



Amman Center for Human Rights Studies

Newsletter – no. 15 - January 2010

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In This Issue:

- ACHRS Releases third book on Academic Freedom in Arab Universities
- Workshop Studies the Formulation of a National Plan for Human Rights
- ACHRS Participates in Rabat Workshop on Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance
- In cooperation with ACHRS, the Iraqi Alliance for Human Rights is established.
- Training of Trainers on Women's Rights
- Completion of Four Courses on Women's Rights in the four Jordanian Governorates of Irbid, Madaba, Zarqa, and Amman
- ACHRS Training Courses in Numbers (2000-2009)
- The Arab Coalition Against the Death Penalty to attend the 4th World Congress Against the Death Penalty

Greetings from ACHRS

The Amman Center for Human Rights had a busy and productive fall 2009. ACHRS has engaged in a wide array of rewarding activities from workshops and training sessions, to networking and conferences. The Center released a third book on *Academic Freedom in Arab Universities*. The book edited by center director, Dr. Nizam Assaf saw the contribution of academics from across the Arab world. Moreover, ACHRS participated in a workshop to explore the opportunity of formulating a national plan for human rights. Jordanian and international human rights experts attended to begin the formulation of a national plan. As always, ACHRS has continued to strengthen its international network, and has further solidified its commitment to human rights defense.

As a regional human rights organization, ACHRS, was invited to participate in a workshop on human rights, democracy, and good governance in Rabat, Morocco. The workshop was organized by the Moroccan Organization for Human Rights and an Italian Organization – No Peace Without Justice. The workshop's aim was to promote dialogue between regional civil society organizations and local governments. ACHRS representative to Rabat participated specifically in the democracy and fair elections workshop as the Center is committed to fair democratic practice in the wider Middle East region. ACHRS has been taking the lead in promoting democratic practice in Jordan and the Middle East, and North Africa.

The Bahrain Human Rights Society (BHRS) and the Amman Center concluded a training of trainers program on the 31st of December, 2009. The first part of the training course held in Manama, Bahrain raised awareness on women rights issues and laws, and also helped to improve the participants to improve and evaluate their skills as trainers. The second session, which involved the delivering of presentations to members of the public was conducted in Amman from the 22nd-31st

of December, 2009. Fourteen human rights activists from eight different Arab countries participated and graduated from the training course.

In coordination with ACHRS, thirty Iraqi NGOs organized a forum in Erbil, Iraq to establish a coalition of civil society organizations. The NGOs represented every governorate in Iraq and each organization specialized in a certain human rights issue. The participants discussed the human rights situation in Iraq with a focus important challenges and opportunities facing the Iraqi citizen. The participants then discussed the structure, bylaws, and the four year work plan of the new coalition. The documents were approved and the coalition was established by the name of the Iraqi Alliance for Human Rights Organizaitons.

As an institution with prior Universal Periodic Review (UPR) experience, ACHRS has helped six Iraqi NGO networks to compose and submit their UPR report to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). As a follow up to the report, ACHRS has organized a work trip to Geneva for the six Iraqi network directors who helped compose the report. The Iraqi delegation along with a representative from ACHRS will attend the UPR session on Iraq at the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva.

This newsletter will provide further details on the mentioned activities as well as update readers on further activities conducted by the Center during the past three months. As always ACHRS plays a leading role in regional human rights defense and is hard at work in that regard. The Center has continued to reach a high number of professionals: journalists, NGO workers, public officials and lawyers to take part in these activities, all of whom help ensure the success of our projects. Enjoy reading the newsletter and many thanks for your continued support and interest in ACHRS!

