

# 1996 ANNUAL REPORT

## *HURIDOCS*

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## INTRODUCTION

1996 was the fourth year of the HURIDOCS Five-Year Strategic Plan for the period 1993-1997. This Plan was developed by the Continuation Committee on the basis of the discussions and resolutions of the third General Assembly of HURIDOCS, which was held in Crete in May 1992.

HURIDOCS continued to carry out in 1996 the resolutions which were adopted and best practices which were identified during the international trainers workshop **Towards More Effective Human Rights Information Handling: International Workshop on HURIDOCS Training Services** held in 1994 in Pattaya, Thailand. As many as 18 training courses and workshops were conducted at various levels (introductory and advanced; national, sub-regional and regional). Most of the courses involved the teaching of the HURIDOCS tool for documenting human rights violations (also referred to as the Events Standard Formats) and its computer application called EVSYS (which was considerably improved within the year).

Complementing the training courses and workshops were a number of on-site trainings, internships and other follow up activities including provision of advice and support services. Eight interns were trained at the HURIDOCS Secretariat within the year.

A first for HURIDOCS was the conduct of a course at a regional level for organisations from Eastern Europe. This was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, in October.

HURIDOCS also pursued its stress on thematic training activities. A regional course on documentation of violence against women was held in Manila in December, while a similar course, but on a national level, was held for women's groups in South Africa in July. There was also the regional course held in Bangkok which mainly had participants from groups concerned with rights of migrants.

The ground work for a major project to develop tools, methodologies and systems for a more effective monitoring of state compliance with and observance of obligations relating to economic, social and cultural rights was carried out in 1996. An Advisory Committee of experts has been established, and research work has been started. This project has been prepared with the Science and Human Rights Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

Networking among human rights organisations concerned with the handling of human rights information continued to be strengthened gradually through the various regional networks established in the recent years. In addition, interaction by HURIDOCS with other networks of NGOs outside of the traditional human rights networks became more pronounced.

HURIDOCS engaged in many other activities in the areas of Training, Tool Development, Communication and Outreach, as well as internal Management. These activities are outlined below.

## **A. TRAINING PROGRAMME**

### **1. Regional course for Francophone Africa, Benin**

This course for NGOs from Francophone countries in Africa was held in Cotonou, Benin from 26 February to 6 March. It was an introductory course covering the basics of information handling, the HURIDOCS Bibliographic Standard Formats and INDEP/SERIAL databases, the HURIDOCS Events Standard Formats and the software EVSYS.

The course was co-organised by the Ecole Instrument de Paix - Benin. The resource persons were: Abou Moussa Ndongo from CODESRIA, Dakar; Mireille Messmer from Institut International des Droits de l'Homme, Strasbourg; and Néjib Ghali and Alexia Ndiba from the HURIDOCS Secretariat.

It was attended by 22 participants from various non-governmental human rights organisations in the region.

### **2. Training on electronic communications, Algeria**

Néjib Ghali from the HURIDOCS Secretariat carried out a needs assessment and provided training on electronic mail at the Human Rights Observatory from 26 to 28 January.

### **3. Working session for African NGOs, Burkina Faso**

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) organised a workshop for NGOs working with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 23 to 25 March, prior to the actual meeting of the Commission. Two sessions were held simultaneously, one in English and the other in French, to introduce the HURIDOCS tool for monitoring human rights events. The resource persons who led the sessions were HURIDOCS Continuation Committee member James Lawson and Secretariat member Néjib Ghali.

### **4. Regional course on documentation of violations and data analysis, Thailand**

This regional course for groups dealing with migrant workers, trafficking in women, and human rights took place in Bangkok from 20 to 28 March. The main subject matters were the Events Standard Formats, EVSYS and data analysis.

The course was co-organised by the Asian Research Centre for Migration (ARCM). It was attended by 22 participants from 10 Asian countries. Resource persons were Bert Verstappen from the HURIDOCS Secretariat, S. Varatharajan from ICES (Sri Lanka), and Beth Daponte from the

American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

#### **5. Training workshop during the regional meeting of NGOs in the HURIDOCS Asian network, Thailand**

From 30 March to 2 April, a consultation attended by 12 representatives from leading human rights NGOs in the Asian region was held in Bangkok, Thailand. A whole-day workshop on the use of HURIDOCS tools, led by Bert Verstappen and S. Varatharajan, was held on 30 March.

