ACHRS has had a productive first three months of 2008.

The year began with the first meeting of the board of directors of the Arab Association for Democracy in Amman. (see page 4)

This was followed by the signing of a joint cooperation agreement between ACHRS and the Mauritanian Society for Sustainable Development. (see page 4)

We received visits from a team of researchers at Harvard University, from members of the Danish Foreign Ministry, from the Canadian Embassy and from the Stanley Foundation. (see page 5)

We have also conducted a training course for judges, in cooperation with the Jordanian Judicial Institute on procedures of litigation and ways of activating them. (see pages 6-7)

We conducted a training course for journalists in Qatar, organised by the National Center for Education and Academic Rights and United Nations Qatar elections, entitled University held an 'fair coverage of the elections'. (see page 8) on Academic Freedom in Arab Universities. (see page 10) This also led to preparing documents for the Universal Periodic Review. (see page 9)

As far as the International Relations Unit is concerned, we have submitted funding applications for courses to conducted a training educate prison officers on human rights, to train journalists on freedom of information (see page 9) and for a 2nd training of trainers course on women's rights. We are currently writing a report ‘Academic Freedom in on the death penalty and Iraqi Universities’ we have been assisting (see page 10) the center in it's preparation for the highly successful conference on Academic Freedom in programme to restructure Arab Universities. We itself and upgrade it’s have also been involved regulations, based on the in advocacy on behalf of Institutional System. (see networks we are members page 5). of and are soon to attend the first Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights in Geneva.

In February ACHRS also published a book entitled 'Academic Freedom in Iraqi Universities' (see page 10)

In March, ACHRS began a comprehensive Academic Freedom in programme to restructure Arab Universities. We itself and upgrade it’s have also been involved regulations, based on the in advocacy on behalf of Institutional System. (see networks we are members page 5). of and are soon to attend the first Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights in Geneva.
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First meeting of the board of directors of the Arab Association for Democracy

In an atmosphere impregnated with vitality and feelings of full responsibility, the Board of Directors of the Arab Association for Democracy held its first meeting in the Jordanian capital of Amman on 13 January 2008.

Secretary General of the Arab association for Democracy, his Excellency Dr. Abdul Karim El Iryani, opened the meeting with an address in which he welcomed those attending and submitted a general report on the activities of the Association since its establishment in Sana’a on 12 June 2007, including the First Annual Conference of the Association held on democracy in Sana’a on 22 August 2007.

Dr El Iryani confirmed that the documents that were approved by the constituent assembly included the Arab Covenant for Democracy and the Articles of Association of the Arab Association for democracy. He said that the conferees discussed the final draft of the articles of association.

He added that the conferees have also discussed the working plan of the Arab Association for Democracy for the forthcoming four years and the details pertaining to the holding of its second annual conference on democratic culture in Beirut in October 2008.

ON the basis of the reports submitted by the first conference held in Sana’a on freedom of expression, the democratic culture in the family and in educational and social institutions, the specifications of good governance, and the empowerment of women, the Board of Directors decided to hold seminars and to carry out activities aimed at disseminating democratic culture in the constitutional and electoral domains, in addition to the freedom of expression and the right of political participation.

A number of resolutions and recommendations were issued by the conferees at the meeting also decided to hold four seminars on the topics of citizenry, democracy and development, transitional justice, and transparency and the circulation of data.

The Arab Association for Democracy expressed the hope that the Arab World would follow the path of reform and peaceful democratic transformation so as to consolidate and deepen political participation and awareness of the importance of the democratic means and methods so as to provide immunity for the individual and society and enhance their competence as well as the role of civil society in its capacity as a strong partner in the democratic transformation.


Joint Cooperation agreement between ACHRS and the Mauritanian Society for Sustainable Development

President of the Mauritanian Society for Sustainable Development, Dr Muhammad Old Seedati, has visited the premises of the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies [ACHRS].

The two sides discussed bilateral relations between the two establishments and the ways and means needed to consolidate and upgrade these relations in a manner that would be useful to the democratic process. They also discussed how to coordinate their stands toward the challenges that are encountering the civil society organizations in the two fraternal countries.

