



# HELSINKI COMMITTEE IN POLAND

MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL HELSINKI FEDERATION  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, VIENNA

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## STATEMENT

In the autumn of 1988, under conditions in which civil rights and liberties were limited, the Helsinki Committee in Poland presented its position on the prevalent situation specifying the minimum human rights and freedoms with which the authorities may not interfere arbitrarily, without judicial supervision.

For over a dozen years now, Poland has been a free country. This is long enough to perceive errors in the way in which democracy works, but not long enough to risk stirring up hopes of a radical remedy for those errors.

The Constitution, as adopted by the People in a general referendum, states that the Republic of Poland is a democratic state of law. The fundamental value of such a State is the observance of human rights and basic freedoms. This is possible under conditions of social harmony and where trust and confidence exist in the fundamental institutions of the state. The tension associated with the formation of new authorities after the elections – which is normal in a democracy – has not only failed to subside, but continues to be constantly fueled as a result of accusations cast by political parties and their leaders.

The Helsinki Committee in Poland has always been concerned about the quality of democracy under the rule of law. The matter of utmost importance is that there can be no harm to basic human and civil rights. This requires good government, the observance of law and good standards in public life, i.e. the creation of the conditions for trust. Bitter accusations and moral blackmail directed at people that hold different opinions, the embarrassing battles waged through the use of investigative committees, claims to having a monopoly on the truth and moral authority – these are the phenomena that have escalated during the recent months and are the cause of our serious concern. An atmosphere is being created that is conducive to the violation of basic rights. We feel obliged to stress the fact that in such a climate it is impossible to hold a reliable public debate on the issue of how to ensure better observance of human and civil rights in the Republic, how to reestablish respect for the law and the system of justice as well as reconcile the requirements of freedom with the expectation of personal safety and social solidarity.

Warsaw, 22 March 2006

On behalf of the Helsinki Committee in Poland

  
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