, on behalf of the Award Panel, I would like to present you with this Honorary Prize of Sergio Vieira de Mello for your career and for the implementation of our objectives. I do this with great enthusiasm and pleasure.



Carlos Alberto **Simas Magalhaes**

Bernard Kouchner



Jan Borkowski



People in the Labyrinth of Political and Ethnic Conflicts The Pressure of Modernisation and Its Consequences Painful Escapes from Virtual Freedom

Krzysztof Bobiński, Unia & Polska Foundation

Moderator

The concept of “risk society” and very intriguing questions connected with it will be the subject of our panel debate. Issues related to people in a labyrinth of political and ethnic conflicts, the pressure of modernisation and its consequences, and most intriguingly, painful escapes from virtual freedom will be addressed by our esteemed experts: Professor Michael Daxner from the Free University in Berlin, Professor Mohsine El Ahmadi from the Marrakesh University in Morocco, Ambassador Borys Tarasyuk, Ukraine’s Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister Henryk Wujec, currently Advisor to the President of Poland.

Prof. Michael Daxner, The Free University, Berlin

Introduction to the Debate

I would like to begin my presentation by referring to the last words of Bernard Kouchner, with whom I worked in Kosovo, and pay tribute to our colleagues killed in Baghdad, and especially to Jean-Sélim Kanaan. The reason for doing this is very obvious: while we are talking about risks, Jean-Sélim knew exactly where he was going and how dangerous it was and there were not that many means of risk prevention available for anyone going to Iraq. I turned down the “invitation” to go there, instead, I went to Afghanistan, another risk zone.

I will start by quoting some facts: before the Thirty Years War, which began in 1976, Afghanistan had 21 million people. In 2001, the UNHCR counted more or less 8.5 million refugees, displaced people and returnees, some of whom had ended up in the same position for the second or third time. This is more than 1/3 of the population, which today is estimated at 28 million. We also need to remember that more than 2 million people died in Afghanistan. So these are the dimensions and when you take Bernard Kouchner’s example of the 500-prisoners exchange between Bosnia and Croatia, you see that micro and macro scales of measurement are tightly linked.

“No borders” does not mean freedom in many cases. Global threats, dangers,

discrimination, famine and violation of human rights are only some of the effects of globalisation. We do not need the nation state to violate human rights. Guided by my experience in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Guatemala, I distrust any kind of resolution or appeal. It is always the individual, the human being that should take centre stage and the responsibility to protect, as Mr Kouchner mentioned.

Good practices should not only be announced but also be the result of the deliberations of the borderless people. *What we will need in the future in global governance is for it to follow the rules of human rights and transnational responsibility.* This is just a harmless sentence, but it implicitly assumes the weakening of the principle that nation states constitute an international community, as was the case in the beginning with the UN. The age of national sovereignty is fading away.

The world, as you know, is full of dangers. We have entered the so-called “risk society,” as the normal form of living and risk management is held in high esteem. The grand theory of Ulrich Beck puts the new lifestyle down to the effects of individualisation. No wonder that many conservatives pinpoint individualisation and relativism as the main enemies to humankind. Beck extends the proposition into global dimensions by linking individualisation to global development. We are all saturated by an ever swelling melody of cascading risks, never-ending crises and catastrophes and frustrated by our sheer unwillingness to change the fundamentals, both in our personal lives and in the collectives to which we belong. Some explain this inability to manage risks by shortcomings in evolution, while others believe in creationist destiny or fate, while the minority still believe that when problems appear, the solutions emerge instantly. This is the famous German notion proposed by Hölderlin – when there is a danger, salvation will be waiting round the corner. Empirically, this is not such a good idea despite its beauty.

I started with the dangers. An old proverb says: “When a danger is recognised, this is the first step to banishing it,” which is the fundament of caution, prevention and prudent action. But of course this has some limitations in reality when we take the example of a tsunami or other natural disasters. The crux of the matter is that a danger only becomes a risk: (i) if and when it is recognised and (ii) we fall short of selecting the best instrument to fight it. Therefore, not every danger is a risk – a danger you have no instruments to deal with will never become a risk. A famous and funny example of this: if you are susceptible to catching colds in October, this is sad. When you have to cross a street in the rain, this is dangerous. But since the invention of the umbrella, it is a high risk crossing the street without one. This is an explication of the difference between danger and risk concocted by the famous sociologist Niklas Luhmann. Such an instrument, the famous umbrella, may not make the danger disappear, but it certainly helps.

We have to face very many global dangers and I would like to present you with four theses related to this. Firstly, it does not make any sense to distinguish between human-made and natural threats. Since all solutions will be human-made, the origin of the danger is secondary to the solution. The implication of this thesis is that a threat or danger can only be met by a coordinated decision about whether or not the instruments with which we want to solve the crisis are adequate and whether or not the side effects will nullify the envisioned effect. The best recent concrete example was the flood in Myanmar. Military intervention would have saved the lives of at least 200 000 people but it had to be combined with a forced regime change, the inevitable side effect of any rescue measure. It is questionable whether we, the international community, would have got a mandate from the Security Council, but the decision should have been made within 24 hours. The world decided against the regime change and 250 000 people died, but some of the protectors of the regime in China experienced temporary relief. I leave it to the ethical principles of the international community to decide whether this was a good or bad decision.

The second thesis is that in many cases the problem is not a danger or threat in itself, but a clear understanding that those who hold decision-making positions and those who legitimise them are unwilling to take the necessary actions to solve the problem. Bypassing and transforming dangers into the kind of threats that can be treated through reaching a consensus would seem to be an acceptable strategy, but in reality, this does little more than postpone the real crisis. Not extending the Kyoto protocol will produce millions and millions of environmental refugees and mortalities, and those responsible for this decision had no other argument than the negative impact it might have on their lousy, pitiful national economies. China is going to bypass most of the European and North American nation states because they understand that their growing economy cannot continue growing through robbing the environment. Unfortunately, this process is of course very late and I am not in favour of the remaining Chinese policies. Many examples can be taken from the debate on climate change. The most dangerous aspect of this second thesis is the attempt to hide or cover up the problem itself, not infrequently by abusing science and research, a shabby game played by some governments which denounced the research on climate change as if you can just deny the melting of the Greenland glaciers and changes in the European climate. With some irony, I would say that the consequences of rising sea levels at harbour cities will also hit those governments. But this of course was a compromise and I am not blaming them alone. I also blame the people, as it was a compromise based on people's laziness and readiness to be content. Therefore, risk awareness has a lot to do with political decisions.



Michael Daxner

The third thesis, unlike those I have just outlined, is a less common opinion. It says that each global danger has the potential to result in a violent conflict. This is my core thesis. If a danger has no such capacity, it is neither global, nor globally relevant. There are local and regional dangers as well, but we are speaking about global dangers and risks. Plainly speaking, globalisation has created over-complex connections between formerly unrelated dangers and threats, enabling them to create other, new dangers on top of the prior cause of the conflict. The most recent example is the speculation on grain and crops within the context of the food crisis in Somalia. Here you have natural causes, yet trade speculators on Wall Street, and in the cities of London and Frankfurt, must take a share of the blame. As long as we fail to dismantle the power of the grain traders, it does not make sense to collect money for the Somali people. We must acquire the grain and bid against the interests of the stock exchange. This of course immediately encroaches on other crisis areas, like the WTO (World Trade Organisation). The age of free liberal regional market development is over and it is better that this has taken place in relatively unviolent circumstances.

My fourth assumption is that global risks grow with the compression of time. The faster decisions have to be taken, the more the risk grows that particular groups will use this additional time pressure to deviate from their main aim, the resolution of conflicts and crises, in order to serve their own interests. An example of this is the question of the core capital of banks in the present financial crisis. Another example may come from the Security Council: if the Security Council had waited another six weeks, the proof that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction would have been so evident that there would have been insufficient justification for an invasion which cost hundreds of thousands of lives.

This was more of an introduction than an elaborate description of the scenario of the ever increasing amount of risk. The third thesis, the thesis on violence, is most relevant in my view, as it implies a relation between risk and violence. But this is a metaphor of discourse, not of reality. If you become heated at the level of discourse, it is very difficult to step down to the real level. Even if yesterday's revelation on the Iranian plot against Saudi Arabia was true, since it is possible that everything we hear from Washington is true, threatening Tehran and trying to forge a new coalition in no way constitutes a de-escalation in potential violence.

What we have learned, and this can be proved, is that round tables may even include the presence of enemies and adversaries. Why do all the Allies in Afghanistan try to talk to the Taliban? Not because there is a spontaneous love between them, for they still consider themselves to be mutual enemies, but it is clear that you can only resolve risks when these risks are at the level of political comprehension

and do not become branded with the status of identity conflicts. Political comprehension means that nobody will and should agree with the aims of the Taliban. Probably, our International Security Assistance Force and international diplomacy in Afghanistan is right. Nevertheless, there would be more bloodshed if you simply tried to fight the Taliban to the last person. As we all know, that is impossible.

Therefore, to hedge conflict, to transform conflict, seems to be the only way to counter the dangers and risks on a transnational, global level. I think that one can use my four assumptions and this is my invitation to my three eminent colleagues, to use these as a point of departure for recommendations, corrections and criticism.

HE Borys Tarasyuk, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

First of all, I would like to say that I am a diplomat by profession and I did not deal with the problem of refugees as such, but I was indirectly involved in this process through my participation in removing the root causes of the phenomenon of displaced persons and refugees. This was mainly connected with conflicts in the former Soviet Union, often referred to as “frozen” or “protracted”. We find them in Transnistria, Abkhazia, Southern Ossitia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Before I talk about this specific issue, I would like to share with you my personal impressions on why people suffer most from man-made disasters: because of the lack of values, lack of arguments and lack of culture, and because of excessive aggressiveness and hatred. These are the major reasons why millions of people suffer every day. And they are not natural, they are man-made.

I would like to give you the example of my country, Ukraine, which has 46 million citizens and has gone through difficult periods in its history. At the end of the 19th century, the first wave of immigration from Ukraine, which was mainly economically motivated, led millions of Ukrainians to North and South America. The period from 1920 to 1940 was one of politically motivated migration when millions of Ukrainians were uprooted from their homes. These included the most skilful farmers, who were sent to Siberia, where many of them met their death. During the artificially created famine, a genocide perpetrated by Stalin in 1932/33, we lost 7 – 10 million people alone. We have not faced such disasters since our independence. For twenty years, Ukraine has been enjoying independent development, but we still have problems, for example we are now facing a new wave of migration from Ukraine to the EU states for economic reasons. At the same time, over the past twenty years Ukraine has become an asylum for immigrants, refugees and displaced persons.

Ukraine was one of the post-Soviet Union countries which avoided conflict based on ethnic tension and internal displacement. But we are receiving a lot of displaced persons and refugees from abroad. When it comes to official figures, more than 50% of refugees come from Afghanistan. The second largest group comes from the countries of the former Soviet Union and Russia, and 13% come from Africa to receive their official refugee status upon their arrival. Yet, these figures are in thousands, so the total number of refugees is not very high.

But I remember when the civil conflict over Transnistria's declaration of independence started in nearby Moldova. As a direct result of this, we received 80 000 displaced persons in a few days. The Azeri community in Ukraine is comprised of more than 100 000 people from Azerbaijan, so many because the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict forced more than half a million people to seek refuge in other countries. The origin of this phenomenon, which is still a serious problem for countries in the 21st century in the heart of Europe, are conflicts based on interethnic animosity and political turmoil. Speaking of political reasons for migration, I must mention Belarus, which has become a source of political migrants nowadays.

Those negative characteristics I refer to are not the only reasons for the phenomena of refugees and displaced persons. Another major cause is aggressiveness and subversion from neighbouring countries. If we look at the origin of separatist conflicts, be they in Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, Abkhazia, or Southern Ossetia, we will easily find everything stems from the policies pursued by the neighbouring Russia. This is a serious problem for the countries that emerged after the disruption of the Soviet Union.

In conclusion, I would like to refer to one sentence spoken by one of today's speakers, Bernard Kouchner: "We want borders to be gone." It sounded as if he was speaking on behalf of millions of Ukrainians, because for them, despite being in the centre of Europe, the borders still exist and they look like a Berlin Wall. Since 2005, the Ukrainians have abandoned all visa requirements for all EU citizens, without any reciprocity. When I was recently crossing the border between Ukraine and Poland, I found out that for Poles it is a border which is very transparent, while for Ukrainians, this is a border which is an obstacle so serious as to block their need to maintain contact with relatives and friends in the neighbouring villages and towns.

So, on the one hand, there are governments and politicians responsible for the emergence of refugees and displaced persons. On the other, this is the responsibility of both countries and governments beyond and within the EU. Of course,



Borys Tarasyuk

they cannot do their job unassisted. Civil societies and NGOs have to be actively involved in this issue to obtain results. In the case of Ukraine, I would like to refer to a NGO that is uniting a couple of dozen of other NGOs and is called “Europe Without Barriers.”

Politicians, governments and civil societies should work together to diminish disasters derived from political and ethnic conflicts and to diminish the number of people suffering from these conflicts.

Krzysztof Bobiński

I had not realised there had been such large-scale flows of refugees from the conflicts in Moldova and Azerbaijan. That is very interesting. But in North Africa, the recent developments have also produced major refugee flows. We, in Europe, notice the flow in Lampedusa, where actually it was quite small. The big flows took place sideways across frontiers from Libya to Tunisia, from Egypt into neighbouring countries, from Syria into Turkey, etc. Those were the migrants’ destinations, it was not Europe. They wanted to stay closer to home.

Prof. Mohsine El Ahmadi, Cadi Ayyad University, Marrakesh, Morocco

Thank you Michael for making my introduction an easy task, because you actually helped to frame my theological point of view on the sociology of migrants and what is happening on the other side of the Mediterranean, with some key notions and points. You mentioned the notion of risk, though you have not mentioned the notion of disaster, humanitarian disaster.

Risk is something that has not happened yet, but when it does happen, it results in a situation that is hard to deal with. That requires another key notion, which is prevention. How can we prevent events, displacements, civil wars and refugeeism from taking place? I would like to focus my presentation on: How to prevent risks coming from North African societies? measured in terms of refugees, but also in terms of violence. Behind the scenes, officials and high military specialists are holding debates on the major risk that may come from the Sub-Saharan area, namely Al-Qaeda violence and the Islamist threat.

My inspiration for this presentation came from the fact that the very notion of risk may also be applied to social stability, to society and also to the social, economic and political system. Do not forget that the origin of the notion of risk comes from sociology. You also mentioned, the German sociologist Luhmann, but it was Ulrich Beck, the German sociologist, who in 1996 started examining the notion of risk.

Behind the notion of risk, there is the notion of violence. This is not a disaster in itself, however. When it occurs, it merely becomes a danger. How then, can we protect societies from violence? I would like to use the example of Libya here, as it is a country where social, political and military violence is taking place. By way of contrast, I can give an example of a society, a state that has managed to prevent social violence. Morocco is a very rich example, giving us an idea of what is going on in North African societies and states, and of how to prevent risks. The notion of the risk society implies a moral attitude which focuses on how to prevent risks, and social, economic, political and military disasters.

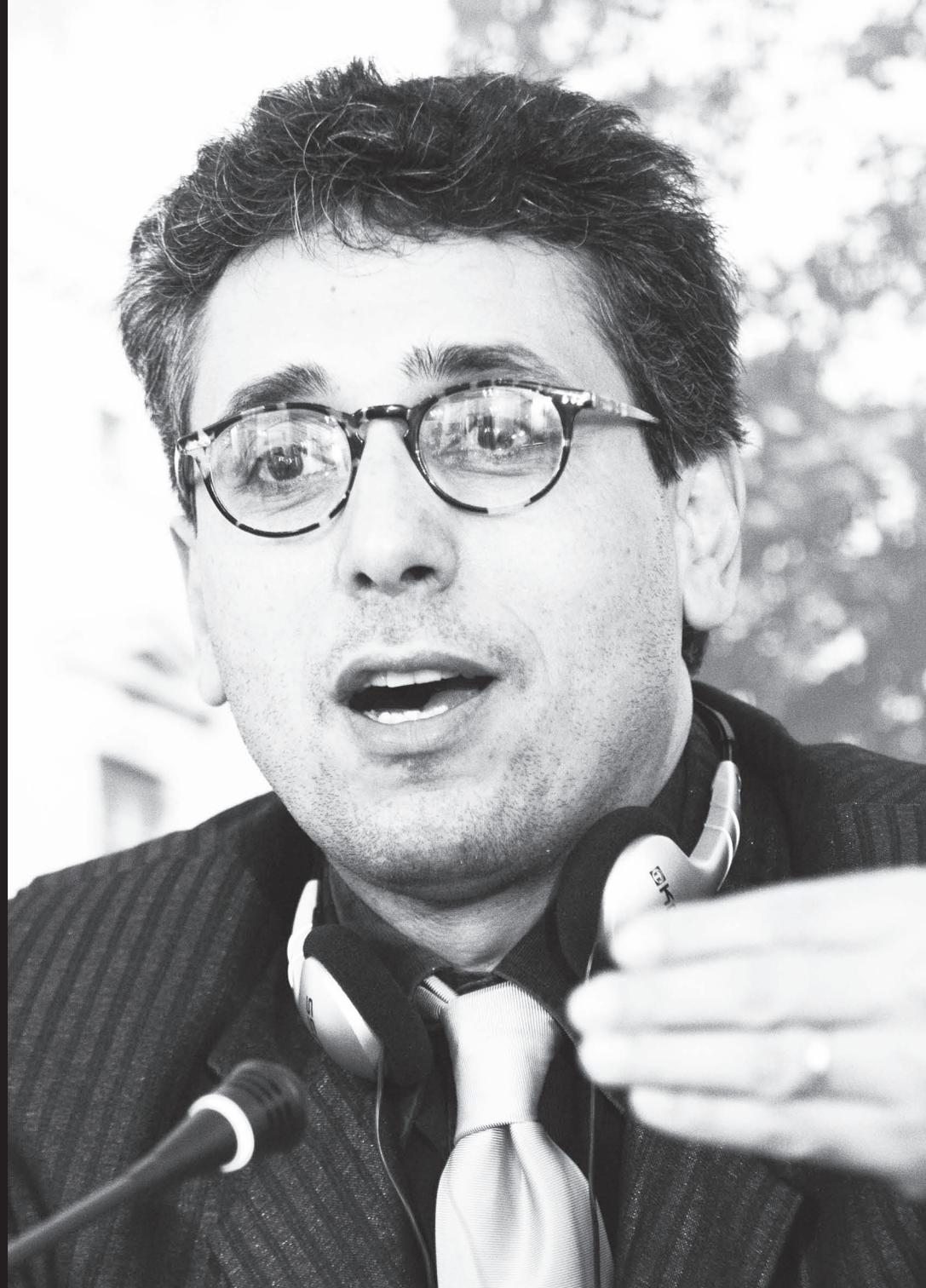
Also, the notion of risk applies to the future, not to the present. “How can we prevent this?” is a question concerning what is coming, not what has already come or what is going on now. It is a kind of preventative approach.

Adopting this perspective, I would like to tell you about the revolts, uprisings and revolutions taking place as I speak in Tunisia and Libya; and also Egypt, which we should bear in mind, as it is also part of the Maghreb. The “Maghreb” in Arabic means “dawn,” the rising of the sun. From a geographical point of view, it is North Africa, and this includes Egypt. Just as we used to exclude Libya from Africa on political rather than geographical grounds, we are making the same mistake when excluding Egypt from North Africa, the Maghreb. Egypt is a Maghrebian state and society.

Here, we have two examples. On the one hand, there is the “happy” example of Morocco and on the other hand, the very “sad” example of Libya, where there was a disaster that could have been prevented several years ago if it had been treated with enough attention by Libyan officials. With respect to this, I would also like to draw your attention to the fact that there are two key notions which we need to keep in mind when dealing with the political and social issues that are currently prevalent in Maghrebian societies.