ACHRS Releases Third Book on Academic Freedom in Arab Universities

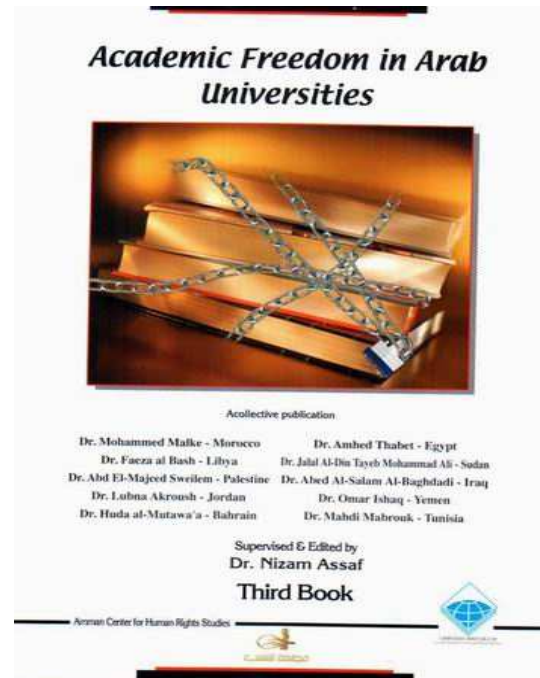
The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies recently released a book: Academic Freedom in Arab Universities. The book is the third of its kind and contains updated information and analysis of Arab universities and academic freedom. Supervised and edited by Dr. Nizam Assaf, the center director of ACHRS, the book saw the contribution of academics from across the Arab World.

Members of the Academic community in Morocco, Libya, Palestine, Jordan, Bahrain, Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, Yemen, and Tunisia contributed to the contents of the publication. Each presented a detailed analysis of universities in the listed countries. The situation reports are followed by a joint statement that includes proposals and recommendations to push for further academic freedom in the Arab World.

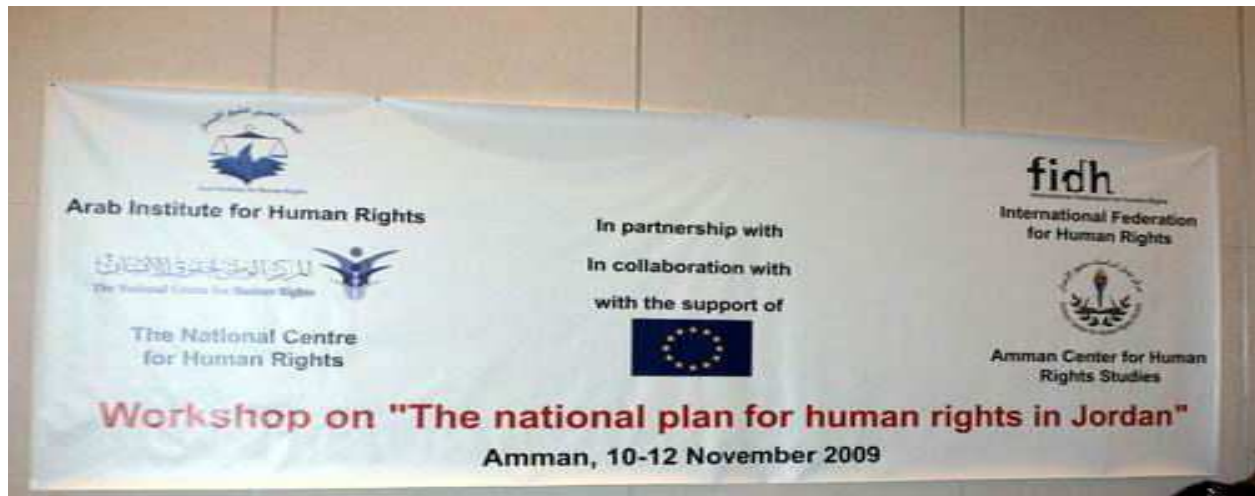
The three editions of the book are the first of their kind as they are the only serious and comprehensive studies conducted on the status of academic freedom in Arab universities. Contributors to the publication are as follows:

Dr. Mohammed Malke - Morocco
Dr. Faeza al Bash - Libya
Dr. Abd El-Majeed Sweilem - Palestine
Dr. Lubna Akroush - Jordan
Dr. Huda al-Mutawa'a - Bahrain
Dr. Ahmed Thabet - Egypt
Dr. Jalal Al-Din Tayeb Mohammad Ali - Sudan
Dr. Abed Al-Salam Al-Baghdadi - Iraq
Dr. Omar Ishaq - Yemen
Dr. Mahdi Mabrouk - Tunisia

Supervised and Edited by Dr. Nizam Assaf



Workshop Studies the Formulation of a National Plan for Human Rights



A formulation workshop took place in Amman on November 10, 2009. Jordanian and international human rights experts participated to help formulate a national work plan for human rights in Jordan. The workshop was organized through a joint effort by the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS), the National Centre for Human Rights (NCHR), the Arab Organization for Human Rights, and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH). The workshop saw the attendance of a delegation from the European Union as well a wide variety of Jordanian non-governmental organizations.