#### **6. National course on documentation of violations / Follow up of course held in 1995, Pakistan**

A national course was held in Islamabad, Pakistan from 18 to 24 April, attended by 19 participants from all over the country. It was co-organised by Voice Against Torture.

The main subject matters were the Events Standard Formats and EVSYS. Resource persons came from the sub-region, namely Ayesha Iqbal of the Human Rights Information and Documentation Centre (Pakistan) and S. Varatharajan of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (Sri Lanka).

After the course on documentation of violations, a session was held on 25 April as follow-up to a course held in August 1995, which was on handling of bibliographic information on human rights. The aim of the session was to see how the various organisations had applied what were taught in the previous course, and to determine what more needs to be done.

#### **7. On-site training, Algeria**

Néjib Ghali from the HURIDOCS Secretariat provided on-site training on documenting human rights violations and EVSYS from 6 to 8 May to ten people from the Human Rights Observatory and the Red Crescent in Algeria.

#### **8. Training sessions during the European Co-ordination Committee meeting, The Netherlands**

The European Co-ordination Committee on Human Rights Documentation held its 20th meeting in Utrecht, the Netherlands from 13 to 15 May. Several sessions were devoted to training, such as on the use of Internet, WINISIS, and EVSYS. Bert Verstappen of the HURIDOCS Secretariat was among the resource persons.

#### **9. National course on documentation of violations against women, South Africa**

The course on documenting violations of women's rights was co-organised with the Human Rights Institute of South Africa (HURISA). It took place at HURISA's premises at Sandton, close to Johannesburg, South Africa, from 15 to 19 July. Aida Maria Noval, a HURIDOCS CC member, was a resource person during the course.

There were fourteen participants in the training on the use of EVSYS, all of them from NGOs, except for one participant from the Human Rights Commission.

#### **10. Course on documentation of violations, Southern Mexico**

### **11. Course on documentation of violations, Western/Northern Mexico**

### **12. Course on documentation of violations, Central Mexico**

A series of three courses were held for human rights organisations in different parts of Mexico, in collaboration with the network La Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos "Todos los Derechos para Todos". The courses were held as follow:

- a. Mexico South - Southeast region: held from 12 to 15 June at Villa Hermosa, Tabasco, Mexico
- b. Mexico West -North region: held from 14 to 17 August at San Luis Potosi, Mexico
- c. Mexico Central region: held from 9 to 13 October at Mexico City

All three courses dealt with the basics of fact-finding, documentation of human rights violations, and the use of the software EVSYS. Aida Maria Noval from the HURIDOCS Continuation Committee (CC) was the main trainer in all three courses.

### **13. Regional course (Eastern Europe) on handling bibliographic information, Russia**

A training course on handling bibliographical information and the CDS/ISIS database took place in St. Petersburg, Russia from 16 to 23 October. It is the first course in the CIS countries undertaken on a regional level by HURIDOCS. It was co-organised with the German-Russian Exchange Association. There were fifteen participants who came from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Ukraine.

The resource persons were two librarians, namely Kirsti Sparrevohn and Hanne Stemann, plus Bert Verstappen from the HURIDOCS Secretariat.

### **14. Workshop for ICFTU, Poland**

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) had adapted certain HURIDOCS standard formats for training and use among its network of trade unions concerned with violations of human and trade union rights. It had consequently requested the HURIDOCS Secretariat to program the adaptation into the EVSYS software. The modified software was demonstrated at a training session for ICFTU affiliates in Central Europe which took place in Zakopane, Poland from 25 to 28 September

### **15. On-site training for the Anti-Racism Information Service, Switzerland**

Bert Verstappen from the HURIDOCS Secretariat provided advice and support to the Anti-Racism Information Service, a Geneva-based NGO, in developing its documentation centre and database. He has also edited a thesaurus on racial discrimination for this organisation.

