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ACHRS becomes affiliated member of FIDH

The 36th general assembly of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) was held in Lisbon on April 19-25. At this general assembly, the ACHRS was adopted as a full member of the federation, which now holds 155 member organizations throughout the world. Earlier, the ACHRS has been a correspondent member, but the general assembly decided to provide the ACHRS with a full membership to the FIDH. The federation was established in 1922 and works to protect victims of human rights violations and prosecute those responsible for these violations on six continents.

The conference elected Mr. Suheer ben Ali the President of the federation. The general assembly also held elections on Vice Presidents. The Director of Gaza City's Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Raji Sourani, was elected as the FIDH Vice President for the third consecutive term, and Turkish lawyer Ty-suf Alatas was elected as Vice President for the first time. Alatas is president of the Ankara-based Human Rights Association (IHD).
ACHRS hosts meeting with Danish Institute for Human Rights

Tuesday April 17th, Amman Center for Human Rights Studies bid a delegation from the Danish Institute for Human Rights welcome. The Danish delegation, headed by the Danish Institute's director, Mr. Morten Kjaerum, expressed their gratitude for the invitation and their desire to explore the possibilities of further cooperation with Amman Center for Human Rights Studies.

Mr. Kjaerum wished to receive an overview of the ACHRS activities and priorities, which was provided by the ACHRS director, Dr. Nizam Assaf. Dr. Assaf explained that Amman Center for Human Rights Studies have organized more than 200 training courses in the Arab world on human rights issues during the centre's 8 years of existence. Besides that, more than 200 training courses have been held in Iraq in partnership with local organizations. In all, more than 12,000 people have attended these courses.

Dr. Assaf underlined the importance of academic freedom in the Arab world and outlined the ACHRS project for academic freedom in the region. This was applauded by Mr. Kjaerum who expressed his concern of education as one of the most important means of democratic reforms, raising human rights awareness and independent thought.

The Danish delegation also expressed their admiration of the work conducted by the ACHRS in the field of election monitoring. As part of the Arab Election Network, ACHRS has monitored elections in Mauritania, Yemen, Palestine, Bahrain and the UAE. A report on these elections will be published by the ACHRS shortly, Dr. Assaf added. This year, ACHRS are to monitor the parliamentary elections in Jordan.

Mr. Kjaerum expressed keen interest in the ACHRS' consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council. Dr. Assaf explained that the ACHRS will prepare a shadow report on human rights in Jordan, possibly in cooperation with other organizations in the Jordanian Alliance for Civil Society. This was applauded by Mr. Kjaerum as an important focal point, and at the end of the meeting the two organizations' directors promised each other to develop cooperation on this important field.

The eighth "Election Observer" Journal

Arab Network for Elections Monitoring has published its eighth "Election Observer" Journal, April 2007. The journal is specialized in the field of monitoring the municipal, the parliamentary and the presidential elections, which occurs in the Arab region.

The journal includes 10 chapters: a report of the presidential elections in Mauritania, which ended on the twenty fifth of March with 53 % of the votes for Sedy Weled Ashaikh Abdullah. These elections are considered to be the last step of the leap towards empowering the society after the Banish of Muawiyah Weled Atayh in 2005.

In addition, it included a report about the electoral movement in Jordan for the municipal and the parliamentary elections in July. It also analyses the electoral procedures for the third round of the Qatari municipal elections. Moreover, the preparations for the legislative elections in all of: Algeria 17 May 2007, Morocco 6 July 2007, and Syria in the mid of April 2007. Finally, a report analyses the role of women in these elections and a comparison of the Arab role in the occidental elections.

For further information, you can visit www.intekhabat.org
Human Rights Education Summer School 2007

In many countries, the human rights movement is confronted with a challenge which is to recruit a new generation of young volunteers who are conscious of their responsibilities and involve in the defense of the human rights.