The first one is exclusion – both social and political. Political systems in the Arab world have traditionally been exclusive, something that does not really apply to Morocco, as it has always been a half-open half-closed political system with a very dynamic society. It is one of the strongest civil societies in the Arab world, if we are considering cultural and political associations, NGOs and so on.

We also encounter the notion of marginalisation of large parts of society, mainly the youth (15-45 years old), which constitute ca. 65% of Maghrebian societies. We need to keep that in mind. And we also need to take into account something



that is a very dynamic and important phenomenon when thinking about North African societies – the rise of women as a gender force. The empowerment of women and their roles in these societies is something that should be dealt with, as it might be seen as a reason for social and religious destabilisation in North African societies. We can see such an attitude in the works of Fatima Mernissi, a very important Arab and Muslim sociologist.

Another important issue is the absence of social justice, which, along with exclusion and the marginalisation of youth, is a contributory factor to the uprisings or revolutions. This phenomenon is not interpretable yet. Sociologists and political scientists are still dealing with the question of whether we are witnessing a total political and radical social change, or it is yet another change whose nature we are unable to define.

We also need to keep in mind the so-called “boomerang effect,” which occurs in a situation when strong and powerful states, political elites or a regime are counterbalanced by a weak society and weak social movements. The difficulty in building sustainable states, societies and economies is explained by the fact that in Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, powerful regimes are not countered by any powerful social movements or civil society. Authoritarian regimes start by destroying any potential foundations for civil society, because they are afraid of the new political elites it can give rise to. Such regimes are well advised either by former Soviet advisors (as is currently the case in Syria, Libya and Algeria), or by Western advisors such as the Americans and French.

Now I would like to tackle the theme of the Maghrebian experience. There are two types of reaction to uprisings. I have already mentioned the first of these, a harsh and strong counter-reaction to social and political claims. This type can be observed in Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt, where the approach is half-hard, half-soft. The second type is a soft reaction, like the Moroccan approach, which works thanks to the monarchy of Mohammed VI and his predecessor Hassan II. Hassan II was an authoritarian and strict king, but also a clever one who knew how to use contradictions between the opposition and the official political regime. He succeeded in this because, although he marginalised the opposition, he always left some room for it to exist in case he needed it. Mohammed VI, his son, used this opposition to enhance and build up the actual political regime. Opposition is present in leftist parties and the king is doing his best to construct what he calls, according to his political slogans, “a democratic and modern Morocco – state and society.” Therefore, you may see that there are these two types of reactions – hard and soft. When you talked about Afghanistan, Pakistan and so on and so forth, these count as hard reactions.

But to give you hope that the world is not totally sad and black, I emphasise the Moroccan example which is kind of “grey zone” between blackness and whiteness. The reaction of the Moroccan political system with respect to social claims was to introduce reforms. The word “reform” is a key concept in this new situation. These reforms are global and thanks to them, we are witnessing political, economic, social and religious reforms. Our political system was one of the “wiser” regimes in the Arab world that listened to the voice of the people. Therefore, this regime took the claims of ordinary people into consideration, rather than those deeply involved in parties and associations, and later enshrined them in the constitution, changing it beyond recognition. The king resigned some of his power and transferred it to the nascent parliament, which is to be created after the upcoming November elections, abiding by the expression “la volonté générale” – the general will of the people. The most important aspect of this situation is that we are witnessing a kind of gradation, changes appearing step by step. To conclude, we either need to reform or to create a revolution, and you need to choose the side you support. Wise political systems choose reform. They choose to give some of their power away in order to keep the real power. Other regimes refuse, as the Syrian and Yemeni regimes have, taking all the power for themselves in accordance with the first rule of political radicalism: “take it all or leave it all”.

I would like to finish with two points. The first one is that we need to construct new social contracts. Arab societies are dealing with a new era and new challenges and they are eager to ask all the questions, the main one being a clarification of the relationship between politics and religion – should they be combined or separated? If they need to be separated, what kind of separation do we need to introduce, soft or hard, the French case or the American case? The second point is addressed to our universal conscience. I would like to tell the Europeans that we need a new policy regarding the Maghreb, in which citizens can dream of a new society in which they may be and should be responsible for their acts. Now, in Libya and Tunisia there is hope, and also in Morocco, but the future could bring risks and disasters. There is an abiding hope in this region that the refugees coming from the South Mediterranean seaboard will not leave for the Northern coast of the Mediterranean and that there will be a kind of mutual understanding.

Krzysztof Bobiński

I think that we are getting to the point where we can start answering the questions posed by Prof. Daxner, namely: how can rulers manage to take the right decisions to avoid disasters that destroy whole societies or populations? How can we get rulers to foresee the consequences of their own actions and take the right decisions?

Henryk Wujec is a hero in Poland. He was a member of a movement called “The Workers Defence Committee,” which was established 35 years ago, and I am mentioning this, because this committee was a very important organisation. It was led by a man who is no longer among us, Jacek Kuroń. He realised that any idiot can be in the opposition, since all that is required is a lack of imagination and a certain amount of bravery that compels him to throw a brick. The man who shot Franz Ferdinand, Princip, spent the rest of his life apologising to visitors by saying: “If I had known that World War I would have ensued from this act of mine, I would never have done it.” But “The Workers Defence Committee” was important also in the sense that Jacek Kuroń encouraged people not to just be in the opposition but also to create a constructive opposition. His actions contained an element of the non-violence concept and a continual search for dialogue with the authorities. So when Prof. El Ahmadi was talking about the inspiration coming from the king, who has been creating the space for civil society, one recalls Poland in the 1970s and the Solidarity movement, because it was the civil society which was constantly telling the government “talk to us, if you do not, things will get bad.” But where did it come from? It came from the experiences of Hungary in 1956, of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and of Poland in 1970, where the regime had fired at shipyard workers. The Workers Defence Committee’s non-violence concept came from a long learning process. They realised that straightforward opposition would end in disaster.

Henryk Wujec, Advisor to the President of Poland

As professor Daxner inspired us to enter into a discussion on the basic issues and to ask profound questions, I will try to address both perspectives. Krzysztof said that we are talking about the risk society and that life generally is a risky matter, as we are always exposed to hazards and risks, including risks caused by our fellow human beings. Luckily, biology has taught us to handle those risks, some of which stem from our genetics and are being subjected to intense research carried out by psychologists and genetics researchers. Apparently, our genes determine whether we are egoists or altruists, and that gives us hope – it is not only culture but also our genetic predispositions that trigger risk situations. One of these is our susceptibility to violence, which is in fact one of the key driving forces behind human actions.

How can we master this violence then? We can do it through culture, as it imposes on us some rules and principles of peaceful co-existence: the art of compromise, problem-solving and developing certain standards. Various things depend on culture: human dignity, the rights of nations, peaceful problem-solving and finally, charity, the principle which first appears in the Bible, in the Judaist world and was later adopted by Christianity and elevated to a universal value.



The obligation “thou shalt love thy neighbour” – the sense of charity that was so often quoted by Saint Paul. We are not Greeks, not Jews, not free people, not slaves – we are all brothers, “brethren” as he used to say, in one large human family. If this is our principle, if it guides us through our actions, only then can we strive to solve difficult conflicts. Without going into theory, we can quote some concrete and specific examples, like Bernard Kouchner did. Mother Teresa of Calcutta put this principle of charity into practice under very adverse conditions. Even in our international relations, it is worthwhile keeping it in the back of our minds while solving problems and conflicts.

After the war, here in Poland, we had this conflict, a feeling of hatred towards Germans upheld and inspired by Gomułka, the First Secretary of the Party, and this ultimately led to Poland being even more dependent on the communist regime. I was raised in such an atmosphere of hatred towards Germans. We all hated them. It was a rule: a good Pole hated Germans and everything that was German. All of a sudden, this principle stopped being valid. It started being challenged and this was both a revolution and a revelation to me. It was challenged through the evocation of the principle of charity by the bishops of Poland in their famous letter sent to their German counterparts in 1965, which said: “We forgive you and we ask for your forgiveness.” It was a genial way to solve this problem and thanks to this gesture, this approach, the abandonment of the language of hatred, so many things changed in Poland, including our relations with Germany. Even Ms Steinbach cannot do much to spoil this.

This very principle of charity, which was adopted then as a universal, is also being adopted in international organisations. Mind you, it is not easy to live by charity. We tried to employ it in Polish-Ukrainian relations: in 2003, John Paul II, the Polish pope, inspired the bishops of Poland to address a letter to their Ukrainian counterparts, in an attempt to replicate the impact that the 1965 letter had. Unfortunately, it never resonated to such an extent with the Ukrainians. We are still noticing tensions in Poland and in Ukraine. Still, the road is there, so we need to set foot on it.

As Krzysztof Bobiński said, there are some great achievements that we have accomplished on the way. Back in 1980 and in between 1980 and 1989, it was a non-violent, peaceful revolution that overthrew the most famous communist regime. This shows that compromise can get you there. With respect to our partners, we were able to abolish the regime. In 1976, we launched “The Workers Defence Committee” (KOR) and it made us realise that intellectuals and workers have to work together, act openly together, if they want to change the situation. Then in 1980 in the Gdansk Shipyard, the Polish authorities met workers and

intellectuals, and they had to respect each other and work towards a compromise. That “Round Table” was a precursor to the proper Round Table in 1989 which brought about the regime change.

Compromise is possible through peaceful and non-violent measures. This experience can be applied to the whole of Central-Eastern Europe, in the countries of the former Soviet Bloc. All former Soviet nations tried to follow our course but not all of them managed to attain their goals. Some of them, like Belarus and Ukraine, still have problems, especially recently, when Yulia Tymoshenko was imprisoned. There is still much to be done and we can do it together.

There is hope on the horizon, thanks to the Arab Spring and revolutions in North Africa. I was lucky enough to accept the invitation of Mr Borusewicz, currently speaker of the Polish Senate, and we visited Tahrir Square, the very centre of the Arab revolution, seeing with our own eyes that people are still there. These are people who are similar to those we met in the Gdansk Shipyard, taking part in a revolt and yearning for freedom. Of course there are differences. They are just starting their long journey towards freedom, but they have already set off on this journey and the whole world should support and assist them on this bumpy road. What is happening in Libya would appear to be the most extreme path, but remember that we do not need to go to such extremes. We should keep in constant contact. Poland has sent a big representation of local authorities to Tunisia to try to assist them in building their democratic capacity.

Therefore, the process is clearly starting. There is hope that it will bring more freedom and democracy, but on the way they could encounter tragic events. We cannot condone bloodshed (as has happened in Syria, where the world cannot master the situation). I think that today we miss someone like Doctor Bernard Kouchner, who would block the crimes, who would say “We shall not allow this to happen.” After another tragic event, a massacre of Egyptian Christians happening in Cairo, we went there, we talked to the Copts. Their situation is difficult to evaluate now, but at least we know that they have started their long journey, which will lead them to positive results. Through such an international process, we can observe the constant worldwide tendency of movement towards freedom.

If we look at what is happening in the economic arena, it soon becomes pretty obvious that we will never solve such problems as the economic crisis if we stand aside, if we say “this is my home, this is my castle and I do not need to deal with anybody else.” This is not true. We have to learn to share our resources with others. Sometimes we have to agree on having a bit less so that others can overcome their crises.

Recently, the President of Poland signed a Law on abolition which comes into effect on the 1st of January and will enable all illegal immigrants to regulate their status over the next three years. This abolition relates to the “sans-papiers”. I guess there is a lot of work to be done for people to accept refugees, to regulate their status, so that we can allow them to integrate into society and start leading proper lives. I think this graduated method, these step-by-step changes mentioned earlier, is something that we need to follow.

Chauvinism and racism are everywhere. Recently in Poland, we had a huge wave of both chauvinist and racist acts against Muslims, Jews and Lithuanians and, though small in scale, they were pretty visible. There has to be a strong reaction to such events, as this is a sign that something dangerous is happening. We have to be strict about it and very clearly show our opposition to such acts, because if the tendency to commit such acts is there in Europe, then if we learn to give up some of our privileges, more positive principles will win the day. Well, you can say “Words, words, words” but these words can be put into practice. Whatever is happening, even here in the Villa Decius, will make a difference sooner or later – these words can be turned into action.

To conclude, on a lighter note, Adam Michnik once told me a story about a young man who asked Antoni Słonimski “How do I behave in a difficult situation?” and Słonimski answered: “Well, I don’t know but at least act in a dignified manner.”

Krzysztof Bobiński

I would just add that what is happening in Ukraine at the moment shows us that the rulers seem to be making all the possible mistakes they can in managing difficult situations.

Jan Piekło

The first question is related to Syria. We know that Russia and China blocked the UN Resolution on the embargo on Syria, so I have a strange feeling that these two countries could use similar measures to the Syrian regime to defend their interests in the future. Do you think it was what they had in mind when blocking this resolution?

The second is to Minister Tarasyuk. This is an issue relating to Ukraine, our neighbour and a country with which it is in our interests to have the best possible relations. Do you think Ukraine could soon be a country at risk because of the Tymoshenko question, deep divisions between various factions, and deteriorating economic conditions?

Krzysztof Bobiński

I would like to ask Prof. El Ahmadi: Did I hear you say that there are Russian advisors in Syria? Is that something everyone knows, but simply no one has told me about?

Mohsine el Ahmadi

Yes, we know that Russians are advising this “real” democracy.

Walid Shomaly

I believe that globalisation has its pros and cons, especially for poor countries. It seems to me that if national cultures come equipped with their own peculiarities at international level within the context of globalisation, there will be no problem. But the problem with globalisation, in particular for the third world countries, is that their cultures are being erased or concealed under the dominium of greater, often European, cultures. Another issue is of an economic nature. While many companies claim that they are multinational, they are in fact transnational – they just go and invade countries to exploit their inhabitants, just to get benefits for their own sake.

As I come from the Middle East, an area of conflict, this leads me to experience events in a quite different context. We have seen conflicts among different cultures of the Maghreb despite the fact that they have many things in common. Let us consider the example of the Sahara and the Polisario conflict, or the conflicts between Algeria and Morocco. Prof. El Ahmadi, Do you think that now, after the Arab Spring, fertile ground exists for Maghrebian states to formulate different formulas for cooperation?

Hassan Omar Hassan

I would like to comment on the East African situation and the problem of Somalia, which has created massive displacement, borderless and stateless people. Just like you cannot kill the Taliban to the last man, you cannot kill the Al Shabaab to the last person. The reality is that these people are causing massive displacement and humanitarian catastrophes in their countries.

Prof. Daxner, rather than labelling them, is there any basis for us to lift the US labelling of such groups and try to directly engage with the people we consider “evil,” e.g. the Al Shabaab, so that we can try to reach a resolution of the conflict in Somalia? This conflict is about 22 or 23 years old and the fact that nobody has found any solution to it proves that current methods are not working and there is no foreseeable end to this conflict. Therefore, I am trying to figure out if there

is any possibility of the world engaging Al Shabaab the way the Taliban were engaged in search for a solution in Somalia. They control a large part of Somalia, not only because they have arms, but also because they have many followers.

Michael Daxner

Let me address Walid Shomaly’s comments on cultural colonisation by the strong players in the global context. You are right. But there is also a countermovement because globalisation at the same time means loosening the national grip of local culture.

There was never a time in Europe when local culture was better protected than it is now, under the EU. This is what the right-wing nationalists often forget. The suppression of minorities was much stronger before we had transnational organisations whose very presence dictates that you cannot, especially when in dialogue with Muslim countries, translate the cultural fact of suppression into the transnational economy, as the latter does not care for cultural differences. This means that the social structure in Muslim countries will never be understood by people in Europe. On the other hand, the non-monetary system in force in countries like Afghanistan calls for different forms of production. There, we need the WTO to ban certain forms of production, credit provision and financial transaction from economies that would work perfectly well without their dominance. For those who are not familiar with what I am talking about, I can give the example of distribution and the price of water. Basically, all the conflicts in the poor countries of Central Asia and Latin America are about land, property and water. The rest is secondary, even family problems. Such issues cannot be managed in accordance with codes established by the WTO. Prevention would mean giving more freedom. I think that there is no practical value in a unified legal code. We will have many territories where people share an agricultural civil code and western trade codes in parallel. Why not? That will create conflicts but will also provide conflict resolutions.

The second point is that we should compare Al Shabaab with the Taliban in terms of the actual reality. 20% of the villages existing in North-East Afghanistan are ruled by the Taliban and they have no coherent geographical connection with each other. The very moment the Taliban really conquer a village, the question is: “What should they do?” First, they need to establish exactly the same kind of governance that the previous government used – hybrid organisations of warlords and drug barons. The Taliban need to do precisely this, if they want to share power. Keeping a village running is basically always the same, only the means differ. The Taliban normally use the wrong instruments, mainly violence, yet governance and productivity crumble when faced with this kind of pressure, which

is exactly what the Taliban do not want. I am not sure if the case is identical for the Al Shabaab, but what I mean is that you can build up a strong military threat against the Al Shabaab and the ISAF could do the same with the Taliban, but this might only result in the transaction costs of violence being lowered. The transaction costs for those Taliban who run the village are very high. The first application of violence against a girls' school would immediately turn the entire village against them and this would be a chance to restore legitimate rule there. I am not saying that we should give terrorists a chance but what I mean is that where you cannot really hedge the violence, at least keep those people who are dependent on them in contact with the rest of the world. I am not an expert but such an attitude worked in relation to food transports to Mogadishu two or three weeks ago.

Perhaps the most promising thing that comes from war, as Bernard Kouchner also said, is that even during the worst of wars you always have islands where people organise themselves and create different methods of functioning from the rest of their country. For sure, there is a high risk that these islands could end up being bombed and destroyed. But there are also many cases where the ruling power, the tyranny is not able to do so. In such situations, those people in opposition can show us what self-determination really means and our post-colonial tendency to teach other people what good governance is should be limited to a few isolated cases.

Borys Tarasyuk

The current situation in Ukraine is not something I can discuss with great pleasure. I belong to the Ukrainian opposition and those political forces which won democracy for Ukraine back in 2004.

“Is Ukraine going to be a country at risk?” Jan Piekło asked. I am afraid, taking into account the fact that the Ukrainian authorities failed to learn any lessons from the messages they received before and after the verdict, that Ukraine might be a country at risk and it may join such countries as Belarus. That is something I do not want to happen. The Ukrainian president, the government and the unconstitutional majority in the Ukrainian parliament have to take the very alarming messages they are receiving extremely seriously.

The EU, the USA and many governments are expressing their serious and deep concern over the Tymoshenko trial, which deviated, according to the EU's assessment, from the democratic standards governing court proceedings and it has been described as a politically motivated trial. I do believe that behind this verdict lay a personal sense of revenge harboured by the incumbent president

against his highly rated political opponent, Yulia Tymoshenko. Despite spending over two months under arrest, various public opinion polls indicate her to be the second most popular politician in Ukraine – Yanukovich and Tymoshenko have an almost identical rating, ranging between 17 and 19%. Of course the current president is afraid of having Tymoshenko as his major opponent during the forthcoming 2015 presidential elections and the parliamentary elections coming up in October next year. So, the attitude of the EU is to my mind adequate enough and, as the EU Ambassador said publically in Kiev, should the authorities fail to prevent Tymoshenko from being imprisoned and fail to ensure her right to participate in the political process and the parliamentary elections, this in itself might be a reason for the EU not to recognise the results of these elections. This message was very strong and the reaction after the October 11 verdict, 7 years in prison plus 1.5 billion hryvnas was greeted with disbelief. Even the investigation conducted by the public prosecutor's office found nothing which could be attributed to Tymoshenko and support the claim that her decisions were taken for personal gain. The accusation of corruption on Tymoshenko's part has no foundation and it was purely a politically-motivated decision. The other thing is that such accusations should not be the subject of criminal investigation but a decision for the electorate or parliament.