### **16. Human Rights Camp, Zimbabwe**

Néjib Ghali from the HURIDOCS Secretariat gave a presentation on HURIDOCS to the 23

participants at the Human Rights Camp held near Harare, Zimbabwe, from 31 October to 2 November. He gave an overview of HURIDOCS work, the characteristics of databasing and the HURIDOCS tools for documenting cases of human rights violations.

### **17. Workshops during CUSHRID Net annual meeting, USA**

The Canada-U.S. Human Rights Information and Documentation Network (CUSHRID Net) held its annual meeting from 1 to 3 November at the University of Maryland. Integrated into the meeting programme were workshops and demonstrations on issues and tools about information handling. Among the topics discussed were: setting up of a documentation centre, the EVSYS software, etc. Agnethe Olesen, a member of the HURIDOCS Continuation Committee, was a resource person in the workshops and demonstrations.

### **18. Regional training course on documentation of violence against women, Philippines**

This training course dealt with documenting cases of violence against women, including domestic violence. It was held from 2 to 10 December, in collaboration with the Coalition against Trafficking in Women--Asia/Pacific. Twenty participants came from Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia and the Philippines.

Topics in the course included conceptual inputs on women's rights, women-sensitive fact-finding, and adaptation of EVSYS for documentation of violence against women. Manuel Guzman, HURIDOCS Executive Director, was a primary resource person for the course.

### **19. Interns**

Eight interns were received at the Secretariat during the period. They are:

a. Deepa Ragmi, from the Group for International Solidarity (GRINSO), Nepal, who was intern from 12 January to 9 February. She received training on handling bibliographic information, INDEP and SERIAL databases, Events Standard Formats, EVSYS, data analysis and e-mail.

b. Maria Cecilia Gomez, from Action des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture (ACAT), France, who was intern from 22 to 26 April. She received training on bibliographic information handling and on the INDEP and SERIAL databases.

c. Frej Fenniche, from the Arab Institute for Human Rights, Tunisia, who was intern on 29 and 30 April. He received a crash course on the use of EVSYS.

d. Volodymyr Tyschenko, from the International Medical Centre for the Victims of War and Totalitarian Regimes, Ukraine, who was intern from 1 to 10 May. He received training on bibliographic information handling and on the INDEP and SERIAL databases.

e. Nancy Perdomo, from the Association for the Prevention of Torture, Switzerland, who was intern from 10 to 13 June. She received training on the INDEP and SERIAL databases.

f. Anne Laurence La Croix

g. Christine Fritzsche

h. Ahmed Ben Yezzar

These are staff members of the Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture, Switzerland. They received training on the use of EVSYS on October 15.

## **20. Other training-related activities**

A needs assessment mission sponsored jointly by International Alert and HURIDOCS was carried out by Ricardo Cifuentes in **Rwanda** in April. The mission came out with recommendations such as the conduct in 1997 of a series of training workshops for Rwandan NGOs, preceded by an internship of a Rwandan documentalist at the HURIDOCS Secretariat in Geneva.

A national course on documenting human rights violations is to be held in **India** in 1997 in collaboration with ADHIKAR, a human rights NGO based in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. Preparatory steps, including a needs assessment mission, were carried out towards the end of the year.

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## **21. Training modules**

Twenty-two training modules, each of which could stand alone or could be combined with some of the others, have been identified. Most of these modules are specifically on tools and techniques developed by HURIDOCS, such as on the use of HURIDOCS standard formats. Some other modules cover other aspects of information handling (e.g., basics of documentation, content description) for which HURIDOCS trainers have also developed expertise. There are other modules which are on more general subject matters (e.g., human rights mechanisms, fact-finding) but which are seen as relevant in some types of HURIDOCS courses.

The development of each module in terms of content, methodology, duration and suggested materials has been started. The modules will afterwards be integrated into a trainers' manual.

## **B. TOOL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

### **1. Events Standard Formats and EVSYS**

The EVSYS software program for documenting cases of human rights violations based on the HURIDOCS Standard Formats was further developed, and Version 4.1 has been distributed as from mid-1996. A draft users' manual for this version has also been produced in English and in French, while the writing of the Spanish version has been started. Copies of the users' manual were distributed to participants of training courses, as well as to organisations and individuals who sent requests to HURIDOCS.

