



ICAR FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2006

ROMANIA

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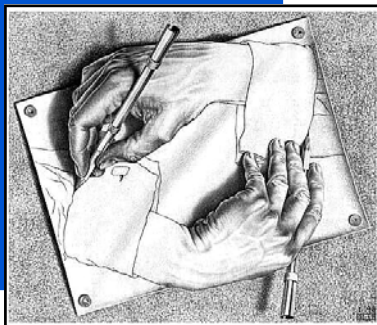


ADVANCING THE TREATMENT AND RIGHTS
OF TORTURE SURVIVORS IN ROMANIA



Camelia Doru,
Medical Director ICAR

*"Reconciliation
is a process and
a goal at the
same time."*



Foreword

In 2006, its 13th year of activity, ICAR Foundation has enjoyed the possibility to expand its activity as new EU funding was received through a successful application made by ICAR in collaboration with the other two Romanian centres in Iasi and Craiova and with the centre in Chisinau. Due to this important source of funding, a new ICAR office was established in the centre for the reception of asylum seekers from Bucharest and services have been improved in Bucharest, Craiova and Iasi. Important events, such as seminars, workshops and anniversaries have been organized and the organisation's staff members have participated in many national and international events.

As known, ICAR Foundation has started in March 2003 an action in court asking the president of the country, as representative of the State institution, to recognize the gross human rights violations committed during the communist regime in Romania (1945-1989) and to address public excuses to the victims and to their families. This court action – which is still ongoing – has been joined by a large number of individuals and other civil society organizations in Romania. In March 2005 Dr Camelia Doru, president and founder of ICAR Foundation, had the opportunity together with the president of the Association of former Political Prisoners to meet with the newly elected President of Romania, Traian Basescu, and urge him to make such a statement.

In 2006, this serious campaign for moral rehabilitation of the victims of communist repression initiated by ICAR was finally rewarded: President Traian Basescu condemned the Communist regime as "illegitimate and criminal" in a speech delivered during a special Romanian Parliament session on the 18th of December 2006. Honoring the official invitation of the president, Dr. Camelia Doru, has been officially invited by the president to attend this historical parliamentary session (for further details, please visit http://www.icarfoundation.ro/breaking_news.htm).

Reconciliation is a process and a goal at the same time, in our case aiming to help a society to come to terms with a past period after the long-term rule of an oppressive regime. This system used terrible measures to repress the most significant members of the Romanian society in order to destroy any attempt to oppose the system and act individually, to inflict fear and to "equalize" the population's values. In the following years, ICAR will now have to identify the legal means to annul condemnations based on articles of law of a political character as an important concrete step towards reconciliation.

OBJECTIVES for the year 2007

1. Provide medical, psychosocial rehabilitation services and legal support to primary and secondary victims of torture.
2. Promote the rights of torture survivors to moral, legal and social redress, including financial compensations for survivors and their families.
3. Provide technical assistance to other rehabilitation centers for torture victims at national, regional and international level.
4. Support all activities contributing to the prevention of torture and to public awareness raising on issues related to the use of torture

"MISSION STATEMENT:

Promote the rights of torture survivors through access to comprehensive medical, psychosocial and legal rehabilitation services and promote respect of human rights. "

ACTIVITIES:

I. Rehabilitation programs for torture survivors

Rehabilitation services have been continuously available for clients, according to individual needs. All consultations were free of charge. Diagnosis and treatment of various physical and psychological consequences of torture were provided as appropriate.

Services were provided by qualified professionals. The medicines prescribed were partially or totally compensated by the health insurance system or by the centers.

Each ICAR centre maintains a system of external referrals for special investigations and sophisticated medical procedures not available in-house.

Client data are registered in both special medical files and computerized Client Monitoring Program designed by ICAR Foundation Bucharest. The general health and psychological status of clients is documented and registered in the same system.

During 2006 more than 1000 clients (one third women and two third men) received assistance from the centers. Around 90% were torture survivors among former political prisoners and their families, while the rest were torture survivors among refugees and asylum seekers.

Refugees and asylum seekers assisted by ICAR Foundation

are coming mainly from Africa and Middle East (e.g. Somalia, Iraq, Ethiopia, Congo).

More than 13000 consultations were provided during 2006 (90% in-house and the rest as external referrals).

Type of consultations provided in-house : general medicine (39%), psychiatry (14,4%), cardiology (14,75%), urology (10,75%), physiotherapy (4,34%), laboratory tests (4%), dentistry (3,7%) and other specialties (9%)

Improvement and/or stabilization of our

Clients' welcome area at ICAR Bucharest





patient's health and socio-legal status, reduction of psychological and physical symptoms (PTSD, anxiety, somatoform

disorders, depression, etc.), avoidance of long-term sequelae such as invalidity, behavioral disorders are some of the rehabilitation program results with obvious impact on their living standard

A new rehabilitation pilot activity was prepared and implemented by ICAR Bucharest during the reported period in one of the refugee camps in Bucharest.