This court case clearly indicates that power is currently concentrated in the hands of one person, which has never been the case before during our twenty-year-long history of independence. The legislative, the executive and even the judiciary are under the control of the president. I have just read news coming from Ukraine that Yanukovich, on visiting one of the country's regions today, said he expects that during the upcoming court proceedings, the legislation will be amended in such a way as to remove the article under which Tymoshenko was sentenced from the criminal code. The question for many people, especially from the opposition, is why the president did not implement his promise to Mr Jagland, the Council of Europe Secretary General, that he will introduce an amendment which will remove from the criminal code any articles that can be used against Tymoshenko and any other politician.

On the contrary, recently in Warsaw during the Eastern Partnership Summit, President Yanukovich kept saying he has nothing to do with the court proceedings and, although he does not like what is going on, he cannot interfere. Not a single Ukrainian believes such words, as the whole situation was instigated by the president and his administration. I am afraid that this verdict could negatively affect points of view on the Association Agreement, which is in its final stage and, should things go in the right direction, is set to be initialled during the

forthcoming EU-Ukraine summit in mid-December.

Now, within the EU, there are various views on the subject. Yesterday evening, the EU parliament had a special debate related to Ukrainian issues and it turned out there is no unanimity among the MEPs. Therefore I strongly believe in the importance of the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine. I am also of the opinion that this is a strategy for Ukraine which does not depend on any politician or political power in my country, so it has a strategic importance, as this is not an agreement for Yanukowych but for the country and for the people. Such verdicts cannot be tolerated either in Ukraine or in the EU and other democratic countries.

Moihsine El Ahmadi

The first question relates to international double standards, mainly in Syria. In order to understand the Syrian case, I will also need to speak about the Yemeni case.

Why do two powerful countries, such as Russia and China, oppose the UN decision to interfere in domestic problems in Syria? We can answer this question from two perspectives: from the perspective of a UN specialist and of a professor of international law; and from the perspective of a Syrian or Arab citizen. The problem of Syria is the collision of two international interests: the Russian and Chinese on the one hand and the US, French and English on the other. The following questions make the matter appear more complex: “Why is the focus on Syria and not on Yemen?” “Why do the USA, France and England not act the same way and with the same vehemence in the Yemeni case, which is no less dramatic from the humanitarian point of view?” The Arab population understand the international community’s attitude to be a form of hypocrisy. They cannot understand why in Libya there was military intervention, yet in Egypt and Tunisia there was some space left to the regimes to see how they would react and who would hold real power over the population and society. In the case of the Syrian drama, they were also not so swift to act. Why is nothing happening in the Yemeni case, even though it is in the very core of the Gulf?

This is my interpretation of this situation: we either need a legal or a political explanation. When it comes to big interests, the humanitarian cause is irrelevant. What matters is whether we should invest in Libya and wait for a return on our investment or maybe disengage from Yemen, because of the dual threat of Al-Qaeda and radical Islam. And in Syria’s case – we know that we have nothing to win there.

As far as the Russian and Chinese governments are concerned, it all boils down to the question of what they are supporting in Syria. In fact, they are supporting an

undemocratic regime that is collapsing and tomorrow they are going to face the voice of the Syrian people – the new order and system. We know that Russia is trying to defend the old order, while the Arab population that was once voiceless is now coming back to power. They want to be strongly involved in democracy and they are asking the international community for help. We cannot help them by negotiating “under the table”. We need to apply a new law. Such a law could also be relevant in the Yemeni case, the Libyan case, the Israeli-Palestinian case, or in fact – in any case. That is why international law should be universal.

We should bear in mind that we are now facing a kind of imperialist situation that ceased to exist for a while after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as Russia is not truly and openly engaged in democracy. Otherwise, they would have enhanced the claims of the Syrian people for freedom, people who, I would guess, want to build a new state based on democracy.

My answer to the second question regarding globalisation and culture is that globalisation is like “L’Auberge Espagnole”. Everyone brings his contribution to humanity, to human civilisation and together we build a pillar on which we can construct a universal future for humanity. This is not poetry, but rather a genuine hope and optimistic vision of what the international community and international order should be. Meanwhile, intellectuals and writers should act as good ambassadors in their societies by telling them that there is an alternative way to engage in constructing modern societies and democracy anew while maintaining respect for national and local cultures’ characteristics. But these characteristics cannot keep us from going out to meet with other people.

Neighbouring Morocco and Algeria have problems of a military and political rather than social nature. People in Morocco and Algeria know that social explanations are artificial, as the real problem is related to development, democracy and social justice. Will the collapse of regimes in North Africa enable such problems to be solved once and for all? I do think so, but the problem is that the Algerian regime benefits from the fact that in the 90s, the international community supported this country’s regime, regarding it as a kind of barrier against radical Islam and another type of totalitarianism. Now things have changed and the Algerian regime should be either for or against democracy, for or against constructing the Maghreb anew. The new composition of North Africa, a wide Maghreb from Morocco to Egypt, is something welcomed by the EU.

Bearing this in mind, I think that this is a viable project, something we can see in the near future. It is not a strategy, not tactics, but something that the Maghrebian population wants, something that can prevent migration to Europe. These

people just want to have the same thing as the Europeans have in their homes but the Maghrebian version. They are not asking for the Eiffel Tower or Big Ben to be brought to Casablanca or Tunis, simply for their own version of modernity, their own path to a relatively painless access to globalisation. If we win in terms of modernity, we have to come to terms with losing a measure of identity and tradition. Of course not the very pillars of identity, only some of its characteristics. We have to combine the self and globalisation.

Henryk Wujec

I want to say one optimistic thing. In August, during the strike at the Gdansk Shipyard, even though we were imprisoned, the negotiations went on, and that really mattered. Once they were complete, Wałęsa suspended this banner in the air. There was a wave of demands that flooded Poland. Wałęsa said he would sign the papers when people were going to be let out of prison.

So, when thinking about Ukraine, on the one hand, you have to continue negotiations and prepare the Association Agreement, but on the other, not sign anything until Yulia Tymoshenko is out of prison.

Salam Europe!
I lit many candles for
the freedom and liberty
of loved ones in your
tall churches.

Pegah Ahmadi – poet, literary critic, translator [Iran/Germany]

Debate II: Survival. Human Rights without Borders

Humanitarian help – People and Places. Issues and Challenges International Tools for Mediation and Intervention in Armed Conflicts and Occupation Zones The International Media and Human Rights

Danuta Glondys

The topic of the conference is “Borderless People,” meaning both refugees and the people who know no borders when working for the benefit of the least privileged. Nansen was a man like that and today we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of his birth, but we are also commemorating Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who was killed eight years ago in Baghdad during a bomb attack. We held the award ceremony for the Polish Prize of Sergio Vieira de Mello yesterday and today we will have the pleasure of listening to two winners of this award.

Here we have our first Laureate, Hassan Omar Hassan, a human rights activist from Kenya and one of the most prominent people in Eastern Africa working in this area.

Next to Hassan we see Major General Bogusław Pacek, who dealt with military matters on special missions in Chad and the Central African Republic, where he helped with the task of sustaining peace among local communities. Then Gottfried Koefner, Regional Representative of UNHCR for Central Europe, which is based in Budapest in Hungary and finally Agnieszka Kunicka from the Polish Humanitarian Action.

Our moderator today is Dariusz Rosiak, a journalist with the “Rzeczpospolita” daily and Programme Three of Polish Radio. In his own programme, he deals with African issues and I suspect he is as much in love with Africa as I am.

Dariusz Rosiak, Rzeczpospolita Daily Moderator

Today, when I woke up in the morning, I switched on my laptop and I went through the BBC website to see what was going on around the world. It happens that the first information that appeared on the screen was something related to what we are discussing today, namely the kidnapping of two humanitarian aid workers from Spain by the Al Shabaab in Northern Kenya, in the Dabbab region.

The next information was devoted to the problems in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where there are thousands of illegal workers passing through Angolan border controls, where they receive horrible ill-treatment. These are mainly women, and they are sent straight back home.

There are many stories like that and whenever you open the BBC homepage, you can read stories like that from Africa, Europe or other parts of the world – stories of borderless people who are trying to find their own place on Earth and failing in their attempts to do so.

For the next hour or so, we will be discussing these problems and I would really like you to join in. In practical terms, the panel will start discussing some topics and if and when, you feel like taking part, please give us a sign and you can join the discussion. If you do not feel like doing so during the discussion, I promise there will be 15 or 20 minutes at the end of the panel for Q&A.

Gottfried Koefner, UNHCR Regional Representative for Central Europe

Introduction to the Debate

The issue of human rights without borders, as well as displacement and the human rights of persons who have become displaced, whether or not they have crossed borders, are very close to our mandate and our daily global work. It is also an appropriate issue for the UN Refugee Agency to have a say in. We turned 60 last December, yet initially we were founded as a temporary organisation. But here we are, 60 years later, still catering for huge displacement issues and refugee phenomena in an increasingly complex world.

The UNHCR's task is to coordinate and manage the international protection of refugees and the response to humanitarian crises resulting from displacement and the refugee phenomenon. The UNHCR is also playing an increasing role in the phenomenon of the internally displaced. It is not so much the number of refugees crossing borders that is growing, it is the amount of people being displaced within countries and remaining displaced over a protracted period of time, often due to internal conflict, but not only. Sometimes the reason for their displacement is a combination of persecution, internal conflict and environmental disasters. Human beings normally look to their governments to ensure basic human rights and their own protection, surely one of the basic functions of government. However, sometimes governments are unable or unwilling to ensure such rights. Sometimes they have an agenda of persecution or the abrogation of human rights, and that can result in refugee movements. This is also the time when the concept of international protection comes into play. Because if that protection is

lost, somebody else has to step in. We are living in a world of states and there is no space between them, so without the protection provided by states, a human being has a serious problem. I sometimes compare it with the situation when astronauts are leaving their space station. If they should lose their linkage, their lifeline, they would be lost in space. A human being in a world composed of states is in a similar situation when losing the protection of one of these states. The whole concept of refugees revolves around the related concepts of incapacity or absence of protection.

Talking about human rights without borders also implies the need for international cooperation. We were talking yesterday about Sergio de Mello and Nansen's anniversary, and one motif that joins the stories of these two personalities is the importance and need for cooperation. Any response to complex situations involving human rights violations resulting in displacement requires cooperation and, in the case of refugees, international cooperation. Such support and assistance for refugees is often beyond the capacity of one country. It is international cooperation that should protect human rights but there is always a chance of conflict between national interests and security, or between the protection of human rights and of individuals. I will highlight some of these issues and provide you with some facts which illustrate what we believe to be ongoing challenges in the protection of human rights.

Let me give a snapshot of the last twelve months. 2011 has been a very challenging year for us. We have had to respond to a number of emergencies and it is not every year that they happen one after another. Towards the end of 2010, thousands of people fled the Côte d'Ivoire after disputed elections. After many years of conflict, the country was in principle doing very well with its post-conflict reconstruction, but we had this backlash, with 200 000 Ivorian citizens fleeing to neighbouring countries, mainly Liberia. Hundreds of thousands became displaced inside the country, around Abidjan and the Western regions. At the height of this conflict, another emergency started in Libya and it is still not entirely over. 1.5 million people, both migrants and refugees, left Libya within these few months. There were times when some 20 000 people per day were leaving Libya after the outbreak of violence. Most of them went to Tunisia and Egypt and hoped to be helped in getting back to their home country, which was a logistic and humanitarian challenge. There were also tens of thousands of refugees who fled by boat over the Mediterranean. You may remember reports relating how many of them actually lost their lives on the way.

Some other people, third-country nationals as we call them, many of them refugees who had been in Libya before and found refuge there (though Libya is not

party to any refugee conventions and has no appropriate system) got trapped in a very difficult situation. It is difficult because they may be mistaken, especially when they come from Sub-Saharan countries, for mercenaries serving the previous regime. Many of those, about 5 000, are still in the neighbouring countries, Tunisia and Libya, and some will need to be resettled in other places.

While all that was going on, the third crisis hit. Due to increasing drought, some 270 000 people fled from conflict-ridden Somalia, bringing the number of Somali refugees in the region to over 900 000, not to mention over 1.5 million internally displaced within Somalia. This means that over 1/3 of the Somali population is displaced and have been forced away from their homes. The Dolo Ado camp in Ethiopia displays disturbing levels of malnutrition and shocking mortality rates, which have to be dealt with. The neighbouring countries of Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen and Djibouti have been bearing the burden of the Somali crisis. This is something that we should remind ourselves of again and again, particularly in Europe. Kenya has the largest refugee camp in the world, Dadaab, which currently hosts 450 000 people. Pakistan hosts the largest number of refugees of all, about 2 million Afghans.

The general reality is that the developing countries outside Europe host every 8 out of 10 refugees, particularly in Africa. So they not only have large numbers of refugees themselves but they also host them. Sometimes in Europe we have a distorted perspective regarding this reality.

This situation actually prompted the head of the UN Refugee Agency Antonio Gutierrez to call for a "new deal in burden sharing," a call for active solidarity with the hosting countries of the developing world which bear the brunt of forced displacement today.

These emergencies I have mentioned put an enormous strain not only on the UNHCR but also on many others who are active in humanitarian assistance, particularly emergency assistance. In the first 9 months of 2011, we have deployed, despite already having staff in most of these countries, more than 600 additional emergency staff in 36 countries to respond to immediate emergencies. Even some of my staff from Budapest have been assisting in Tunisia and other conflict-ridden places. Unfortunately, it does not seem that the situation is getting any better. The latest CrisisWatch of The International Crisis Group currently puts three countries on the crisis risk alert – Afghanistan (not for the first time), Sudan and Yemen. It lists eight countries as being faced with deteriorating situations, and there are no countries on this list with improving situations or conflict resolution opportunities.

Displacement continues to grow in scale as new conflicts occur, while old conflicts are not necessarily being solved. Today, according to our statistics, about 43.7 million people are currently uprooted due to conflict and persecution. I am not just talking here about natural disasters, though. This is the highest number in the last 15 years. In 2011 alone, another 750 000 sought refuge in other countries. At the same time, as I said, some of the old crises never die: Afghanistan, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of Congo are just some examples of ongoing situations.

What is the solution to displacement then? At the UNHCR, we talk about two options or solutions to refugee situations.

- The ideal one is voluntary repatriation and reintegration of refugees into their home country after a given conflict stops and reconciliation can take place.
- Resettlement to a third country is another option if refugees cannot stay or the situation is too bad to cope within the first country of asylum. This is the normal and most frequent situation.

These situations have their challenges. In 2011, voluntary repatriation figures are at their lowest in 20 years. This proves that the situation is not really improving in a manner that would allow the return of the displaced and refugees in larger numbers. Globally, fewer than 200 000 returned home in 2010, while in the last two decades, the equivalent figure was over a million of those who returned.

Annually, the number of places available for the second solution, resettlement to a third country, is about 80 000 globally. We have had such a situation for the last three years, so this number of available places is not growing. The EU, which after all already has a population of 400-450 million people, resettles 5-6% of these cases, which is not very much. Only in the Libyan situation has the UNHCR submitted 2600 cases for resettlement so far, yet only 450 have been moved from the neighbouring countries and half of these have been moved to transit centres in Romania and Slovakia, so they still have not arrived at their countries of asylum. The process is painfully slow and complicated and connected with checks, immigration rules, and so on.

I would like to highlight that resettlement has not evolved into an effective tool of response to emergency situations. Countries still insist on certain profiles of refugees, while excluding particular nationalities and groups, irrespective of emergency needs. This causes many humanitarian problems to which we cannot find a solution. This has been different before. We can give the example of Central Europe and Hungarian refugees in 1956. After the mass outflow of Hungarian refugees to Austria and neighbouring countries in November, within one week,

not one year or month, buses and trains started moving refugees to other countries. Within a few weeks, daily departures were being counted in thousands. Within less than a year, most refugees, 80-85%, had been moved to other countries. So it is a matter of understanding and the political willingness to take the decisions that make such solutions possible.

In situations when people are moving across borders, human rights protection is more critical than ever. This year, the refugee crises I mentioned have tested the willingness of states to provide help and I think we need to appreciate that some countries, for example those neighbouring Somalia or Libya, have responded amazingly, keeping their borders open despite their own problems and challenges and despite having gone through their own political changes. Liberia, Ghana, Guinea and Togo have all kept their borders open for more than 200 000 Ivoirian refugees. Turkey and Lebanon also kept their borders open this year for those seeking refuge. Italy and Malta have received almost 30 000 people, not just refugees but also migrants from Tunisia, and Italian coastguards have been doing an important and impressive job of rescuing people at sea.

But there are some competing trends which also need to be highlighted, like xenophobia and racism, which are threatening the protection space. Unfortunately, in the European context, we need to understand that racism and xenophobia are not just attitudes promoted by extremists but also by populist politicians and some irresponsible elements of the media. They are not always opposed with sufficient energy and courage by the mainstream political and social movements. While racism and xenophobia diminish us, they have an even more terrible effect on people with no nationality or those who have to flee – they suffer disproportionately. In these tough times, otherness and social exclusion play on common fears of the new and unfamiliar and can play a huge role in the lives of migrants and refugees. Governments need to address these issues of concern to their citizens. The message should be put across that human rights are not exclusively for us, but for us all, including the forcibly displaced.

The increasing criminalisation of asylum seekers is another phenomenon. The rising costs of asylum systems, in Europe for instance, and incidents of migration fraud have had an impact on governments' willingness to keep high-quality protection systems in place and not to curtail access. For some years now, asylum seekers have had to agree to tight border controls and restrictions. Yet these deterrence measures have not stopped boat arrivals in Australia, Europe or across the Gulf of Aden. People continue to risk their lives in search of protection, and deterrence measures probably only make their efforts more deadly. The tradition of rescuing people at sea seems to be under serious duress in some locations.

Another phenomenon we can see in Europe is automatic detention forming part of the machinery deterring new arrivals. The UNHCR commission study released earlier this year has found that there is no empirical evidence that detention deters illegal migration and that compliance with the outcome of an asylum decision is better if you detain people or worse if you do not. Detention has been proved to be seriously detrimental to the physical well-being and psychological health of asylum seekers and refugees who sometimes get detained before their cases have even been examined. This is being maintained in spite of the mounting evidence of the high costs of detention. It is the most expensive form of keeping asylum seekers. Yet, it seems there are boundless amounts of EU money available for detention centres in these frontline EU states. Just imagine, we could use similar amounts for intensive language training, refugee integration, cultural programmes, financial support for municipalities agreeing to host refugees and also the education of employers, in short for solving situations and problems. Of course, the asylum institution has to be preserved for those who need it, but I believe we should have robust procedures to assess the cases rather than use detention.

In Central Europe, we can see the phenomenon of the challenges of integration, for example refugee homelessness, which is linked to the issues of lack of understanding of their situation by employees and prejudices. We have to work on those things and we need to do so via cooperation between civil societies, governments, academics and the media. At the end of the day, it is all a matter of understanding what the issues and people are about and why human rights have to protect them; why very concrete solutions need to be found.

I hope I have highlighted the most important issues that we can pick up in further discussion.

Dariusz Rosiak

Thank you for mentioning these important issues faced by refugees. Now, I would like us to touch upon a specific subject that I find particularly important, one of the previously mentioned challenges: the links between humanitarian actions and politics. Not all, but many, humanitarian aid actions are performed within a political context. Mr Koefner mentioned Somalia and Libya, but actually every situation we are considering is happening within a particular political context.

My questions are as follows: How should humanitarian aid workers cope within a given political context? Where is the limit, that frontier when humanitarian aid becomes impossible, when it no longer entails aid, but rather cooperation with political forces we would rather not cooperate with?

Hassan Omar Hassan

First and foremost, humanitarian work is exactly that. Humanitarian aid workers must operate in political neutrality. In fact, the very core of their legitimacy rests on the idea that they should present the notion of neutrality in any political context or situation. UNHCR is a legitimate humanitarian aid agency on account of the fact that it does not take any political sides. That is why Al Shabaab, for instance, did actually allow humanitarian workers to distribute food during the severe drought lasting for almost 30 years in that region. Therefore, in any political situation, humanitarian workers must continue to exercise political neutrality to ensure they meet the objectives of their mission.