An adaptation of EVSYS was made to suit the needs of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and its affiliate organisations.

### **2. Bibliographic Standard Formats and INDEP / SERIAL**

The INDEP / SERIAL database software, a computerised application of the HURIDOCS bibliographic standard formats programmed in CDS-ISIS, continued to be distributed, together with a users' manual, to organisations which requested it.

HURIDOCS took part in a conference of European CDS/ISIS users which took place in London in the beginning of December.

### **3. Translations**

The translation into French of the contents of three HURIDOCS books (Events Standard Formats, Bibliographic Standard Formats, Supporting Documents) was finished. The translation into Spanish of two of the books was likewise finished. The translation into Arabic of these books has also been started. Some main parts of the HURIDOCS Standard Formats, as well as basic instructions on their use, have been translated to Russian and used during the St. Petersburg training course.

The translation of EVSYS into Arabic has also been incorporated into the program of activities of the Arab Human Rights Information Network (AHRINET).

### **4. Monitoring economic, social and cultural rights**

The Science and Human Rights Program of AAAS and HURIDOCS have started their joint project on developing improved methods for monitoring economic, social and cultural rights. The composition of the project advisory committee was finalised, and preparations for its first meeting, scheduled for January 1997, were undertaken. Research into relevant literature has also been started.

A brainstorming on how the project could be implemented was held in Geneva on 23 November, attended by staff members of HURIDOCS and AAAS, advisory committee members present in Geneva at that time, and representatives from organisations involved in this field.

### **5. Other tools**

HURIDOCS has provided assistance to the Moscow Helsinki Group for the updating of a **directory of human rights NGOs** found in countries from the former Soviet Union.

A **classification scheme** for shelving documents in a human rights documentation centre, developed by Iva Caccia, has been distributed by the Secretariat to a number of interested members of the network. It was also publicised in the HURIDOCS newsletter.

The translation into French of the book *Data Analysis for Monitoring Human Rights* was finished, and distribution of copies by the AAAS or HURIDOCS will be possible in 1997.

## **C. OUTREACH AND INFORMATION PROGRAMME**

### **1. Regional networking / focal points**

#### ***a. Arab Human Rights Information Network (AHRINET)***

The Steering Committee of the network, composed of representatives from the Arab Institute for Human Rights, Arab Lawyers Union, Arab Organisation for Human Rights, HURIDOCS and three independent experts, met in Tunis on 18 April. The Committee drew up a one-year plan. A second Steering Committee Meeting was held also in Tunis on 13 November, to assess the progress of the implementation of the plan.

### ***b. HURIDOCS Asia***

The Asian network had its second meeting on 29 and 30 March in Bangkok, attended by representatives from eight organisations. Among the key decisions were:

- shifting the focal point from Pakistan to Thailand. For this, a small group was commissioned to conduct a study as to which specific organisation could host the focal point
- formation of a Steering Committee to guide the focal point. It is headed by Supang Chantavanich of the Asian Research Centre for Migration.
- retaining the name HURIDOCS-Asia

The small group tasked to study which Asian organisation could host the focal point has identified four organisations in Thailand as possible candidates. Consultations with these organisations have been started as part of the selection process.

### ***c. European Co-ordination Committee***

The oldest network, the European Co-ordination Committee for Human Rights Documentation has existed since the first half of the 1980s, and has held regular meetings since then. Since 1995, its Secretariat is with the International Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims in Denmark. The 20th meeting of the Committee was held on 14 and 15 May, in Utrecht, with the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights as host. A day (13 May) was allotted for introducing HURIDOCS to first-time participants.

Among the participants were some 10 representatives from human rights and church-related organisations in Central and Eastern Europe.

### ***d. Canada-U.S. Human Rights Information and Documentation Network (CUSHRID Net)***

The network's Steering Committee held its first meeting for the year on 19 and 20 April. A few months later, the annual meeting was held from 1 to 3 November at the University of Maryland. The meeting once again incorporated some training sessions, such as on the setting up of a documentation centre, use of HURIDOCS tools, etc. The Steering also held a meeting during this time.

