

Human Rights Monitoring and Reporting: 11 Scenarios for Extra-Curricular Training

Name of organization:

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The Government Protects Us Even from Ourselves

The district court of Neustadt yesterday declared a verdict in the case of the Deputy Head of Police, Michael Stein.

As seen in the case material that follows, Mr. Stein gave the order for the dispersal of a demonstration of antiglobalists which took place in the centre of the city on 17th December of last year and ordered the use of special means, simply stated, pepper spray. More than three hundred people suffered.

In recent times in the international news, disturbances organized by antiglobalists in other countries and the reinforced security measures which accompany any meeting of European leaders are reported more and more. One can only admit that our law-enforcement officers have only fulfilled their duty – to serve and to protect.

Whatever happened in Neustadt on 17th December? Which dangerous enemy did our police do battle with? The opponents of a united Europe for the fourth time in the last half-year took advantage of their constitutional rights of peaceful assembly and demonstration, freedom of thought and speech. They came out onto the streets of the capital to express their opinion of a process affecting the lives of all Europe, the whole world – and all of us. Three times – in July, September and October, they passed through the centre of the city with placards. Involvement by the police was not called for once. There wasn't even the smallest reason to expect disturbances.

The average age of the members of this movement was 19–20. Not less than half of those in the demonstration were young women. On 17th December such a menacing force approached the police, who were protected only by armor and plastic shields. Such a ruthless enemy could be resisted only using special means. Praise and honor to Mr. Stein who was able to save both his subordinates (not one police officer suffered in the dispersal of the demonstration) and our peace, against such a monstrous enemy!

The young people who were taken to Neustadt's hospitals with varying degrees of injury did not agree. Their parents and friends did not agree. The inhabitants and visitors to the city who had become witnesses of the police outrage did not agree.

Neustadt's district court convened as a result of the dispersal of the demonstration of 17th December last year. After careful examination of the circumstances, witnesses and victims, the use of special measures against a peaceful demonstration was pronounced unjustified. For exceeding his authority and leading to a significant breach of citizens' rights, Mr. Stein was relieved of his position and given an 18-month prison sentence. He was also deprived of the right of taking a position connected with the use of arms and special measures for ten years. The Neustadt police authorities had to pay the victims more than one-and-a-half million Euros in compensation.

Police work, in my view, is like that of any government employee. We can only do our duty. When you walk home along clean, well-lit streets or, for instance, turn on the kitchen tap and pour a glass of water, you hardly remember the road sweeper or plumber who made it possible. That's just like us. If everything works out well for you and you don't meet with misfortune

or become a victim of crime, neither you nor those close to you remember the police. No one goes into a police station and says, “ Today everything is fine. Thank you, chaps!”

People come to us only when there’s something wrong, something a person can’t sort out themselves. We stand between the criminals and peaceful people and we have to deal with them ourselves. Do you know how many police officers suffered last year just in Inburg? One hundred and twenty. Fifteen died. But the newspapers don’t write about this. It is our daily labor.

When a police officer injures or simply hits a villain in detention, human rights defenders don’t sleep for half a year. If the villain hits the police officer, it’s a matter just for his family and his colleagues and not a matter for society.

The patrols on the streets are armed with rubber truncheons, and in each case when firearms are used we write mountains of paper, to prove that there was no other way. Our fifteen dead colleagues will not have to write anything..

Journalists love to write about police brutality. Another time you read something similar and don’t understand--either the person has had a bad dream or seen too much of American soldiers. Yes, these villains spit in our face from behind the backs of their lawyers! They planted drugs, they left a gun behind with fingerprints on the trigger – police brutality. .Three witnesses are mistaken, the investigator obtained the confession by force, the police officer read out the rights with a stammer, so the arrest was unlawful.

How everybody loves reading about such things and cursing the police! It would be better to think: when the drug dealer with the help of his lawyer leaves the police station, where will he go? What is he going to do? Perhaps his next customer will be your child. Whom will you accuse? Not the Colombian mafia; not the lawyer covering us with dirt, ensuring complete freedom of action for his defendant. No, you’ll throw yourselves at us – me, my colleagues. Why didn’t you protect us, intervene, stop it?! But our hands are tied.

