Amman Center for Human Rights Studies
Newsletter – no. 3 - April 2007

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ACHRS Concluded a Course of Human Rights in Al-Wasateyah Forum

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, in cooperation with Al-Wasateyah Forum for Intellect and Culture concluded an educational course in the field of human rights. The course, which was held in Irbid lasted for three days and attended by 30 participants. The course included a number of training sessions about general principles and concepts of human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the International covenant on civil and political rights, and the right to participate. The lectures of these sessions were Attorney Manhal Al-Suidh, Raid Alathamna, Islam Aradayda, Manar Anizami, and Mr. Mohammad Sarsak

ACHRS has organized 236 training course in the field of human rights and they were attended by 6778 participants coming from all over the kingdom and Arab World.
Training session on the freedom of expression for the Media workers organized by the Qatari National Committee of Human Rights in cooperation with the ACHRS

The training session on the freedom of expression for the media workers was opened in the Qatari capital city of Doha on 4 March 2007. The training session was organized by the National Committee of Human Rights in cooperation with the Amman Center for Human rights Studies [ACHRS]. The aim of the training session was to introduce the concept of the freedom of opinion and expression to the Qatari journalists and media workers, ways of protecting this right and how to integrate it into their media work.

Secretary General of the National Committee of Human rights in Qatar, Dr. Ali Al-Marri, said that freedom remained the goal of mankind since the beginning of history to this date because it has enlightened the path of mankind in its long and continuous struggle to achieve further prosperity and progress. He added that there can be no innovation without freedom and that progress would be futile without achieving further freedom.

Dr. Al-Marri pointed out that freedom becomes more valuable and more important when it is coupled with printed and audio-visual media, all the more so because the media is one of the means of expression of opinion in a democratic society. He explained that a healthy democratic system protects the freedom of the media and gives it a prominent role in forming a unique public opinion that can attain the goals of society and safeguard the basic rights and freedoms of individuals. He said that the relationship between the media and human rights is not only one of an organic relationship that is guaranteed by legislative provisions, but is a relationship that is more interlocked and integrative, and this allows us to say that they are two faces of the same coin.

Dr. Al-Marri noted that the handling of human rights issues by the Arab media remained one of reaction and follow-up of events. Interests in these issues was only restricted to the people involved in the work of human rights. In fact, national media does not highlight certain human rights issues except after these issues are covered by the foreign media. The reason for this is the structural defects that are characteristic of the Arab media institutions and the lack of the strategies of formation and sustainable formation for the media workers.

Active dynamism
Addressing the participants in the training session, Director General of the Amman Center for Human rights Studies [ACHRS], Dr, Nizam Assaf, spoke about the organic relationship between the workers in the field of human Rights and the media workers. He said that this organic relationship is based on the belief that the freedom of expression, including the freedom of the press, is the foundation stone for all other freedoms and rights, such as the right of participation, peaceful gathering, membership in societies, voting and others. This will become evident during this session.

Dr. Assaf pointed out that the media will continue to be a source that enriches information, on the one hand, and an early warning system for human rights violations, on the other. Therefore, the media in the age of the information revolution is the best instrument, although not the only instrument, for the dissemination of human rights culture and raising the awareness of the importance of this culture. Moreover, we can view the various instruments of human rights on the various national, regional and international levels as being the best instruments in making effective contributions in stopping human rights violations and forestalling the aggravation of these violators.
Dr. Assaf said that it happens sometimes that the media violates human rights here and there by insti-
gating people to commit violence or by disseminating the hatred of a certain group of people on discrimi-
natory basis, such as sex, color, ethnicity, and others. He warned against using the media as an instru-
ment for human rights violations as was the case in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Dr. Assaf pointed out that the training session will focus on a variety of matters that will contribute to the
upgrading of the potential of the journalists in establishing world peace and international security, as
stipulated by the UNESCO principles of 1978 on the role of the press in advancing world peace and in-
ternational security and in forestalling racial segregation.

The training session was held in Doha and lasted for five days, from the 4th to the 8th March. A total of
25 media workers from the various Qatari printed and audio-visual media are taking part in this session.