Dr Seedati affirmed the depth of the fraternal relations existing between the Jordanian and Mauritanian civil society organizations. He also expressed his appreciation and respect for the status which the civil society organizations in Jordan have reached.

The meeting was concluded by signing a joint cooperation agreement between the Mauritanian Society for Sustainable Development and the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies [ACHRS]. The aim of the agreement is to consolidate joint coordination and cooperation between the two sides in order to give momentum to human rights, upgrade the techniques of public work and collective voluntary awareness, and raise the standards and capabilities of the personnel of the civil society organizations.

The two sides asserted the importance of the exchange of expertise in the field of the exchange of information and the training of personnel. They also asserted the importance of continued contacts between the two sides and the exchange of publications and visits.
Meetings at the Center

Meeting with researchers from Harvard University
An academic delegation composed of three researchers from the human rights program at Harvard University visited Amman Centre for Human Rights Studies, where they met the staff of the Centre in the framework of joint cooperation to prepare a study on the right to housing.

The importance of this study stems from the controversy raised about the law of owners and tenants. The visitor delegation met a number of the Center’s researchers, the experts and specialists in the subject of housing and the law of the owners and tenants.

Meeting with the Danish Delegation
Dr Nizam Assaf, the director of the center, met the Danish delegation, which is visiting Jordan and includes senior advisers at the Danish Foreign Ministry. They discussed issues of concern to civil society organizations and they way mechanisms work, as well as ways to develop relations of partnership between them and government institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Meeting with the Canadian Embassy
Members of the Canadian Embassy visited ACHR to talk with Dr. Nizam Assaf about human rights in Jordan and issues affecting the region.

Meeting with the Stanley Foundation
Matt Martin. Programme Officer at the Stanley Foundation visited ACHR to talk about a conference on nuclear non-proliferation, which the Stanley Foundation is organizing, as well as to discuss human rights issues in Jordan with Dr. Nizam Assaf.

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHERS) begins restructuring itself

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHERS) has launched an ambitious program to introduce the institutional system in restructuring, formation of the working team, the distribution of roles and duties, identification of powers and duties, upgrading of the strategic planning, advancing the skills of the ACHR staff and volunteers, and the activation of the ACHR bodies and departments.

The process consists of four phases:

1. **Preparations**
   - Lasts one month during which data will be collected, needs would be evaluated, questionnaires would be drafted, analysis would be made, and a workshop would be held to draft the broad-lines of the laws and regulations and the strategic plan.

2. **Formation of the General Assembly**
   - After the workshop, the General Assembly would be formed, the departments and bodies of the ACHR would be named on scientific basis, a working team of the ACHR staff and volunteers would be formed and their skills would be developed through training sessions run according to modern training techniques.

3. **Follow-up process**
   - The third phase will continue until the end of this year, 2008, with several techniques applied in the follow-up process, including the follow-up questionnaires and monthly meetings.

4. **Evaluation**
   - At the end of 2008, an evaluation will be made for this process after preparing an evaluation report to be discussed at a meeting or workshop of the General Assembly of the ACHR.

All the staff of the ACHR, the volunteers, and members of the ACHR bodies and departments will participate in this process.
The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies [ACHRS] in cooperation with the Jordanian Judicial Institute has held a seminar on the procedures of litigation and ways of activating them. The president of the Jordanian Judicial Institute, Judge Mansour El Hadidi, welcomed the 25 male and female judges and participants in the seminar.

In his welcoming remarks, Judge El Hadidi said that the aim of the seminar is to identify the obstacles, if there were any, and ways of averting them, and to discuss the procedures of litigation, particularly the reasons for the slow process of litigation and how to overcome it. He added that the seminar will also try to determine the role of the partners in the judicial process in this connection, namely, the judge, the lawyer, the citizen and the legislator.

Judge El Hadidi explained that holding this seminar in cooperation with the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies [ACHRS] falls within the context of the implementation by the Jordanian Judicial Institute of one of the focuses of the strategy for the development of the judiciary, which could be done by strengthening cooperation with the civil society organizations.

Addressing the seminar, the Director General of the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies [ACHRS], Dr. Nizam Assaf, paid tribute to the efforts that were made by the Jordanian Judicial Institute, describing it as one of the pioneering national institutions in the field of training and following up of everything that is new, particularly in the field of human rights.