Dariusz Rosiak

But is that not an unattainable ideal? How can you be politically neutral while dealing with Al Shabaab? How can you be politically neutral while dealing with issues within the context of an oppressive political reality?

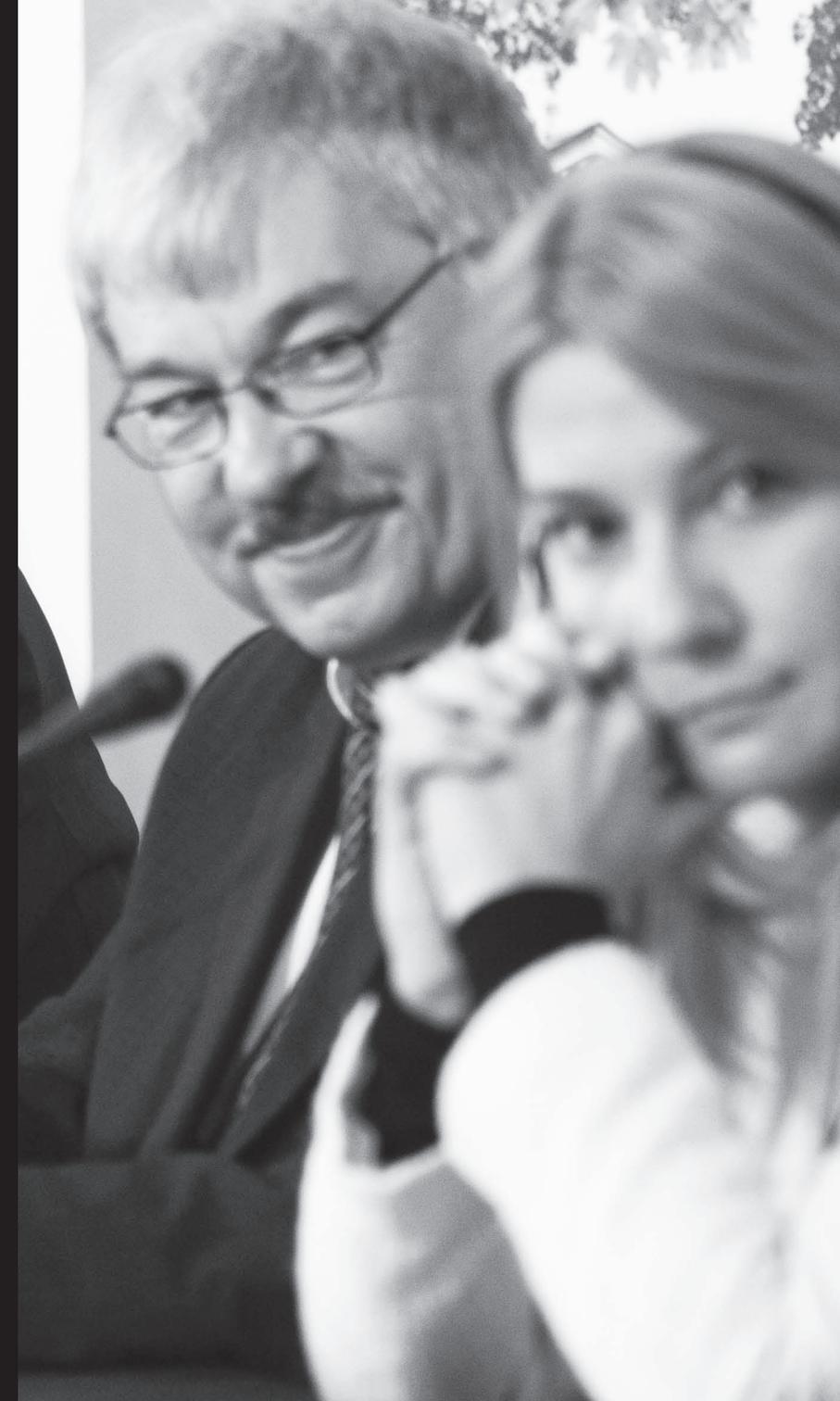
Danuta Glondys

Hassan, can you also explain to our audience what Al Shabaab actually is?

Hassan Omar Hassan

This is an ideal situation because you are not dealing with Al Shabaab but with people in distress. You are not giving direct aid to an Al Shabaab government or administration, but they are aware they need to open the doors for humanitarian aid directed at people in need. I remember there was an argument about whether aid should be given to Al Shabaab, as they were suffering from the same oppressive drought. They definitely would be a beneficiary of this help but I feel that humanitarian work is noble and for anyone to use it as a political tool would mean missing the point. That is why humanitarian aid has to be coordinated and regulated by agencies that best understand these kinds of intervention. Al Shabaab only let agencies without any political objectives operate and provide humanitarian aid in their area of operation.

Al Shabaab in Arabic means “youth” and it is an alleged terrorist organisation with links to Al-Qaeda that now controls most of Somalia. Our neighbours in Eastern Somalia have been under the strain of civil war for the last twenty years and they were not able to create an administration or government. Actually, in Europe there is also a country that cannot create a government, namely Belgium. Since the breakdown of the former government in Somalia in 1989, there have been groups who have been trying to administer control over Somalia. Initially these were warlords controlling certain territories and charging taxes for the use of roads or airports. In 2007, an Islamic group, at that time called the Union of



Islamic Courts, became able to take control over most of Somalia. Later, Somalia was invaded by Ethiopian forces who pushed the Union out of Mogadishu, the capital, and many of them retreated and reorganised themselves in different parts of the country into a new force called Al Shabaab. This is a politico-military movement that has been able to capture large areas, including part of Mogadishu. They were in control of the greater part of the capital until recently, when they pulled out of the city due to the drought. The TFG (Transitional Foreign Government), which is recognised by the EU and the UN, claims that this was a military victory over Al Shabaab, which, on the contrary, claims it moved out of Mogadishu due to environmental causes compelling them to shrink their administration to enable better control over other territories. Still, over 70% of Somalia is under Al Shabaab's control. This organisation is comprised of very young people, mostly students, under religious rule. Similarly to the word "Taliban," Al Shabaab also means "student" and it is students who provide the foundation for these Islamist movements.

Dariusz Rosiak

Theoretically, this lecture on Al Shabaab is not necessarily related to the subject of our conversation but it will be helpful, as Somalia and North Kenya are the places where the greatest refugee crises are going on.

Agnieszka Kunicka, Polish Humanitarian Action

I would like to touch upon two subjects. The first one is about the relation between humanitarian aid and politics. Let us look at the distribution of aid in certain areas that are suffering from catastrophes e.g. Haiti after the earthquake. Most of the assistance was provided by American NGOs. It means that there are certain subsidised national grants for aid in a given state. The dilemma is as follows: will an NGO be willing to cooperate with a government or will it find giving assistance to people who are suffering more important? This is the issue of the political and financial independence of a given NGO. It would have to have funds that are not linked to its own government, to any particular country or political interest.

When it comes to cooperating with countries, or totalitarian or terrorist regimes, you have to analyse the situation very carefully. Think whether you will be helping the people or the regime more. Sometimes regimes require certain kinds of "fees" for allowing any aid. First, you need to look at the condition of the people. If the community is strong, they might overthrow the regime and we can step in and help. In Somalia, there are millions of people dying but we cannot hope for people to fight against Al Shabaab or any other organisation that controls its territory. In this case, we are first and foremost helping them to survive. Secondly, we can help them rebuild certain structures, which in the future will be able to

oppose movements like Al Shabaab. This would be a long process but offers long-term hope for solving the situation. If we chose another path and let these millions of people die, terrorist organisations would achieve their goals faster and more easily.

Bogusław Pacek

I am a soldier and, though the military do not play a direct role in the actions of NGOs, we often also provide humanitarian aid. Therefore, I can see the potential problem of a kind of competition, rivalry and lack of understanding. What I observed between Sudan and Chad, the very famous crisis of Darfur, was, as Mr Koefner said, a situation where very often refugees do not want to go back home and to resettle. They would rather stay where they are than take the actions they are expected to take. I personally understand such an attitude, as on numerous occasions, I have talked to such refugees and when politicians asked them: "What would you like us to do; when would you like to go home?" they answered "We do not want to go back home." In the camps they stay in, they are much better off socially and economically, while general living and humanitarian standards are better than in their homelands. This is a problem. Of course I am not saying that we should reduce the living standards of these people, but we should do everything we can to improve the living conditions in their homelands. I am not surprised by all the problems related to humanitarian aid we are facing today because, whatever we might say, you are much better off being a citizen of Kenya or any other ethnic group from Sudan or Chad if you are in a refugee centre rather than your own home. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is a problem we will need to solve in the future.

Dariusz Rosiak

This is a very interesting and slightly controversial comment, because it does indeed boil down to the nitty-gritty of the problem, namely the existence of the danger that the system within which NGOs and humanitarian aid organisations operate may become a self-propelling wheel that is really helping us rather than those we are designed to support. Do you feel there is a hazard like that and if so, how can we eliminate it and what are the specific things we can do, Mr Koefner?

Gottfried Koefner

I fully support what Hassan said in answer to the previous question. The limitations of humanitarian aid are sometimes bound up with the issue of humanitarian space. If you do not have access and security enabling you to operate and guarantees allowing you to deliver humanitarian aid, particularly in emergency situations, these factors will limit your ability to act. But I would fully subscribe to the idea of humanitarian agencies having a mandate and obligation to help

victims in need of assistance. We cannot remain aloof and step back because we do not like the circumstances.

With regard to what you were saying about there being a danger that we will become part of the kind of continuous humanitarian aid that in effect encourages people not to return home due to their increasing dependency, that's very true. There is such a risk. But we must ask why the situation persists, and 6 million people on the Earth have been refugees for more than five years, sometimes fifteen years, while whole generations are growing up as refugees. It is not because we provide them with humanitarian aid and do not let them die. When Dabaab is flooded and 80 000 people suffering from measles are fleeing from there, we provide them with assistance, and we do that because there is no other solution for these people. And this needs to be worked on. Going back or staying in Kenya are not in themselves solutions for these people, so there is this kind of encampment situation perpetrated due to the lack of solutions.

Humanitarian aid exists to assist people, particularly in emergency situations. It does not produce solutions. It can merely help solutions arise if the opportunity is there. In the case of returns, when the situation improves, we can help people restart their lives and hopefully then, development actors will kick in and that will result in long-term sustainable development. But the solutions to the causes of humanitarian problems are political and not to be left to humanitarian agencies to come up with. This is an issue to be solved by politicians and other major players.

This is the key. Humanitarian actors need to be fully aware and take into account the prevailing circumstances so as to safeguard their independence, but they cannot be the ones who drive the political agenda, as they would then have problems concerning their role. The role of the military is similar in this case. The military, in a given situation, has the role of safeguarding an environment in which humanitarian aid can be provided, like in the case of Chad. Humanitarian aid organisations cannot do the security job and this is the time where different players have to come together. It is politicians, not humanitarian actors, who need to solve political problems.

Dariusz Rosiak

I am still not fully satisfied because we are still facing the problem of whether we should be paying bribes to Al Shabaab or not. Can we pay them under the table or not?

When you are saying that political problems need to be solved by politicians and

military problems by soldiers, while humanitarian aid workers are in a way outside the whole decision-making setup since they are working under different conditions in different zones, can we really remove humanitarian aid workers from the picture? Is that possible?

Agnieszka Kunicka

I would say we would like to do our utmost not to assist the Al Shabaab regime. Humanitarian organisations enter an area which is pretty secure. Usually, military forces are already there to “clean up” the area and separate the conflicting parties, and only then can humanitarian aid organisations get in. We have to make sure that both the local population and humanitarian aid workers are kept safe, as, if they are shot dead, they cannot do their job. So, if you enter a safe and secured place, there is much less chance of somebody demanding a bribe.

The first step in humanitarian aid is directed at making sure that people who have experienced direct threats to their lives and health can survive. We need to provide them with food and water and only then can we start development aid programmes which basically aim to make sure that these people can survive on their own and be self-sustainable. This might, for instance, entail building a water infrastructure, teaching people how to breed animals or the rules of agriculture. This is our investment in their self-sustainability.

Later, security needs to be provided. Because if we teach these people and invest money in rebuilding the infrastructure, and they then get attacked by military squads, all our work will be to no avail.

Hassan Omar Hassan

My best friend's father was the head of the Kenyan military and when I was graduating from school, my ambition was to become a military officer, because I used to visit their camps and see everybody saluting and I wished everybody would salute me. I briefly joined the military as an air force cadet, but during the medical test, I was banned from flying due to problems with my eyesight. I was told that I could go to the military intelligence department (CMI) but then I thought this does not comply with my vision of life – I wanted to be up in the skies, not analysing information.

In fact, my first point was what the General has pointed out. When I joined the National Commission on Human Rights in 2007, media reports were claiming that the refugees in Dabaab were so privileged that it had reached a point where the local communities that were hosting them were becoming antagonistic. My first trip, in February, was to find out for myself how privileged a refugee can be.

I went to the camp and could not see any sense of privilege. The only thing I saw was that the Kenyan people were poorer than expected and that the government was not fulfilling its obligation to assure its nationals that a refugee who gets a ratio of food and a tent is not more privileged than they are. I was shocked to see the quality of life in Dabaab, the biggest refugee camp in Kenya.

I felt that this is the point when we need to tell the media to be more accurate in their reports rather than fuelling antagonisms and xenophobic attitudes. The truth is that the media can stir up agendas that can be very counterproductive to the work of humanitarian organisations. I think that was one of the places that the media did a bad job, especially when we take into consideration the complexity of the situation between the refugees, Al Shabaab, the conflict in Somalia and insecurity in Kenya. Sometimes we are too simplistic in our treatment of issues in the media. I just wanted to tell you this story to show you how powerful the media is around the world, in Poland also. That is why we all sometimes appear to be very nice to the media people, not because we love them but because they can do things counterproductive to your work. The media in Kenya hate what we call “capacity building,” which is organised for them to better understand the issues they report. Media people believe they are trained professionals and none of them needs capacity building. In 1787, Edmund Burke, a British philosopher said in a parliamentary debate that there are three estates in the House of Commons, but the reporters’ gallery contains a “Fourth Estate” which is much more important. Later, Oscar Wilde wrote in one of his books: “In the old days, men had the rack. Now they have the press.”

Journalism might have been the Fourth Estate years ago, but now it is the only estate, it has eaten up the other three and we have all been eaten by it. That is today’s reality. Why do you think you wake up in the morning and go to Google to see what has happened around the world? Sometimes you even have no way of verifying the facts you read. I have personally experienced situations when I have seen facts being misrepresented and I have also been in situations when I commanded journalists to report events accurately. This happens because some journalists are lazy in terms of going beyond the call of duty. Since an editor needs a report, they make sure to file it before the deadline no matter what the input is. The editor, on his part, because he wants to publish it, will publish it without the due diligence required in reporting.

Still, we need to appreciate that journalism has also done amazing work. Part of the revolution and the social construction that we now have in various countries has been greatly informed by journalism. When the media has an agenda and ideology and represents the vision of the people, then it can be a very important

tool for democratisation, human rights and guarding the public interest. Therefore, in our way of doing things in Kenya, as human rights actors and humanitarian aid workers, we believe the media is a critical component of our engagement. I remember when I was a guest during the 60th anniversary of the UNHCR in Kenya and we were all saying many things on what had and what had not been done while responding to the humanitarian situation. The next day, I was quoted in the media as criticising the government for not allowing another camp to be opened up to accommodate the influx of refugees.

We definitely have problems with the closure of the Somali-Kenyan border. That goes against Kenya’s international obligations and I think that the media must be firmer when trying to highlight situations of this kind and not take the official line that our national security is more important than the human rights of these people.

Therefore, whether we like it or not, journalism and the media will continue to play an important role. And most of us here are trying to be communication experts. I keep telling our Commission members and staff: “If you know that you cannot communicate, let somebody do it for us, because effective communication helps in terms of pushing the agenda forward.” Sometimes a paper can be very inferior but the way it is communicated can make it a very effective agenda. And it works the other way too. An inaccurate presentation of a piece of work or research can really undermine its content. Some Kenyans believe that the most effective communicator of our times is the US president, Barack Obama. He communicates very effectively, though over the last 3 to 4 years of his presidency, some Americans have become very critical over the issue of whether he is actually able to deliver on what he communicates.

Most of us who are Muslims or of Arab origin felt that Obama’s entire message in Egypt, Cairo, two years ago was watered down when he could not stand up for the cause of the Palestinian people. So, on the one side, he is robust with his words, on the other side, very mean with his actions. These are areas you need to balance in communication.

The media itself has become a human rights actor and player. In fact, what we are trying to tell the Kenyan media is that they have become a very important human rights advocate. In our progressive bill of rights, the freedom of the media, press and information is a critical part. But these rights impose responsibility. When you have all these rights, you need to decide what to do in terms of promotion of the most important values in society.

We do many things related to proper communication with the media in the hope

of building their capacity but one of Kenya's most important domestic players are the international media. In fact, many times when things are not expressed in the local media, they find their way into the international media. Many people recall that during the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya, the local media were banned from live broadcasting, so were the international media, which continued to report on the humanitarian aspects of the Kenyan violence. We had over 400 000 internally displaced Kenyans, 1300 dead in a span of two months and it was the international media that were able to trigger the international intervention.

To go briefly into a more recent situation which Gottfried described very broadly, Kenya is undoubtedly a poor country, but we also have some of the wealthiest people in the world. They say that there are three African countries, South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya, which have billionaires in US, not Zimbabwean, dollars. Wealthy people in Kenya are wealthy by any standards in the world and if they came here, they would be among the wealthiest in Poland. We are said to be the third country in the world when it comes to inequalities, Brazil being the first. But we are still able to host over 400 000 refugees in camps and this situation has become even more critical with the 30-year-long drought in the region. This drought escalated the bad humanitarian situation and again, the most effective intervention came from the media.

The media articulated our humanitarian plight to a point that literally led to international intervention. They showed high UNHCR officials paying visits to camps and various types of people, including celebrities, who were holding babies and crying. These are powerful images in some parts of Europe and America. When you see Beyoncé holding a baby and crying you think that you should do something and this is the power of media. One of the images that shocked the whole world was the one with a child suckling milk from the breast of a mother who was dead from starvation. I think this image horrified everybody, including Kenyans. This image was showed by the media, both locally and internationally, and everybody said "We need to mobilise for action."

In Kenya, we started a campaign aimed at feeding the hungry called "Kenyans for Kenya," and we were able to raise just under 1 billion Kenyan shillings, which is about 15 million USD, to assist the humanitarian situation in our country. This was possible thanks to the Kenyan media. Therefore, the media can be an extremely powerful tool for mobilising humanitarian action and intervention, which was also proved during the current drought in Somalia and the Eastern-African region. Everybody across the world responded with solidarity and I can't think of a single country, poor or rich, which did not respond to their call. Even Japan when it was being hit by the tsunami, still responded to the situation in East Africa.

To conclude, the media have a critical role in highlighting facts during humanitarian situations through highlighting the situation itself and also calling for accountability – the media force governments to be accountable for human rights violations during humanitarian situations. It is partially the media's influence that led to the intervention of the International Criminal Court against the perpetrators of the post-election violence.

Yet, some Kenyan media are compromised by their affiliation to the government, as they see positive aspects in the lunacy of the political class, articulate politicians' speeches of hatred, play the political agenda and mobilise xenophobia, racism and violence.

I am a human rights actor and I work for the Human Rights Commission in Kenya, which is a constitutional body, and all of us know that there is a very thin line between freedom of speech and speech of hatred. We do not want to limit freedom of speech, but there are issues of corporate social responsibility that any journalist should keep in mind. If someone thinks that a certain issue that he/she is talking about can be seen as prejudicial or harmful to the well-being of a nation, he/she has the obligation to ensure that his/her coverage will have a positive influence on the nation. When you start talking about Somalis and piracy, by making the link that Somalis are pirates you create xenophobic attitudes towards the whole society, which in general is extremely entrepreneurial, in all parts of the world: Minnesota, Europe, the Arab world.

