

Torture and physical abuse represent the values and practices of medicine turned inside out. Whereas health professionals intervene to relieve pain, the abuser deliberately inflicts it. It is the passion of Physicians for Human Rights not to allow the torturer to succeed, so we use professional skills to detect and identify torture, to bring it to the world's attention, and to make sure those who are its victims have a chance for a new life.

Medical Expertise in Support of Asylum

Political violence, internal conflict, and war cause thousands of people to flee their homelands to find safety in other countries. Many have been tortured, detained without charge, or subjected to inhumane prison conditions, often without benefit of a fair trial. Since 1989, PHR's over 300 Asylum Network members have provided medical and psychological evaluations of asylum seekers who have been tortured in their native countries. For many of these torture survivors, gaining asylum is the only hope they have of escaping the torture, even death, that they face in their own countries. The health professionals in the PHR Asylum Network provide crucial medical documentation to support the asylum claims of torture survivors and help them remain in the United States. Ninety percent of asylum seekers whose case was supported by a medical evaluation from PHR, were granted asylum in the United States. A constantly expanding

program, hundreds of physicians, psychologists, and social workers provided over 350 evaluations for tortured asylum seekers, including those in detention in 2000.

In addition to providing evaluations, the Asylum Network is committed to educating health professionals about the sequelae of torture and the asylum process. In 2000, PHR trained over 120 health professionals who attended seminars across the country. PHR is issuing a new manual for health professionals evaluating asylum seekers in the summer of 2001.

INS Detention Centers

Since the Immigration Reform Act of 1996, asylum seekers who arrive in the U.S. without proper documentation are frequently detained upon arrival in Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) facilities. Mental and physical health of these asylees is frequently compromised. To document the health affects of detention on asylum seekers, PHR is collaborating with the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture in an investigation of the health status of asylum seekers and torture survivors in INS detention centers in the New York/New Jersey area. Trained health professionals have been administering a questionnaire, developed in 2000, that includes questions on the trauma history, the health status of the detainee before arrival and while in detention (including physical and psychological symptoms), treatment by the INS, and access to health care.

Kenyan man wins asylum after three years in immigration jail.

*Credit: The Record
Danielle P. Richards*

From their first days, human rights organizations have had the job of bearing witness.

We identify abuses, expose the perpetrators, and show the world the evidence. But that is only the beginning of our job. If we are to succeed in our mission of protecting human rights, we must find ways to compel governments to stop the abuses. There is no shortage of people who believe deeply in human rights and desperately want to end the violations they see. But they need leadership—leadership in organizing them toward an achievable goal, developing strategy, and providing ongoing direction. So we campaign, with passion, vigor and intelligence. This past year, Physicians for Human Rights led campaigns for individuals who are at risk and for millions of people affected by landmines and the trade in conflict diamonds.

USA Don't Look Away: Promoting the Mine Ban Treaty

In February 2000, PHR became the coordinating organization of the over 500 organizations that compose the United States Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL). With this new position of leadership, Physicians for Human Rights deepened and expanded its longstanding commitment to banning antipersonnel landmines—a commitment that began in 1992 when PHR became

one of the six founding members of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Campaign to Ban Landmines.



FAR LEFT: Hundreds rally at the Capitol for US participation in the Mine Ban Treaty.
Credit: Rick Reinhard

CENTER: PHR's Holly Burkhalter with Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan.
Credit: Rick Reinhard

The Mine Ban Treaty entered into force in 1997 and now has 140 signatures and 116 ratifications. Its impact has already been astounding: the number of mine-producing nations has fallen from fifty-four to sixteen; annual rates of mine-related casualties have decreased; and few countries and independent groups are deploying these cruel and unnecessary weapons in recent conflicts.

Despite these successes, PHR understands that much remains to be done to make the world free of antipersonnel landmines. PHR has led the charge to bring the United States on board through grassroots organizing, media outreach, and elite advocacy. In 2000, PHR and the USCBL achieved several victories that have moved the U.S. closer to joining the Mine Ban Treaty.



In January 2000, PHR participated in a major political and media event in Des Moines, Iowa, convening leading anti-landmine activists and members of the newly formed Iowans to Ban Landmines to call upon the presidential primary candidates to commit them-

selves to the Mine Ban Treaty. Significant media exposure was gained and the landmines issue was successfully introduced as an important foreign policy and political issue in the 2000 Presidential campaign. In July 2000, 75 USCBL grassroots activists, including PHR members, medical professionals, landmine survivors, and members of the faith community visited Washington to bring greater public awareness to the importance of the United States joining the treaty.