Dr. Assaf pointed out that the Jordanian Judicial Institute has introduced the subject of human rights to the training courses of the institute and has held numerous activities and events on human rights and
undamental liberties.

He said that this in fact, constituted a qualitative contribution by the institute and it was warmly welcomed by the civil society organizations, particularly those involved in human rights activities.

Dr. Nizam Assaf pointed out that the right of litigation and the right to complete and effective justice have become one of the most important human rights at the present time. The Jordanian judicial system has made significant strides for the sake of shortening the long period of litigation, minimizing the slow procedures, and expediting the judicial process.

He said that the aim of all this was to guarantee that rights are given to their lawful owners and that the confidence of citizens in the Jordanian judiciary, which we are proud of, is strengthened. It is enough to mention in this regard the method of managing lawsuits and the method of mediation.

On the first session, Judge Muhammad al-Tarawneh spoke about the ways and means that are needed to upgrade the judicial procedures. He pointed out that slow justice is a kind of injustice and that complete and effective justice is one of the characteristics of the advanced societies, because it helps create an environment that attracts investors and that undoubtedly gives momentum to the wheel of the economy.

He added that needless to say; before they start any investment, many investors inquire about the judicial procedures in force at a certain country. Complete and effective justice raises the level of satisfaction and contentment in the targeted groups, namely, the masses; because it makes them feel that the judicial system is the last resort to resolve any dispute which may break out.

Dr El Tarawneh said that in order to achieve this goal, we need abundant funds and efforts and the upgrading of the judicial procedures, including the alleviation of the state of judicial congestion. We should also keep pace with modernism and the contemporary world as both have become indispensable and we should keep pace with them so as to restore rights to their lawful owners in the shortest and easiest ways.

The judge in charge of managing the civil lawsuits, Judge Waleed Kanakriyah, spoke in the second session about the management of the lawsuits. He said that the goal of the management is to minimize the administrative and judicial procedures which used to delay the court decisions on lawsuits.

He pointed out that among the procedures followed in the management of the lawsuits were the fixing of specific dates for each procedure of the lawsuit, control of the subsequent procedures, and scheduling the subsequent procedures within the context of speed, necessity, and the expectation of completing the procedures in the specific period of time.

Judge Kanakriyah quoted statistics that the management of the lawsuits has succeeded in minimizing time and effort and led to speedy court decisions on the lawsuits.

Addressing the third session was Judge Suhair El Tubasi, director of the Mediation Department. She said that mediation was a modern technique used as an alternative for the purpose of conflict resolution. She said that mediation was one of the techniques of the judicial solutions which were specified by law, and that it saved time, effort, money and provided secrecy for the litigants because it used the method of quiet and conscientious dialogue.

Attorney Zuha’ El Majali, the Legal Advisor of the ACHRS, submitted a working paper on the role of the legal profession in activating the judicial procedures. He pointed out that the lawyer has a great role to play in achieving justice because he is the second face of justice and because he can offer legal counsel and represent the litigants at court, so as to achieve the principle of balance, equality, and defense of litigants for the sake of serving justice and humanity.

He pointed out that one of the most important duties entrusted to the lawyer for the activation of the judicial procedures is to seriously and truthfully interact with the decisions of the court and the public prosecution.

He explained that this was necessary for facilitating justice and simplifying the procedures by compliance with the periods of time fixed by the judge and by participation with the judicial institution in working to apply the procedural legal provisions, to submit petitions, lawsuits and clear and proper legal defense free from any ambiguity or evasion, for the purpose facilitating the judicial procedures.

El Mjali said that it was the duty of the Jordanian Bar Association to consolidate and deepen the provisions of the law on the practice of the legal profession, whether on matters related to the profession or to the Jordanian Bar Association as a sacred professional beacon.
The work of the four-day training session on the “fair coverage of the elections,” organized by the National Committee of Human Rights in cooperation with the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies [ACHRS] was concluded at the premises of the Committee in Doha, the capital city of Qatar.