Such xenophobia may also result in the victimisation of refugees, who also suffer from the encampment syndrome. Most of them have been in camps for the last 15 to 20 years. Some of them are graduates of the University of Nairobi and yet cannot find employment in Kenya. They have nowhere to go, nowhere to return to and no opportunities locally. Time and time again, they try to leave the camps to look for better opportunities, to integrate, yet when they are found by police officers, it turns out that they are being exploited sexually or suffering from extortion and all manner of other human rights violations.

The media feel miserable reporting this, partly because some of them feel that the Somalis are too dominant in the Kenyan economy and they take over every single little shop. So in addition to accountability, it is important that the media have responsibility for not only international intervention but also social cohesion, to ensure that people interact as societies and communities.

As I said, the media have shaped both local and international discourse. In most cases, they have highlighted human rights protection concerns and the need to

Hassan Omar **Hassan**



protect borderless populations, however, in some cases they might have undermined these very rights. Therefore, strategic engagement with the media is very important. We must continue to engage the media and we must continue to provide them with information, whether they use it or not, even though they can sometimes be very irritating. I have a list of all the key editors in the country and whatever information I get, I pass it on to them hoping that they can evaluate it and articulate it positively.

So, we need to continue engaging the media for strategic reasons towards the promotion of rights and the agenda of borderless and stateless people. The capacity of regional and international reporters to report and cover issues comprehensively is an issue that requires constant capacity building through strategic engagement with those who have influence over the media.

I guess that the moderator, Dariusz Rosiak is more qualified to speak on this subject, especially as he is now doing a story about Kenya, so I guess, by asking this question, he was also trying to fill in the gaps in his story. Still, I think you are more entitled to give an expert analysis of this matter, but I also think it was necessary for me to highlight one or two things that affect us directly in Kenya.

Dariusz Rosiak

Thank you Hassan also for being so gentle with us, journalists. I guess you could go on about how cynical, hopeless and sometimes silly some journalists are. You could also have said that some crises are more “sexy” than others and so on and so forth. I know that the media can be blamed for many things, as we do not have a clear conscience. Major General, would you tell us something on the issue of the media?

Bogusław Pacek

I would like to say one thing to Hassan Omar Hassan. Although you were very elegant and gentle at the end of your presentation, I must say that I do not agree with what you said to a large extent.

The role of the international media in various activities on the international arena, both in humanitarian aid and in conflict solving has changed a great deal. Today we have to understand, whether we like it or not, that the media are sometimes obstructing us. Sometimes they are simply bloodsuckers, bloodthirsty in their quest for headlines and their hot topics and they are not really interested in showing the truth. We need to realise that to a large extent the international media do not belong to specific entities like governments and are not owned by them as they used to be some years ago. Of course there are still interest

groups, as has always been the case.

I am saying this, because in the crises and emergency situations that we are going through, the media are a very significant partner on the scene, just as important as NGOs, the UN organisation or the military. Without the media you cannot win conflicts nowadays.

Hassan, you spoke about the media, saying that we need to talk to them. This is a very fair point, but you never mentioned that, whether we like it or not, we have to be more open towards the media. And we have two options for doing this. One of these was apparent in Chad, where Iraqi general Patrick Nash was leading the operation and was very open towards the media. Whichever journalist wanted to go to Chad, the general would pay for it, giving him/her the use of a car, paying for a plane ticket etc. This greatly contributed to the success of this operation because at one point, journalists did more for this campaign than the military. Of course, the humanitarian aid was also very important, but the media in any operation, be it in Afghanistan or any other country, is an equal and equivocal partner.

Do the media lie and obstruct us? They use all the same methods as we, the politicians, the military, do. This is the truth. But the solution for those of us taking part in international crises is to be open to the media, to give them a chance to speak the truth and hope they will say what we want them to say.

Hassan Omar Hassan

As far as we are concerned, in the human rights community, we also certainly recognise that the media are a double-edged sword which cuts both ways. But all the time, we try to make sure that it cuts in the direction we want. This is how we position the media and therefore, we realise that in the Kenyan case, the extraordinary role which the media has played within the human rights discourse comes from their understanding. If the media understands the case, it can be an extraordinarily useful tool. Definitely, most governments try to curtail the power of the media, as they view them as obstructionist or too nagging but I think that a critical media is a cornerstone of democracy and it must continue to be the avenger of society by articulating things we dislike most.

Many times, when negative things have been said about the Kenyan National Human Rights Commission, we feel that we need to tolerate this, as they also often say things we like. Therefore, these are some issues in which you always need to keep creating a balance. We are an independent institution. I am appointed by the parliament of the Republic of Kenya and the president but I still can say anything against both of these authorities, because I was given the independence of that office.

One of the reasons why constitutions secure the independence of the media is for them to have an opportunity to say whatever they like. But they can be used like any other human institution. They can be used for capacity building and for very constructive intervention and that was exactly what the general you spoke about did. Sometimes, the media is easier to manage when you just give them information. But when you have things to hide and you always say “no comment,” the media write what they want and I have seen such a situation in many crises.

The reason why the media gives us positive coverage is because every time you call institutions such as ours, you will get any information you want, but when you call the government, you always hear “no comment, we do not speak to the media.” Some of my best friends are journalists. We studied together and shared the same apartments, so I know how they think and we talk a lot. When you shut them out, they just start imagining that many bad things are going on but when you give them information, they start articulating it. But when the Iraqi general was open, you could see the positive coverage.

Agnieszka Kunicka

I can clearly agree that we need to cooperate with the media but I would like to point out some smaller issues, so that we have a fuller picture.

NGOs which cooperate with the media have to be aware of the fact that this is a very responsible part of our job. We have to know the ways in which the media operate, and also need to know how to communicate with them so that journalists can understand us, as they work in a completely different medium to us. In the media, especially in TV and on the radio, you have to be very brief and concise. When you talk to a journalist, you cannot go on for a long time and go into details, as there is a high chance that the journalist would understand and remember nothing or would just fish for irrelevant details. If we want to make sure that a journalist gets our message across, we need to digest it first and give him/her a short message to make sure he/she gets it right. You have to train your humanitarian aid workers in communicating with the media. We very often work with well-known PR agencies who train our workers free of charge and they somehow participate in our humanitarian work.

A well-put message can also be a very efficient fundraising tool. This is very important, because if NGOs have no 72-hour fast track access to money to react in emergencies, you have to raise funds during public fundraising. NGOs in Poland, apart from the Caritas Church charity, have to apply to the ministry for permission to fundraise. It takes about two weeks providing you cooperate with the ministry. This means time has already been lost. During this time, we can start

our cooperation with the media, but the message has to be put across. They have to know what to say and how to address the general public. Most of the journalists are doing their best and want to demonstrate their commitment. However, I can tell you from my own experience that some journalists have a blueprint in their minds and it is pretty difficult to change this. Sometimes we even have xenophobic journalists and I remember times when I had to refuse an interview because I decided it would be better for me not to talk to such a person so that my words were not going to be quoted out of context. We will cooperate with everybody but sometimes it is better not to speak to the media if we know that they would distort our words. Of course, the best solution would be to authorise interviews but these are no longer times when that is possible.

One more point. The media are very supportive, but as our moderator mentioned, we have also forgotten conflicts which are not “sexy” enough. They do not have a wide appeal and they are never mentioned because for some reason the media and public are not interested. Very often, there is no money from the EU or a given government to organise help, so we raise funds during public fundraising. Public money gives us independence, as it comes from individual donors and they usually do not think about whether they are contributing to the best interests of their country, they simply want to help individual people in need.

Dariusz Rosiak

Speaking of conflicts that are not “sexy,” we might mention April 1994 in Rwanda. Nobody understood what was going on and nobody was interested. After 3 months, 800 000 were lying on the streets covered in blood.

In Sudan, there used to be two conflicts: the first one was in Darfur and the second was a 50-year-old civil war between the North and South with just one 10-year break in hostilities. Most people confuse these two conflicts and nobody really knew what this war between the North and South was about.

These are just two examples of situations in which the media do not know what to do and how to act.

Gottfried Koefner

I don't want to repeat what others have said about the important role of the media, but I would like to point out that the media do indeed play a key role in today's world, where we have instant communication. At the same time, this puts an enormous responsibility on the media and journalists. I am distinguishing between “media and journalists,” because it is one thing to be an individual journalist and another to be a media corporation, the whole machinery. Also,



Agnieszka **Kunicka**

there are media organs with a clear agenda as well as the powerful media, which pursue their own agenda.

For us working in the field of humanitarian aid and human rights, as Hassan explained, it is very important to engage with the media and we are also not only training our staff to understand how to explain themselves, but also to understand that journalists are doing their job. And that their job is not easy; they may be driven by other priorities; they may have their own constraints, including time, resources, employer interests, and so on. But they also bring in new issues which make a crucial contribution to our role as reflexive practitioners and enable us to see that we are operating within a context that is both international and local.

We have also developed a kind of code of conduct illustrated in guidelines and leaflets. And we provide trainings for journalists enabling them to better understand refugee issues, the sensitivity of this matter, how to deal with it and what their role is within such a context. We do not tell them what to say, but just ask them to be sensitive to the complexities of a given situation.

Sometimes journalists and the media are in danger of becoming part of a political agenda, particularly in the case of human aid workers and human rights activists. Journalists have their own code of conduct and their own dilemmas.

Agnieszka mentioned the forgotten conflicts and emergencies. Indeed, we sometimes talk about the so-called “CNN effect”. Due to all this global attention, we check Google after waking up and we immediately know that there have been a few foreigners abducted in Dabaab. There is a direct link between what is in the media and the response of the international community, and actually anyone, to the humanitarian crises. The “CNN effect” means that you have an emergency today and another one tomorrow. When the next one happens, the first one falls off the screen, and this in practice means that very often it falls off the screens of politicians, donors and humanitarian agencies, all of whom are already moving on to another conflict. Then resources get limited and sometimes become unavailable. When a conflict is over, the post-conflict intervention starts and there is a huge donor conference where billions of dollars are promised but they are never donated. Two years later, everyone is dealing with something else and another two years later new conflicts arise, because the solutions were not seen through. This is the case because politicians have to explain to the people why they should give millions to this or that operation and why humanitarian aid organisations are being used for that and not for something else.

There is competition over what is deserving of priority attention. In this context,

the media play a very important role. On the one hand, via the power of the image and reports, they can draw attention to something and that can really lead to some response. On the other hand, their actions may lead to a shifting of response from one conflict to another. De-prioritisation is also sometimes important and the media can play a role there by not reporting on certain issues, instead dealing with the headline of the day, the most “sexy” and dramatic issue. This is the reality of which we all, including the media, have to be aware.

The ultimate effect of this is that we only see what is on the screen today, like Somalia because of the drought there. This country has had its fair share of forgotten years, of being a forgotten emergency. For years, nobody paid attention to Somalia or Afghanistan. I remember the time just before 9/11 when the High Commission was appealing to the international community to give money to aid the return of hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees who wanted to return to the Taliban-led Afghanistan. The UNHCR did not get the funds, because at that time nobody was interested in Afghanistan, even to help 100 000 refugees to return, which would not have required that big a financial outlay.

Attention is shifting, moving around and this is not always fair or linked to real needs. I think that the media and ourselves need to play a role and help to paint a more realistic picture, focusing attention and enabling others, for example politicians, to deal with situations. If things are not brought on to the agenda, they might not deal with them.

Major General Bogusław Pacek

I am happy to see so many students in this room, because on an everyday basis I am not only an advisor to the minister, but I also teach students. I have always preferred to spend one hour with students than five hours with generals and other soldiers. I do hope that today I will not be addressing you in the manner of a preaching professor from a university, but I will be able to share some practical comments with you on the everyday practices of the military and tell you something about the interventions I was commanding or in which I have taken part in Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq and Afghanistan. In Chad, I was co-commander; in Congo, all the soldiers were Polish; finally, I have been in Iraq and Afghanistan on numerous occasions. I certainly witnessed human rights violations during all of these operations.

I would like to focus on the role of the army and the new approach of the armed forces to humanitarian law and the implementation of human rights throughout the world. You may find it strange that a general, a member of the military forces, is saying such controversial things. Yet, let us remember that the military speak

a great deal about human rights and humanitarian aid, for our activities always bring death – we go to places and kill people.

In the 20th century, 87 million people were killed during armed conflicts. On the one hand, we talk about humanitarian rights and civilians, yet at the same time, we are legal actors bringing such deadly effects. In those conflicts, civilian people lost their lives. During World War I, the proportion of civilian victims was 5%; in World War II, it was 50%; in the Korean War, 60%; and in Vietnam, 70%. This poses a huge question about the role of the military in peacekeeping operations and in preserving the lives of human beings. Do we change our mentality? Of course we do. We certainly change our approach to conflict solving and to the role of the military in global security.

In the 20th century and before, the set up was very simple: governments had their armies and were sending soldiers to various parts of the world, usually to their neighbours, in an attempt to destroy these other countries. And there were either winners or losers. The effects lasted for a couple of years and then we were back to square one. It turned out that the army, when left to its own means, cannot solve any problem. Today, the setup is different. We realise that the objective of a military campaign nowadays is to acquire and win hearts and minds rather than to conquer an enemy on a temporary basis. We are fighting in the arena of consciousness rather than with tanks and planes.

Solving conflicts is about drawing conclusions from the crisis situations we observe in Africa, Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, we know that we cannot solve the situation in Afghanistan. Even if we send another 100 000 soldiers, we will never solve the country's problems, as it is impossible to win against the Afghans. The strategic objective of military forces sent out into the crisis zones is to change the intentions of our counterparts. We want to contain the conflict but never destroy them physically.

What is this new approach in practical terms? It can be found in the EU, NATO and other international organisations and it focuses on understanding that some things have to be done jointly with the civilians, NGOs, the UN, the EU, and so on. Obviously, this is not an easy task. But why is it so difficult from the practical point of view? I do not quite agree with what Gottfried Koefner from the UNHCR has said, because if you say that we would like to cooperate with civilians, this is a broadly understood truth – everyone wants to work together. But why is *wanting* so difficult to translate into *doing*?

In my view and from my own experience, the activities of organisation representatives in a crisis zone differ a great deal. All of us have a tendency to boast about



Bogusław Pacek

our actions: the military will say “we did a fantastic job containing the conflict” and I am yet to observe a “lost” operation, all of them are “won”; the UN has never said “we lost;” the NGOs always say “we did a good job.” If it was so good, why is everything in actual fact so bad?

I can see clear progress, as year by year the situation is getting better. The humanitarian situation and human rights on all continents are improving, so all these activities yield results. The point is whether this is enough in itself and whether the pace of change is sufficient.

The first problem is related to military organisations. How should we tailor our methods to meet the specific requirements of a given conflict and a given country? The numerous meetings that I have obtained with numerous local governments in numerous local countries have taught me a lesson. To quote a sultan, a very educated man: “Do not use the European methods and your European mentality in my country.” This is one of our problems. We are trying to use our own toolkits, money, hearts, knowledge and potential in a country that is very often expecting something completely different or would handle the conflict in a very different way given the chance. In deportation camps or camps for the displaced, where numerous organisations try to help the refugees, the situation is very hard and we cannot be picky when solving it. But often, it would be enough to simply use the different methods and means offered to us by those who have lived in the countries we have been assigned to for thousands of years. This is true for the military as well. How can you keep peace while pointing a gun at the local population? How can you keep peace against the will of the local population?

If you ask me, you cannot.

What can be changed then? From my personal perspective, there is one thing we can do: we have to abandon something that we would never admit is going on, namely, we have to abandon this rivalry, this competition. In all the crises and operations I have witnessed, there is a fragile rivalry going on between various organisations engaged in a conflict. During an international conflict, you do not have one organisation, but 50, 60 or 70 of them. Very often you have 20 or 30 military squads from different countries being steered in different directions by their countries’ governments. There is this rivalry going on and in this respect, I really appreciate the role of UNHCR as a coordinator. But I can also say how difficult it is to coordinate these actions and how flexible you have to be to do so. It requires alignment with the local conditions and this is something we have been missing.

I am very open about this issue and have been talking about it at various conferences, but I see no progress and no international consent among all the partners, including the media organs we have discussed which are very open but never

invited. There is no dialogue going on before we decide to enter a conflict zone. And even when there are some talks, there are no joint plans employed. The “OP;” the operational plan, is still very much the basis of everything – the commander receives it and that is the basis for action. It would be much better if we worked out a common plan and were able to live by it. There should be an emergency plan agreed with the country which we enter and coordinated by the UN, a plan that would reflect the good will of the partners. Such an emergency plan should contain actions and deliverables, and during campaigns in the field, we should share these deliverables.

In humanitarian campaigns, for instance in Haiti, where we dealt with the natural catastrophe caused by a hurricane and flood, the role of military operations is secondary. The military is there to support the emergency plan being implemented by NGOs. These NGOs are saving lives and the military is there to support them.

But I cannot condone the rivalry between civilian and military organisations in Afghanistan. We need to give in, we need to give up certain elements of ambition and we have to become part of the greater military plan to be sure that we save our own lives. There is no point in replicating today’s situation, where individual countries under the SIMIK, which delivers military tasks, bring help like medical assistance, but at the same time, the very same kind of medical help is also being organised by an international NGO. This does not make any sense at all, as such actions should be coordinated. Still, NGOs do not want to be coordinated without prior notice. I agree, but the question is why it could not be done earlier, be planned for in advance and subsequently implemented. Agnieszka said one thing I particularly liked – the role of the military is really important in the first stage of the conflict when the situation is dangerous and you simply need to overwhelm other forces. But what happens then?

Today, we have talked about the sin of forgetfulness. It is not just the media which tend to forget about a crisis when it is no longer interesting for them; this also applies to politicians and the military. The problem is as follows: to plan civilian and military actions together, because they both have a role to play. Military action alone is not enough. All the players and actors need to act and exhibit their good will. The money you have collected funds our actions, so we need to listen to your suggestions as well.

It is not only about laws. It is also about changing the mentality and differing objectives. All the organisations that arrive on the scene, apart from the official agenda, have their own agendas. Organisations acquire money and are trying to attain certain results, while not cooperating with the military. One of the

organisation representatives died. This was not a military attack. He got shot, as someone spread the information that he had lots of money on him. This man did not want any protection, any guards.

On the one hand, people are complaining that the military is not supporting their organisations. On the other, the same organisations do not want to be too close to the army. Maybe this results from negative associations. They just do not want to be seen around guns.

The role of the military today is different. Let me give you an example of its new role, taken from Afghanistan. A huge Soviet army was defeated there. Poland is a member of the alliance that is very active in that region and we have not seen any effects in Afghanistan so far. The effect we would like to appear and is just starting to make its presence felt is achieved through talks with the opposition. You can call them as you wish, the Taliban, religious leaders, but what matters most is that they are shooting at us. In the current world, it is mediation with military participation that tends to yield better results than the latest high-tech equipment.

To sum up, I have three dreams. The first one is related to the young people in this room. Soon, you will be taking decisions and as you have come here, I guess you are interested in what lies ahead of you.

My second dream is the following: when it comes to respecting human rights, I would like to see more progress. I have participated in many conferences and people see how much is happening in this respect. At the same time, if you go to Africa, to Congo for instance, and you see the ONUC operation that has been going on there for years; or if you go to Libya; if you look at half of Africa; only then you will see how much more is still to be done.

My last dream now: I would like to see a form of “umbrella activity” from the UN. In my view, the UN is no longer first in line. It is not at the forefront, but it is in fact the organisation which represents us all and the only universal organisation in the whole world. Its actions could be much more efficient, but I guess this is a discussion for another time and place.

The Smell of Longing, multimedia slideshow of Rune Eraker's photographs

Danuta Glondys

I would like to ask Helge Lunde, the Executive Director of ICORN, the International Cities of Refuge Network, to present us an absolutely unique set of photographs taken by his friend, an outstanding Norwegian photographer, Rune Eraker.

