



# Network of Concerned Historians

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The **Network of Concerned Historians (NCH)** is a human rights network that aims to provide a bridge between international human rights organisations campaigning for censored or persecuted historians (and other concerned with the past) and the global community of historians. Its work consists of two core activities: the collection of information on persecuted and censored historians, and on the intersections of human rights and history production, such as the freedom of historical research and teaching and the right to the truth; and the dissemination of urgent actions for persecuted and censored historians (and others who write about the past.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup> The NCH publishes an Annual Report covering countries around the globe.<sup>[4][5]</sup>

## Network of Concerned Historians

<b>Headquarters</b>	Groningen, Netherlands
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://concernedhistorians.org/">concernedhistorians.org</a> ( <a href="http://www.concernedhistorians.org/">http://www.concernedhistorians.org/</a> )

## Background

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### History

It was created in 1995 by Antoon De Baets, prof. em. of History, Ethics and Human Rights by Special Appointment of the European Association of History Educators (EuroClio) at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands (2014–) and President of the International Commission for the History and Theory of Historiography (2022–).<sup>[6][7]</sup> It was partly inspired by a roundtable titled "Power, Liberty and the Work of the Historian" at the 1995 International Congress of Historical Sciences in Montreal, Canada.<sup>[8][9][10]</sup> In the Summer of 2020, Ruben Zeeman, a graduate student of Comparative History at the Central European University in Vienna, Austria, joined NCH as co-editor.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Affiliates

In 2001, it became one of the founding members of the Network for Education and Academic Rights (NEAR). It has fraternal ties with Academia Solidaria of the Historia a Debate at the University of Santiago de Compostela (since 2003)<sup>[12]</sup> and with the Scholar Rescue Fund of the Institute of International Education in New York (since 2008).<sup>[13][14]</sup> It is further affiliated with several international human rights organisations, including Scholars at Risk (since 2007), the Science and Human Rights Coalition of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (since 2008), the Montreal

Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (since 2011), the International Students of History Association (since April 2013) and PEN America (since 2024).<sup>[15][16][17]</sup> Its website is regularly archived by the Center for Human Rights Documentation & Research at Columbia University.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Structure

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### Mission

It is inspired by article 1 of the Constitution of the International Committee of Historical Sciences (1926, as amended in 1992 and 2005): “It [the Committee] shall defend freedom of thought and expression in the field of historical research and teaching, and is opposed to the misuse of history and shall use every means at its disposal to ensure the ethical professional conduct of its members.”<sup>[19]</sup>

It works according to four principles:

1. *Universality*; it works for *bona fide* historians everywhere, regardless of where they live, in democratic or non-democratic countries...
2. *Impartiality*; ...and regardless of who they are, mainstream historians or their opponents.
3. *Independence*; it receives no subsidies.
4. *Distance*; its presented information does not imply that NCH shares the views of historians (or others) mentioned in it.<sup>[20][21]</sup>

### Topics

Its work consists of a variety of topics:

1. *History*; these include limitations to archival access, legal cases against historians, politicisation of history education curricula and textbooks and censorship of historical research and popular history production (e.g. novels, films, theater, internet).
2. *Memory*; these include limitations to commemorations and access to cemeteries and memorials, and the destruction of cultural heritage.
3. *Freedom of Information and Expression*; these include laws infringing on the freedom of information and expression, defamation and libel cases and cases on privacy and secrecy.
4. *Right to the Truth*; these include the obstruction of the workings of transitional justice and truth commissions, the passing of impunity laws and the forestalling of reparations and reconciliation measures
5. *Activism by historians and others concerned with the past*, including politics, journalist and human rights advocacy.<sup>[22][23][24][25][26][27][28]</sup>

Among the professions represented in their work are historians, archivists, archaeologists, anthropologists, students, high school teachers, librarians, truth commission members, journalists, librarians, authors and film makers.<sup>[29]</sup>

### Activities

The Network of Concerned Historians produces Annual Reports about the domain where history and human rights intersect. In addition, the NCH collects codes of ethics of Historians and workers in related fields, such as Archivists, and Archaeologists from all over the world.

The Annual Reports have been published since 1995, and are all available in the organization's website.<sup>[30]</sup>

## References

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## External links

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- Official website (<https://www.concernedhistorians.org/>)
  - Around the World, Censorship of Historians is Tied to Attacks on Democracy (<http://hnn.us/article/184003>)
  - Regimes Around the World are Manipulating History and Threatening Historians (<https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/183300>)
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