Greetings from ACHRS

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies had a busy and productive summer 2009. ACHRS has engaged in a wide array of rewarding activities from workshops and training sessions, to networking and conferences. The Center held a workshop on the Universal Periodic Review in which 10 participants from 5 different Middle Eastern and North African countries attended. Moreover, ACHRS participated in and helped coordinate an NGO meeting parallel to the 14th Annual Conference of the Asia Pacific Forum on National Human Rights Institutions. As always, ACHRS has continued to strengthen its international network, and has further solidified its commitment to human rights defense.

ACHRS, as a member of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) has facilitated meetings between a FIDH delegation and the Jordanian Government. The aim of the mission is to explore the official government and private prospects for participation in a national conference that will discuss the national plan for democracy and human rights in Jordan. ACHRS has been taking the lead in developing a national plan for human rights and democracy in Jordan ever since the center joined FIDH.

In cooperation with Forum Asia, the International Women Rights Watch-Asia Pacific, the International Services for Human Rights ISHR, and sponsorship by the Foundation for the Future, ACHRS held the Arab Asia-Pacific NGO Conference on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The conference was attended by 44 participants representing 22 Asian countries in which they discussed the nature of national human rights institutions and their significant role in the promotion and protection of human rights on the national level.

In coordination with ACHRS, three human rights organizations chose Jordan to release their annual reports. The World Organization Against Torture (OMCT), the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, and the International Federation for Human Rights released their reports in Amman with facilitation by ACHRS. The reports discuss the right and responsibility of the individuals, groups and society's organizations in the consolidation and protection of human rights and the basic liberties that are internationally recognized.

As an institution with prior Universal Periodic Review (UPR) experience a well developed relationship with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), ACHRS organized a workshop for the Universal Periodic Review. The workshop was held for two days on the 28th and 29th of July in the ACHRS office. As previously alluded to, the workshop was attended by 10 participants from 5 different Arab countries. ACHRS Center Director, Dr. Nizam Assaf, initiated the first training session of the workshop followed by sessions held by Mr. Kholoud Najim and Mr. Majid Talab.

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

Members of the Election Network in the Arab World (ENA) have been meeting with representatives from the Carter Institute to discuss prospects of joint cooperation on elections in Arab countries. A delegation consisting of Chancellor Anwar Rashid, vice-chairmen and lawyers Hawker Jtwo and Issa Al-Gaib, as well as the Network's board of directors and the general body met with Sara Johnson the program director of the election monitoring program at the Carter Institute. The meeting consisted of both parties exchanging information on the description of their respective activities and discussed the prospects of joint cooperation between the two institutions on joint election monitoring campaigns in the Arab World. The two sides agreed to a series of steps in this direction. Members of ENA continue to coordinate with the Carter Institute and an agreement is expected to take place soon.

The Election Network in the Arab World was initiated and established by the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies at the beginning of 2006. ACHRS held a survey on the status of organizations working in the electoral field and found that they needed a stronger, more cohesive organizational structure. A founding conference for the Network was held in November 2006 and in turn ENA boards of directors were elected representing 15 different Arab countries. The Network includes about 50 members representing institutions that are concerned with election issues from Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Yemen, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania.

The Election Network in the Arab world will hold its first conference in December 2009.

[Photo of members of ENA meeting with Jimmy Carter]

Members of ENA at a meeting with the Jimmy Carter, president of the Carter Institute and former President of the United States, on the sidelines of the Lebanese Parliamentary Elections in which both institutions helped monitor.
Workshop on Universal Periodic Review (UPR)


In the first training session, ACHRS Director, Dr. Nizam Assaf reviewed civil society institutions' relationships with the United Nations and the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights. He also made a presentation on the Jordanian experience with the UPR.

Ms. Kholuod Najim held the rest of the sessions, in which she reviewed a brief introduction of the UPR, including its history and establishment. Session covered the guidelines for UPR involvement published by the OHCHR and an overall strategy for NGOs participating in the process. The goals for NGO submissions were covered, which include clarity, a balance of breadth and depth of topics, and effective messaging. Ms. Najim also offered an outline of the overall UPR process, which is based on periodicity, with a clear timeline for countries to be reviewed on specific bases.