Agnethe Olesen, HURIDOCS CC member, represented HURIDOCS in the annual meeting, aside from serving as a resource person. Judith Dueck, HURIDOCS Continuation Committee member, represented HURIDOCS in the Steering Committee meeting in April, while Charlotte McCann, HURIDOCS International Advisory Committee member, represented HURIDOCS in the December Steering Committee meeting.



***e. Red de Informatica y Documentación en Derechos Humanos para America Latina y el Caribe (RIDHUALC)***

This network held its last meeting in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1991, and has started planning for a third regional meeting combined with a conference with impunity as the likely major theme.

**2. Liaison / collaboration with IGOs, NGOs and INGOs**

***a. Major human rights events***

HURIDOCS representatives attended the following meetings:

- *Informal Experts Workshop on Development Co-operation and the Promotion of Human Rights*, sponsored by OECD and CIDA and held in Paris on 5 and 6 February;
- Workshop of NGOs working with the *African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights*, held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in April, where HURIDOCS provided inputs on documentation of human rights violations;
- Lisbon Forum *Human Rights in the North-South Dialogue* on 9 May, and the Executive Council meeting of the North-South Centre on 10 May in Lisbon, Portugal, where the agenda included exchange of information on human rights and the establishment of early warning mechanisms;
- *IFLA Conference* held in Beijing in August, where HURIDOCS Continuation Committee member Judith Dueck presented the paper "Access to Human Rights Documentation through Non-Governmental Organisations";
- *International Workshop on National Level-Activism in Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* held in Chiang Mai in July;
- *World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children* held in Stockholm in August;
- *Workshop on Human Rights Education for the Asia-Pacific* held in Sydney in August, where HURIDOCS Executive Director Manuel Guzman made a presentation on human rights training.
- *NOVIB Partners Meeting, The Netherlands, September*. This meeting was called by the international projects department of NOVIB to consult with its partners in coming up with a platform for the eradication of poverty through the building of civil society. Manuel Guzman, HURIDOCS Executive Director attended. The meeting was an opportunity for HURIDOCS to get acquainted with NOVIB INGO partners in the other sectors (women, environment, indigenous peoples, etc.).

***b. Martin Ennals Award***

HURIDOCS continued to host the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders (MEA). The third Award was given to Clement Nwankwo of the Constitutional Rights Project, Nigeria, at a ceremony held in London on 10 June in collaboration with Amnesty International, HURIDOCS, International Alert and Article XIX. HURIDOCS' Administrative Assistant, Alexia Ndiba, carried out co-ordinating work for the preparation of the Award ceremony and other work for the Martin Ennals

Foundation.

### ***c. Intergovernmental bodies***

HURIDOCS has applied for consultative status with UNESCO, and is waiting for official response, after having submitted additional information as requested.

### **3. Newsletter**

HURIDOCS Newsletter No. 20 was published in May. This is the second issue published in English, Spanish and French.

### **4. Other information activities**

HURIDOCS was approached by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for the production of a documentary on the use of technology for human rights. Some filming has been arranged in Mexico during the training workshops held there in the middle of the year.

## **D. Management**

Two new CC members, Supang Chantavanich (Thailand) and Agnethe Olesen (Denmark), started their functions in 1996. Serving as a new member of the International Advisory Committee is Charlotte McCann from the Human Rights Documentation Exchange in the USA

The HURIDOCS Continuation Committee (CC) met twice in the year in Geneva. In both meetings, the CC evaluated past and ongoing activities, and started preparations for future training courses and workshops, regional meetings and other projects. The final CC meeting also took up the preparation of the programme for 1997.

The CC agreed that the next General Assembly of HURIDOCS should take place in early 1998, to be combined with a conference on information issues in relation to issues such as conflict, conflict resolution, deprivation of economic, social and cultural rights, and other major issues obtaining as the next century approaches.

The HURIDOCS Secretariat in Geneva was headed by Manuel Guzman as Executive Director and consisted further of Néjib Ghali (Administrative Officer), Alexia Ndiba (Administrative Assistant) and Bert Verstappen (Information Officer). Alexia Ndiba left the Secretariat for personal reasons in October.