The executive director of the Arab Organization for Human Rights opened the floor by outlining the intent of the workshop. The workshop was held in Jordan because human rights organizations in the country have made a good amount of progress, she explained. Although Jordan has taken some important steps in the right direction, there was much more work to be done on the political, judicial, and human rights level she went on to explain. The director concluded by saying that holding the workshop in Jordan will further assist the efforts of the human rights organizations in the country.

Workshop Studies the Formulation of a National Plan for Human Rights (continued)

(cont. from page 4)

Amina Buayyash, the representative from the International Federation for Human Rights, exclaimed that the actions of the workshop should focus on democratic principles and human rights. Ms. Buayyash exclaimed that each participant must play an important role in the promotion of human rights in the region. The participants, she explained, must organize and promote human rights (based on international agreements) awareness in each of their respective societies.

Ms. Buayyash contends that the formulation of a national plan is the first step in promoting democracy, human rights, and awareness. The FIDH representative made sure to clarify that the national plan was the first and most important item on the agenda for the workshop. Discussions took place regarding the local human rights situation. Participants then offered recommendations based on the analysis of the situation. The recommendations, to be added to the national plan, addressed current federal laws that play a role in affecting freedoms and the human rights situation in general.

Dr. Nizam Assaf, Center Director of ACHRS, suggested that priorities must be set in regards to the human rights situation. He also suggested that a comprehensive strategic framework be put in place to help organize the efforts of individual advocates and organizations concerned with human rights. Dr. Assaf also spoke about the promotion of the relationship between democracy, development, the law, and the governing powers. Dr. Assaf made the decision to create a committee to perform and materialize the recommendations made by the participants into a National Plan for Human Rights. The committee will be at work to finalize the National Plan for Human Rights under the supervision of the organizing NGOs. Further details will be released once the plan is fully finalized.

ACHRS Participates in Rabat Workshop on Human Rights, Democracy, and Local Governance

The Rome based Italian Organization, No Peace without Justice (NPWJ), and the Rabat based Moroccan Organization, Moroccan Organization for Human Rights (OMDH), organized a workshop and conference on human rights, democracy, and local governance for the broader Middle East and North African Region (BMENA). The workshop held in Morocco's capital city Rabat, saw the participation of regional civil society organizations, democracy advocates, European and North American NGOs, as well as representatives from local governments, and other G8 democracy partners.

The meeting was set to promote productive dialogue between regional CSOs and governments. The workshop gave participants the opportunity to directly open dialogue between high level governmental representatives with regional NGOs operating in those countries. Initially, the workshop focused on the current human rights status in each participating country. Participants of the workshop were given an opportunity to discuss the recent positive and negative developments in regards to the human rights situation in their country. The discussion was then developed based on the updates.

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies participated in the workshop held on October 5-6. The International Relations Coordinator, Atef Aresheh attended the conference in representation of ACHRS. Specifically, ACHRS' representative to Rabat participated in the democracy and fair elections committee in the workshop. The committee discussed and analyzed the democratic situation in the BMENA region as well as ways to help promote and advocate elections. The committee ended the session on the final day of the conference by cultivating a list of recommendations that was later distributed to all workshop participants.

Iraqi Alliance for Human Rights Organizations



Statement of Establishment

Upon the initiative taken by the Public Aid Organization (PAO) and support from the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS) the first forum of Human Rights Organizations was held in Erbil on October 29-31, 2009. The forum saw the participation of more than 30 NGOs representing all Iraqi provinces. The former KRG minister of civil society, Mr. George Mansour was also in attendance. During the first day of the forum participants discussed human rights situation in Iraq with a focus on important challenges and opportunities facing the Iraqi citizen. The second day of the forum participants discussed the structure, bylaws, and the work plan for the next four years. Participants then approved these documents, while agreeing to establish a coalition under the name of Iraqi Alliance for Human Rights Organizations. The main goal and objectives of the coalition as agreed to by the participants:

General goal: protecting and promoting human rights.

•Short-term goals:

Expand the alliance in order to unify the efforts of civil society organizations to promote human rights in Iraq.

Increase the knowledge and skills of the national NGOs in terms of UPR.

Building/developing capabilities of civil society organizations and sharing information and experiences in the field of human rights.