250 activists from nearly every state to educate policymakers on the need to ban landmines. Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan joined survivors and activists to bring the devastation of landmines to public attention to move the U.S. speedily toward accession to the Treaty. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate introduced the Landmine Elimination and Victim Assistance Act soon after the events.

Stopping the Trade in Conflict Diamonds

As much as 10 percent of the world's diamond production, worth about \$1.4 billion per year, comes from conflict areas in Africa. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the rebel faction responsible for the overwhelming brutality inflicted upon the citizens of Sierra Leone, sustains itself primarily through illicit diamond sales and exerts control over the region's mines. In addition to investigations in Sierra Leone, PHR has created and overseen a campaign to halt the trade in these "conflict diamonds." In 2000, PHR dedicated itself to advocating the passage of the "Clean Diamonds Act," a bill seeking to place import controls on the continued trade of gemstones responsible for funding Sierra Leone's suffering. The Campaign to Eliminate Conflict Diamonds, coordinated by PHR, includes Amnesty International,



PHR created and maintains the coalition's web site www.endconflictdiamonds.org that features actions for jewelers and consumers.

World Vision, Oxfam America, World Relief, and the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism on its steering committee and over 100 nongovernmental groups from the human rights, faith and humanitarian communities. Together, these groups have placed the problem of conflict diamonds before the conscience of the public and the industry.



Jewelers for Clean Diamond Imports Decal

Diamond merchant in Sierra Leone.

Credit: Kristina Hare Lyons



Over 300 doctors signed a joint letter to President Bush, spearheaded by PHR member Dr. Larry Schwab, urging him to join the Mine Ban Treaty. The letter was published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Soon afterward, 100 members of Congress from both sides of the aisle signed a letter urging President Clinton to join the treaty before leaving office. With ICBL campaigners from 90 countries and USCBL activists from 46 states, PHR continued the momentum with Ban Landmines Week in Washington, DC, in March 2001, bringing over

Colleagues at Risk

Khassan Baiev, M.D. **Chechnya**

At the height of the conflict in Chechnya, Dr. Khassan Baiev, a Chechen surgeon, made international headlines by refusing to compromise his Hippocratic Oath. For treating all patients on his operating table, Dr. Baiev was threatened with assassination by both Russia's Federal Forces and fighters from the Chechen side.



His temporary war hospital was repeatedly and intentionally shelled, and eventually, destroyed.

In Ingushetia, a republic bordering Chechnya, Dr. Baiev met PHR representatives, who were conducting a survey-based assessment of human rights abuses among the population displaced from Chechnya. Dr. Baiev later came to the United States at the invitation of PHR and has now received asylum. His family joined him in the US at the beginning of 2001.

Flora Brovina, M.D. **Kosovo**

PHR members worked tirelessly this year to call for the release of Dr. Flora Brovina, a Kosovar pediatrician, poet, and human rights activist who was arrested in Kosovo in April 1999. Charged

with “terrorism” based on her ethical practice of medicine, she was later transferred to a prison in Pozarevac, Serbia. She received a special pardon on November 1, 2000 from Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica. Dr. Brovina founded the League of Albanian Women and the Center for the Rehabilitation of Women and Children. The Center offers schooling to orphans, widows and refugees. While in detention, Dr. Brovina was nominated Deputy Ombudsperson in Kosovo, to investigate human rights violations and promote ethnic co-existence and reconciliation.



H. Zeki Uzun, M.D. **Turkey**

Dr. H. Zeki Uzun, a gynecologist for the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey Treatment and Rehabilitation Center, was acquitted of all charges against him on May 23, 2000. PHR, together with the International Federation of Health and Human Rights Organizations (IFHHRO) had sent Professor Dr. Evert J. Dorhout Mees to Izmir, Turkey to observe his trial in late February 2000. Authorities charged Dr. Uzun with providing medical treatment to two of his patients who “were members of an illegal organization.” Police officers from the Anti-Terror Branch of the Turkish Government reportedly raided his clinic and subjected him to various forms of torture during interrogation.

LEFT:
Conflict
Diamonds rally
in Copley
Square, Boston.
Credit: Barbara Ayotte

Building a Health and Human Rights Constituency

That all people are, by their very existence as human beings, entitled to human rights, is the most powerful idea of the past half century. But we know that the promise of human rights can only be fulfilled if there is a strong and active constituency that seeks their fulfillment. Members of the health professions are key participants in this constituency, both as professionals and as citizens. So Physicians for Human Rights trains health professionals and students in human rights, showing them how deeply health practice is linked to human rights and how they can play a crucial role in protecting human rights.



