

13 November 2006

In wake of the war in Lebanon the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) sent a mission to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). The purpose of the mission was to study the situation of human rights in the aftermath of the war in Lebanon and to evaluate the consequences of the ongoing Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip. The mission coincided with the first anniversary of the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, which Israel itself has called a 'disengagement' from the Gaza Strip.

By July 2006, Lebanese Hezbollah and the Israeli military were engaged in full-scale warfare. Hezbollah launched hundreds of missiles in numerous deliberate attacks against Israeli civilians and population centres in the north of Israel that led to the death and injury of civilians in 11 Israeli towns and numerous population centres. The attacks also caused damage to civilian property. Israeli forces attacked Hezbollah and also deliberately targeted Lebanese infrastructure objects such as bridges, the Beirut international airport, several ports and an electricity power station. More than 1,000 Lebanese civilians were killed by the Israeli military actions. Hezbollah's aggression killed 40 Israeli civilians.

Whereas focus of the international community and media was on Lebanon, human rights violations in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories continued to occur and even escalated. The mission's purpose was not of a fact finding character, instead it aimed to shed light on the deteriorating situation for human rights in the OPT and Israel, as well as expressing solidarity with Israeli and Palestinian human rights organisations.

In the context of the war in Lebanon and the rocket attacks carried out by Hezbollah against Northern Israel, Israeli public majority opinion appeared not to be concerned with the dramatic situation of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. At the time of the conflict, public opinion was particularly focused – quite reasonably so – on the problems being faced by the population in the North of the country (40 persons were killed and about one million displaced following Hezbollah's rocket attacks). Little attention was paid to the problems being experienced by people inside the OPT or to the killings of civilians and the destruction of civilian property and infrastructure taking place in Lebanon.

Nonetheless, five Israeli human rights organisations did call for ceasefire during the war in Lebanon. And the organisation B'Tselem is preparing an information campaign towards the Israeli public on the human rights implications of the destruction of the electricity plant and the ongoing blockade and bombings in the Gaza Strip.

The mission noted the deteriorating human rights situation in the OPT and Israel following the war in Lebanon:

- The Gaza Strip is still sealed off with all borders closed, both for persons and goods.
- The Israeli military carried out attacks on the Gaza Strip, hitting civilian infrastructure such as a power plant and the three main bridges that connect the road system in the Strip. Travel within the Gaza Strip is once again a problem as it were at the time of Israeli settlements inside the Gaza Strip.
- Gazans still do not have access to the sea and are thus prevented from fishing.
- The construction of the Wall continues in the West Bank.

- The Palestinian Arab minority is discriminated against as regards security arrangements and compensations for damage caused during the war.

More generally, the mission team noticed a disastrous deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip following the Israeli 'Operation Summer Rains' which was still being completed at the time of the mission. It also noticed a serious deterioration in the living conditions of Palestinians. This was directly related to the ongoing construction of the Wall. The mission team also registered the severe damage caused by Hezbollah's rocket attacks against the North of Israel.

Furthermore, the mission noted that discrimination against Palestinians had worsened at all levels. The Israeli occupation is increasingly exacerbating the situation in the OPT, discriminatory laws are increasing and direct or indirect violence against Palestinian people is on the rise.

Israel has a policy of collective punishment against Palestinians in the OPT. The EU and the UN seem to have a 'closed eyes policy' towards Israeli violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. The EU appears to be treating the State of Israel with positive political conditionality (via, for example, the favourable European Neighbourhood Policy's EU/Israel Action Plan), whereas it treats the Palestinian Authority with negative conditionality (by suspending contacts with its democratically elected leadership).

EMHRN and FIDH member organisations in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights and Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, urge the Europeans to stop endorsing what they regard to be an illusionary end to the occupation.

The mission team was subject to lengthy waiting times and very detailed security checks upon arrival to, and departure from, Tel Aviv airport, as well as when entering Israel after having visited the Gaza Strip. If one compares the treatment meted out to the mission team with the way other international passengers were dealt with, one is tempted to assume that there exists an Israeli policy of intentional harassment against international personnel working for human rights.