Monitoring the performance of state authorities and to further monitor human rights violations.

Raising awareness and spreading the concepts of human rights while conducting studies and research in order to improve the human rights situation.

The board of directors of the alliance was elected through a democratic process. The board of directors held its first meeting on the third day of the forum to define the tasks of each member organization and to help open the doors for other Iraqi human rights organizations to join the alliance in the future. The alliance seeks cooperation and



Iraqi Alliance for Human Rights Organizations

(continued from page 8)

coordination between all local, national, and international human rights institutions for the implementation of joint programs in order to achieve the set goals.

For more information please call:
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Email: Hogr.pao@gmail.com

Founding institutions of the Alliance (30 Organizations):

Iraqi Institute for Democracy Support, League for Fraternity and Solidarity, Legal and Social Clinic Organization, National Institute for Human Rights, National Association for Human Rights, Iraqi Institute for Human Rights, Human Justice Organization, Human Rights Organization, Babylon National Association for Human Rights, Humanitarian association for human rights, Chaldean Cultural Society, Siwan Organization for Women Development, Life for Women Organization, Insan Cultural Foundation, Zaman Organization for Women Support, Women's Association for Reform and Development, Faith Association to Support Widows, Public Aid Organization, Kurdish Human Rights Watch, Al-Masalla Organization for Human Resources, Human Rights trainers' League, Democracy and Human Rights Studies Center, Iraqi Association for Human Rights Watch, Iraqi Women's Association, Gender Studies and Information Center, Kuvan Organization for Human Rights, Hadia Association for Human Rights and Iraqi Community Development, Human Rights and Civil Society Institution, Humans Without Borders Organization, Iraqi Women's Center of Reform and Service.

ACHRS Holds Two Roundtables on Political Life at Two Jordanian Universities

A round table on poverty of political life within the university and its impact on political development was held by the General Rehabilitation and Welfare Foundation in cooperation with the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies. The Roundtable was attended by a number of prominent academics, students and civil society institutions. The roundtable saw the participation of 48 men and women.

21/10 / 2009

A round table on the poverty of political life and its impact on poor women participation in parliament was held by the General Rehabilitation and Welfare Foundation in cooperation with the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies. The roundtable was attended by a number of prominent academic institutions, political parties and civil society organizations. The Roundtables saw the participation of 26 men and women.

28/10/2009

Training of Trainers on Women's Rights

The first phase of the 'training of trainers' (TOT) course on women's rights was held from 1-10 October, 2009 Manama/Bahrain. Fourteen human rights activists, from eight Arab countries (Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait and Yemen) participated in the first phase of the course. Part one of the training course raised awareness of women's rights issues and laws, and also helped the participants to hone and evaluate their presentation skills as trainers.

The 'training for trainers' course aims to disseminate knowledge of women's rights across the region, and involved presentations on women's rights issues relevant to the Gulf region. 'Training of trainers' was made possible through funding kindly made available by the MEPI and conducted by Bahrain Human Rights Society (BHRS) and Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS). The second session, which involved the delivering of presentations to members of the public was conducted in Amman from 22nd – 31st of December 2009. Thirteen participants took part in the second session.

It should be recalled that ever since it was established (1999), the ACHRS has held 15 training of trainers (TOT) on human rights in which more than 300 men and women from 12 Arab states have participated.

Completion of Four Courses on Women's Rights in the four Jordanian Governorates of Irbid, Zarqa, Amman, and Madaba

On the sixty-first anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies [ACHRS] held four training courses on women's rights in four governorates of Jordan. The first was held in cooperation with the Irbid University in which 25 men and women participated. The second was held in cooperation with the Women Youth Center in Madaba in which 25 men and women participated. The third training course was held in Amman in cooperation with the Al Esraa University in which 25 men and women participated. The fourth and final course was held in Zarqa in cooperation with the Society for Working Women in Al Russaefeh in which 35 men and women participated.

Participants in the training sessions discussed the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Participants, also discussed the management of campaigns on (continued on page 10)

Completion of Four Courses on Women's Rights

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women's issues, violence against women, gender concepts, women's stereotype in the media, the right to get married and to have a family, and the right of women to pass their citizenship rights to their children.

The training was conducted by a number of human rights trainers from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, Oman and Kuwait. Since establishment, ACHRS has held more than 330 training sessions on human rights issues. More than 9,500 women and men from 18 different Arab countries have participated in the training courses.