Helge Lunde, ICORN, Norway

Sometimes we need to sit back and use other receptive instruments, our minds, and I am grateful to Danuta and the Association for letting us sit back, watch and think. We are going to see 26 photos from areas that were discussed yesterday and today. Initially, I planned to give a comment on every picture, but I eventually decided to say something now and later remain silent to let you contemplate.

This project, using pictures taken from the “The Smell of Longing” exhibition, was an EU project featuring the joint cooperation of the Edinburgh Book Festival, Stavanger Festival, The Long Beach Festival and Göteborg Book Fair. It was a project called “Nations Unlimited,” which suits the conference theme perfectly.

Rune Eraker is an internationally acclaimed documentary photographer. For the last 25 years, he has been travelling all over the world, including Africa, Asia, Europe and both the Americas, and he has been documenting conflicts, as well as the normal lives of people. He has a very special characteristic. He connects with people, tries to get to know them, but also has this integrity – he never takes a photo if the people he is photographing are not 100% sure. He is a minimalist, maybe even a purist. He only takes photos in black and white, and never cuts or manipulates them, so the moment the photo was taken is there for all to see. Honesty might be a dangerous word but that is the quality I would attribute to this photographer and the way he works.

We start with Afghanistan and three generations of the internally displaced in Kadahar.

You, my dear Europa,
have been my lotus-land:
I was washed upon your
shores just like Ulysses'
sailors. I rested from
battle and I received
from you, gracious
Europa, the gifts of your
lotus-fruit: peace, free-
dom of expression and
sweet scented myrrh.

Easterine Kire Iralu – poet, novelist [India/Norway]

Seeking a Safe Haven in Europe Crisis of the Multicultural State The Embarrassing Inability to Dialogue

Adam Leszczyński, *Gazeta Wyborcza Daily*
Moderator

When I was attempting to approach the topic of our debate, I was trying to look at the emotions which this topic stirs in me. I remember a scene I observed in Pittsburgh in America some time ago. I was in a court celebrating the naturalisation of some new American citizens and this was a very elevated event. Most of these “newly-created” Americans were very happy. It was neither a cynical event, nor a pure formality. Most of these people came from outside Europe and they were mainly former refugees from South Sudan, which was not yet independent. I got the sense that this was a very moving experience. One of the judges spoke straight from his heart. His speech was unscripted and the participants were swearing their loyalty to the Constitution. When I was talking to those new Americans, they told me they were very moved and that they felt like Americans. They usually already had a history of working in the country, as most of them had lived there for quite some time and it had taken them years to go through the complex naturalisation procedures. This is a very positive example, because these people had managed to integrate into that huge American multicultural melting pot. And I would like to tell you one more story. When I came back to Poland in December 2009, I was observing a protest by Chechnyan refugees. This was a group of refugees who had boarded a train and were trying to cross the Polish border. There were some shocking reports on that case in the Polish press, as they wanted to claim their rights in Strasbourg on account of being ill-treated. Their train was stopped at Legnica, so they never got beyond the Polish border, but on the train, they were holding a banner saying: “We are people too – SOS.” Their complaint was related to the fact that they had not been able to gain asylum despite trying to do so for a long time and could not find jobs, so had no money and no chance of a better life. Their living conditions in Radom were poor. A young woman showed her skin covered in scars, supposedly caused by lice.

The question I would like to ask our panellists is the following: “What can we, the Europeans, do to improve such situations and what are we, the Poles, doing wrong while integrating refugees from non-European cultural circles into Polish society?”

To answer this question, we first need to answer another one: What in fact is the framework within which refugees operate in Poland? These are not immigrants. Nor are they tourists and students who want to study here of their own free will. The refugees are people for whom Poland and Europe are a “space of freedom” which represents an opportunity for a better, dignified, or simply ordinary, life.

Since we have people arriving in Poland who are different to us, they are branded on their arrival with a double stigma. First, they need to leave their homelands and I don't think they are happy about that. They bring some negative emotions with them and an array of complaints which can obstruct their successful integration and cause them to be stigmatised. Secondly, when they arrive in Poland they are treated as different, as aliens. This alien character bears the imprint of a poignant historical burden, as they come bringing their own culture. We do not know anything about them, but we are already labelling them by “placing” them within the culture they come from.

When talking about refugees, all the people coming into this new area, we need to make two points. On the one hand, they are entering the legal sphere. Legal activities defined by the Polish and the EU legislative systems are taking place on their behalf. On the other hand, refugees are making contact with Poles. So, apart from the challenge faced by the Polish legislation of practically implementing these regulations, another important matter arises, namely interpersonal relations. An alien entering Poland is often considered to be a threat, a hazard to the existing legal system and order that we have got used to. In other words, this alien is a threat to our identity.

Refugees arrive in Poland as private individuals, bringing their own particular problems and specific identities rooted in the culture they are bringing with them. Therefore, we encounter the problem of how to accept this cultural difference, which we sometimes fail to understand and do not want to recognise and open ourselves out to. Apart from the top level, which allows us to regulate the status of a citizen arriving in Poland as a refugee, many problems relating to everyday co-existence appear.

We have to view this situation as it is unfolding in our country. Europe is going through a difficult time with the economic crisis and unemployment, while a large proportion of the Polish population, apparently almost 50%, is living on the subsistence line. Very often, a foreigner or stranger who arrives needing our

empathy, care and openness is treated as a threat, a hazard or a source of competition. And this holds true in the labour market and affects attitudes toward social care or any other social benefits that would enable such a person to live a dignified life in Poland, to simply feel safe and secure.

But what are we doing wrong? This is a difficult question we are discussing, but it is a very good point of departure. Many NGOs are taking action to help refugees and there are many activities that try to do away with the existing barriers, both legal barriers and those in everyday life. There are also specialist assistance centres which ensure that people entering Polish social life are well taken care of.

The second important point is related to the Polish law currently defining the way in which these immigrants can operate within our borders if they decide to stay. The limitations of this law clearly show that we have not yet adopted the principle of elastic assimilation, yet adaptation should be preferable to assimilation. Adaptation in this case means that we allow these people to maintain their cultural identity while integrating them so they are subject to a full-scale inclusion policy. Assimilation, on the other hand, is one of two very dangerous options for creating social relations, it is like “fight or flight,” and neither of these options can lead to dialogue.

In the contemporary world, where we cannot avoid multicultural elements and diversity, dialogue becomes the only possible tool that enables us to find a formula for co-existence. Dialogue, as I understand it, is about values that stem from democratic systems and are related to the most profound general humanitarian values that guide humanity. Dialogue, if we look into the Greek source of the word, is about mutual respect, respect for all human beings and an earnest quest for truth. Dialogue is also about building relations that enable mutual openness, understanding and acceptance, without necessarily automatically giving up of our own values and rights. What seems to be a very important point is that very often dialogue is misunderstood, both in Poland and Europe at large. Let me give you such an example. Two years ago in Oxford, it was decided not to celebrate Christmas because of the large Jewish and Muslim diasporas. It was replaced by the Holiday of Life, which would bring everybody together. It turned out that neither Muslims, nor Jews, who by the way were never consulted on this matter, approved of the new holiday and it received very negative feedback from the British students who felt deprived of an element of their culture which had been part of their identity.

So what we want to do better is to make sure that, while understanding the stranger, the alien, we can allow them to be themselves and to show them the



huge cultural potential which materialises when people who used to be strangers come together and start operating in joint fashion.

Adam Leszczyński

I would like to ask you one extra question in relation to the kind of dialogue you mentioned. Dialogue which would mean not giving up one's values is very often hard to implement. Some time ago, there was a scandal surrounding the publishing of cartoons depicting Muhammad, which triggered off strong reactions from Muslims all over the world. This was a conflict on the freedom of speech, which is undeniably a very important value in the West. On the other hand, these cartoons were considered blasphemous by Muslims. How can such a conflict be resolved? You were talking about not giving up one's values, but these issues really are hard to resolve. How should this particular problem be dealt with?

Anna Lubecka

We are talking about dialogue, but we need to agree on one thing: there are certain universal values and we must not relativise them. What are the limits to freedom then? Is freedom "limitless" or are there actually some limits? Well, in fact there need to be. If we understood freedom as something boundless or limitless it would lead to conflict. These limits to freedom are designed, or pronounced, out of respect for other human beings. We must remember that we need other human beings.

What happened in Denmark with the Muhammad cartoons was a political problem revolving around whether they should have been published at all and what should have happened later. People went out onto the streets and there were threats made towards the publisher and journalists – an explosion of a kind. In my private opinion, the decision to publish those cartoons was too brazen. They should not have entered public discourse. We are dealing here with intercultural communication, but what you need for this to work is sympathy and empathy; some set of principles which should regulate our relationships. In short, do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself.

What happened was painful to some but to others it was about freedom. Let us imagine ourselves in their shoes. How would we have behaved in such a situation? In these kinds of relationship it is sometimes difficult to assess and measure. What you need is real sensitivity. We need to ask ourselves the following questions: "What would I do?" "How would I feel in such a situation?" We need sensitivity and empathy, because everyone has a God-given right to be respected.

Adam Leszczyński

I will go back to the original question I asked at the beginning, directed to Katarzyna Przybysławska: “Are we integrating refugees well in Europe?”

Katarzyna Przybysławska, PhD, The Halina Nieć Legal Aid Centre, Krakow

Integration has many layers. It is a complex process and therefore, we cannot give one simple answer to such a question. Let me address it in a different manner. In Europe there are many examples of good practices. Governments, institutions and NGOs take actions that can be considered as examples to follow. Poland also has examples of such good practices. However, broadly speaking, we can observe certain crises. There are problems in integrating refugees.

Integration is a process that starts on the very first day. Refugees who arrive in Europe, say Poland, do so while trying to protect their lives. They get out of a dangerous region and flee to a safety zone. What happens after they cross a border, after they receive guarantees that they will not be deported, is not pre-planned. You cannot plan your career when you are running for your life.

This process is bilateral and there are two parties involved. On the one hand, there are government authorities who need to set up certain conditions to make it easier for a refugee to enter a social structure. On the other hand, refugees need to put in some effort themselves. Without their own involvement and commitment, the whole process of integration cannot be successful.

I would like to focus on this establishment of certain conditions. International law states that the process of protecting refugees should provide them with a substitute for their state of origin, the state they are running away from. A country responsible for accepting refugees must also set up certain conditions to make it possible for a refugee to exist. People who come to Poland as refugees are not here to sightsee, they are not tourists; we are accountable and have some responsibility for protecting them.

In Poland we have tangible problems with the real estate market, though there are not that many refugees in our country. You cannot integrate somebody who has no place to live. Refugees have problems acquiring a place to live. I think that this is a matter for the legal system and the fact that the country does not have enough residential space. Also, there are not enough community flats that could be offered to the refugees. What is more, when refugees come to Poland and other European countries, they are not professionally trained on how to enter the labour market. We must not forget about the economy.

Katarzyna Przybysławska



Let me get back to the integration process. It needs to be organised in such a way that refugees learn the language – that is the most important thing. Secondly, they need to acquire certain skills which will enable them to survive in a very demanding labour market. Hopefully, thanks to this, refugees should be integrated into society without any major conflicts. Economic issues are important but there are also other aspects to it. Refugees need information, legal assistance or protection. Free of charge legal aid is sometimes more important to a refugee than to a Pole, because they do not know the Polish legal system and culture or how our institutions act and they are not familiar with administration procedures. All of these factors make it very difficult for a refugee to absorb information in a way which would make legal protection valid and active.

I am not a specialist in intercultural conflicts, but I like what Prof. Małczyńska once said: “Polish society is unique in Europe because we are a special mix between the West and the East.” We are increasingly Western European on the one hand, but on the other, our values are very conservative – we believe in family and share values with people who come from the East – and this potential should be used. Poland may be able to find an efficient way to integrate refugees into our society. Also, for many refugees, Poland is not their “dream country.” It is not a country that Chechens, for instance, would like to enter. Due to European regulations, Poland is the country where they are sent back to and that is also why integration is tough. People who are supposed to integrate within our society have been sent to Poland against their will, as this was the point where they crossed the European border. Therefore, it is hard for them to integrate, as our country is not their “land of dreams.”

We cannot influence all the regulations, but let us look at the living conditions in refugee camps. They are not as bad as you might think. The Polish infrastructure is not that inferior to its Western counterpart in this sense. Many people tend to think that Poland is just a stopover on their way to a mythical rich and wealthy Europe.

The Polish integration system can be improved by improving its constituent elements like teaching Polish and offering social support. The preparation of refugees for the labour market and accommodation are a must. What can the government do? Can they provide more money? Build new flats? No, absolutely not. It should simply make more space available to refugees.

Poles also have a problem understanding the difference between migrants and refugees. This is why they sometimes tend to be hostile towards both groups. A refugee might have problems in finding a flat for that reason, even when he/she has sufficient finances. We not only need to make more flats available but also

educate the whole community about who the refugees are and why they have come here.

Adam Leszczyński

Questions directed to Satsita Khumaidova, who deals with these issues on an everyday basis: “How should we act?” and “How is it actually working?” The image painted in the press is of people being ill-treated. Is that true?

Satsita Khumaidova, The “Ocalenie” Foundation, Chechnya/Poland

When I came to Poland, I was not prepared for integration. I was fleeing from Chechnya, looking for some peace and tranquillity for myself and my family. I never chose to escape my country of my own volition. I was forced to do it to protect my life. Poland was the first country that we were able to enter from Chechnya. In the beginning, it was very important for me to find peace and I found it here. As a person who graduated from a university in Russia, I never experienced any culture shock. Poland and Russia both speak Slavic languages and are similar in terms of culture. The biggest shock, however, was that as a person who had lost four family members during the war, I was greeted by men in military uniforms when I came to Poland and the same thing is happening to my compatriots who are crossing the border. I was asked questions about what was going on in my country and I had to make a choice over whether I wanted to speak openly or not about Chechen matters. I had to make this decision quickly: Do I tell the truth? Will it be dangerous for me? Will they hold it against me? Am I not putting my family at risk speaking the truth? This is the first shock that Chechens have to go through.

The second shock has to do with something I am now very familiar with. When refugees are transferred to a refugee centre they think they will be welcomed here. This is the democratic West and there is good will on the part of the hosting country. Once you learn the language, you find out that the picture is not so rosy. The population is not prepared to accept refugees. Prof. Lubecka and Ms. Przybyławska discussed numerous problems and I would like to add some others to their list.

Refugee centres are located in small villages, where the problems are more acute. There is a higher unemployment rate in comparison with big cities, and life is more difficult, even for Poles. This is juxtaposed with the situation of the refugees, who suddenly arrive and the local population sees that they live in deportation camps, where they receive free board and lodging, and sometimes even get pocket money. For somebody who is poor and living outside the Polish metropolises, such a situation is hard to understand and results in problems.



Satsita **Khumaidova**

Is there mutual understanding between us and the Poles? On 29 September, I celebrated the 8th anniversary of my arrival in Poland. I had been living in the small town of Łomża, full of problems like unemployment, lack of tolerance, and a high proportion of elderly in the community, and all of these were transferred onto the refugees. It is often claimed that Poles do not understand the difference between immigrants and refugees, but in my small town, Łomża, they know exactly who is who, partly due to our efforts and trainings. People say that for them, immigrants are better as they know from the beginning what they want and take the worst paid jobs they themselves do not want, but refugees just stay in Poland for their money. Refugees need time to find their place and themselves in a new reality.

When we are talking about refugees from Chechnya, anybody who has had any experience of this country and this nationality realises that Chechens react strongly to almost anything. We have very strong opinions and we are hot-blooded, which often results in problems. Refugees from Chechnya find it very hard to trust anyone and do not have any confidence in the authorities and social services. We do not trust people, as we have gone through so many atrocities and violence that we find it difficult to place our confidence in strangers. This lack of trust is something that makes it very difficult for us to integrate into any new country we have arrived at.

Many refugees perceive Poland as a stopover in their longer journey. They understand that they need to be here to apply for papers enabling them to travel further West, but those who want to stay in Poland and who do so, just like my family did, need to go through the second phase. This means asking yourself the question: “If Chechnya is now peaceful, why not go back there?” And this is a question I keep asking myself. Why do I want to stay? Do I really want to? What happens when I go back to Chechnya? What will I lose or win? What will I get by staying here? And this is a question that most of the refugees have to pose at this point. If I get back home, I will have to give up my values, things that I have been fighting for. I will have to give up in mental and emotional terms. In Chechnya I could not tell the truth, would not speak my mind, and the latter is very important to me. If I do not agree with something the authorities do, I need to say “No. This is wrong.”

Certainly, problems relating to Poland as a country concern me. Issues related to law-making for instance. Some laws have not been implemented yet, while others are ill-conceived, making it difficult for us to live here. For example, we have to register our domicile. This is still an obligation in Poland, whereas in the EU this regulation is no longer valid. This is a very difficult practical obstacle, and in order for us to function well, this registration obligation has to be amended.

Why is it so difficult for Poles to understand our people? In my opinion it is because Poles have not yet experienced poverty. Not everybody understands what it feels like to be poor. In order to build a common future, be free and celebrate our presence in the EU, we have to change ourselves. If we fail to change ourselves, how can we demand the same of others?

There are times when people are open to integration and there are times when they are not aware of what is awaiting them in another country. Usually, refugees enter a country with lots of expectations and hopes, because they are simply not aware of what is awaiting them. These first days are very important. This is the time to show the opportunities available in the given country to this particular individual, this particular family, make it clear that there are opportunities for their children and for them to live their lives.

Most old people want to leave for their homeland, but they want their kids to have a future here. If I could not see any future for my sons in Poland, there would be a problem, not necessarily with me but with the other side. Our children go to schools, they are taught Polish language and culture and you can virtually teach them anything you feel is needed. But if we are already assuming that we do not need these kids, we do not need immigrants and refugees, we do not need to teach them, then something is wrong with the system and there will be no integration.

Adam Leszczyński

Thank you for this moving story. I have one question about one particular thing. You have touched upon many various matters that are not working the way they should be. But if you were to select one thing, one issue that is an obstacle to integration, what would that be? Is there any such single thing?

Satsita Khumaidova

If I were to name one thing it would be that we refugees are told that we are guests here. We are given a limited period of time for our stay here and, trust me on this, they tell us: “You are only guests.” That means that we cannot even try to integrate.

Adam Leszczyński

Who tells you so, the administration?

Satsita Khumaidova

Well, there was a training session I went through which surprised me. It was organised by the police forces in Łomża, but it turned out that it is us who need

to train the police. We were told then: “You are guests here, behave like guests.” It was a moment at which I had to be ready to say one thing: “It is not the people, it is the institution. They are the police and they have certain stereotypes and this is why they tell us these things.” I had to be ready to face such stereotypes but I also need to train my people, the refugees, to make them stronger – we need to tell them not to take offence, to be prepared. We need to let them know that they will encounter such attitudes and they need to be ready to face them.

I remember when I rented my own flat for the first time. There was a nice 70-year-old lady living next door. She came by and asked where I was from and why I had come to Poland. She also asked if I had any problems and I answered that yes, I did indeed have some. In the labour office, I was told that this was not my country and I could not take any decisions there. And she told me: “You should not take offence. You should respond – I have not come here to argue, I am here to get on with my business.” This really works. When somebody is getting emotional, you can say “I am not here to argue with you. I am simply here to get on with my business.”

Adam Leszczyński

Prof. Walid Shomaly from Palestine. Would you now be so kind as to paint a broader picture? We have discussed some practical issues bothering refugees and migrants in Poland. Now, I would like to ask you if you can do the following. Can you comment on what is working in Polish and European integration policy and what is not? How do you see this issue?

Prof. Walid Shomaly, Bethlehem University, Palestine

Let me start with intercultural dialogue in Palestine and then I will reflect on European policy in general.