THE SITUATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS – KEY PROBLEMATIC ISSUES

The mission team visited the West Bank (including occupied East Jerusalem), the Gaza Strip and Israel¹.

Deprivation of Palestinians' Human Rights in the OPT

In the aftermath of the war in Lebanon, Palestinians in the OPT have been facing a situation where they are continuously deprived of several of their human rights.

The mission noted the extent of the destruction being caused by the ongoing Israeli bombings of the Gaza Strip. The cities of Beit Hanoun, in the north of the territory and Rafah on the Egyptian border are the most affected. Human rights organisations have on many occasions deplored the consequences of the destruction of civilian infrastructure².

The mission team also witnessed the destroyed bridges on the Salaheddine Road – the only road connecting the northern and southern parts of the Gaza Strip; the destroyed transformers of the only power plant inside the Gaza Strip, the civilian houses and buildings destroyed by Israeli bombs. Since the beginning of the military offensive in June 2006 these bombings have caused the death of more than 300 people. 80 per cent of who were civilians of which 30 per cent were children. Added to that, 800 persons have had a leg amputated due to injuries caused by Israeli cluster bombs.

¹ Jerusalem, Ramallah, the Gaza Strip, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Nazareth and Majd al-Kroum (located between Haifa and Nazareth).

² See for example the EMHRN report, [Disengagement With Effective Control: Report from a mission to the Occupied Territories](#), October 2005; and FIDH's preliminary conclusions of a fact finding mission in July 2006 [Failing the Palestinian State: The human rights impact of the economic strangulation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#).

The Right to Freedom of Movement

The restricted freedom of movement of Palestinians is strikingly obvious and has serious negative effects on their other rights.

It is quite clear that the Gaza Strip has been sealed off from the outside world. Neither persons nor goods are allowed to enter or exit the Gaza Strip. The only exceptions are international personnel working with humanitarian aid or human rights organisations, media staff and some Palestinians participating in the International Red Cross' family visitation programme (for family members of Gazans kept in Israeli prisons). However, these groups are all subject to the decisions of the Israeli authorities and therefore permission to enter or leave the Gaza Strip can never be taken for granted.

Six human rights groups petitioned the Israeli High Court to demand that the crossings in Gaza be reopened to allow for the steady and regular supply of fuel, food, medicine, and equipment, including spare parts needed to operate generators³.

Regarding the situation in the West Bank, the complex military system which deprives Palestinians of the right to freedom of movement continued while the war in Lebanon was taking place. The building of the Wall, the permit system, the closures, military check-points and the designation of 'no-go' areas for Palestinians continued at undiminished speed with negative effects on other human rights. According to the information received by the mission team during a number of meetings, the general situation has become much worse in the northern part of the West Bank and especially in Jenin. Acts of violence perpetrated by Israeli soldiers at check-points have increased during the conflict in Lebanon. Some people consider this to be a reaction to the setbacks encountered by the Israeli military in Lebanon.

Since January 2006, the Israeli government has established new travel protocols for West Bank Palestinians travelling to Jerusalem. Only three check-points allow passage as of today: Qalandia (with the Hebrew name Atarot), Anat in the eastern part of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. According to information received, no-one – with a few exceptions – is permitted to enter Jerusalem from the West Bank⁴.

The West Bank is also hit by closures which involved the isolation of entire cities or villages. For instance, Palestinians living in the West Bank are generally denied access to the Jordan Valley.

Members of the mission team became aware of concerns that Palestinians were being placed outside of what seems to be the new borders of Jerusalem due to the Wall. These Palestinians may then risk losing their residence permits for Jerusalem – and thus their right to enter the city, whether this be to work, or because of family, educational, religious or purely leisure reasons⁵.

This Wall has severely restricted the day-to-day life of the inhabitants of the Palestinian villages affected. The urban area of Jerusalem is particularly hard hit. The objective of the Israeli government is to include the main group of settlements (Ma'ale Adumim and in particular its recent extensions) on the Israeli side and to place several Palestinian villages, formerly included in the urban area of Jerusalem, on the West Bank side⁶. Allegedly, the strategic objective of this operation is to maintain the current demographic balance in Jerusalem (two thirds of the population are Israeli Jews and one third Palestinian residents).

