

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2014



Farida Nekzad

Journalist from Afghanistan

On a cool autumn day – the day of the missile attack on her office in the heart of the Afghan capital city – the decision was made. Once the dust had settled and Farida was able to take her five-year-old daughter into her arms unscathed, she knew she had to leave Afghanistan: “I wasn’t so much afraid for my own life,” the journalist told the Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People in response to their invitation. “But if anything happened to my little Muska, I would never forgive myself.”

The founder and chief editor of the news agency „Wakht“ (Time) is convinced that once the international NATO mission has ended, life at the Hindukush will become more difficult for all Afghans, and even turn precarious for journalists and women. The political and socio-economic progress of the past years, she claims, is extremely jeopardized by the renewed revival of radical islamists: “The Taliban do not respect the law of the state.” And those who take a stand against them, the Warlords or corrupt politicians will all too often pay this courage with their lives.

Farida knows what she’s talking about. Among more than 1,000 students she trained to become citizen journalists

for “Wakht” over the past years, she particularly remembers one young woman who did research on a warlord. When this student wouldn’t be intimidated by the warlord’s threats, she was eventually murdered by her own family: “Even faced with this kind of danger it was her own decision to continue,” Farida says. “But not being able to help my student in this situation only strengthened my resolve to carry on with my mission. Women’s rights must gain recognition in Afghan society. Otherwise we will always revert to yet more cycles of violence.”

During her time in Hamburg, Farida wants to recount her experiences with “citizen journalism,” which has become possible through mobile phones and the Internet, in a manuscript. “Traditional journalism needs these courageous and committed citizens,” she stated on October 8 as she received the Leipzig Media Award.

Since her arrival in Hamburg, the Afghan journalist has repeatedly emphasized the significance of the ISAF mission. She can’t understand the German’s negative attitude towards the NATO mission at the Hindukush. But this attitude, she believes, might exactly be the reason that her country will fade into obscurity following the troop withdrawal.”

Editorial



Martina Bäurle

For 28 years, the Foundation has been a safe haven for our guests. We have stayed in touch with almost all of our alumni. The trust developed in Hamburg withstands the geographical distance. They go on to live engaging lives. In most cases, we only receive good news.

The investigative Indian journalist Tongam Rina (guest in 2014), who was shot in front of her newsroom building in Itanagar, as well as the Mexican writer Ana Lilia Pérez (2012) work on new incriminating revelations.

Following the return to his home country last year, Alhierd Bacharevich (2007) from Belarus submitted the first Belarusian translation of Grimm’s Fairytales along with a new novel.

And just recently Sihem Bensedrine (2002) was elected chairwoman of the new “Truth Commission” by the Tunisian parliament.

The “list of successes” is long.

But things can also turn out differently. On July 27, 2014, the human rights activist Leyla Yunus from Azerbaijan and her husband Arif were arrested and charged with alleged military espionage, tax offenses and defamation of the state. Due to these evidently false allegations, both of them are facing a prison sentence of 25 years.

The Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People is co-organizing an international campaign for the unconditional release of Leyla and Arif Yunus and all other political prisoners in Azerbaijan.

Leyla Yunusova asked us to not fall silent. And we won’t!

Yours,

Martina Bäurle



Farida Nekzad: Winner of the Leipzig Media Award, presented by the city's Mayor Burkard Jung and Dr. Harald Langenfeld in October 2014.



Farida Nekzad and Wolfgang Krach (SZ) at the Körber Forum, Hamburg.



Donny Reyes and Beatrix Kania, German Ambassador to Honduras.



Asif Mohiuddin: Prize for Freedom of Speech of the „World Humanist Congress“ in Oxford, August 2014.

Spender

The Hamburg Foundation for Politically Persecuted People would like to thank the sponsors.



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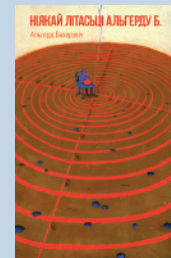
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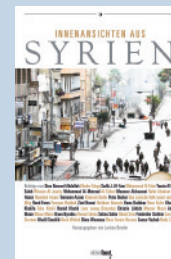
Tongam Rina in her editorial office Itanagar/ India. She's been back since March 2014.



New book: While in Hamburg, Ana Lilia Pérez researched for the book. In June 2014 she returned to Mexico.



„No Mercy for Alhierd B.“ New novel by Alhierd Bacharevich. Since 2013 he lives back in Minsk.



Anthology: „Inside Syria“. With Rosa Yassin Hassan. Guest in 2013.

Imprint

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