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On the workshop to evaluate the Arab experience in the field of Juveniles Justice

For information on the conclusion of the workshop, see article on page 2.

The workshop on the 4. to the 6. February had the purpose of evaluating the Arab experience in the field of juvenile justice and coming up with ideas for the best interests of children. This workshop which lasted for three days and was organized by Penal Reform International (PRI) in cooperation with Amman Center for Human Rights Studies.

15 leading specialists and workers in juveniles field participated in the workshop from several governmental and non-governmental organizations from Jordan, Yemen, Palestine, Algeria, Morocco and Egypt.

The workshop reviewed Palestinian, Moroccan and Egyptian experiments highlighting legislations in these countries that related to rights of children and how far these legislations go in line with UN agreement for child rights.

Throughout the workshop the participants discussed the programs aimed at developing child’s rights in the field of juveniles justice, additionally they viewed a presentation on experiences in some Arab countries in this field, evaluated the achievements and discussed how to promote the juveniles justice in the future.
Conclusion of the Roundtable on the Arab Experience on Juvenile Justice

Formation of an Arab Network on Juvenile Justice

The Roundtable on the Arab experience in the field of juvenile justice organized by Penal Reform International (PRI) together with the Amman Centre of Human Rights Studies (ACHRS), held in Amman, Jordan, from 4-6 February 2007, with the participation of specialized researchers representing governmental institutions and civil society concluded its 3 days work with the adoption of the Amman Declaration on Juvenile Justice in the Arab World. The declaration exhorts states in the region:

1- To review their legislation on juvenile justice to give full effect to their international obligations under the Convention on the Right of the Child and the related international rules and standards.

2- To establish a constructive social policy targeting the eradication of the root causes of juvenile delinquency and to consider juvenile justice as part of social justice to be integrated in their national strategy for development. The juvenile justice system should be construed to be an educational and rehabilitation system to benefit juvenile offenders on the ground of impartiality and without distinction of any kind.

3- To orientate the juvenile justice system to emphasize the well-being of the child and to ensure that measures taken in reaction to juvenile offences are in proportion to the circumstances of both the offender and the offence.

4- To undertake the necessary structural reforms to clearly separate juvenile justice from criminal justice by:
   • Creating special juvenile courts with sitting judges specially trained on juvenile matters.
   • Establishing special police units for juveniles provided with the necessary training on the law enforcement and the administration of juvenile justice.
   • Providing the relevant training for the public prosecution and empowering it to take discretional alternative measure such as close supervision or placement in an educational arrangement or any other measure that serves the best interest of the child in lieu of pre-trial detention.
   • Housing juveniles in separate institutions or a specially designated area of the institutions if detention cannot be avoided

5- To elaborate awareness-raising programmes among those in charge of juvenile justice underlining the importance of crime prevention.

6- To draw up awareness and sensitisation programmes for the purpose of protection through the media, schools, clubs, posters and clerics.

7- To set up an Arab Network for Juvenile Justice to be coordinated by PRI’s MENA Regional Office and ACHRS for the purpose of encouraging enter-Arab exchange of successful experiences and good practices.
ACHRS initiative: Founding of Jordanian Alliance for Civil Society Organizations

A statement was issued in Amman on the formation of the Jordanian Alliance for Civil Society organizations following a preparatory process that lasted more than two months. Seven civil society organizations participated in the discussions that created the alliance. During the talks, agreement was reached to approve a Charter of Honor for the alliance, taking as its reference the International Covenant on Human Rights. The Charter indicates that the founding organizations, societies and centers view themselves as acting in solidarity and total compliance with the following values:

**Public liberties and civil rights**

The indivisible universal human rights that are organically linked, the priority of sustainable development, compliance with the consolidation of the independence of the civil society organizations, sponsorship of transparency and good governance, priority of the freedom of opinion and expression, adoption of democracy and equality between man and woman, pluralism, representation, participation, social justice to all the segments of society, and guaranteeing the rights of individuals and peoples in line with the principles of human rights and relevant international conventions, compliance with the values of solidarity and active role in defending public liberties, interaction with all the social, economic, cultural and political issues of society.