Ethnic and cultural diversity cannot be preserved without establishing a multicultural society based on pluralism. In his book “Pluralist Democracy in the United States”, Robert Dahl defines pluralism as a “Political System that is comprised of various groups or power centers rather than one central dominating authority”. None of those power centers then will have the absolute authority or sovereignty. Dahl suggests that for those groups to be influential, they have to be legitimate and active. Therefore, pluralism is the antithesis of totalitarianism, and while the latter is based on the one party regime with an absolute central authority, the former with its multiple power centers undermines the central authority. Moreover, in the pluralistic political regime it is the elite that rules and the political groups are the ones that make decisions.

The globalization process, facilitated by the rapid development of new information and communication technologies, imposes a new challenge for political and cultural diversity, and hence creates conditions for a new type of dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

Article 3 of the Universal Declaration on cultural diversity states that the latter widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence. Article 4 of the said declaration states that the defense of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity. It implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples. No one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope.

Palestine is a multireligious and multiethnic country where Muslims, Christians and Samaritans live together. In addition to Arabs, Palestine accommodates several ethnic groups including Armenians, Syrians, Circassians and Kurds. However, ethnic and cultural diversity in Palestine will not persist unless it is based on pluralism, multiethnicity, and multiculturalism. However, the January 2006 Palestinian elections were expected to stabilize highly negative domestic dynamics and bring Israelis and Palestinians back to the negotiating table. Instead, Hamas, the Islamist group, won 44% of the national vote and 56% of the seats of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) to the nationalist Fatah’s 41% of the national vote but only 36% of the seats. One of the immediate consequences of the elections has been further deterioration in internal Palestinian conditions and the collapse of any hopes for immediate resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. Concern grew over the potential for major internal violence and for a resumption of open warfare between Palestinians and Israelis. The year 2006 witnessed an escalation in Israeli-Palestinian violence despite the agreement in December on a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip. Similarly, intra-Palestinian violence threatened to escalate into civil war in the Gaza strip despite the continued efforts of Fatah and Hamas to put together a national unity government. While these efforts seen to have failed in 2006, leading Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to threaten in mid-December to hold an early election, it remained unclear what impact a national unity government would have on domestic conditions or on the chances for a resumption of the peace process.

In terms of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel still denies the political rights of the Palestinian people, a policy that was recently manifested when Palestinians

went to the UN seeking recognition for statehood. In 1948, Palestinian refugees were about 750,000 people and they add up now to almost five million people, and Israel still denies their rights. Paradoxically, Israel now is inclining more towards a theocratic state after being all along ethnocratic. Israel is now demanding that Arabs, including Palestinians, recognize it as a Jewish state. In general, a theocratic state is one governed by divine right and in which the religious authority dominates and has leverage over legislative, executive and judicial authorities for the sake of securing sovereignty. In such a state, citizens have to comply by the tenets of a certain creed in their daily life and in every detail. People have no religious freedom, nor that to embrace another religion, or to proselyte others to a creed that is different from that of the state. A theocratic state usually controls the religious establishment, and appoints its personnel and leadership so that it can use them to achieve its political objectives.

A practical solution cannot be reached while Palestinian people living in the West Bank are divided among three main jurisdictional areas, namely A, B and C. In areas A, the PA has full authority over civil affairs, and internal security and public order, while Israel retains responsibility over external security. In Areas B, the PA exercises civil authority and maintains a police force to protect “public order” for Palestinians, while Israel retains overriding responsibility for security for the purpose of protecting Israelis and confronting the threat of terrorism, as well as responsibility over external security. In Areas C, Israel retains complete territorial jurisdiction. Indeed, besides natural pluralism, Palestinian society has witnessed since 1948 (the year when the state of Israel was established) a sort of coercive and distorted pluralism i.e. Israeli Arabs versus Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT); West Bank citizens versus Gazans; indigenous people versus refugees; returnees (who were allowed by Israel to return to the OPT) versus local people. This further jeopardized the integration process among those different segments of the Palestinian society. Yet, ending the occupation, and establishing a Palestinian state with a national unity government on the OPT with East Jerusalem as its capital will bring a just and lasting peace to the region. However, the potential Palestinian state should delegate power to the governors for decentralization to take place. In addition, a vertical separation among the legislative, executive and judicial authorities ought to be sustained. Israel’s recognition of Palestinians’ political, civil, and human rights will much help pacify the volatile political situation in the Middle East. This will positively reflect on Europe and its stance towards the Middle East.

Europe, both in terms of the individual states and collectively through the European Union, seeks to play an active role in the Middle East peace process. There are many reasons for this - substantive, political, and symbolic.



Walid Shomaly

In the first category, Europe has major economic interests in the region, both as a consumer of Middle Eastern petroleum and gas, and as a producer of industrial goods, weapons, and related military technology for which the Middle East constitutes a lucrative market.

In addition, some members of the European Union (e.g. France) have an ambition of playing a major role on the international stage, supporting, “balancing,” or, in some cases, challenging what is often seen as American hegemony in the post-Cold War era. Events in the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli peace process are central factors in the international arena, and a major role in this activity would symbolize or reflect the “arrival” of Europe as a major power broker.

These interests, as well as a response to the eastward expansion of the EU, are reflected in the European-Mediterranean Project, which was formally initiated in Barcelona in November 1995. Participants include Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and the Palestinian Authority. Following the Helsinki-CSCE model, three baskets or areas of activity were created: 1) political and security issues, 2) economic and financial cooperation, and 3) the “social and human dimensions.”

The EU has invested a great deal of resources in the EuroMed program, in the hope of realizing these objectives. This program attempts to address the Mediterranean as a single region in terms of economics and security. However, Europe should be ready to support agreements reached by Israel and the Palestinians, for example in providing technical assistance in developing agreed security procedures for operating the port in Gaza and the safe passages. In other areas, promotion of confidence-building measures, people-to-people contacts, educational dialogues, joint research, and economic cooperation are vital in order to make progress, and should not be considered as a reward for “good behaviour.” With respect to long-term issues, Europe should be ready to assist in overcoming major problems that require a regional approach, such as limited water supplies, refugee resettlement, and environmental issues.

Satsita Khumaidova

I know from my personal experience that if a person stays at a refugee centre, the money is different. In such a situation, it is 9 PLN/day for food, 70 PLN of pocket money/person and 360 PLN for a child up to three years old and school children up to 18 years of age. My family have got refugee status and such families get additional support, called “2nd degree support” – they get 500 PLN/person for a year and then, they need to find a job. If they are homeless and unemployed, they receive help from the city social assistance centres which

is identical to that which Poles receive.

Katarzyna Przybysławska

All refugee children are obliged to go to school and that might be treated as a kind of service provided to the refugees and might be considered a way of improving integration. If a child has contact with other children at school, this kind of human-to-human contact may yield good results quickly. It is really important in our policy towards the refugees. Refugee children must go first to a primary and then to a secondary school, where they learn Polish and this represents a basic form of socialisation.

Bogusław Pacek

I do not want to offend anyone but my question is as follows: Are we not mistaking immigration with refugees?

Particular countries and international institutions are supposed to stabilise situations in regions dominated by conflicts. And sometimes there are people who migrate from their countries. Stabilising regions in distress may work through letting all those people return back to their homes.

Let us assume that Poland takes in 1 – 2 million Georgians. If we do so and other countries follow, Georgia as a country will disappear. So, we act for the benefit of single citizens while at the same time destabilising a given geographical region further. Chad and Sudan can be cited as good examples of that. I was surprised that the Sudanese did not want to go back to their country, and not only when the war was raging. They did not want to go back at all.

I would not blame any single country for being resistant to migration. On the one hand, being open to migrants is the only humane option. However, we need to define the phenomena related to this. We cannot offend anybody but I do not think that it would be beneficial to your homeland if we followed such an approach.

Let us look at Libya: there are refugees who want to stay in “refugee camps.” If they are in Slovakia, they might be willing to go back home, but if they find themselves in Germany or France, who would ever choose to go back to Libya?

Hassan Omar Hassan

When I learnt that I was coming to Poland, I talked to young Kenyans who had already been here and studied here. The community of Kenyan students is very large here. They told me very interesting things about Poland. They said that this is the only country in which they have never experienced racism or discrimination

and that they experienced such attitudes in the USA or the UK.

I would like to point out one contradiction I observed. Theoretically, in a country coming from the Eastern bloc and dealing with various problems, Kenyan students should stick out, feel different. And what is strange, Chechens who are closer to Polish people in terms of culture and language are more ostracised in a sense that they are told “Prepare to leave.”

Can you explain that to me? Is it because Kenyans are regarded as only coming here to study and there is no fear they will stay?

I have talked to various diplomats in Kenya and I keep telling them that many shifts are coming over the next few years. The Arab Spring is going to bring a new reality. I really think that after the elections, most of these countries will have Islamist governments for historic reasons. It was mostly Islamists who were resisting oppression in those countries, for example The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt have won the largest share of trust from among the people over the years. So I keep telling those diplomats that they need to make a choice about whether their agenda for these countries is culturalisation, creating a unicultural society; or democratisation, where people can choose if they want to be led by Hamas, as long as it operates under the order established by the Palestinian state.

These are areas we need to deal with and we can no longer wait, and this applies to the USA or any other country. The democratically elected governments in Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria will find it very difficult to bear the pressure of the Israeli matters. It is no longer about dealing with Hosni Mubarak, for these politicians will have to respond to pressures within their own countries. Like Obama going to the Jewish lobby and acknowledging support, these people will also need to be re-elected in 4 – 6 years and therefore deal with domestic pressure. The Arab Spring will change our relationships totally. How we integrate, how we perceive global politics, people will have to review and fundamentally shift many of the existing policies. Democracy is about responding to your people’s needs. It’s not about a king or a monarch any more.

Adam Leszczyński

It was a very good thing to hear about the positive experience of Kenyan students in Poland, though I am a bit surprised actually.

Anna Lubecka

I would like to refer to the Major General’s question.

Refugee status is not a permanent solution. Following the international law and UNHCR doctrine, the permanent solution for refugees is to be repatriated of their own free will. This can only happen when the country of origin is safe and secure and we know that the change is permanent, only when we know that the political and social foundations are already fixed. Refugee status is not designed to last a lifetime.

Still, all people can choose where they want to live. We can endorse and promote certain solutions, instruct and teach. For voluntary repatriation to be successful, a person first needs to be aware that they are making a decision of their free will. Many people simply dream of going back to a safe home. Others, however, have little hope of positive changes occurring in the places they come from. Refugee status should be a kind of substitute form of protection whenever the refugees’ own authorities are not efficient enough.

Refugees need to go back to their countries to rebuild them. Let us look at the Arab Spring. Those people who fled will be needed to construct and build a new reality, so that they will later be able to guarantee and safeguard the values which were in demand during the Arab Spring itself.

Satsita Khumaidova

Why do Poles seem to be friendlier towards Kenyan students than Chechens? I have never been to Africa, so I do not know if that is true or not, but maybe it is about the living conditions. Living conditions in Chechnya may differ greatly from the ones in the country of asylum. I personally, have very positive experiences with people in Poland. What is very important to me is that people need to answer the question of how they can contribute to peace.

After all the atrocities I went through, I could not find my role in life, but all of a sudden I came across a quote from the prophet Muhammad which helped me a lot: “There is poverty all around you. What can you do? Do something to help, through your actions. If you cannot do this, do something with your words. If you cannot do this, help them with your heart.” These are the three gradations which we experienced in our homeland. We could not help each other through our actions because of the military conditions and we could not speak for fear of being penalised, so the only way to help each other was through our thoughts. I think about what I can do for my country all the time, so that the conflict will not escalate.

Currently, there is some peace and quiet in Chechnya but it is only temporary, as

the country is under the influence of radical Islam. We are moving further away from Europe and I consider this issue to be one of real poignancy. In my view, I now face the problem of how to bring up my child, whose life has already been infiltrated by politics.

It might sound a little off-topic, but I would like to address all the young people gathered here. You are just learning that you have your whole lives ahead of you. It is very important to keep your paths open and not burn your bridges. Don't say "I am not interested in this or that, this is not about me." After everything I went through, I know that various things can happen to anybody whether we want it or not. It might happen to you that you will have to leave your homeland and change everything. Keep your heart open and think twice before you say "I don't care."

In the 1970s and 1980s, there were more peace workers and peace movements, and people were more interested in others. Maybe this is what we need, to return to that pacifist attitude, to understand each other, to build a dialogue.

Anna Lubecka

Why are we more tolerant towards people who come from far away and less tolerant towards Chechens, for example? I guess this is about the general concept of tolerance in Poland. If you think about the research completed by the Institute for Public Policy Research in Warsaw, it turns out that we are less tolerant towards people coming from the East, especially the part which used to be the monolith of the Russian empire. This is due to the historical aftermath of the breakup of the former Soviet Union.

Let me give you an example illustrating this: in Poland we have yet one more group which are neither immigrants nor refugees. They are Polish repatriates from the Polish eastern border. These people were all of a sudden forced to move to the Soviet Union and now, after the war, under the "Compatriot" campaign, they can come back to Poland. A given municipality needs to take on the burden of offering such people the accommodation and jobs which allow them to become Poles again. According to our research, these people speak Polish, though with a strong Russian accent. For them, Poland supposedly is a Land of Dreams, a place where all their dreams may come true but when they arrive, they encounter discrimination. They are being called names, for example "you Russians," and they feel very bad about that.

This merely serves to show the importance of the historical backdrop, the way we label people, the way we categorise them. We need people who are free of historical

experiences. I guess the next generation would view these things in a different way. However, we should remember that, although we are now in this specific moment of time, there were things which happened in the past and there will be things happening in the future. The way we are operating right now is a function of all those things which used to be in force and those which are to come.

Agnieszka Kunicka

Let me just add to that. We are dealing with repatriates and refugees, and this is a topic which provides a framework for the operations of Polish Humanitarian Action. Apart from what Ms. Lubecka said, namely the different approach towards these two groups, generally, in Poland there is a positive approach to proactive attitudes. One should be entrepreneurial, self-sustaining and independent. The students from Africa who come here are seen to be condoning this viewpoint, while the refugee families who come from places like Chechnya and live on the margins of the state are not perceived as independent, entrepreneurial entities.

Anna Lipowska-Teutsch, The Crisis Intervention Society

The relationship between Poles and refugees depends on who these Poles and refugees actually are and when everything happens. I once got in touch with some Greek refugees and they said that they had very good lives under Communism, as they were very well treated. When the political change came, the approach towards them changed and even their fathers' graves were desecrated, because they were seen as communists.

I think that when it comes to the Polish approach towards Chechens we experienced a kind of evolution. At first, we felt solidarity towards them, because we found out that they had been oppressed by the Russians or the former Soviet empire, and we saw them as our allies who were in the same historical pickle as we used to be in. Polish anarchists used to travel to Chechnya. Here, in Krakow, there was an organisation which supported the Chechens, as they were seen as people who had been fighting against the Soviets and Communism. We are nations that are close, yet this closeness is tinged with an ambivalent sense of disquiet. After the crash of the Polish presidential plane, I met people who came from Chechnya and I learned that the Poles' approach towards the Chechens had changed. The perception was that our president had been murdered yet we were doing nothing about it. We felt that we were cowards, that we weren't displaying courage. This was the social emotion at the time.

The second thing is that there are some very conservative, rightist, traditional milieus in Polish society. They tend to have direct confrontations with Chechens.

One of the MPs from the Law and Justice party advocated this confrontational approach towards the Chechens.

Walid Shomaly

The Arab Spring will carry many consequences both at the international and regional level, as it will reformulate relations between the Arab world and countries in the rest of the world. Hassan was right when talking about the Islamists. If we were to hold elections in Palestine right now, Hamas would take it over. Even they have not yet ruled in the West Bank, surveys show that Hamas will have higher support in the West Bank than in the Gaza Strip, because in the latter, people have experienced the negative aspects of such unilateral party rule, for instance, the restrictions to everyday life; whereas people in the West Bank perceive Hamas as more genuine in its attempts to confront Israel and defend Palestinian rights.

In the 2006 elections, many Palestinians voted for Hamas, not because they wanted it to rule but because they were sick of corruption on the part of Fatah. After the failure of the Oslo process, they were seeking a political alternative and voted for Hamas. If we look more broadly at the whole region, it is true that the Islamists attract larger support during the elections and in Egypt they are the longest-lasting political party (The Muslim Brotherhood). They have long been oppressed and now it is time for their spring, for their coming to power.

Still, both religious minorities and many secular Muslims fear Hamas taking over power. They are afraid of oppressions and lack of freedom of expression. We are really entering a kind of era in the Middle East that is still unclear and still cannot see the outcome of what has happened. The situation is completely chaotic, things have not yet been well-organised and nobody knows what will happen. I guess the situation is similar to the one which took place in Europe after the fall of the communist regime – the whole region was in chaos until it reformulated itself and created a political safety net.

Magdalena Grzywok, student, Cracow University of Economics & Polish Humanitarian Action volunteer

I would like to go back to the problems of refugees in Poland. Why do so many people have problems with their legal status? Why can this not be regulated during the current abolition campaign? There have been such actions already, yet only a small number of refugees have benefited from them. What can we do for this new abolition campaign that is being launched soon to be a success?

Katarzyna Przybysławska

Let us not confuse abolition campaigns, which are legalisation campaigns for refugees, with the refugee status regulations. The status of a refugee is there to

regulate the position of a person who is in Poland to stay. The abolition campaign is for those people who have been in Poland for a long period of time without papers. This is indeed a very good opportunity for some people (we do not have the exact figure, only some estimates).

Why were these campaigns, which have been organised twice before, not successful? Basically, because the regulations were not well prepared. They were so detached from the reality and so hard to fulfil, especially in economic terms, that it was impossible for a large body of refugees to grab this opportunity. Also, I think that, during previous editions, the information campaign was too narrow. Maybe some people simply didn't know that this opportunity was there for them to take.

Starting from 1st January 2012, for a six month period, refugees will be able to apply for two-year stays and job permits. This will give people who are currently in Poland illegally a chance to legalise their status. That includes people who previously applied for refugee status but were declined. Still, this is not a typical campaign for refugees, as it is targeted at those who do not have permission to stay.

Agnieszka Kunicka and I have been dealing with this topic along with various NGOs, and we hope that this year's campaign will be much more popular and efficient and that it will be more comprehensible to foreigners than before. The Polish Office for foreigners has adopted, in cooperation with NGOs and UNHCR, an information campaign which will be launched sometime in November.

I would like to urge all of you here to spread this information. If you know any people who could benefit from this abolition campaign, please get in touch with us. Those who have not decided yet will maybe warm to the idea. We are also obliged not to disclose any private details of persons who are illegally in Poland, so no one need be concerned.

Egypt is not just the country of pyramids, Pharaohs and the Nile. Tunisia is not only the country of olive trees and tourism. There is more to the Arab countries than just deserts, camels and oil fields. The West has to deal with a new history. Born at the hands of a different generation, the new east contains the first flowers of the freedom that we were always dreaming of.

Manal Al-Sheikh – poet, essayist [Iraq/Norway]

Ceremony of Signing a Declaration between ICORN (International Cities of Refuge Network) and the Municipality of Krakow

Danuta Glondys

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From this year on, every year, Krakow will provide shelter for persecuted writers. Krakow will become a member of the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN) and start cooperation with The Writers in Prison Committee of PEN International and the most prestigious cities all over the world which care for human rights and freedom of speech.

Now we will all witness an unusual event, the first of its kind in this part of Europe – the signing of a declaration to join the ICORN which is there to help freedom of speech refugees.

I would like to ask the Deputy Mayor of Krakow Magdalena Sroka and the Executive Director of ICORN, Helge Lunde to come forward.

Deputy Mayor of Krakow, Magdalena Sroka

We need to change our attitude towards refugees and start treating them not as a problem but a chance to develop the local community, for learning from others. As an opportunity for a discussion on how to modify our identity and change our attitude towards reality, on how to become a more open, intuitive, more creative and more committed society.

This is not only about the humanitarian approach, how we view the very fact that everybody needs to have their rights and dignity protected, but it is also about something else, namely how to enter into a relationship with another human being representing a different culture.