In January 2006, ICAR Foundation signed a protocol of collaboration with the National Office for Refugees (ONR) and was given access to the "Vasile

Stolnicul" refugee centre, situated in the outskirts of Bucharest, hosting asylum seekers as well as legalized refugees who cannot afford to live in town.

ICAR received a two room-space with own sanitary unit. These premises which had to be adapted somewhat for our purpose are shared with two other NGOs: ARCA - The Forum for Refugees and Migrants, and JRS - The Jesuit Service for Refugees.

Two ICAR staff members with psychology background and relevant experience and training are now providing counseling twice a week in this centre. Assessment of the medical needs of individual cases and a process of general screening of possible torture victims among

asylum seekers and refugees in the camp were undertaken during the reported period.

Currently the team is preparing an information session for potential beneficiaries, focusing on specific physical and mental health problems among refugees, with special emphasis on trauma relate problems.

Discussions with refugees and asylum seekers, with the ONR specialized staff (psychologists, doctors, social workers) as well as with members of other NGOs providing assistance to refugees in the camp have taken place in order to adapt our information session to the specific needs of the beneficiaries' and to avoid information overlap.

"Services are provided by qualified professionals."

Dental services for torture survivors - at ICAR Iasi.



ICAR specialists have also started to work together with ONR specialized staff to design a system of identification of possible torture victims among those who demand asylum in Romania, to be used by interview- and decision officers.

A training needs assessment for ONR health care staff regarding knowledge about torture victims and the special precautions to be taken in the initial encounter with such victims has been made. Several training sessions are planned by ICAR for 2007.

Services

1. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

The medical assistance comprised general as well as specialized services.

General medical care, psychiatry, cardiology, urology, pain therapy, physiotherapy/ kineto-therapy, dentistry, basic laboratory investigations, ultrasounds are provided as in-house services.

Other specialized services, such as ENT, ophthalmology are provided as external referrals. Additional medical investigations and hospitalizations are part of a network of services established by ICAR based on agreements with outside medical institutions

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PSYCHIATRIC ASSISTANCE

The patients are receiving psycho-pharmacological and/or psycho-therapeutic assistance.

Trauma-focused therapy has reduce symptoms such as: intrusive memories, nightmares, anxiety, aggressive out-

breaks towards family and friends, social isolation, alienation, mistrust; or it helped patients to better cope with these symptoms.

3. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

During the social counseling sessions the clients are informed about their rights in obtaining different social and health-care services available within the community as well as information about the access to these services.

Psychosocial support for clients with temporary or permanent disabilities was provided at their homes.

Re-socialisation activities were organised outside the cities of Bucharest, Iasi and Craiova on different occasions.

Networking with and referrals to NGOs offering social services and community services.

4. LEGAL ASSISTANCE

As part of the rehabilitation process ICAR centers provided information about new

legislative developments concerning victims' rights (e.g. in housing, social security and refugee legislation). In 2006, legal counselling sessions were provided by ICAR's lawyer at the Bucharest centre's headquarters.

During 2006, 15 cases of former political prisoners were selected with a view to document severe abuses committed during the communist repressive regime.

An ICAR research team thoroughly investigated 4 such cases of psychiatric abuses.

Three of these patients were considered mentally ill and imprisoned without a proper trial, the accusation being founded only on their pretended psychiatric disorder, although medical documents attest that all of them were perfectly healthy before being imprisoned and after their liberation.

The four cases are now fully documented and ready to be submitted to Court.

"ICAR continued its organized effort to foster relationships with NGOs offering social services and community services."

At the headquarters of ICAR Bucharest a survivor's painting exhibition was hosted.

**In the picture:
the opening of the exhibition**



The trial of communism



Revealing abuses of communist regime:
press conference at ICAR Bucharest

The trial of communism was initiated by ICAR in 2003; it has been further documented and finally, in 2006, ICAR's legal representative has managed to persuade the Court to return the action to the analysis of proofs, as until now it has been several times rejected on a procedural basis.

In 2007 the action will be reformulated and further proofs will be presented. We expect that following the excuses presented by the President in December 2006 for the past abuses committed between 1945 and 1989 in Romania, ICAR's legal action will be re-considered less reluctantly by the judiciary.