**International alliances**

The Jordanian Alliance for Civil Society organizations declared that it views itself as an inseparable part of the Jordanian civil and international society and of the Anti-Globalization Movement and that it is seeking to participate in an effective fashion to the strengthening and enabling the international alliances of civil societies. It has also declared its commitment to the consolidation of the spirit of cooperation, coordination and domestic solidarity.

**Promoting cooperation**

The Charter of Honor also asserted the role of the alliance in consolidating the civil society organizations and promoting their capabilities along with coordination and cooperation among them through the building, developing and activating their work and creating a democratic society that respects human rights and the consolidation of the State of institutions, the principle of the separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, and the complementarity of roles with the government institutions.

**Mutual support**

In the field of the relationship between the allied organizations, the Charter of honor asserted the respect of the freedom and independence of each organization within the constants of the charter of honor and decided to seek the complementarity of roles, collaboration, the upgrading of the mechanisms of domestic solidarity and joint action, aversion of duplication of work and commitment to the exchange of expertise, solidarity among the organizations and their mutual support so as their activities might success, the encouragement of collective work, compliance with the ethics of fairness and commitment to the complementarity of work, sponsorship of the principle of fair competition and the respect of specialization, initiatives, and the maximization of the joint benefit.

**Integration of activities**

In the field of the relationship with the Jordanian societal institutions, the Charter of Honor asserted that the alliance will seek a relationship of coordination and integration, will upgrade its performance, will adopt collective stands and consolidate the societal activity in the direction of the values that were expressed in the Charter, will assert the need for the balance between the roles of the civil society organizations on the one hand, and those of organizations that defend human rights, on the other, for the purpose of creating integration among their activities that seek protection and consolidation of human rights.
ACHRS Initiative... (continued from page 3)

Equality between sexes
The Charter has also asserted the that Alliance sponsored the principle of equality between man and woman in society and its trend to support the stature of women and their empowerment as well as its support of the principle of the positive discrimination.

It also asserted its commitment to the principle of the best interest of the child and the active role of the youth in change and sustainable development.

Founding organizations
It should be recalled that the Jordanian Alliance for Civil Society Organizations has included in its founding membership the following: the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies [ACHRS], the Arab organization for Human Rights in Jordan, the Jordanian Jurists Association, the Jordanian Association for the rights of the Child, the Jordanian society for Human Rights, the Arab Women Association, and the Jordanian Youth Forum. The founders of the alliance have also decided that membership is open to all the Jordanian civil society organizations.

ACHRS hosts "Ad Dor Al Manthour" Schools
Amman Center for Human Rights Studies hosted a group of students from "Ad Dor Al Manthour Schools", and their director teacher.

Dr. Assaf, the center's director and a number of the staff welcomed the students who are participating in "Domestic Violence" reportage competition, and thanked them for the visit.

During the meeting, Mohammad Sarsak gave an overview of the most important activities that the center achieved since its establishment such as, training, education, family counseling, etc. He discussed with the group some topics related to the main issue they are working on which is the domestic violence. The topics were: how to reduce the violence inside and outside the home, violence against people with special needs, measuring the tangible impact of awareness in the local community and the target groups to address regarding this issue.

The two parties agreed to make coordinations between the School and ACHRS and to strengthen the ways to develop coordination in order to serve the democratic process and promote the joint activities.

Conclusion of programme for women and youth participation in elections
With the support of UNEAD and UNOPS, Amman Center for Human Rights Studies in collaboration with a number of Iraqi NGO's have concluded a project under the title "Encouraging Women and Youth Participation in Elections", which has lasted for nine months.

Throughout the project, more than 200 training courses were held on subjects related to the general principles of human rights and the specialized international treaties. The right of women and youth to participate in the political and social life were also discussed.