A good deal of documentation is involved, including the national report, OHCHR report, and the stakeholders' submission. The Working Group on the UPR issues an outcome document which is then adopted by the Human Rights Council. At both stages, there is a discussion of the interests, opportunities, and roles of all actors: State governments, National Human Rights Institutions, and Civil society organizations both trans-national and domestic. A final session covered key resources which CSOs can use in preparing their submissions and participating in the UPR reviews in Geneva.

Mr. Majed Talab held the second day's sessions, which covered NGO Participation in the UPR process, attending the working group session, and attending the regular session of the HRC following it. Specifically, Mr. Talab discussed strategies and protocol for delivering a statement to the regular session of the HRC when the outcome document is adopted. Discussion also covered ideas on how to work on the follow-up to review outcomes. CSOs have a role to play in implementation, i.e. publicizing the UPR on a national level. Finally, Mr. Talab covered report writing skills important to the formulation and preparation of UPR reports and submissions using the application of the Human rights principles and the guidelines of the office of the high commissioner.

In the last session both Ms. Kholuod Najim and Mr. Majed Talab asked participants to hold a group discussions using the Stakeholders' Submission and other documents used in the UPR process (outcome document, national report) for domestic human rights advocacy. In attendance were 10 participants from Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Morocco and Tunisia. The administrators concluded the workshop with a session evaluation including a section on remarks and suggestions. Certificates were then distributed to the participants.

ACHRS organized previous workshops on the UPR with other Jordanian NGOs in 2007. In addition, ACHRS organized a workshop with the cooperation with three other partners on the preparation of UPR in August 2008. ACHRS was one of the organizations which submitted a Human Rights report as a civil society stakeholder in (continued on page 4)
(cont. from page 3)

NGOs in 2007. In addition, ACHRS organized a workshop with the cooperation with three other partners on the preparation of UPR in August 2008. ACHRS was one of the organizations which submitted a Human Rights report as a civil society stakeholder in Jordan's first UPR (title: Human Rights in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan – Report of the Jordanian Civil Society Organizations) and participated in the 4th session of the Human Rights Council this year.

The Delegation of the International Federation for Human Rights meets with the Jordanian Government

As part of the preparations made by the International Federation for Human Rights, a team of the International Federation held a meeting with the National Center for Human Rights to discuss the mission of the team of the International Federation which is headed by Vice president of the International Federation for Human Rights, Attorney Aminah Buayyash.

The aim of the mission is to explore official government and private prospects for participation in a national conference that will discuss the national plan for democracy and human rights in Jordan.
The meeting was held in the presence of the representative of the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies [ACHRS] in its capacity as a member of the International Federation of Human Rights.

ACHRS has arranged for 26 meetings for the team with the various active parties. ACHRS organized 16 meetings with the various government and non-government and international organizations as well as with Jordanian political parties in the last few days of July alone. All of these organizations were briefed on the goals of the exploratory mission of the International Federation for Human Rights. Later in the week the team met nine other organizations in hope of organizing a national plan.

The conference for discussing the plan is expected to be held in November 2009.

Three international organizations held a press conference on Tuesday, 28 July 2009 at the Jerusalem International Hotel in Amman, Jordan. They were the World Organization against Torture [OMCT], the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, and the International Federation for Human Rights.

The three organizations held the press conference in collaboration with the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies [ACHRS]. The press conference was held on the occasion of the official release of the 2009 fifth annual report on the protection of the defenders of human rights.

The annual report was issued on the strength of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution number 53/144 of 9 December 1998. The report discusses the right and responsibility of the individuals, groups and society's organizations in the consolidation and protection of human rights and the basic liberties that are internationally recognized.