A total of 40 male and female participants representing the various audio-visual and printed media in Qatar participated in the session. The aim of the session was to acquaint the participants with the concept of fair coverage of elections. It also sought to acquaint them with the ways that should be followed in order to guarantee free elections. The session also aimed to explain to them the ways and means of how this coverage could be merged with their media work.

The session covered a number of subjects and focuses pertaining to the international criteria of fair elections, the election systems and the criteria for formulating them. It also covered ways and means on how to evaluate the election platforms and the working media plan for covering the elections. Moreover, the session covered practical training on the writing of fair election reports and evaluation reports, as well as the ethical responsibilities of the media.

At the conclusion of the session, the participants came out with a draft honor charter asserting their eagerness to guarantee fair and free elections that can reflect the views and aspirations of the voters. They noted that the honor charter should guarantee freedom of opinion and expression, pluralism and non-discrimination.

The participants affirmed their compliance with all the provisions of the draft charter. They said that they will strive to make the media workers of Qatar comply with the charter. The participants also asserted the need for educating the voters on their rights, informing them of the dates of the elections, and providing them with the necessary information on the candidates and their platforms in order to guarantee better opportunities for the most favorable choice and to seek accuracy, objectivity, fairness, and clear techniques in media coverage, together with using clear and declared criteria and conditions for political advertisements, while drawing the line between the edited material and the political declarations.

According to the draft charter approved by the participants, the importance of the respect of the privacy of individuals was stressed. The draft charter also affirmed the need for refraining from assaulting this privacy by using swearing words or slander. It also asserted the need for refraining from arousing clannish prejudices or discrimination on the basis of sex, color or religion or instigating violence and disturbances. The draft charter also affirmed the commitment, whenever public opinion polls are taken, to making reference to the source of information, the funding party, the methodology used, and all the information pertaining to it.

The training was carried out by a team of trainers, including Dr Nizam Assaf and journalists Yahya Shuqayr and Majdi Hilmi, in addition to the administrative team.
A workshop on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS) conduct a workshop on the "Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council"

The workshop was held in the ACHRS hall on 9th February, 2008.

Taking into consideration that the state of Jordan is going to be under review in the first session of the UPR in 2009, the ACHRS organized and chaired this workshop and informed the participants about it.

The participants who attended the workshop enhanced their knowledge about this new mechanism for the protection and promotion of Human Rights of the UN Human Rights Council.

Moreover, the participants discussed what the most substantial ways are of contributing to this new mechanism, as NGOs, and analyzed the potential opportunities and constraints surrounding the UPR.

The role of the media in strengthening human rights

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies [ACHRS], in cooperation with the Jordanian News Agency [Petra] held at the Petra Training Center a specialized training workshop entitled: "the role of the media in strengthening human rights."

The workshop sought to acquaint the Petra media personnel with the concepts of human rights and the role of these personnel in the protection of these rights, as well as enhancing the technical and scientific skills and competence of Petra personnel in the field of integrating human rights with their news work.

During the two-day workshop, the participants discussed the sources, systems and criteria of human rights and the right to freedom of opinion and expression, with emphasis on the role of media workers in influencing the national legislation for the purpose of guaranteeing the protection of this right. The participants also discussed the mechanisms of protection and defence of news men and media workers.

Assistant Director General for Press Affairs, of the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, Hamid El Abbadi, said : Jordan is one of the pioneering countries that have endorsed the international conventions on the protection of human rights and integrated these conventions into their national legislation.

He added: The Jordanian News Agency, Petra, asserts the importance of maintaining contacts with the various civil society organizations.

In remarks he made at the opening of the workshop, Dr Nizam Assaf, said that the workshop was held out of the belief in the role of the ACHRS and its mission in disseminating the culture of human rights throughout the ranks of Jordanian citizens of all sectors, and in particular within the journalists and media personnel.

In the first session of the workshop, Palestinian expert on human rights and journalist, Majed El’Aroury, made a presentation on the basic concepts of human rights and the development of these rights in the various phases of history, focusing his presentation on the most prominent rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In the second session, El’Aroury discussed with the participants the role of the newsman in influencing the national legislation to guarantee that they are compatible with freedom of opinion and expression.
In February 2008, ACHRS published its book detailing academic freedom in Iraqi universities. This book was the collective publication of twenty-one respected academics and was edited by ACHRS director, Dr. Nizam Assaf.