Missing Among the Living

The trendy rock group “Warcraft” played one evening in Monsee, a suburb of Bechsholm. Nineteen-year old Inga N. set off for the concert, having warned her mother that she would be home very late. In the morning Mrs N. glanced into her daughter’s room and discovered that she hadn’t returned. The radio announced that after the concert, a group of “Warcraft” fans had caused a scuffle and that some people were injured. Worried, Mrs N. started to phone the city hospitals. Her daughter was nowhere to be found. In the morgue of the St. Teresa clinic there was a body of an unknown young woman. Mrs N. hurried there. Having barely glimpsed at the unknown face and being sure that it was not Inga, the woman, who had buried her husband only three months previously, lost consciousness. The doctors who came diagnosed a heart attack and with difficulty saved the woman’s life.

The young woman returned home after 48 hours. It turned out that she had been detained by the Monsee police and spent all this time in the police station. They did not allow her access to a telephone and refused her request that they tell her mother where she was on the grounds that their refusal was “in the interests of the investigation”.

Now Mrs N. is recovering. The family N’s lawyer is preparing a lawsuit against the Monsee police.

A Criminal Chronicle

Yesterday the biggest criminal gang in Inburg was smashed. It was involved with drugs and arms dealing. The police authorities had been preparing the operation for two years. During this time several apartments of conspirators were uncovered along with underground stores of weapons and drugs. The ringleader and almost all the gang members were identified.

At the last minute the carefully planned operation almost failed. Detained under a

trumped-up charge, the contact person was insisting on access to a telephone. Knowing that one phone call would send the gang underground, the police officer took a risk and played for time. The villain openly sneered at the guard, threatened him with legal action referring to his constitutional rights. The inspectors could only rely on the professionalism and good luck of their colleagues.

After 24 hours it became clear that the long awaited moment of victory had arrived. Three of the gang's ringleaders, who occupied senior positions in the criminal world, were in police hands, together with more than two hundred gang members. Connections between the criminals and corrupt officials at different levels of government were uncovered. More than one hundred kilograms of heroin were confiscated, together with several hundred firearms, including the latest model of mobile rocket, seventy kilograms of TNT, and money and valuables worth more than three hundred million Euros. The bank accounts of the villains in Starkland and abroad were frozen. The total sum amounted to more than two billion Euros.

The Criminals Go Beserk

Today, Mr. B, who was kidnapped by criminals one week ago, was freed by police from the Marburg police department. All this time the hostage was held outside the city in a cellar of a house belonging to the relatives of one of the captors. The criminals demanded a ransom of thirty thousand Euros to spare his life.

Mr. B, a 35-year-old manager of a commercial bank, was seized in his bank's underground parking garage as he prepared to return home after work. His captors stunned him with a blow to the head and thrust him into the trunk of his car. He regained consciousness in the cellar, bound with handcuffs to the central heating radiators. They hit him many times with rubber truncheons and a baseball bat and made him dictate onto a film a statement to his family, with a plea to pay the money as soon as possible and not call in the police. The criminals, who were under the influence of drugs, threatened many times to beat the hostage, and even twice pretended to shoot him, firing two or three bullets into the wall above his head.

At the present time Mr. B is in a clinic. According to the doctors, his life is not in danger; at the end of the course of treatment it is expected that he will return to normal life.

In this instance, the hostage was fortunate. However, in the police archives there are records of those who weren't so lucky.

Robbers operating in a doctor's home seized the housekeeper, Mrs. S, and demanded that she open the safe where all the family valuables were kept. The woman did not know the combination, but they did not believe her. The robbers tortured her, covering her head with a plastic bag, cutting off the air. When the victim lost consciousness, they stabbed her several times with a knife. Doctors saved the woman's life but she remains bedridden.

The owner of a small grocery on the outskirts of Marburg refused to pay extortionists. The heart of the old man didn't survive the torture with electric shock.

Kidnapping people with the aim of getting a ransom, although not wishing to sound cynical, is in fashion. Captors no longer confine themselves to verbal threats to the hostage and his family. More and more often torture is used. The inquisitors of the Middle Ages could learn something from the modern Torquemada, inspired and whipped up by drugs: electric shock, pincers, red-hot irons, soldering irons, even hair tongs and other sick fantasies!

Isn't it time for Starkland's legislators to fulfill their main obligation: to protect the lives and personal inviolability of the citizens of Starkland? Isn't it time to deprive criminals of the possibility of practicing their sadistic imagination on innocent victims?