The evaluation meeting was attended by both Mr. Hakam Shahwan, chief of the United Nations Election Assistance Division and Mr. Neels as representative of the United Nations Office for Project Services. At the meeting, they discussed the achievements of the project and its role in raising the social awareness on these important issues.

Moreover, the Iraqi NGO's were applauded for their cooperation on this project. Besides, it is also regarded as an excellent experience to help them develop their work throughout Iraq. Finally, one of the most important achievements of this project is the establishment of an Iraqi Network for Women and Youth Participation in Elections, which is supervised by ACHRS and includes many Iraqi organizations.
ACHRS presentation of Annual Plan attended by important organizations

The launching of the first Annual Plan by the ACHRS attracted much interest from a wide range of international actors in the field of civil society and human rights. The presentation was held on the 28 of February in Amman and provided the guests with a sound understanding of the general aspects of the work conducted by the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies.

The guests were welcomed by Dr. Assaf, the ACHRS director, and thereafter an overview of the Annual Plan was presented. It is the first Annual Plan made by the ACHRS, which until now has functioned by smaller projects and short-term planning. Dr. Assaf explained that the introduction of an Annual Plan represents a qualitative step forward in the development of the ACHRS work.

The guests
The meeting was attended by representatives from UNDP, UNOPS, the EU delegation in Jordan, the Canada Fund, the Spanish Cooperation Agency, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, the Japanese Embassy and the American Bar Association.

The presentation highlighted the ACHRS work with election monitoring, the building of an alliance between civil society organizations in Jordan and abroad, as well as the ACHRS' training programmes in the field of women rights and civil justice. After the presentation the guests had several comments and questions regarding the Annual Plan and broader perspectives.

Future prospects
Questions were raised on the ACHRS view of the major challenges regarding human rights in Jordan as well as efforts to enforce human rights through the legal court system. Dr. Assaf explained that we are in a long process of implementing human rights in Jordan as well as the rest of the region, and it must be done step by step with clear objectives, something which is specified in the Annual Plan and other ACHRS documents. He also explained that the ACHRS is planning on a campaign to minimize the use of the death penalty, and that the ACHRS from now on will publish an annual report on the human rights situation in Jordan.

The remarks by Dr. Assaf and the answers to the questions raised filled the guests with a more profound understanding of the ACHRS' work and laid the foundation for future cooperation and partnership among the organizations.

HR Training course in Irbid

ACHRS in cooperation with the Moderate Forum for Thoughts and Culture, held a training course on human rights in Irbid. The issues of the course included concepts of human rights, UDHR, CEDAW, the covenant on political and civil rights, the covenant on economic and cultural rights and rights of participation. The course were held in three days with the participation of 30 guests, both male and female.

The course were held 26-28. February in Irbid, and among the trainers were the attorneys Dr. Manhal al Saida, Dr. Raed al Athamnah, Dr. Islam al Radayeh, Dr. Manar al Nethami as well as Mr. Mohammas Sarsak.

ACHRS has conducted 234 training courses on various human rights issues since its foundation in 1999, and the courses have been attended by 6728 persons from Jordan and other Arab countries.
About ACHRS

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 a change to the general level of awareness and sensibility towards 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.

ACHRS:

- Consultative status with ECOSOC
- Constituting member of the Federation of Human Rights Centers in the Arab World
- Member of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN)
- Correspondent member of the International Federation for Human Rights (fidh)
- Member of the Arab Network for NGOs
- Member of the International Federation of Workers’ Education Associations (IFWEA)
- Member of the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Platform
- Member of the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum
- Initiator for establishing the Election Network in the Arab Region (ENAR)
- Constituting member of the Jordanian Alliance for the CSO in Jordan
- Initiator for establishing the Arab Network for HR Trainers
- Initiator for establishing the Jordanian Network for HR Trainers
- Initiator for establishing the Iraqi Network for Supporting Women and Youth in Elections
- Member of the Arab Social Forum
- Member of CIVICUS
- Member of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)

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