The publication of the book is a follow-up to the two seminars on academic freedom in Iraqi universities, initiated by ACHRS, held in Baghdad in 2005 and Amman in 2006.

There are five sections to the book, each covering a different area of academic freedom in Iraq. The first section deals with academic freedom concepts and the importance of it. In this section the issues of academic freedom and protection of academic freedom in the Arab region and the realities and obstacles standing in the way of academic research in Arab universities, academic freedom in Arab universities; the Syrian model and the principle of the independence of Arab universities.

The third section deals with the realities and environment of academic freedom in Iraqi universities. Issues discussed here include academic freedom in Iraq under occupation and intellectual and academic freedom.

The fourth section deals with aspirations and horizons in academic freedom in Iraqi universities. Topics include; the role of Egyptian clerics and academics in the protection of Iraqi academic freedom, a study on freedom and university action in Iraqi universities, academic freedom and the pattern of good governance in university administration, case studies on freedom in Iraqi universities, the intellectual imbalance between university and society and a proposal for the consolidation of the term ‘academic freedom’.

The fifth section focuses on academic freedom in higher education. This section focuses on higher education in Iraq and the Arab world, the reality of scientific research in Iraqi universities and obstacles standing in the way of this, higher education in Iraq and questions of whether it can keep pace with the changes and challenges of the future and the impact of academic freedom in promoting higher education.

The book also includes the Baghdad-Amman Declaration of Academic Freedom in Iraqi Universities and the opening speech of Dr. Kheireddine Haseeb to the conference, entitled, ‘Academic Freedom in Iraqi Universities’.

If you would like to receive a copy of this book, please contact the Amman Center, contact details listed at the end.
This conference was a gathering of academics from universities in thirteen different countries in the Arab world, as well as representatives from the University of Malaya, Malaysia and the European University in St. Petersburg, Russia, as well as members of the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR) and the Network for Education and Academic Rights (NEAR).

The aims of the conference were; to discuss the realities of academic freedom in Arab universities and the ways of stimulating research, to identify the global experiments of academic freedom and how these experiments can be utilised in the Arab world and to recognise obstructions to academic freedom in the Arab world and mechanisms to overcome them.

The first day began with introductory speeches made by Dr. Reddy of United Nations University, Dr. John Akker of NEAR, Dr. Nizam Assaf of ACHRS and his Excellency Professor Omar Shdefat, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Jordan.

Session one was an overview of academic freedom issues; this was chaired by Dr. Ameen Mashaqbeh with Dr. Reddy speaking again, along with Professor Ahmad Barcawi of Damascus University in Syria and Mr. Robert Quinn, from SAR.

In session two, case studies on academic freedom from different world regions were discussed. This was chaired by Dr. Ali Mahafzah of Jordan University. The first speaker was Dmitry Dubrovskyi of the European University in St. Petersburg, who spoke of the problems faced in Russia. He was followed by Dr. Terence Gomez of the University of Malaya, who spoke of issues in Malaysia and then Dr. John Akker, who spoke of the situation in the UK.

The third session was an overview of academic freedom in the Arab world. This was chaired by Dr. Roula Zoubiane of the Lebanese University. ACHRS presented it's report on academic freedom in the Arab countries and this was followed by talks from Dr. Mhammed Malki from Qadi Ayyad University in Morocco about academic freedom in the Magreb and from Dr. Hanan Salem of Ain Shams University, who talked about academic freedom in Egypt.

The fourth session looked at case studies on academic freedom in different Arab universities. This session was chaired by Dr. Madhi Jaber of Salah El-Deen University in Iraq and featured presentations from; Dr. Ahmed Thabet of Cairo University on hindrances in Egypt, Dr. Abdul Majeed Sweilem from the University of Bir Zeit in Palestine who discussed academic freedom in Palestine, Dr. Faiza Al-Basha of Al-Fatih University, who discussed academic freedom in Libya, Dr Jalal Deen Tayeb of Khartoum University, who discussed academic freedom in Sudan and Dr. Hoda Al-Mutawa of Bahrain University, who discussed academic freedom in Bahrain.