ACHRS Training Courses in Numbers 2000-2009

Year	Number of Training Courses in Jordan	Number of Training Courses in Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Bahrain, Qatar, and Yemen	Length in Days	Participants		Total Participants	Location		Type of Funding		Participants from Arab Countries
				Male Participants	Female Participants		Local	Regional	Foreign Funding	Voluntary and in Partnership with Local Institutions	
2000/2001	31	--	97	250	575	825	31	--	2	29	--
2002	36	--	105	386	693	1079	35	1	6	30	26
2003	45	--	140	422	922	1344	44	1	4	41	25
2004	26	--	115	239	423	662	19	7	11	15	182
2005	53	3	234	662	932	1594	31	25	31	25	559
2006	26	7	96	1018	719	1737	20	13	3	30	1070
2007	44	1	96	623	766	1389	39	6	22	23	100
2008	30	3	110	647	335	982	26	7	18	15	181
2009	27	4	88	398	414	812	23	8	12	19	118
Total	318	18	1081	4645	5789	10434	268	68	109	227	2261
Per-centa ges	94%	6%	100%	44%	56%	100%	79%	21%	32%	68%	22%

The Arab Coalition Against the Death Penalty to attend the 4th World Congress Against the Death Penalty



The World Coalition against the Death Penalty (WCADP) has organized the 4th World Congress Against the Death Penalty to be held in Geneva, Switzerland on the 24-26 of February, 2010. The Arab Coalition against the Death Penalty (ACADP) has played an important role in the organization of this convention. The executive coordinator, of the Arab Coalition, Dr. Nizam Assaf is on the steering committee of the World Coalition.

The international relations coordinator of ACHRS represented the Arab Coalition against the Death Penalty at the WCADP steering committee meeting in Paris on December 8-9, 2009. The committee discussed the upcoming congress and addressed concerns and difficulties that have come up throughout the organizational process.

Many members of ACADP, representing 11 different Arab countries have been invited to attend the congress. The 4th World Congress is due to have over 1,500 participants representing hundreds of civil society organizations from over 80 different countries. The executive director, of the Arab Coalition against the Death Penalty, Dr. Nizam Assaf has accepted the invitation to speak at the Middle East and North Africa Round Table. The round table titled: Tools and Strategies for Death Penalty Abolition in Middle East and North Africa, will focus on the discussion of different methods to advocate abolition in the region.

ACHRS At A Glance

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS) is an independent, regional, scientific, advocacy center for studies, research and training on issues of human rights and democracy. In pursuit of contributing to the dissemination of a culture of human rights, our work and activities aim at strengthening civil society in Jordan and in the Arab World, and at inducing change to the general level of awareness and sensibility towards issues of human rights and democracy.

The projects carried out by ACHRS mainly concentrate on training for democracy and human rights as they are closely related and highly complementary. Conducting studies and research to serve as an informational basis is a further means to achieve our aims.

A young organization, founded and registered in Jordan in 1999, the work of ACHRS strongly depends on the knowledge and skills of its staff and volunteers. Currently ACHRS has a personnel staff of 10 and counts 150 actively contributing volunteers. Though keeping in mind that human rights and democracy are relevant to all segments of society, our activities mainly target women and youth. The activities are carried out either solely by ACHRS or in cooperation with other local, Arab and international NGOs and organisations of civil society.

ACHRS is ...

- In consultative Status with ECOSOC
- Initiator for establishing Jordanian, Iraqi, and Arab human rights networks.
- Member of the Arab Network for NGOs
- Member of the Arab Social Forum
- Member of the International Federation for Human Rights (fidh)
- Member of Initiative to Establish Arab Society for Academic Freedom
- Member of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)
- Initiator for establishing Arab Election Network
- Member of the International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA)
- Member of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)
- Member of the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Platform
- Member of the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum

Activities

Since its foundation in 1999, ACHRS has organized and carried out:

- more than 500 courses on various Human Rights topics with more than 13,000 participants from 18 different countries, 65% of which were women and 70% under the age of 30.
- more than 120 conferences, seminars, discussion groups and lectures about different human rights cases with more than 1,200 thinkers, researchers, experts, and activists in human rights and civil society from other Arab and foreign countries.
- published twenty books on human rights and civil society cases, in addition to a myriad of articles and periodical reports.