³ The case is still pending. Petitioners are: Association for Civil Rights in Israel, Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, HaMoked: Centre for Defence of the Individual; B'Tselem, the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel and Gisha – Centre for the Legal Protection of Freedom of Movement.

⁴ The mission was informed that during the month of Ramadan, only men older than 45 years could be granted an entrance permit to Jerusalem in order to attend religious services.

⁵ Palestinians with Jerusalem residence permits do not have any Israeli citizen status, but are allowed to live in Jerusalem and vote in the municipality elections. Their residence permit can be revoked.

⁶ Abu Dis and Azzariya villages are particularly concerned. As a consequence, the inhabitants of Abu Dis need since the building of the wall, half an hour to go to Jerusalem, instead of 5 minutes. See in the annex, the map of the wall established by Ir Amim.

On the other side a growing number of illegal Jewish settlements surround East Jerusalem with the aim of cutting off the Palestinian part of the city from the rest of the West Bank and possibly preventing it from becoming the capital of a future Palestinian State. The route of the Wall aims at establishing a territorial continuity between Jerusalem and the illegal Jewish settlements. The construction work planned for the E1 area would make this continuity possible and consequently separate the northern and the southern parts of the West Bank⁷.

In order to complete the strategy, the Israeli government is making it more difficult to obtain or to renew residence permits for Jerusalem. From 1995 to the present, a total of 4,000 Palestinians have been deprived of this permit under the guise of various 'justifications'.

The Right to an Adequate Standard of Living and Work

The economic situation of the Palestinian Authority (PA) after Israel and the international community decided to interrupt all aid channelled to and via the PA is considered disastrous.

The current employment situation is appalling. This due to a rapidly increasing unemployment rate; the blockade of the Gaza Strip and restricted movement inside the Strip; the Israeli decision to freeze the transfer of the PA's tax revenues; and in addition to that, the suspension of EU financial assistance to the PA.

The Wall has also had severe consequences for the Palestinian economy at large. In several regions, it has not only separated villagers from their fields, and thereby prevented farmers from working, but it has also seriously limited trade with fruit and vegetables between the West Bank and Jerusalem. Economic activity along the Wall has been practically paralysed and many shops, bars and restaurants have closed down. The streets along the Wall are sort of no man's land.

The Right to Health and Medical Care

The constant closures of border crossings to the Gaza Strip imposed by the Israeli authorities have created an unbearable situation where Gazans lack adequate access to health and medical care. Patients who are in need of expert medical care outside the Strip are prevented from travelling. This puts not only their health but also their lives at risk.

Hospitals and health care centres are short of medical supplies. Civilians are further threatened by the shortage of electricity which is needed to run these health institutions. In an aerial attack on 28 June 2006 the Israeli military destroyed six transformers inside the Gaza Strip's only electrical power plant.

The lack of fuel caused by the limited amounts allowed into the Gaza Strip puts a further strain on the production of electricity and the hospitals that require it.

In the West Bank, the separation of populations caused by the construction of the Wall is beginning to have serious consequences on the health and medical sectors. Inhabitants of the areas located on the other side of the Wall cannot reach the four hospitals situated in East Jerusalem.

The Right to Food

When the borders are closed, people in the Gaza Strip suffer severe deprivation because of the lack of food. The Israeli military has declared the sea off limits to Gazans and this has closed off a major source of nutrition. Because of this, many families have lost their main source of income.

The Right to Housing

The mission met with Gazans whose houses had been demolished and they also spoke with Gazans who had been threatened with demolition by the Israeli military. The reason usually given by the military for such actions was that a Palestinian militant had been living in the same area. These actions therefore constitute a form of collective punishment which is illegal according to international law.

⁷ [See map of the E1 area](#) from Ir Amim.

The situation in Rafah remains particularly worrying. The Israeli military – looking for tunnels used for arms transfers from Egypt to Gaza – has continued to target civilian housing. The mission team met with a representative of the inhabitants of Rafah. The man and his family represented one of the many cases of people who had become victims of Israeli bombings. Most of them cannot afford to rebuild their houses. Some of them have been forced into living in precarious conditions e.g. inside Rafah sports stadium where the mission met with their representative. This representative lives with his eight children and wife in one room and expressed the distress of the homeless families.