The fifth session continued this theme, with Dr. Nizam Barakat of Jordan taking over as chairperson. Dr. Medhi Mabrouk of the University of Tunis began the discussion, taking about 50 years of Tunisian higher education. He was followed by Dr. Omar Is'hak of Taiz University, who elaborated on the reality of academic freedom in Yemen. Dr Lubna Akrush, of Balqaa University, then talked of academic freedom in Jordan. Dr. Marie Ghantous of the Lebanese University then concluded the day by explaining about the situation in Lebanon.

The second day began with Robert Quinn summarizing the previous day and discussing strategy for developing academic freedom.

The participants were then split into two working groups. In the first working group session they discussed an example of a theoretical institutional problem and possible solutions to this problem. The second session of working groups looked at a theoretical individual problem.

The last session of the day, and indeed of the conference, was a plenary session discussing all the ideas suggested and participants drafted a list of recommendations for academic freedom in the Arab world.
Recommendations of the Conference on Academic Freedoms in Arab universities

1. To develop legislation and policies relating to Arab universities with the aim of improving government and private universities and strengthening academic freedom. This includes efforts at implementing already existing legislative schemes, provided that these schemes guarantee the principles and development of academic freedom.

2. To upgrade academic curricula and advance educational programs to ensure that students who graduate from universities may have the qualifications necessary to meet the requirements of society, national development and the labor markets according to the highest international accreditations and technical criteria.

3. To grant universities an important role in formulating the general educational policies, including granting universities autonomy over the subjects and courses to be taught; fixing transparent academic and ethical criteria for the promotion of university staff; formulating the policies of acceptance of students; and guaranteeing an equality of opportunity for acceptance in universities and higher educational institutes.

4. To combat the various aspects of corruption, particularly those related to the academic field, and to encourage the fair implementation of laws and policies to combat all forms of corruption.

5. To deepen the link amongst the Arab and foreign scientific associations for the purpose of upgrading and exchanging educational and scientific expertise and skills, and to recognize and safeguard for this purpose the freedom of movement, travel and work.

6. To develop the role of associations, societies and bodies to which the members of the teaching staff in Arab universities are affiliated, so they might better contribute to the improvement of the scientific and social conditions of their members and of society.

7. To identify the funding necessary to develop scientific research centers and specialized institutes in Arab universities, operating under a free scientific and research climate conducive to reaching the highest quality professional, objective, and scientific results.

8. To avoid intrusion of politics into matters pertaining to the curricula, acceptance and advancement of students, the appointment of the members of the teaching staff, including recognizing the importance of the principles of quality, honesty and transparency in appointment of members of the teaching staff, including by developing the autonomy of Arab universities in matters of scientific, administrative and financial governance and operation.

9. To develop a comprehensive database of the laws regulating higher education, research and academic freedom in Arab countries, as well as the statistics related to manpower development, with all its indicators and elements (i.e. population, education, rates of illiteracy, the networks of government, private and foreign universities, and manpower resources), including for this purpose through the use of modern information technologies.

10. To establish an Arab fund to support academics and to compensate them materially and morally when they encounter violations of their academic freedom; and, whenever necessary and practical, to work to create teaching, research, study or other opportunities within Arab universities for scholars and researchers who are refugees, exiles or otherwise threatened or unable to work in their home country, so that their talents, skills and intellect might not be lost but retained for the benefit of society.

11. To publish a comprehensive guide on academic freedom in Arab countries, to include fundamental principles and mechanisms, as well as training programs, and to distribute the guide to all the Arab universities.

12. To develop a wider understanding and acceptance of the principle of academic freedom, including immunity from sanctions for professional and scientific research, including where appropriate through developing necessary legislation or through the use of the media.

13. To eliminate all forms harassment and violence against Arab academics, including especially at this time to put an end to the violence against attacks on the academic community in Iraq, including the murders of numerous Iraqi scientists and researchers.

14. To support and encourage Arab initiatives to form associations and bodies for academic freedom in each Arab country and in the region.