On the 15th January of this year an amendment to the criminal code of Starkland was adopted by Congress. In particular, it states that the use of torture constitutes a grievous crime

against the person and carries a penalty of loss of liberty for 15 to 20 years. President Christian confirmed the decision of Congress.

Mother or Stepmother?

Starkland readily opens its borders to those who need protection and help. This country provides a haven for refugees from the planet's hot spots, gives shelter and citizenship and the possibility of living honestly, without fear.

Leaving his native country, 23-year-old Nury H looked to the future with hope. Behind him were harsh laws, death threats for "incorrect" beliefs, and a long dangerous journey without documents across three borders, five months in a refugee camp and a court hearing for his citizenship. On front of him he hoped for a new, secure life.

On the evening of the 13th December, when Nury was returning from Inburg University, two police officers stopped him and asked him to accompany them. The inspector of the 17th police department, Heinz, informed Mr. H that he was suspected of stealing a handbag from Mrs. L., and suggested that he admit everything. Nury honestly admitted that he did not understand what it was all about. He didn't know the woman mentioned and definitely hadn't stolen a bag,

The inspector became more and more insistent. After long attempts at persuasion and thinly disguised threats of a long prison sentence and deportation, the offended Heinz (greatly irritated by the prisoner's the non-Aryan appearance) finally lost his self-control. He kicked the chair from under Nury and when he fell to the floor grabbed him by the hair and beat his head on the brick wall several times.

Who knows how this nightmare would have ended if an approaching colleague hadn't told Heinz that the person guilty of the theft had been detained, was recognized by the victim and gave a statement? After several minutes, Nury was on the street and hurried to the nearest first aid station. The doctors diagnosed concussion of the brain, bruising, and laceration of the face.

Mr. H turned to Commissioner Dietrichs, head of the 17th police department, with a complaint about the actions of his subordinate, attaching an extract about the account of his injuries and color photographs taken by the first aid doctor. After three days he received the official answer: "An official investigation has shown that the facts which you presented were not confirmed".

A new person in Starkland, Nury H had reached a dead end. The human rights organization "Alpine Heart" came to his assistance. Now they are preparing an application to the district court with a demand to investigate Mr. H's case. The human rights activists are sure that justice will be done.

Romy Zhelyaskova, lawyer in the human rights organization "Hope" (Magdeholm):

It would seem that official representatives of the law should know exactly the maximum permissible period of an investigation: in normal cases, two months. This can be extended by a district court to six months and in exceptional cases, when the case is particularly complex, to one year. However, police are convinced that people should be able remain under investigation for years, if not their whole life. Imagine for a moment how it is: to be in a situation of not knowing, of uncertainty, while investigators wait for something-or-other, drag things out, "lose" documents. I know cases where people "cracked" from this interminable waiting, and took on someone else's guilt just to end this torment, while the real criminals walked around free. And you can be sure the real criminals didn't waste time worrying about it. It is not enough just to stipulate the standard in law. Strict and vigilant control is needed, both from the state and from society.

Garry Klein, car mechanic:

Of course, everyone is interested in cases being investigated as quickly as possible, except perhaps the police? I don't break the law, and it's all the same to me how long investigations take. I'm not threatened. But criminals who sit with a pile of lawyers, paying each of them enormous amounts of money – they try to claim that the expert evidence was flawed, they feign mental deficiency, drag out every half hour. How can an investigation proceed when they are mocking everything in this way? Well, it's clear that no one wants to go to prison. Whatever period is written into the law, it's all the same – they'll never keep to it.

Johan Nurme, inspector of Police Station Number 5, Bechsholm:

Every member of the Ministry of Internal Affairs knows the standard time for an investigation. But judge for yourself – every inspector is handling 15 to 30 cases at the same time. The level of criminal activity in the country is growing. To manage in the time stipulated by the legislation, it is necessary either to increase the number of hours in the day or almost double the police personnel. We are in an impossible situation. Whatever we do, lawyers will find fault. We carefully explain the circumstances of the case, and they accuse us of dragging it out; we try to manage it within the time allowed and there is always a defense witness whom we haven't managed to question and on whom evidence in court relies. Perhaps it would be better to do nothing, and then they could accuse us of negligence. The police in our country are scapegoats. Whatever happens, it's just we who are guilty!