The Right to Education

The Wall that continues to be built in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) often separates families from each other as well as cutting children off from their schools. Children often have to pass through military check-points on their way between home and school.

Representatives of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights and Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights (both located in the Gaza Strip) insisted that, despite Israeli claims to have ended the occupation in September 2005, the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip continues to exist in a disguised form after the evacuation of the Israeli settlements.⁸ PCHR and Al Mezan urge the Europeans to stop endorsing what they regard as an illusionary end to the occupation. They deplore the current attitude of the European Union. They strongly criticise the presence of European observers on the border between Egypt and Gaza because, as they put it, the observers accept the monitoring rules decided by the Israeli government, and have therefore made themselves subject to the security strategies and rules of the occupying power. The human rights organisations asked the mission team to convey this message to the EU and its Member States.

Deprivation of the Right to Protection of the Individual in Israel and the OPT

The Right to Life – Victims of Violence

During the war in Lebanon, the Israeli military forces took violent action against the Gaza Strip. Palestinian civilians were killed and civilian infrastructure (houses, bridges, power plants and agricultural lands) and Palestinian Authority buildings destroyed. The Israeli military authorities claimed that the destroyed buildings were being used by Palestinian militants. However, the attacks have been clearly disproportionate and were carried out with lethal force, killing and injuring many civilians.

Hezbollah's rocket attacks caused the death of more than 40 civilians, 13 of them in Haifa. 200 people were also injured in the city. Hundreds of thousands of inhabitants escaped from the north of Israel during the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. Between 20 and 30 per cent of the inhabitants of Haifa escaped from the city. From January to August 2006, 3500 rockets were fired into the north of Israel. Among the 124 rockets fired on Haifa, 92 hit targets. The mission visited three buildings hit by rockets but at the time of their visit, most of the damage had already been repaired.

For one month, all social and economic activity stopped as the population was prevented from going out due to security reasons.

Despite the deadliness and seriousness of Hezbollah's attacks on civilians in the north of Israel, the mission noticed that Israeli reprisals were disproportionate. This reality has been highlighted by human rights groups during and after the war in Lebanon⁹. The same goes for the situation in the Gaza Strip. The disproportionate nature of Israel's reprisal must be condemned.

In addition, the situation within the Gaza Strip is chaotic with regard to protection of the individual. The proliferation of small arms and the general security chaos in the Gaza Strip are highly worrying. The Palestinian Authority and its police force are not in control of the situation, nor of the groups of armed

⁸ See both [Legal Aspects of Israel's Disengagement Plan under International Humanitarian Law](#), Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, November 2004; and John Dugard's [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied since 1967](#), A/HRC/2/5, 5 September 2006.

⁹ See [statement from joint mission to Lebanon](#), EMHRN, FIDH and Euromed NGOs Platform, August 2006.

Palestinians whose violent activities constitute a danger to both the Israeli and the Palestinian civilian. Several Palestinians have been killed since the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip last autumn. This unilateral Israeli move is likely to have contributed to the lack of preparedness of the Palestinian Authority with regard to keeping order in the Strip.

Reports from member organisations show that the Israel's military's policy of extra-judicial killings in the OPT continued while the war in Lebanon was going on.

Discrimination of Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel

The right not to be subject to discrimination

When the mission visited Nazareth and the village of Majd al-Kroum, it met with representatives from the Arab Association for Human Rights as well as with some local representatives of the region. These meetings revealed that besides well-attested forms of discrimination, where Palestinian minority citizens are victimised on a daily basis in areas such as access to infrastructure, investment, education etc., they have also been made victims of specific discrimination directly linked to the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. According to the testimonies of members of the Palestinian Arab minority, large sections of the Israeli public suspect them of implicitly or explicitly sympathising with Hezbollah.