15. To work toward each of these recommendations, and to report on progress in achieving them at future conferences of the Arab Society for Academic Freedom.
The Arab Society for Academic Freedom
- established 1st April 2008

On the 1st April 2008, after the successful completion of the Conference on Academic Freedom in Arab Universities, delegates of 13 Arab countries stayed on to establish the Arab Society for Academic Freedom (ASAF).

The day began by the presentation of a draft strategic plan for the association, prepared by ACHRS. Participants were then invited to discuss the plan and suggest changes to it. After a session of lively debate and amendments made, the participants took a vote and accepted by full consensus the strategic plan for the association, subject to a period of consultative amendment pursuant to suggestions made.

The next session then examined the basic law of the association. The participants went through the basic law, clause by clause, making suggestions and discussing each point in turn. Following this a vote was taken and the basic law was also adopted by full consensus, subject to revision in line with the suggestions made in the discussion. Following a motion put forward, this was declared as the moment of the creation of Arab Society for Academic Freedom and all members became the official establishing committee.

Session three was devoted to the election of a board of directors. After much debate, a motion was put forward, and accepted, that the usual practice in the establishing of societies is that the full establishing committee becomes the first board of directors for an interim period. Out of this board, Dr. Nizam Assaf was elected as the first chair person and the international secretariat was confirmed as being in Amman, Jordan, which ACHRS will initially host.

The executive committee was then selected from the board by popular vote. Dr. Nizam Assaf was selected as chair and Dr. Mohammad Tarawna (Jordan), Dr. Lubna Aqrush (Jordan), Dr Abdul Majeed Sweilem (Palestine), Dr. Ahmad Thabet (Egypt), Dr. Mhammed Malki (Morocco), Dr. Taher Boumedra (Algeria), Dr. Sherzad Al-Najjar (Iraq), Dr. Nadhim Alshamre (Iraq), Dr. Hoda Almutawah (Bahrain) and Dr. Mary Ghantous (Lebanon) were selected as members of the executive committee.

The aims of the Arab Society for Academic Freedom are to enhance freedom in academic universities, to deepen knowledge of laws and legislation on academic freedom, to seek to adapt university criteria to secure scientific research, to coordinate with educational bodies to give momentum to academic freedom, to establish relations with international academic communities, to be a platform to strengthen dialogue, to hold seminars and workshops and prepare report on academic freedom in Arab universities.

For further information on the Arab Society for Academic Freedom please contact us, details on the next page.
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.

Being a young organisation, founded in 1999 and registered in Jordan, 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.

The Center aims at helping in spreading and strengthening human rights culture in the Arab World. For this sake, the ACHRS is committed to all the criteria which are contained in the provisions of international and regional conventions and declarations on human rights, as issued by the United Nations or by regional, Arab, and Jordanian organizations.

The ACHR seeks to achieve its goals through educational, intellectual, and cultural activities, particularly through studies, research, and seminars. These activities are either organized by ACHRS alone, or in collaboration with other international, Arab and Jordanian organizations, active in the field of human rights.

The ACHRS implements scientific and educational programs, such as theoretical and applied research and studies; carries out programs on general awareness and education on human rights; organizes training courses; convenes conferences, seminars, workshops and study sessions; offers consultations, technical and scientific services, and information to students and researchers, interested in human rights issues. The Center also publishes bulletins, reports, and specialized periodicals on human rights. In addition, ACHRS trains target groups of men and women activists from governmental and non-governmental human rights organizations on the skills of dialogue, collective work, critical thinking, and effective communication.

In pursuit of its goals, the ACHRS cooperates with local, Arab, and international scientific institutions, whose activities are compatible with ACHRS activities. This cooperation is based on integration, truthfulness and commitment to the principles of the international legitimacy of human rights.

Consequently, the ACHRS refrains from carrying out any political or religious activities, nor is it involved in any Jordanian, Arab or international political association which might negatively affect the neutrality or scientific objectivity of its activities.

ACHRS is ...

In consultative status with ECOSOC

Constituting member of the Federation of Human Rights Centers in the Arab World

Member of the Arab Network for NGOs

Member of the Arab Society for Academic Freedom

Member of the International Federation for Human Rights (fidh)

Member of the Election Network in the Arab World

Member of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)

Member of the Arab Coalition for the International Criminal Court

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

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