The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) is a network of 82 human rights organizations, institutions and individuals based in 30 countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region, which has been established in 1997 in response to the Barcelona Declaration. The EMHRN promotes networking, cooperation and development of partnerships between human rights NGOs, activists and wider civil society in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The “2007 Summer School” will be held in Limassol, Cyprus from the 23rd to the 29th of July 2007. It is a key project for the EMHRN with leading NGOs working in the field of Human Rights Education. The focus will be on methodologies to facilitate human rights learning in youth related environments in the formal and informal sectors. The participants will be those who work with youth on a regular basis – though not necessarily in human rights learning. The added value will be in bringing together those who are within and those who are not within the Human Rights community.

Designed as training for trainers, the Summer School aims at promoting the dissemination of Human Rights culture and human rights values through active education activities addressing young people. It seeks to empower those who work with youth with the tools and the ideas behind human rights learning on a number of levels.

The last overall aim of the Summer School is to provide an opportunity to build a sustainable network in the field of Human Rights Education.

1. Objectives of the Summer School
The summer school aims to:
- Creating and building a better understanding of Human Rights Education among participants in an engaging and empowering manner.
- Providing resources and materials for use by participants during and after the Summer School with a focus on the Euromed region and its human rights mechanisms.
- Exploring human rights education methodologies and tools to be developed and delivered at a regional and local level.
- Facilitating the development of personal action plans.

It also intends to:
- Support capacity building in human rights education on organizational and personal levels to foster greater understanding and delivery of human rights education activities organizationally and personally and within the Network as a whole.
- Share ideas and methodologies used in human rights education for the purposes of promoting and delivering human rights values and human rights education approaches in the Euromed region.
- Explore ways of co-operation within the field of human right education in the Euromed region, following the outcomes of the Summer School.

2. Participants: assortment criteria
The summer school addresses a wide range of individuals but will be mainly focusing on young defenders of human rights and also members of NGOs working with young people.

Three criteria are obligatory:
- The participants’ age must be between 18-35 years.
- They must be competent in at least one of two languages: English and Arabic.
- They must have been active in human rights NGO/CSO working with youth.

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Other valuable criteria for the selection of the candidates:

Formal education:
- Teachers who are inclined to work on human rights related issues – civics, history, social science, literature – that is, those who have a potential to integrate human rights learning in their regular teaching.
- Teachers who are involved in extra curriculum activities which have a human rights connection.

Informal education:
- Trainers in human rights education from EMHRN member NGOs.
- Individuals working with youth groups.
- Members/guides/counsellors in Human Rights NGOs.
- Members/guides/counsellors within youth NGOs.

Teacher trainers:
- Those who train teachers and possess the above characteristics.

Individuals working in Human Rights Education:
- Involved with EMHRN member organizations.
- Involved with non-EMHRN member Human Rights NGOs.
- Involved in non-human rights organizations but with potential for human rights work/involvement such as a public or private school, a youth organization or an academic institution.

Individuals with a demonstrable Human Rights interest / experience / knowledge.
A minimum familiarity is necessary.

For more information and for application go on:
http://www.euromedrights.net/pages/52

ACHRS Concluded a Course of Human Rights for Mafraq Youth Center

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, in cooperation with Mafraq Youth Center, concluded an educational course in the field of human rights. The course, held from April 10. to 12., was attended by 28 participants.

The course included a number of training sessions about general principles and concepts of human rights, the International Declaration on Human Rights, CEDAW, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

The lecturers of these sessions were Attorney Raed Al-Athamneh, Attorney Essa Al-Qallab, and Attorney Murad Al-Faqeeh.

ACHRS has organized a total of 237 training courses in the field of human rights and they were attended by 6809 participants from all over the kingdom and Arab World.
Report published by ACHRS on election in the Arab World – first of its kind

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies now publishes the report "Elections in the Arab World 2006: a Human Rights Evaluation". It is the first time that elections in Arab countries have been systematically and comparatively analyzed from a human rights perspective.

The report, prepared by the researchers Elena Moroni and Sofie Bille from the ACHRS International Relations Unit, analyzes the parliamentary elections that have taken place in 2006 in six Arab countries: Palestine, Yemen, Bahrain, Mauritania and the United Arab Emirates. It also investigates the relationship between elections, democracy and human rights. The focus of the report is on investigating the level of compliance of such elections to international standards and human rights principles. In fact, it uses indicators as freedom of expression, association, movement, civil and political rights, women and youth participation as fundamental principles that define democratic elections.