The training course included a number of training sessions which covered the general principles and
concepts of human rights, freedom of expression and opinion according to both the international stan-
dards and the national Qatari legislations, it argued freedom of press in Qatar and other Arab countries
regarding to the applications and legislations, it discussed the impact of the press and the juridical in-
dependence in regards to freedom of expression. it also included examples of juridical actions against
some journalists because of their opinions and professional work. Finally, the participants made a covenant of
honour for the media workers in Qatar.

ACHRS Concluded a Course of Human Rights
in Jadara University

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, in cooperation with Jadara University concluded an
educational course in the field of human rights. The course, which was held in Irbid lasted for three days
from the 11th to the 13 March and was attended by 28 participants.

The course included a number of training sessions about general principles and concepts of human
rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the peaceful settlement of
disputes, the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the right to protection.

The lecturers of these sessions were Attorney Manhal Al-Suidh, Omar Qadoura, Islam Aradayda, and
Miss. Ruba Al-Amad.

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Meeting in Malta prepared for Euromed Summer School

The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network from 22nd to 26th March held a meeting in Malta with
participation of ACHRS representative Mohammad Sarsak. The meeting prepared for the Euro
Mediterranean Summer School. A work plan for the preparation of the Summer School which will be held
in July has been made, and this includes the agenda of the Summer School.

The work plan includes the finalization of the research and outcomes for the summer school, a
memorandum of understanding and the Summer Schools call for participation.

The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network Human Rights Education Working Group aims at
developing, supporting and extending the human rights education agenda within the network, amongst
the members and in the region as a whole.
Canada Fund signs agreement on funding ACHRS project on Academic Freedom in Jordan

Canada Fund and Amman Center for Human Rights Studies signed the final agreement for the granting of funds for the ACHRS project on Academic Freedom in Jordan on March 13. The Canada Fund granted JD 13,050 for the project. The realization of the project will be supported by the Canada Fund.

Before the signing of the agreement, Dr. Assaf, the ACHRS director welcomed the Canada Fund representatives, Mr. Philippe Cousineau and Mona Darwazah, and stressed the fruitful and friendly relation that ACHRS has had with the Fund throughout the last year as well as its generous support of initiatives related to human rights in Jordan. He added that such support is crucial for the region, as there are many difficulties faced by human rights organizations.

Dr. Assaf then gave a brief introduction of the ACHRS activities, highlighting the contribution of volunteer work and international support. Thanks to the Canada Fund support, the ACHRS is capable to conduct in-depth research on the issue of academic freedom in Jordan and to improve its work on the field.

Mr. Cousineau then made a short speech, expressing his appreciation of cooperating with the ACHRS, the high standards and the quantity of the ACHRS work. He highlighted the importance of the regional component of ACHRS training courses and stressed the truly pioneering work of the Center in the field of academic freedom in Jordan.

Mr. Cousineau explained that academic freedom is tightly related to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Thus he concluded that ACHRS with this work on academic freedom is promoting fundamental human rights. He added that the Canada Fund is glad to contribute to the work of ACHRS, as it is very active in promoting human rights, democracy and good governance; fields in which the Canada Fund is very much involved.

He concluded his speech by stressing the Canada Fund's support of civil society organizations as a key to democratic development, and that he therefore is pleased that organizations like ACHRS exists.

Background:

- In December 2006, ACHRS organized a conference in Amman on academic freedom in Arab universities. The conference was attended by 50 professors from various Arab countries.
- In cooperation with the Iraqi League for University Teachers, ACHRS in February 2006 organized a conference on academic freedom in Iraqi universities.
- ACHRS has published two books on academic freedom, one on public freedom and freedom of creativity.
- This year, ACHRS will organize the 3rd conference on academic freedom in Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon.

ACHRS participation in international conference on Civil society and reform in the Arab world

On March 29. and 30., the Foreign Policy Center in London hosted a conference on the issue of "The Role of Civil Society in Advocating Reform in the Arab World". Amman Center for Human Right Studies was represented by the Centre’s director, Dr. Nizam Assaf.

The debates and discussions that took place focused on furthering the cause of civil society and reform in the region.
Seminar: "Death Penalty: the challenges and the alternatives"

International Penal Reform (IPR) in cooperation with ACHRS held a seminar under the title "Death Penalty: the challenges and the alternatives" was held on March 26. in Amman. This seminar is sponsored by the EU.

