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Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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ISHR President praises human rights defenders

(Bonn, 18.06.2024) In his closing remarks of the annual general assembly of the German section of the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR), Prof. Dr. mult. Thomas Paul Schirmmacher, President of the International Council of the ISHR, declared, that ISHR mainly exists to protect human rights defenders (HRD) and is proud to have so many of them in their ranks.

Schirmmacher underlined: “It is one thing to work against human rights violations from a rather safe country, it is another thing to live in the midst of widespread human rights violations, but instead to seek protection for oneself, to work for others, leading up to risking one’s own life, so that others may have life and human dignity.” He pointed to the number published by United Nations and the European Union, that in 2020, at least 331 HRDs were murdered in 25 countries.



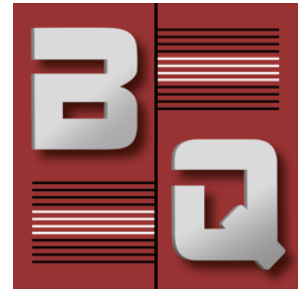
Thomas Paul Schirmmacher during his speech © ISHR/Schirmmacher

Schirmmacher stated, that the protection of human rights defenders is a prominent concern for the International Society of Human Rights, that it is a large part of what ISHR has been doing and still is doing all over the world. He said verbatim: “I admire human rights defenders. I am proud, that the ISHR has so many in its ranks, working with us closely, often helping us directly to protect other human rights defenders. Standing here and speaking, I look into the face of some of our dear heroes attending our assembly, e.g. from Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Kurdish AR, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, Moldova, or Iran.”

He insisted, that publicizing the work of human rights defenders often is an effective way to enhance their protection, as those seeking to protect the human rights of persons often face the risk of persecution by those who prefer to keep such criminal acts quiet and out of public view.

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A joint platform for the following Bonn organizations on the basis of the Evangelical Alliance:

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business.worlddea.org

Evangelical Missiology, Journal of missiotop – Evangelical Forum for Missions, Cultures and Religions (German Evangelical Alliance)
missiotop.org

Evangelical Review of Theology (New York, Bonn)
theology.worlddea.org/evangelical-review-of-theology

Giving Hands – International Charity (Bonn)
gebende-haende.de

Global Theology Department of the World Evangelical Alliance
worlddea.org/what-we-do/global-theology/

International Institute for Islamic Studies (IIIS) (Bonn)
islaminstute.net

International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF) of the World Evangelical Alliance (International Headquarter, EU-Office Brüssel)
iirf.eu

International Journal for Religious Freedom (IJRF) (Bonn/Toronto)
journal.iirf.eu

Martin Bucer Seminary (Bonn, Zürich, Tirana, São Paulo, Helsinki, Istanbul, Delhi)
bucer.org

Office of Intrafaith and Interfaith Relations of the World Evangelical Alliance

SOS World (Brussels)
sosworld.be/page-daccueil

Theological Commission of the European Evangelical Alliance
europeanea.org

Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance
worldevangelicals.org/tc/

Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft (VKW) (Culture and Science Publ.)
vkwonline.com

WEA Global Issues Series (Bonn, Manila, New York)
global-issues-series.iirf.eu

WEA Sustainability Center
wea-sc.org

World Evangelical Alliance (WEA)

Yearbook on Religious Freedom of the Commission for Religious Freedom of the German and the Austrian Evangelical Alliance
yearbooks.iirf.eu

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Human Rights Defenders (HRD) is an official term used by the United Nations, the European Union, and other international organizations. In 1998, the United Nations issued the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (A/RES/53/144, 1998), commonly known as the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

The EU defines them as “persons, who individually or in association with others, act to promote or protect human rights of others peacefully”. This is the position of the EU: “HRDs stand up for the rights of others, which is why it is so essential to protect them and their families. They often do so at great personal cost. In standing against human rights violations committed by States and non-state actors, HRDs are increasingly exposed to serious threats, including physical attacks, harassment, smear campaigns, arbitrary detention, torture and killings. As laid out in the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, the EU is firmly committed to protect HRDs at risk by enhancing their visibility and recognition, and by publicly speaking out against the threats, they face.”

Downloads and Links:

- **Photo:** Thomas Paul Schirmmacher during his speech © ISHR/Schirmmacher
- About the annual general ISHR assembly:
<https://www.igfm.de/52-jahrestagung-2024/>
- Wikipedia entry on “human rights defender”:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_defender
- “Human rights defenders” on the European Union website:
https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/human-rights-defenders_en
- “Human rights defenders” on the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) website: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/human-rights-defenders>

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International Institute for Islamic Studies (IIS) (Bonn)
islam institute.net

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