II. Documentation And Advocacy

*"ICAR's library
comprises numerous
resources for and it
is opened to
Romanian human
rights activists."*

Several books and articles from staff participation in different international events have been added to our library comprising books, reports, scientific magazines, different materials on torture related topics, including relevant national, regional and in-

ternational legislation on human rights. Most of these publications are available in English.

In 2006 ICAR's web page has been continuously updated, as a way to facilitate interaction and enhance communication with other

centers for victims of torture and human rights NGOs. Several modifications took place and finally, by the end of the year it was completely changed, a new look being now available on the internet at www.icarfoundation.ro.

WWW.ICARFOUNDATION.RO:
a new web look and more functionalities



26th of June - the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture



26th of June at ICAR Foundation, Bucharest

On 26th of June 2006, the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, each Romanian rehabilitation centre organized a local celebration of the Day. The centres brought together beneficiaries and representatives of media - with the aim of raising public awareness concerning

the needs of torture survivors, the methods of torture used by the communist regime and their effects on the life and health status of the persons who suffered these inhuman experiences.

On this occasion, ICAR's Medical Director addressed an open letter to the Romanian Minister

of External Affairs Mr. Mihai Razvan Ungureanu, pleading for international funding for rehabilitation services for torture survivors, urging Romania to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Torture Victims and considering to support financially the activity of the three Romanian centers (more details on the web page).

Beneficiaries of Craiova centre visiting Pitesti memorial



Celebration of a lady survivor, born on 26th of June



Collaboration with other organizations

Camelia Doru speaking about psychiatric abuse during communist regime



Formal and informal collaboration with other NGOs, public and private institutions connected to our field of activity and in-

terest were established, mentioned or renewed E.g.: Association of Former Political Prisoners (AFDPR), National Health Insurance House, UNHCR, Forum for Refugees and Migrants (ARCA), National Council for Refugees (CNRR, the Jesuit Service for Refugees (JRS), National Office for Refugees (ONR), City Hall of Bucha-

rest, Iasi and Craiova.

A press conference in collaboration with the Institute for Investigation of Communism Crimes in Romania was held at ICAR premises in November when a well documented case of psychiatric abuse was presented.

The political, administrative and professional networks of people involved in the chain of abuse have been revealed based on documents found in the archives.

III. National events in 2006

First Board Meeting (February, 2006) of the Institute for Investigation of Communism Crimes in Romania (IICC):

After a long period of silence regarding the atrocities committed by the Communist regime in Romania, the current government has decided to create an Institute for Investigation of Communist Crimes. During the meeting the President, the Secretary General and the Executive Director were elected.

Dr Camelia Doru participated in the first Council meeting as a member of the Board and responsible for investigation of individual and public health consequences of abuses during the Communism rule

Establishment of the «Presidential Commission for Analyzing the

Communist Dictatorship in Romania»:

The mandate of the commission is to produce a scientific report as a basis for the presidential political statement regarding the Communist rule in Romania.

From far, the most important event of the year was the **historical presidential statement regarding Romanian State responsibility for 45 years of state terrorism** and human rights abuses (unofficial English translation available on ICAR web page).

On December 18, 2006, the President Traian Basescu before a special joint session of the two Chambers of the Parliament, officially condemned the gross human rights abuses of the Communist regime in our country

and presented a public apology for 45 years of illegitimate and criminal suppression of the Romanian people and especially of its political opponents. Romania thereby became the first country in our part of the world officially condemning the crimes of the communist regime from the highest political level.

ICAR Foundation is happy on behalf of its clients and proud to have initiated a process for moral rehabilitation of the victims of communist repression (in 2003), which has led to this very real result, but of course ICAR Foundation cannot claim credit for the many intermediate factors that have contributed to the President's final decision to follow our appeal to act without waiting for the court decision.

"The President officially presented a public apology for 45 years of illegitimate and criminal suppression of the Romanian people during the communist regime."

IV. International events in 2006

The IVth meeting of European Network of Treatment Centres for Victims of Torture (EURONET), Paris:



ICAR participating in EURONET sessions

The network was created in 2003 and comprises about 100 centres and programmes in the European region, which provide assistance to victims of torture and other human rights violations, among both asylum seekers and refugees in host countries and victims of past or current regimes.

The network is a loose structure based on the free will of the centers to get together, to share experiences and develop common projects, strategies, advocacy campaigns within specific working groups. The annual working network conferences are organized by a volunteer center with the assistance of the Steering Group which is holding at least one meeting between the annual conferences.

ICAR is the coordinator of the working group "Assessment and Documentation" and also actively involved in the "Fundraising" group.

