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THE POLICE, INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWING AND HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS

THIRD ORANIENBURG HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

Brandenburg State Police University, Oranienburg/Berlin, Germany,

22 to 24 May 2024

Modern police forces must ensure public safety and investigate crime effectively while at the same time respecting and protecting citizens' rights. In this context, interviewing suspects and witnesses is an indispensable tool of police work. The use of investigative, non-coercive interviewing methods has proven to be a most effective way to solve crimes while protecting the human rights of all involved.

Research has shown that in general, oppressive and coercive interviewing methods – often directed at obtaining a confession from a suspect – tend to intimidate the interviewed persons and produce unreliable statements, including false confessions. They may also violate their human rights to physical integrity, or to a fair trial. In contrast, non-coercive, investigative interviewing methods facilitate the communication flow, increase the output of interviews, are more effective in general, and respect the dignity and human rights of the questioned persons. Investigative interviewing by the police contributes to achieving correct outcomes of criminal proceedings and thus improves public safety.

In his [annual report in 2016](#), the United Nations Special Rapporteur against Torture, Mr. Juan Méndez, called for the development of a universal set of minimum standards for non-coercive interviewing methods and associated procedural safeguards to be applied by all law enforcement officials. During the following years, a group of experts from many countries and various professional backgrounds have elaborated the “[Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering](#)” (the “Méndez Principles”). These principles were published in 2021; they may be considered to be a big step towards preserving human dignity and solving crimes effectively all over the world. Their implementation is supported by the international human rights movement as well as a growing number of governments all over the world, including in the context of the UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly.

The conference will analyse and evaluate these developments. In plenary sessions and workshops, international experts and participants will discuss the psychological foundations of investigative interviewing, as well as its effects and its limitations. In addition, presentations and discussions will cover the legal framework for interviews, including in particular the right to be treated in a humane manner, the presumption of innocence, the right to silence, as well as the general obligation of states to investigate crime effectively. The special situation of particularly vulnerable people will also be examined. Experts from different countries will report on their experiences and on practical challenges connected with introducing and implementing non-coercive interviewing methods in reality, for example with regard to the training of police officers.

The conference will provide a forum for speakers and participants to share their knowledge, experience and good practice in a very dynamic and interdisciplinary field of work. We hope and trust that innovative ideas will emerge and new approaches to research and practical police work will be identified.

We expect and welcome a variety of participants such as police officers, academics, judges, public prosecutors, practicing lawyers and psychologists, human rights activists as well as officials from government authorities and international organisations.

The conference language will be English. The Brandenburg State Police University is situated in Oranienburg on the outskirts of Berlin, Germany.

This event is a follow-up to the conferences on “The Police and International Human Rights Law” (2016) and “Fair Treatment of Persons in Police Custody” (2018).

Further information will be published at www.hpolbb.de in March 2024. Enquiries may be directed to Prof. Ralf Alleweldt, ralf.alleweldt@hpolbb.de.