While all villages and cities with a majority of Jewish citizens benefit from numerous anti-missile shelters set up by the Israeli authorities (in addition to private shelters in most of newer buildings), urban areas with a majority of Palestinian Israeli citizens are largely deprived of such security arrangements. In Majd al-Kroum, there is no public shelter. 'When a rocket was fired, the inhabitants ran but never knew where to go' one of the interlocutors told the team. Furthermore, unlike the Jewish population, the Palestinian population did not get any guidance from the military to teach them in how to protect themselves during attacks.

In the north of Israel, Israeli citizens (both Jewish citizens and members of the Palestinian Arab minority) were killed by Hezbollah's rockets during the war in Lebanon. Arab Association for Human Rights reported that the Israeli Jewish community of Kiryat Shmone was hit by 1,800 Hezbollah missiles without any of them causing fatalities¹⁰. The Israeli Palestinian community of Majd al-Kroum was hit by 43 Hezbollah missiles but two persons died in those attacks.

The Arab Association for Human Rights is writing a report on discrimination relating to the unequal level of security arrangements for Jewish citizens and Palestinian Israeli citizens during the war in Lebanon.

The right to legal redress: 'non-compensation law'

On 27 July 2006, the Israeli government requested the Parliament, the Knesset, to amend Law 5712 passed in 1952 on compensation for victims of acts carried out by state security forces. The amended law, *the Liability of the State (Civil Wrongs) Law*, states that the State of Israel is not legally responsible for 'damage which occurred in a conflict zone and which are imputable to an act committed by the security forces'. Israel does not consider itself legally responsible when victims are citizens of an 'enemy State', activists of a 'terrorist organisation' or any other organisation acting on their behalf. This law clearly aims at depriving Palestinian citizens who have been victims of actions carried out by the army and/or the Israeli security forces of their right to compensation¹¹.

Following the circulation of the amended law, a group of human rights organisations lodged a complaint before the Supreme Court of Israel. On 30 August 2006, the mission attended a hearing of the Israeli Supreme Court on this 'non-compensation law'. The Court will deliver its verdict regarding the constitutionality of the law next November¹².

¹⁰ Referring to statistics presented in the Israeli daily newspaper Ha'aretz.

¹¹ See the text of amendments to the Law 5712.

¹² Complaint submitted by Adalah, HaMoked, ACRI, Al-Haq, PCHR, B'Tselem, Physicians for Human Rights, The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, Rabbis for Human Rights.

The complainant organisations are not optimistic about having this law overturned. The Supreme Court has on many occasions approved discriminatory legislation passed by the Israeli government e.g. *the Nationality and Entry into Israel Law*.

The right to legal redress: '2nd class compensation'

During the war, the Israeli Finance Ministry introduced regulations entitling almost all businesses located in the north of Israel to claim financial compensation from the state for damages sustained during the conflict. However, the regulations created different formulas for the awarding of compensation depending on the urban areas affected, even though all of the towns in the north were exposed to the same threat. Four Palestinian Arab towns (Fasuta, Meilia, Jish, Aramshe) located on, or very close to, the border with Lebanon were completely excluded from the list of frontline communities eligible for major compensation, whereas Jewish towns located to the south of these towns were included. Numerous petitions are currently pending before the Israeli Supreme Court challenging the discriminatory 'second class' war compensation for Palestinian businesses.

The Right to Family Unification

According to a newly approved law, *the Nationality and Entry into Israel Law*, Palestinians from the 1967 OPT who are married to Israeli citizens are not granted any residency or citizenship status in Israel. In Adalah's view, the Law constitutes one of the most extreme measures in a series of governmental actions aimed at discriminating the rights of Palestinian citizens of Israel, as well as Palestinians from the OPT.

'Closed Eyes Policy'

Following the victory of Hamas in the January 2006 legislative elections, the European Commission has stopped political contacts and has temporarily put on hold its direct assistance to the PA. The EU called on the PA to meet the Quartet principles of nonviolence, recognition of Israel's right to exist, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. However, when it comes to the EU's relations to Israel, few, if any, measures against violations of international law are seen. An EMHRN report noted that:

'The EU clearly does not consider that it can procure Israel's compliance with international law by threatening to apply the most stringent negative measures available to it. [...] It is not prepared to take the larger view that setting such an example would itself be worthwhile considering the contribution it could make towards strengthening the credibility of the EU's commitments to human rights, and the political cogency of the body of international law on which they rest.'¹³

¹³ [A Human Rights Review on the EU and Israel: Mainstreaming or Selectively Extinguishing Human Rights? \(2004-2005\)](#). EMHRN, December 2005.