ABOVE: Kosovar doctors at PHR health and human rights training.

Credit: Allison Cohen

ABOVE RIGHT: PHR training in Indonesia

Kosovo Trainings

Following the war in Kosovo, PHR resumed its work there to promote a culture of human rights in the health professions. In March 2000, PHR conducted human rights and medical ethics trainings for physicians in Kosovo. The team, led by PHR President Robert Lawrence, M.D., conducted trainings in six cities throughout Kosovo: Peja, Gjakova, Prizren, Ferizaj, Gjilane, and Pristina. These sessions informed health professionals about the Universal



Declaration of Human Rights and related treaties and stimulated discussions about their implications in Kosovo as well as the relationship between health and human rights.

Cyprus and Indonesia Forensic and Human Rights Trainings

Physicians for Human Rights' forensic program is internationally known and increasingly called upon to lend its expertise throughout the world. Under the direction of Dr. William Haglund, PHR provides health professionals with skills needed to make identifications and expose human rights violations. In January and February 2000, scientists from 19 countries came together to work with Dr. Haglund to address unresolved questions from previous exhumations in which the Greek government attempted to repatriate Greek soldiers who had died in the 1974 conflict in Turkey. As a result of this effort, dozens of Cypriot families received positive DNA identifications. Dr. Haglund conferred with mainland Greek families members and government representatives to facilitate the

return of previously repatriated remains. In Indonesia, PHR also cooperated with Asia Legal Aid to conduct classroom training on human rights and forensic science for 100 investigators from nongovernmental groups and experts from areas all over Indonesia, including the troubled region of Aceh.

Student Chapters and Conferences

Across the country, young people exhibited extraordinary interest in health and human rights. PHR's student program experienced unprecedented expansion with a



David Kuwayama, Harvard Medical School

total of 40 chapters at medical and public health schools by year's end. PHR supported these chapters by providing speakers, activities, and information about current issues. PHR cosponsored a conference with Harvard University Medical

School and the Harvard School of Public Health for students and faculty and later organized the first Leadership Training Institute in Boston. This course, attended by 30 leading student activists, involved an intensive three-day training on health and human rights, the role of students as leaders, ethics and values within the health profession, and coalition building on campuses.

Fellows

This year, three professionals received fellowships to work full or part-time on substantial projects for PHR. **Jennifer Kasper**, M.D., Soros Advocacy Fellowship for Physicians and a pediatrician, is researching and advocating on hunger and immigrant rights especially addressing the problems facing children in the United States.

Lorraine Anderson, J.D., a 2000 Master of Laws graduate of Columbia University School of Law is the first Fine Fellow, named in honor of Dr. Jonathan Fine, PHR's first executive director. Anderson developed a new juvenile justice program to monitor the conditions of juvenile detention centers in the United States, and has represented PHR at preparatory committees for the U.N. World Congress Against Racism.

Lynn Amowitz, M.D., M.P.H., an internist with specialty in women's health, is PHR's first Fireman Fellow. She spent the first six months of her fellowship in Kosovo, where she conducted trainings sessions for health professionals, and Pakistan and Afghanistan, where she conducted research on women's health and human rights.

Communications

Prime time television, leading newspapers, and prominent radio stations featured PHR's work throughout the year, bringing greater public awareness of the health impacts of human rights violations. Programs such as *ABC Nightline*, *NBC Nightly News*, *CNN Headline News*, *National Public Radio*, and *Fox Television*

Throughout the year, PHR's web site (www.phrusa.org) multiplied dramatically its content and presence on the World Wide Web with the help of a grant from the John Merck Fund. The site now features new research, membership, asylum network and forensic program sections; expanded and timely news sections, including full PHR reports; innovative audio and video features; a secure server



PHR Website
www.phrusa.org

News covered PHR's work on the campaign to ban landmines. The Campaign to Eliminate Conflict Diamonds was featured on *Dateline NBC* and prominently in the *Washington Post*. Our Afghanistan women's health and human rights survey garnered attention on *BBC* and in the *Los Angeles Times*. Our Chechnya and Israel reports made headlines in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* and the *Associated Press* wire, as well as major Israeli media, among others. PHR maintained a popular health and human rights column in *The Lancet*.

for donors; and more opportunities for direct and immediate action. The biweekly PHR email newsletter, *News from PHR*, now reaches several thousand subscribers. This year PHR also entered into a relationship with MDPlanet—a unique tool for health professionals to search, navigate and file medical literature on the web more easily. The tools, called the *Health Rights Connection*, are featured on PHR's web site.