In March 2006 the annual meeting of the European centers took place in Paris and was organized by the Primo Levi Association. For the first time, a press conference was programmed during the meeting. ICAR's medical

director provided interviews related to torture and torture victims of communist repression in Eastern Europe.

Conference «Beyond Violence - Violent conflicts, care and reconciliation processes»:

The conference was organized by the Swiss and Hungarian Red Cross in Budapest (10-11 November 2006) with the aim to create a dialogue on the highly topical issue of reconciliation following wars, violent conflicts and torture.

The topic was presented and discussed from various

professional and contextual points of view - participants included psychologists and psychotherapists, social workers, fundraisers and advocates and representatives of refugee organizations.

International symposium «Providing Reparation and Treatment, Preventing Impunity»:

It organized between 9 -10 December by International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims in Berlin. The participation of the ICAR staff member was kindly sponsored by CVT Minneapolis.

The steering committee meeting of EURONET:

It was held in Berlin, 11 December, with the view to prepare the Vth European meeting to be held in spring 2007 in Antalya, Turkey.

"ICAR reports constantly on the situation of torture victims in Eastern Europe in connection with EURONET"



Conference: plenary session on reconciliation

V. Training

The centers organized the following training/ information sessions:



Training at ICAR Bucharest:
"Working standards in the rehabilitation treatment of torture survivors" - with special reference to refugee victims

ICAR staff feel more equipped to contribute to development of their organizations in 2007!



"Strengthening fundraising capabilities of rehabilitation centres and organizational strategic development"-

Training at ICAR Bucharest



Relation between rehabilitation, prevention and fundraising – training at ICAR Craiova



Individual plan of intervention: training at Rehabilitation centre Memoria, in Chisinau



Organisational Strategy – training at ICAR Iasi

The staff of the Romanian centers participated in the following training courses:

Public Policy: Concepts and tools to manage policy reform

One staff member of ICAR participated in the "Public Policy – Concepts And Tools To Manage Policy Reform" training, provided by World Learning for International Development and Management Systems International through the Romania Civil Society

Strengthening Program. The training aimed at improving Romanian NGOs knowledge and skills in the fields of advocacy, public policy and their capacity to act as watchdogs.

Specific topics of the training were: Stakeholder Analysis, Techniques for Political Mapping, Policy Characteristics Analysis, Monitoring Policy Reform, Managing Policy Implementation, and Strategic Management.



Public Policy training - group reports

Strengthening the capacity of Bulgarian and Romanian Civil Society Organizations (CSO)

Under the Project "Strengthening Bulgarian and Romanian CSOs" financed by European Union, CBN Consortium organized a training courses aiming at strengthening of the capacity of Bulgarian and Romanian Civil Society Organizations.

The training was organised around four main topics: - Project Management; - Communication & Public Relations; - Advocacy & Lobbying; - Fund-

raising. The first training course took place in Silistra, Bulgaria, between 18th and 23rd of July with 25 Bulgarian and 25 Romanian participants. The participants will meet again, for advanced courses in two of the subjects chosen by each participant in Bucharest between 12th and 17th of December 2006.

A second group of 25 Bulgarian and 25 Romanian participants met in Romania for basic

courses 12th -17th September and will meet in Sofia 13th - 18th February, 2007 for advanced courses.



2nd phase of the training - group picture



Advocacy & Lobbying - group work

ICAR Foundation was represented in the first group by one staff member and will have a second staff member as participant in the second group. For more details about this program and training courses please visit the CBN Consortium website www.csobgro.net

Advocacy tools for NGOs



Because of the lack of loans on the banking market a lot of NGOs cannot start small businesses for supporting their projects and

also cannot finance their activities if the grant instalments are coming later than planned.

One ICAR staff member participated in a workshop organised by CENTRAS (Centre for Assistance to NGOs) focusing on advo-

cacy tools allowing NGOs access to the Fund for Granting Credits to Small & Middle Private Enterprises (FNGCIMM) and on NGOs involvement in the formulating of the specific legislation. The workshop aimed at developing NGO capabilities to build advocacy campaigns for improving the legal aspects and settling the relation between the NGOs and the credit institutions.

ICAR also participated in the working group for elaborating materials re-

garding credit procedures for NGOs and a draft law that would include NGOs among the beneficiaries of the FNGCIMM. The materials were offered to the credit institutions as tools for deciding the start of the crediting process of the NGOs.

Along with other 40 NGOs, ICAR is still involved in the Advocacy campaign for changing the law in the sense mentioned before.

"Exploring human rights was an inspirational activity, also."

Introduction to the European System of Human Rights Protection and Promotion

One staff member of ICAR participated (between 11th September – 3rd December 2006) in this correspondence

course organized by the "Human Rights Education Associates".