Founding of the ENAR
The report is a result of some of the activities of the ACHRS regarding election monitoring. In May 2006, the Center established the Arab Election Network in the Arab World (ENAR). It seeks to work as an indigenous Arab alternative to foreign imposed codes of election monitoring, involving local independent NGO’s in the electoral processes.

In particular, the network was established in order to monitor the electoral processes in the Arab countries, with special focus on the performance of governments, media and political parties and to publish detailed reports on the neutrality and fairness of the elections. ACHRS has also launched a website focusing on elections in the Arab world (www.intekhabat.org).

Throughout the report it is clear that elections alone are not a sign of fulfillment of human rights in itself. Political systems claiming adherence to democratic principles must manifest and aspire towards the attainment of political, as well as social and economic, democracy.

Democracy needed
Human rights can be used as indicators for evaluating democratic practices; there is, therefore, mutual dependence between these and democracy. The whole range of human rights can ideally be realized only in a democracy; but democracy does not always guarantee the protection and enforcement of human rights principles.

It is worth highlighting this important assumption: it is true that human rights need democracy, as it is equally true that democracy does not always guarantee their fulfillment. Therefore, this report enquires whether the elections that have been held by the countries cited above can be taken as a genuine expression of democracy, and whether they have contributed to the improvement of the level of protection given to human rights principles.

At first, the report briefly introduces some principles of democracy and defines the meaning of democratic elections. Then, it moves to analyze each of the elections that have taken place, according to the indicators just cited above. It provides a general overview of the situation of elections in the Arab world and an insight on the situation of each of the six countries taken into account.

Role of evaluation
The outcome of this research highlights that elections should not be seen as an end, but as a means to promote democracy and human rights. It is thus not the number of elections held that is of importance, rather the process by which they take place and the following political situation that reflects a country's genuine wish for democracy.

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The international community, hence, must evaluate if the election-outcome reflects the different intellectual, social, economic and political spectrum, or if it institute the control of an elite belonging to any of these groups. Political reform should not be measured in terms of how many elections are held, but by evaluating the human rights situation in the phase before the election, during the election and especially after the election.

Foreign countries have the responsibility to push for democracy, however, not merely by cutting aid as this often have the worst effects in the country in question. But by enlightening and giving priority to education, health, vulnerable groups, social and cultural reform, and not just pushing for periodical elections, which we have seen can be used as a façade.

ACHRS publishes the second report on Freedom of the Media in the Arab Countries 2006

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies have published the second report on Freedom of the Media in the Arab Countries. This report is prepared by ten experts and journalists from different Arab countries.

The first chapter analyzed a report with statistics about the main indicators of freedom of the media in the Arab countries. The second report discussed the Arab countries reports. An attached report explained the work frame, which the reports were built on. The reports included all of the following countries: Kuwait, Qatar, Mauritania, United Arab Emirates, Palestine, Somalia, Oman, Lebanon, Morocco, Bahrain, Jordan, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen.

A summary of the report in English can be read at:
http://www.achrs.org/arabic/FR_E.pdf

ACHRS lunches a Website for Monitoring the Academic Freedom in Jordan

ACHRS lunches a Website for Monitoring the Academic Freedom in the Jordanian universities. The name of the site is Academic Freedom Observer in the Arab world. This website includes a study about the academic freedom in the Jordanian universities. It also includes the activities, conferences, articles and opinions, media statements, reports and researches, complaints, conventions and covenants, resources, and finally an electronic library for academic freedom.

The Canada Fund who continuously sponsor governmental and non-governmental institutions sponsor this initiative.

It is noteworthy that ACHRS had organized a conference about academic freedom in the Arab universities in 2004. The center also organized a conference about academic freedom in the Iraqi universities in 2006. Moreover, the center plans to organize another one under the same title but in the Middle East, Egypt and Sudan.
ACHRS participated in the EMHRN workshop about women and gender

ACHRS, represented by attorney Islam Al-Radaidah, participated in the meeting on human rights. This meeting, which was held on April 3-4 2007 in Al- Rabat in Morocco, was organized by EMHRN.