The ceremony of signing this declaration whereby the Municipality of Krakow joins ICORN (the International Cities of refuge Network) does indeed represent an opportunity that we are presenting to ourselves, the local community and everybody here. This opportunity is there for you to grab – you can meet people who have different things to say, sometimes something new, something that will enable us develop. This is an opportunity for us to become part of the body of a mature democracy, to defend the rights of human beings, to protect their dignity, their freedom of expression and freedom to create. This is also an opportunity to pay off the moral debt which Krakow and Poland owe the world for their prior support.

I think that literature written in foreign countries is a partial way of repaying our debt. Thanks to such émigré literature, we were historically able to preserve our



Magdalena Sroka

identity and it gave us the freedom to make a vociferous contribution to issues related to human rights. For this particular reason, as well as for many others I am sure you can find in your hearts, Krakow is now becoming a member of ICORN.

Helge Lunde, Executive Director, ICORN, Norway

This is my third time in Poland and I have always been welcomed with hospitality, creativity and solidarity. These three words already emanate with the energy that I associate with Krakow. I visit many cities which are members of our organisation but coming to Krakow and feeling this energy makes a really big impression on me.

ICORN started with just one person 30 years ago. That was Salman Rushdie, who had a fatwa issued against him. In cooperation with other writers, he established the so-called International Parliament of Writers in the early 90's, whose members include many journalists, poets, novelists, translators, bloggers and cartoonists who are persecuted and unable to write freely.

Wherever they are, we are trying to help them, to take them out of the place where they are persecuted and help them reach a safe haven where they can write freely. The International Network of Cities of Asylum was created in 1995. Its first member was Pasadena and my city, Stavanger, was probably the second or the third. This made me aware of what was going on from a very early stage. In 2004/2005, the network based in Paris disintegrated and we faced the challenge of continuing or starting up again. The first ICORN General Assembly took place in Stavanger and our administration centre and the headquarters are there. We currently work all over Europe and beyond its borders as well.

Since 2010, ICORN has been an independent international member city organisation. The General Assembly is its highest organ, but we have formed an operational model where the cities themselves, Krakow, Stavanger, Miami, Mexico City, all of them, are defining our road forward. I am sure that Krakow will take up a leading role in forming the future of the whole organisation. It is only four years old but we are definitely going to grow. We currently have 39 or 40 members and yesterday we signed an agreement with Reykjavik in Frankfurt. Yesterday it was Reykjavik and today it is Krakow's turn. We are really looking forward to having Krakow as an ICORN member.

How does ICORN work? Let me give you three examples. We are trying to define our tasks through creating a win-win situation. Whenever a troubled and persecuted writer, journalist, poet or blogger comes to a city, he/she gets a safe haven no matter whether it is Krakow, Paris or Barcelona. He/she is able to write and



Helge Lunde

concentrate on his/her writing. It is of course a win situation for an artist, but also for a city for the reasons we have already spoken about.

In Tromsø, a city in the far North-West of Norway, their first guest was Easterine Kire Iralu, a writer who comes from Nagaland, a semi-autonomous state in the far north-eastern part of India. She is a feminist, poet and academic who was caught between separatists and the Indian government, and both parties persecuted her. She came to Tromsø and had a habit of writing a poem for every person she met. So when she met 140 people, she wrote 140 poems. She came up with the idea for earning money via publishing a book with these poems and from the start, she had 140 perspective readers. It was a great success. She continued to write and her books were translated into many languages, including Indian languages. She still lives in Tromsø and has become the ICORN coordinator there.

The second example is related to the Arab Spring. Mansur Rajih, who was a prisoner in Yemen for 15 years, came directly to Stavanger and reunited with his wife, whom he had married only a few days before he got arrested. They encountered many problems but also many victories during their stay in Stavanger. Mansur Rajih took part in the revolution in Yemen while sitting in his writer's office in Stavanger. He did so through a phone link directly transmitted to Sana'a, where a big demonstration was taking place. He was screaming and supporting his kinsmen, who were holding posters with his picture.

The first example shows how creative writers can be; the second shows the role that these writers can play; the third example is of Sihem Bensedrine, who is a prominent activist and blogger from Tunisia. She was the ICORN guest writer in Barcelona and very actively working for the revolution from her city of refuge. She terminated her stay a long time before she was due to, because she wanted to play a role in the events in Tunisia. She may now become a minister.

These are only three stories from the very many we have and I guess we will collect many more. We are very much looking forward to signing the contract in Krakow and to experiencing the moment when Krakow will receive its first guest writer.

Now who are you, what
are you and where are
you going?
Many questions are
burning my tongue.
You have to direct them
to yourself before I can
direct them to you – you
whom I still revere, in
spite of everything.

Faraj Bayrakdar – poet, journalist [Syria/ Sweden]

EXPERTS

Mohsine El Ahmadi

Professor of sociology at Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech (Morocco) and a Visiting Scholar at Georgetown University's Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, where he leads research on Islam and power in the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia). He has published several books and articles on Islamist movements and religious freedom in Morocco. He is currently working on a study of Quranic schools and traditional education.

Krzysztof Bobiński

Journalist and political commentator, president of the “Unia & Polska Foundation” and a board member of the “Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation” (PAUCI). He occasionally writes for “openDemocracy” website, “European Voice” and is an associate editor of the Europe section of the “Europe’s World”. Studied Modern History at Oxford University and obtained his MA in Regional Studies at London University. He was the Warsaw correspondent of the “Financial Times” from 1976 to 2000 and contributed to other publications such as “The Observer” and “Washington Post”, he also cooperated with the BBC. He is the co-founder and publisher of the “Unia & Polska” magazine.

Jan Borkowski

Secretary of State in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, holder of PhD in economics of agriculture. Author of several dozen works and editor of “The Role of Poland in Shaping the Eastern Policy of the European Union on the Example of Ukraine” – 2006, editor of “Yearbook of Polish European Studies” – 1999-2006, lecturer on the strategy and European policy of the Republic of Poland, EU community policies, international organizations, European integration (2003-2006 at the Higher School of Commerce and Law in Warsaw, Jean Monnet Module grant of the European Commission). Member of the Polish European Community Studies Association and the Polish Council of the European Movement.

Michael Daxner

Professor of Sociology and Jewish Studies. Between 2000 and 2002 he worked as the Principal International Officer on Education, Science and Technology in Kosovo, followed by a role as the Adviser to the Austrian Government for Issues on the Soft Sector Politics of South East Europe (2002–2006). During the following two years he worked as an Adviser to the Afghan Minister of Education, followed by research in the region. Former President of Oldenburg University. Lecturer at many European and American universities, presently at the Free University of Berlin and Oldenburg.

Rune Eraker

Norwegian photoreporter, studied photojournalism in England and for the past twenty years has worked as a documentary photographer, mainly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. He has mounted several exhibitions, including a one-man exhibition at the Stenersen Museum in Oslo (2001), and the exhibition “The Smell of Longing” (Lukten av savn) at the Oslo City Hall (2004), in collaboration with the Refugee Council. Published several books containing collections of his photographs. His work has appeared in newspapers and magazines both at home and abroad.

Torbjørn Frøysnes

Norwegian diplomat and politician for the Conservative Party. He started working for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1973. He participated in East-West negotiations in Geneva, Belgrade and Madrid. He served as a State Secretary from 1984 to 1986 as a part of the second Willoch's cabinet. In the period 1989–1993 he was a Deputy Representative to the Norwegian Parliament. He chaired the Norwegian Tourist Board (1988–1995) and then served at the Norwegian Embassy in Bonn from 1995 to 1999. After another period in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the chief negotiator on trade in the WTO, in 2003 he became the Norwegian Ambassador to the Council of Europe. Currently he is the Ambassador and the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council Europe to the European Union.

Danuta Glondys

Director of the Villa Decius Association since 2001. She holds a PhD degree in the Humanities, MA in English Philology and MA in Political Studies. Between 1993–1999 she was the director of the Culture Department of the Municipality of

Krakow and following it, the Regional Director of the USAID programme in Poland. She is the European Commission expert in the European Capitals of Culture programme since 2007. Her research is devoted to relations between culture and politics and to European integration.

Satsita Khumaidova

Born in Chechnya, now living in Poland and working for the “Ocalenie” Foundation. She completed postgraduate studies at the Jagiellonian University in Cultural Mentoring. She also works as an expert for the International Organization for Migration and acts as a mediator between Polish and Chechen communities. She is actively involved in supporting communities of migrants from the Caucasus. She teaches at a school for children from Chechnya.

Gottfried Koefner

Regional Representative of UNHCR for Central Europe in Budapest. He is a historian, and a former lecturer at American Studies College in Salzburg, Austria on Comparative European Politics (1979–1982). He also worked as an expert at Documentation Centre on Refugee Issues in Bonn, Germany (1981–1982). He is involved in International Civil Servant with UNHCR since August 1982 with deployments in: Austria, Germany, Hungary, Kosovo, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland and missions to East Timor, Indonesia, Namibia, Rwanda and Turkey.

Aleksander Koj

Medical doctor and scientist working in the field of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, author of over 200 papers, professor at the Faculty of Biochemistry, Biophysics and Biotechnology of the Jagiellonian University, member of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Letters (Krakow) and Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw). Laureate of the Award of the Foundation for Polish Science in the field of Biomedical Sciences (1996), the Award of the Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation in New York (1998) and the Award of the City of Krakow in the Field of Science and Technology (2005). Holder of an honorary PhD from three US State Universities: Cleveland, Hartford, Buffalo. Elected three times for the position of the Rector of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow (1987–1999). Currently a member of the Council of the Polish Rectors Foundation and of the Board of Directors of Polish-American Freedom Foundation. President of the Villa Decius Association in Krakow.

Bernard Kouchner

French politician, diplomat and a medical doctor. Co-founder of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the founder of Médecins du Monde. From 2007 until 2010 the French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs. He worked as a humanitarian volunteer during the Siege of Naba’a refugee camp in Lebanon in East Beirut during the Lebanese Civil War. In 1999 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan nominated Kouchner as the first UN Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). In 2005, he was a candidate for the position of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). He is also an author of UN resolutions which enabled humanitarian interventions and creation of “humanitarian corridors”.

Agnieszka Kunicka

Graduate of Warsaw University, she has also completed Management Studies at postgraduate level. She started her professional career in international corporations. She has been with the Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH) for 6 years. Since 2008 in charge of PAH Refugee and Repatriates Counseling Centre. She initiates and implements assistance programs and projects for foreigners and repatriates and actions addressed to Polish society. In May 2011 she was appointed by the Polish Ombudsman to the Expert Commission for Migrants.

Adam Leszczyński

Journalist and publicist, currently works for the “Gazeta Wyborcza”. Assistant at the Institute of Political Studies in Warsaw. Graduate of the Warsaw University. Doctor of Humanities in the field of history. Author of several books,

including reportage “Naznaczeni – Afryka i Aids” (Scarred - Africa and AIDS), (Warsaw 2003).

Anna Lubecka

Professor of the Jagiellonian University, specializes in intercultural communication and multiculturalism and their role in intercultural organizations management, particularly building up organisation’s identity, creating product/brand and unconventional language of advertisement, mainly in post-communist states. Her academic achievements include ca. 60 articles published in Polish, English, French and Portuguese, as well as three books. Her work “Requests, invitations, apologies and compliments in Polish and Polish American: a cross-cultural perspective”, received individual award of the Minister of Education (2001), and “Bergitka’s Roma’s Cultural Identity” the Award of the Rector of the Jagiellonian University (2005). Since 2004 she has worked as a head of Department of Intercultural Communication at the Jagiellonian University and serves as Director of the “Ambassador Programme” since 2001.

Helge Lunde

Former Director of the Kapittel Stavanger International Festival of Literature and Freedom of Speech and the managing director of Stavanger’s city of refuge for persecuted writers programme (1998–2005). He was the founding director of ICORN, the International Cities of Refuge Network (2005) and has been its Executive Director since then. The International Cities of Refuge Network is an association of cities around the world dedicated to the value of Freedom of Expression.

Hassan Omar Hassan

A commissioner of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (independent national human rights institution). He was appointed Commissioner in January 2007, aged 31, making him the youngest commissioner to the KNCHR. Has served as commissioner responsible for various areas of work which include Security Sector Reforms, Transitional Justice, National Cohesion and Peace Building and Anti-Corruption Advocacy. The Commission’s Vice Chairman from 2008 to 2010. Being head of the Security Sector Reform programme, he has advocated against the extrajudicial killings by the security agencies and in particular the police. He heightened the campaign to such points as to have the matter gain the notice and attention of the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Killings and Summary Executions. He is one of Kenya’s most influential commentators on numerous pertinent national issues and a Sunday columnist with Kenya’s leading newspaper “The Standard”.

Bogusław Pacek

Major General. He completed the high rank officers operations staff course at the National Defense University in Warsaw and numerous courses, trainings and exercises abroad (Canada, Italy, France). He subsequently earned his PhD degree in 1990. The Warsaw Military Gendarmerie Branch which he led from 1997 to 2003 was regarded as the “Leading Unit of the Polish Armed Forces” and twice awarded the “Crest of Honor of the Polish Armed Forces.” He established three Military Gendarmerie Specialized Units - type of forces capable of ensuring the public order during peacekeeping missions and operations abroad. Awards and decorations earned by Gen. Pacek include Gold and Silver Distinguished Service Medals, Cross Medal of the Republic of Poland and Medal for Distinguished Service of the Republic of France.

Katarzyna Przybysławska

President of the Board of the Halina Nieć Legal Aid Center, a non-profit NGO established in 2002 in Krakow. The Center’s main objective is to protect human rights by providing free legal aid to persons at risk of social exclusion and discrimination, including the poor, victims of domestic violence, foreigners, asylum seekers and refugees. The Center monitors human rights standards and undertakes legal interventions and advocacy as well as realizing research and educational projects. Awarded by the Polish President Bronisław Komorowski with the Gold Cross of Merit for her achievements in building civil society.

Dariusz Rosiak

Writer and reporter for “Rzeczpospolita” daily. Editor and presenter of “The World Report”, a weekly current affairs radio show for the Polish National Radio. Author of “Oblicza Wielkiej Brytanii” (Faces of Britain), recently published “Żar” (Heat), a collection of reportage from Africa. Published numerous articles in national papers and magazines, including “Życie Warszawy”, “Życie”, “Tygodnik Powszechny”, “Polityka” and “Newsweek Polska”.

HE Carlos Alberto Simas Magalhães

Brazilian diplomat, Ambassador to Poland (since 2008) and former Ambassador to Morocco (2003-2008). Since 1975 employed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including the Department of International Organizations and the Department of the United Nations. From 1979 he served as the Second, then the First Secretary of the Embassy in Washington, La Paz (1982–1985) and Paris (1985–1987). In 1991–1993 he worked as a counselor at the Brazilian mission of the Organization of American States in Washington, then represented the country at the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). He also was the ministerial adviser to the UN in Geneva (1997–2000) and a representative of the country in the World Trade Organization in Geneva (2000–2001).

Walid Shomaly

Holds a PhD degree from Northeastern University in Boston, USA. Professor of chemistry at Bethlehem University. Since his return to Palestine he got involved in dialogue and peace talks with Israelis. Currently also holds the position of the Executive Director of the Palestinian Center for Research and Cultural Dialogue that he co-founded in 2003 with a group of Palestinian academics in the West Bank. The Center’s mission is to promote dialogue between social, political and cultural groups as a means of conflict resolution, accepting differences between peoples, citizenship, and respecting other’s convictions.

Magdalena Sroka

Deputy Mayor of Krakow in charge of culture and city promotion. In the years 2008–2010, the Head of the Krakow Festival Office, which organises most prestigious cultural events in Krakow and co-ordinates a unique programme of the city’s cultural promotion “The Six Senses.” A graduate of the Jagiellonian University (Polish Philology, theatre studies). Manager of culture, producer, expert in art and culture. Organiser and head of the mass events production in Poland. For several years she also worked for the Conspero Foundation as a co-organiser of exhibitions of prof. Jerzy Duda-Gracz works, including “Duda-Gracz for Chopin” – a remarkable series of nearly 300 paintings – artistic interpretations of Chopin’s works, presented at the Polish National Opera in Warsaw.

Borys Tarasyuk

Ukrainian political scientist, diplomat and politician, activist of the Ukrainian national movement. He twice served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Graduated from international relations and international law at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, holds a Honoris Causa degree of the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. He is the founder of the Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation (IEAC). He actively advocates Ukraine’s integration into EU and NATO structures. He was awarded by Polish Minister Radosław Sikorski with the honorary distinction “Bene Merito.”

Henryk Wujec

Opposition activist in the communist times, MP and former Deputy Minister of Agriculture. Currently he is the Presidential Adviser for Social Affairs. He organised and edited the underground newspaper “Worker” and was one of the founders of Free Trade Unions. In 1987–1988 he was a member, and from 1988 to 1990 the secretary of the Civic Committee of the President of the “Solidarity” Lech Wałęsa. In 1989 he took part in the Round Table Talks. He served as the Secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture in the Jerzy Buzek’s Cabinet. He was awarded with the Commander’s Cross with Star of the Order of the Rebirth of Poland by the Polish President Lech Kaczyński.

Polish Prize of Sergio Vieira de Mello

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2002-2003)

Honorary patronage:

Ambassador of the Federative Republic of Brazil to Poland
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to Poland
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

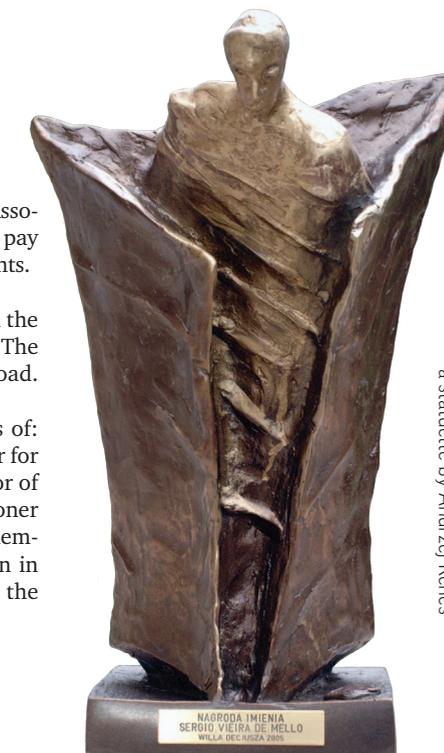
The Polish Prize of Sergio Vieira de Mello was established by the Villa Decius Association in the year 2003 with an aim to promote democracy and tolerance, and to pay tribute to Sergio Vieira de Mello, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Prize is awarded to a person and an organisation for their special merits in the peaceful coexistence and cooperation of communities, religions and cultures. The Laureates of the Prize may be individuals and institutions from Poland and abroad.

The Prize is awarded by the Award Panel composed of High Representatives of: the President of the Republic of Poland, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, HE Ambassador of the Federative Republic of Brazil, HE Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Polish Commissioner for Civil Rights Protection, Chairman of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, consulates and foundations cooperating with Villa Decius Association in matters related to human rights, Founders of the Prize and the Chairman and the Director of the Villa Decius Association.

Laureates:

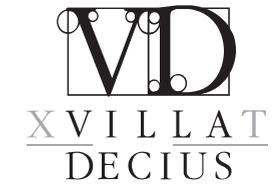
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|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| 2004 | Tadeusz Mazowiecki
One World Association | 2009 | Fatos Lubonja
Leopold Unger |
| 2005 | Rev. Marian Żelazek SVD (1918-2006)
Krzyżowa Foundation for European Understanding | 2010 | Nagy El-Khoury and Mohammad al-Nokkari
Memoriał
Andrzej Przewoźnik (1963-2010) |
| 2006 | Alaxandr Milinkevich
Jewish Culture Festival | 2011 | Hassan Omar Hassan
Halina Nieć Legal Aid Centre
Bernard Kouchner |
| 2007 | Maryna Hulia
Magurycz Association | | |
| 2008 | Krystyna Pryjomko-Serafin
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
and
Szewach Weiss, Michał Żejmis | | |



a statuette by Andrzej Renes



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