The training provided practical guidance on how to protect and promote human rights through the European human rights system, specifically through institutions and treaties of the Council of Europe. Participants are introduced to the main European human rights conventions and jurisprudence, including:

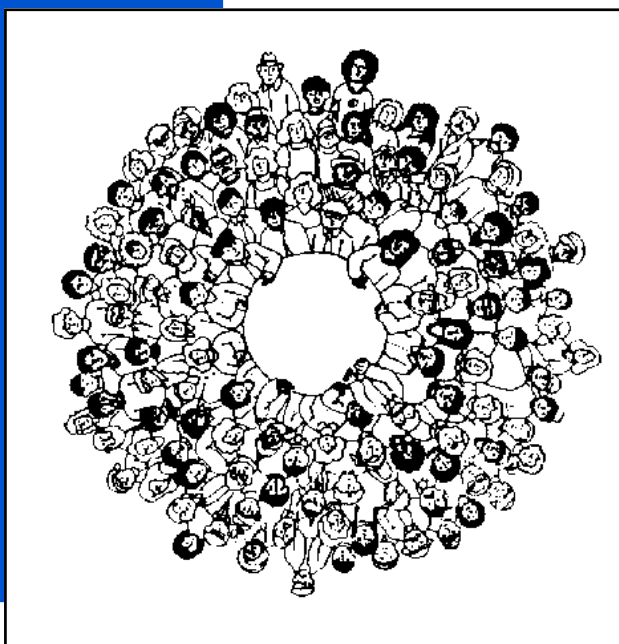
- Philosophical and practical foundations of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights and group rights
- European Court of Human Rights and its juris-

prudence

- Council of Europe human rights treaties: the European Convention on Human Rights, the Convention for the Prevention of Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the European Social Chart, and the Framework Convention on National Minorities.

- Council of Europe and national enforcement machinery.

For more details see <http://learn.hrea.org>.

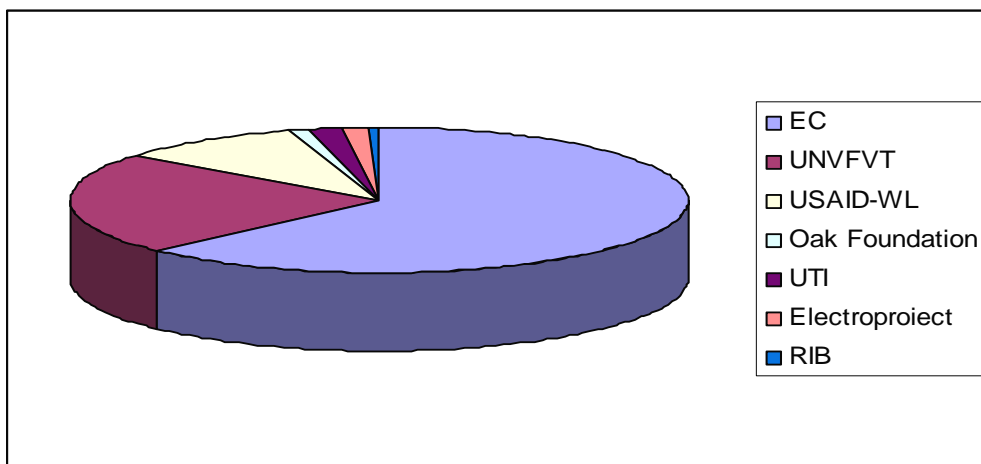


V. DONORS

The activity of ICAR Foundation has been made possible due to the financial support received from:

INTERNATIONAL DONORS:

- ☑ European Commission (starting with December 2005) - Joint project including ICAR Rehabilitation Centres in Bucharest, Craiova and Iasi – Romania - and MEMORIA Association in Chisinau - Republic of Moldova. Grant Contract-External Actions of the European Community-EIDHR/2005/98949
- ☑ United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) / Project P.165/G.2357(06)



“ICAR is grateful to its international and national donors who have supported the foundation's activities and programmes.”

- ☑ United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – World Learning for International Development / Subgrant Agreement No. 186-A-00-05-00103 (34)
- ☑ Oak Foundation / Contract Ref. No: OCSG-2006 R-1-8

ROMANIAN DONORS:

- ☑ UTI Systems SA / Contract No: 022/2006
- ☑ S.C. ELECTROPROIECT SA / Contract No: 001/2006
- ☑ Romanian International Bank SA



Help survivors!

ICAR Foundation helps the survivors and their families, in Romania. You can do this also, together with us and through us:

BRD Decebal, IBAN:

RO42BRDE441SV19070944410 (RON) and

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"Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal." - ICAR team



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