Dr. Taher Bumadrah chief of Penal Reform International in Middle East and North of Africa said that the aim of death penalty eliminating is not to challenge the Islamic legislation, which states this punishment for some cases, but to raise social awareness within civil society against it. Dr. Bumadrah also said that this seminar target the parliament, the juridical systems, and the NGOs. Moreover he indicated that there no case for political crimes.

The seminar which lasted one day took into consideration "the international standards and the possible alternatives to death penalty in the regional and national legislations; as death penalty in the religions and in international Human rights law, well as the role of civil society organizations in lobbying to eliminate death penalty.

Dr. Nizam Assaf, the director of ACHRS, said that death Penalty has never been and probably will never be a way for deterring and preventing crimes. The participants were from most of the Jordanian society sections, including official institutions, and civil society organizations.

The seminar concluded by establishing a Jordanian Coalition against the death penalty. At the seminar, 50 organizations and personal capacities were present, including academics, lawyers, journalists and known intellectuals. All decided to participate in this coalition.

The final conclusion of the seminar will be published in the next ACHR Newsletter.

Outcome of conference: Safe and Stimulating School

The UNRWA Education Programme Jordan organized the conference "Safe and Stimulating School" on March 22. Included in the conference was a number of presentations to maintain a safe and stimulating school environment, about the role of effective learning in creating such an environment and the role of Teacher/Parent Councils in order to create a safe and stimulating school.

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies was represented at the conference by the centre’s director, Dr. Nizam Assaf. Other organizations were represented, among them Jordan River Foundation, UNICEF, MOE, Greater Amman Municipality and, naturally, UNRWA.

The conference presented case studies from UNRWA schools towards a safe school, the impact of Right to Play on creating a sound environment for stimulation and safety, bullying, child rights at school, child friendly cities and alternatives to corporal punishment at schools. Also, a presentation was given on Violence: Reasons and Solutions from UNRWA Students’ point of view.

The attendants at the conference were divided into different workshops on the issues, and each group came up with recommendations on the various fields.
The Formation of the Iraqi Network for Civil Peace Building Network

The workshop entitled "The role of civil society organizations in building peace in Iraq" has been concluded. It was organized by the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies in cooperation with the Iraqi Youth League and the Monitoring Network of Human Rights in Iraq. The workshop, which lasted for three days (24-26 March 2007), addressed many topics, including: situation of the conflict in Iraq, chances for peace, the concept of civil peace, direct players (individuals, groups, institutions) in the conflicts, the role of civil society organizations and the media in building civil peace in Iraq (capacities, needs, challenges), and work together to build the proposed civil peace building.

Twenty participants from twenty Iraqi NGOs took part in the workshop. The outcome of the workshop was the creation of the network of Iraqi civil society organizations for civil peace established among the organizations participating in the workshop together with other Iraqi civil society organizations applying for membership to the network. The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies undertook co-ordinative and administrative tasks, in order to establish the network.

ACHRS participation in NEEDS conference in Casablanca

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies attended the conference held on 23 - 25 March in Morocco, on election observation in the Middle East and North Africa region. The conference was organized by Network fo Europeans for Electoral and Democracy Support (NEEDS) in cooperation with the Alternative Moroccan Forum for Southern alternative (FMAS).

On the conference, which was held in Casablanca, ACHRS was represented by attourney Dr. Zahaa Al-Majali. He facilitated a workshop on the conference under the title "Elections and the use of money". Here, Attorney Zahaa Al-Majali focused on corruption in election processes and how to deal with the problem.

Also, Attorney Zahaa Al-Majali presented a case study on Jordan to the conference, outlining the work and the role of civil society in election observation, the challenges faced and the solutions found. He also focused on the question of alliances and how to develop alliance partners (authorities, parties, the international community etc.) as well as how to distinguish between peace and conflict situations.

The NEEDS project is funded by the European Commission.

Seminar on independence and impartiality of the judiciary

The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network in cooperation with the Lebanese members of EMHRN Working Group on Justice and the support of the European Commission and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency organized a seminar in Beirut, Lebanon on the 10th and 11th March. The seminar, entitled "Independence and Impartiality of the Judiciary - Lebanon" was attended by ACHRS representative, attourney Raed Al-Athamneh, and the agenda focused among other things on the problems and challenges facing the independence and impartiality of the Lebanese Judiciary and the more general situation for Justice in the South and East of the Mediterranean region.
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 (NAS)
- 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)
- Member of the Arab Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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