



To: The Executive Board of the International Council on Archives
From: The ICA Working Group on Archives and Human Rights
Date: 9 September 2008

Subject: Status of the ICA Working Group on Archives and Human Rights

Background. The 2003 CITRA in Cape Town adopted a resolution on archives and human rights violations. In part, this resolution invited ICA and UNESCO to put in place a preservation programme for archival fonds that would document violations of human rights. To implement this resolution, ICA established a Working Group on Archives and Human Rights (AHR) under the chairmanship of the Deputy Secretary General Perrine Canavaggio.

During the past five years, the AHR undertook, in particular, the following projects:

- *The Access to Memory software project, designed to provide institutions and organizations with free software that will allow them to manage human rights archives effectively; currently in beta testing;

- *Revision of the 1995 UNESCO-sponsored “The Archives of Security Services of Former Repressive Regimes;”

- *Exhibition, “Sans voix sans visage;” shown at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and the World Forum on Human Rights in Nantes, France; virtual exhibit at www.sansvoixsansvisage.net;

- *Co-sponsor and organizer of seminars on archives and human rights in Lyon, France, 2006, and Geneva (UN, Human Rights Council), Switzerland, 2007;

- *Dissemination and translation into seven languages of the practical guide to the archives on international non-governmental organizations;

- *Publication on ICA website of “Application of ISAD(G) for Human Rights Archives;”

- *Publication of two electronic newsletters;

- *Currently supporting the work of archivists in Mexico on the organization of a conference on archives and human rights in December 2008 in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; co-organizing a seminar on memory, archives and human rights to take place in Copenhagen (Denmark) and Malmö (Sweden) on 21-22 May 2009.

In addition to Perrine Canavaggio, the first members of the AHR were (in alphabetical order):

- Ramon Alberch (Spain)
- Jens Boel (UNESCO)
- Alicia Casas de Barran (Uruguay)
- Antonio Gonzalez Quintana (Spain)
- Armelle LeGoff (France)
- Christine Martinez (France)
- Gabrielle Nishiguchi (Canada)
- Anne Perotin (France)
- Trudy Peterson (USA)
- Anna Svenson (Sweden)

The group has later been enlarged with about 20 more members.



Issue: The AHR recognizes that the area of archives and human rights is one of growing concern to many archives professionals and that therefore the Working Group needs to continue its work. To do so, it also recognizes that it needs a formal reporting relationship to the ICA leadership to ensure that the leadership is fully informed of the activities of the AHR and to provide a regular channel for the AHR to make any necessary proposals to the leadership. At present that formal relationship does not exist.

Furthermore, because the AHR is not a branch or section, it does not have a regular designated time to meet at CITRAs and Congresses. This has created difficulties in formally interacting with meeting participants who are interested in the work of the AHR.

Proposal: The AHR proposes the following:

1. The Executive Board commissions the AHR to continue to develop projects and organize meetings and seminars that will increase the cooperation between ICA and archival services and administrations in the field of human rights; support better, wider and more creative use of archives in the defense of human rights; and assist archives to increase the number of citizens obtaining information from archives to enforce or defend their rights.
2. The AHR is authorized to seek external funds for the support of AHR projects. Acceptance of such funding is conditioned by the approval the Executive Board in each individual case.
3. The AHR will cooperate as a partner with all ICA bodies in projects and programs as requested.
4. When the AHR recognizes that it needs additional expertise, either technical or geographical, it is authorized to call upon other ICA bodies and individual members for assistance or information.
5. The AHR will submit an annual report to the Executive Board and a quadrennial report to the Annual General Meeting, to be distributed to the ICA membership with the annual and quadrennial reports of other ICA bodies.
6. The AHR will be provided official announced meeting times at CITRAs and Congresses.
7. The AHR constitutes itself and establishes a Bureau according to its needs. At present the Bureau consists of the following persons:
Chair: Anna Svenson
Vice-chair: Trudy Peterson
Secretary: Anne Perotin
All changes in membership of the Bureau will be communicated to the ICA Secretariat.