



# The Right Livelihood Award

*for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people*

## Inge Genefke / International Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims (Denmark)

### Honorary Award (1988)

*...for helping those whose lives have been shattered by torture to regain their health and personality.*



Inge Genefke

In response to Amnesty International's appeal in 1973 to the medical profession to help fight torture, Dr Inge Genefke formed the first Amnesty International medical group in Denmark. At that time no knowledge existed about the destructive influence of torture on the victim's physical and psychological health, so the work started from scratch. The pioneering investigations of Genefke's group resulted in the establishment of more medical groups the world over. The need for treatment and rehabilitation then led, in 1982, to the establishment of the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims (RCT) in Copenhagen, with Dr Genefke as medical director.

The objectives of RCT are:

- to operate a centre for rehabilitation of persons who have been tortured, and of such persons' families;
- to instruct Danish and foreign health service personnel in the examination and treatment of persons who have been tortured, and through instruction in wider fora to propagate knowledge about torture, forms of torture and the possibilities of rehabilitating persons subjected to them;
- to conduct and initiate research on torture and the nature and extent of its consequences;
- to operate and extend an international documentation centre, and through the above activities to contribute to the prevention of torture.

The rehabilitation programme is based on a holistic treatment emphasising psychotherapy. Because close relatives are also affected whenever a person has been subjected to torture, treatment aims to aid both the survivor and his/her spouse and children.

In 1986, the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) was established by RCT

as a private, humanitarian, non-political organisation. The most important task of IRCT is to contribute to the establishment and operation of rehabilitation centres worldwide. Several times a year it hosts international training seminars for health professionals, both in Denmark and abroad.

Today, almost 100 centres and programmes in 75 countries provide treatment for thousands of torture victims every year. RCT has assisted in supporting and setting up the majority of these centres, e.g. in Albania, Argentina, Bangladesh, Chile, Estonia, Equatorial Guinea, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Kenya, Kuwait, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Ukraine, Uganda and Uruguay. At the request of the European Union, IRCT has participated in the establishment of professional assistance to rape victims from the war in former Yugoslavia.

The IRCT cooperates with a range of international agencies and national medical associations. It has also created an international torture documentation network and produced books, articles and films in addition to its quarterly journal.

### Quotation

*"The aim of torture is to destroy a person as a human being, to destroy their identity and soul. It is more evil than murder... Today we know that survivors of torture can be helped to regain their health and strength, and in helping them we take the weapon from their torturers. They sought the destruction of other human beings. We have proved that they have not succeeded."*

Inge Genefke

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