The meeting focused on the woman rights and the necessity of the hard work to protect their rights. It also discussed the equality between men and women to give the woman the ability to become a leader and take responsibilities to contribute in building her society in the Euro-med region.

This meeting is considered the first of its kind in the Euro-Med, the Middle East, and the Arab World. The countries represented at the meeting are: Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, France, Sweden and Finland. Madam Eva Nostrom, the vice president of EMHRN, attended the meeting.

Concluding on the meeting, they agreed on a number of activates in the field of studies about integrate women from Middle East and North Africa in EMHRN. They also decided to establish a training brief-case about the equality conception that will target Human Rights Organizations and civil society Organizations.

In the end of the meeting, attorney Islam Al-Radaidah, a member of women studies unit in ACHRS, was selected as the director for the workshop about woman and the social work for the year 2008.

ACHRS concluded an Educational Course of Human Rights in Princess Taghrid Secondary School

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, in cooperation with Princess Taghrid Secondary School, concluded an educational course in human rights. 64 students attended the course, which lasted for three days, from April 10th to 12th.

The course included a number of training sessions about the general principles and concepts of human rights, the International Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration of the Right of the Child, and the right to participate in the social life.

Mr. Ali Almasha'leh, the director of education in Amman Third District, who attended the conclusion session, emphasized the important role of civil society in raising the public awareness of human rights. He also appreciated the efforts of ACHRS in organizing these courses for the educational sector.

ACHRS has organized a total of 238 training course in the field of human rights and 6855 participants from all over the kingdom and Arab World attended them.
ACHRS and Madaba institute for development concluded "The Public Discussion on Small Arms" seminar

Madaba institute for development, in co-operation with ACHRS held a seminar under the title "The Public Discussion on Small Arms." This seminar was held in Al-Quds Hotel.

Mr. Ali Al-Zainat, the director of the institute and the representative of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), talked about the importance of the public discussion in showing the dangers of using or dealing with small arms in threatening people's lives. He also called governments to vote for the international convention, which the Secretary General called for too.

On the other hand, Mr. Zaha’ Al-Majali, the coordinator of Combat of Light Arms and Small Weapons Unit in ACHRS, discussed the significant role of ACHRS in promoting Human Rights and in exposing the dangers of small arms.

The deputy Mr. Hatem Al-Sarairah discussed the cultural heritage for this phenomenon since the Ottoman Empire. He said that the use of small arms was needed for protecting proprieties and providing security, but afterwards it became an expression of masculinity as it was a shame at that time not to hold a weapon. Unfortunately, it expanded to our days, making it a terrifying phenomenon.

Colonel Ibrahim Al-Shobaki, security leader in the middle Amman district, analyzed its legality. He indicated the procedures that police takes towards any person who uses or deals with small arms. Moreover, he emphasized the necessity of cooperation within civil society in order to eliminate this phenomenon.

Dr. Zuher Al-Tahat from Petra University discussed the media's part in raising the awareness of the dangers of small arms whether in public or private occasions.

Through the seminar, a discussion ran between the civil society institutions and NGOs and the lecturers. At the end of the seminar, the participants filled a form to be delivered to the minister of foreign affairs in Jordan to participate in signing the convention on small arms and light weapons.

Participation from ACHRS in Human Rights activities in both Irbid and Al-Baqa

Amman center for Human Rights studies participated in two lectures in the field of human rights, the first was in cooperation with Al-Baqa friends’ center and it was held in Al-Yarmuk club. The lecture which was given by Mr. Mohammad Sarsak, from the youth and students unit in the center, talked about education for every person. This lecture was attended by a number of attendance from different local society spectrums.

The second lecture was held in Irbid and with cooperation with Dair Abi Saeed center. The lecture which was given by attorney Manhal Al-Sayedah, from the training unit in the center, talked about the international convention on the right of the child and the rights related to their protection against all kinds of abuse. This lecture was attended by members of the center and a number of the society ladies.
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)
- 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 Coalition 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
- Establishing member of the Arab Federation of Worker’s Education Associations
- 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

www.achrs.org