

## **IFSW Human Rights Commission Report General Meeting 2012**

### **The Website**

The website that was launched in Hong Kong in 2010 has been used regularly by many people across the world. The hit rate for the site is .....

### **Cases**

The Commission has had three cases referred in the past two years of social workers who have been harmed or abused because they were working to help people achieve change in their lives.

- Norbert Ferencz from Hungary
  - His conviction for dumpster diving to help the homeless has been quashed after campaigning from a number of bodies including the IFSW community
- Baris Basel from Northern Cyprus
  - His contract of employment was ended and a court case is currently considering if this unlawful. He exposed the lack of protection for children being looked after in public care.
- Elizabeth Rekas from Chile
  - Killed at the times of the Pinochet regime a Doctor in Germany is now facing legal proceedings and we have been asked to work with the lawyers.

There will be a 10 minute session in the Conference to highlight the work of the Commission and ask the question how to reach out to more social workers being persecuted for their ethical practice. We hear about them by word of mouth but when asked to follow up with an email or something in writing we perceive that people are concerned about being traced – we need to find safe ways for social workers to report human rights violations.

### **Contraventions of the Human Rights of people who use services.**

Increasingly we are getting referrals of violations of the human rights conventions. At the moment the Commission is not set up or has the resources to meet all these needs. This year we have had abuses reported to us from across the world about the actions of state parties and municipalities. There has been growing concern about how we help members with whistle-blowing or how we deal with situations where homophobia is overt government policy. These are issues of ethical practice and this has led to the discussion about whether the Human Rights and Ethics Commissions should at least work more closely together or even merge.

### **The Future**

The Commission will

- seek to reach out to social workers persecuted for their ethical practice
- assist in developing guidance for members in whistle-blowing
- assist members in combatting human rights abuses

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