CONCLUSIONS

During its stay, the mission team noted a severe deterioration in living conditions and an increase in human rights violations within the OPT. This development could be traced back to the beginning of 'Operation Summer Rains' and the war in Lebanon. The mission team also noted that the respect for the rights of the Palestinian minority in Israel had deteriorated.

There was a lack of focus on the situation in the Gaza Strip during the Lebanon war. This lack of international attention probably allowed Israeli attacks to continue without much protest from the international community.

Israel has a policy of collective punishment against Palestinians in the OPT. The EU and the UN seem to have a 'closed eyes policy' towards Israeli violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. The EU appears to be treating the State of Israel with positive political conditionality (via, for example, the favourable European Neighbourhood Policy's EU/Israel Action Plan), whereas it treats the Palestinian Authority with negative conditionality (by suspending contacts with its democratically elected leadership).

Because of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, the human rights of Palestinians are violated in numerous ways; the harsh restrictions on their freedom of movement have a detrimental effect on their rights to life, health, education, and their efforts to achieve an adequate standard of living and viable employment.

There is a general lack of protection of the individual, which affects both Palestinians in the OPT and Israeli civilians. Civilians become, all too often, victims of violence. The mission has identified the authorities responsible for this state of affairs as Israel, Hezbollah and the Palestinian Authority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To Israel:

- end the occupation of the Palestinian territories;
- and in the meanwhile halt all military operations against the Palestinian civilian population and fully comply with international humanitarian law, and in particular put an end to the policy of collective punishment;
- to conform to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004 on Legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Opinion states that Israel must 'put an end to the violation of its international obligations flowing from the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and must accordingly cease forthwith the works of construction of the wall, dismantle forthwith those parts of that structure situated within the Occupied Palestinian Territory and forthwith repeal or render ineffective all legislative and regulatory acts adopted with a view to construction of the wall and establishment of its associated régime, except in so far as such acts may continue to be relevant for compliance by Israel with its obligations in regard to reparation'.
- to put an end to the unequal treatment of Israeli citizens (Jewish and Palestinian) in Israel, also securing proper security arrangement for all; and
- to recognise and respect the rights of the Palestinian minority in Israel.

To the Palestinian Authority:

- to take control of the security situation in the Gaza Strip in order to ensure the security of its population as well as to prevent the firing of rockets at Israel; and

- to allow for Palestinian NGOs to register with the Palestinian Authority.

To the UN:

- to call upon the UN Security Council to promptly adopt a resolution in compliance with article 39 of chapter 7 of the Charter of the UN, and in application of the Resolution 1674 (2006) on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, ensuring the protection of civilian populations. Thereby call for an international UN protection force along the 1967 borders to ensure the protection of civilian populations.

To the EU and EU Member States:

- to let the EU's Rafah border observers be subject to, and work in accordance with, only impartial security analysis;
- to respect the results of the Palestinian National Council elections that were democratically held in the beginning of 2006, and
- to put an end to the 'closed eyes policy' towards human rights violations, taking the necessary measures to push for the full respect for article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement; and as high contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention pushing for respect for international humanitarian law.

To the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention:

- to push for an end to the 'closed eyes policy' towards human rights violations, pushing for respect for international human rights and humanitarian law

The mission took place between 29 August and 2 September 2006. The team was composed of Birgit Lindsnaes, Director of the International Department at the Danish Institute for Human Rights, and also executive committee member of the EMHRN (Denmark); David Bondia García, Director of the Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya, representing the Federacion de asociaciones de defense y promoción de los derechos humanos (Spain); Marita Roos, EMHRN Coordinator (Denmark); Sophie Bessis, Deputy secretary general of FIDH (France).

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