Participating in the press conference were ACHRS Director general, Dr Nizam Assaf; Vice president of the International Federation for Human Rights, Attorney Aminah BuAyyash; Attorney Radiyah Nasrawi of the Tunisian Anti torture Society; and member of the Executive Committee of the International Federation for Human Rights Daniel Sa'ud of Syria.
(continued from page 5)
In remarks at the press conference, Dr. Nizam Assaf pointed out that the release of the annual report coincided with the visit by a preparatory team of the International Federation for Human Rights to arrange for convening a special conference to approve the national plan for democracy and human rights in Jordan. The three international organizations will participate in the conference in addition to the National Center of Human Rights and the ACHRS.

The next speaker was Mrs. Aminah Buayyash who pointed out the importance of the release of this annual report which has been published every year since 1998 and which is devoted to the violations committed against human rights activists in the various parts of the world. She said that the report is very large and covers all countries of the world. Nonetheless, she added, the press conference is devoted to covering the part pertaining to the Middle East and North Africa.

In remarks to the press conference, Attorney Radiyah Al-Nasrawi spoke about the grave violations committed against human rights activists in Tunisia. She said that the Tunisian authorities use beating, torture, and harassment of the activists on the professional and personal levels. She added that she was one of those who suffered from these violations. She was beaten in Carthage International Airport by security men on the sight and hearing of everyone.

Daniel Sa'ud of Syria spoke at the press conference about the difficulties encountered in licensing societies defending human rights. He said that the Syrian authorities are placing restrictions on the movement of human rights activists.

The press conference was attended by many members of the Jordanian civil society organizations and the local and Arab media. Some of them made interventions on the worsening conditions of human rights in the Arab region, noting that these worsening conditions have become the common denominator of the state of human rights in the Arab region.
On August 3 - 4, 2009, the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, in cooperation with The Forum Asia, the International Women Rights Watch- Asia Pacific, the international Services for Human Rights ISHR and The Foundation For the Future, hosted an NGO Meeting Parallel to the 14th Annual Conference of the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions in conjunction with FORUM-ASIA with sponsorship from the Foundation for the Future. The conference took place at the Landmark Hotel.

More than 59 participants attended, all representing NGOs working in the following 29 countries:

Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Palestine, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Syria, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Yemen.

The first topic of discussion was titled, "Engaging with the Asia Pacific Forum (APF) and the International Coordinating Committee for National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC)." Mr. Fitzpatrick, gave NGOs an overview of this year's APF program and discussed the APF's future plans. He also gave an update on the role the APF is playing to help establish NHRIs in countries where they do not yet exist. Meanwhile, Ms. Jennifer Lynch of the Law Resource Center gave an overview of new developments within the ICC and how NGOs can contribute to its work.

Mainstreaming human rights defenders' concerns into the work of the Advisory Council of Jurists (ACJ) was another topic discussed during the meeting. A panel titled "Role of NHRIs at the International Fora" involved speakers discussing entry points for NGO-NHRI collaboration with the UN Treaty Bodies and the UPR. They also discussed the (continued on page 8)
growing role of NHRIs in bodies such as the Committee on the Status of Women (CSW) and the UN Human Rights Council.

In the afternoon, Caroline Hames, Nikote Laiboni and other speakers discussed the "Role of NHRIs in addressing Migration and Trafficking." Miss Hames presented the GAATW and Miss Nkriote Laiboni talked about migration, the exploitation of women, and trafficking in Africa. Three root causes for trafficking were proposed: political instability and ongoing violent conflicts, poverty, and the lack of economic opportunity. Many women travel within Eastern Africa to escaping violent conflict or leave the continent for Europe or the Middle East, where they typically find domestic work and are deprived of many of their rights.

Finally, another session was held about the Role of NHRIs in Conflict Situations & States of Emergency. In this session, the speakers shared their experiences in engaging with their NHRIs during emergency situations or periods of armed conflict. They also discussed possible recommendations on how NHRIs may effectively promote and protect human rights during emergency situations/ periods of armed conflict, and detailed accounts of best practices.

The representative from the Palestinian NHRI tackled the difficulties that face the national Palestinian institutions while working in an area of conflict where they have to cope not only with the absence of a sovereign state but also with a foreign military occupation, in addition to the national division.

On the second day of the conference, Mr. Yap Swee Seng of FORUM-ASIA, talked about the need of dialogue and cooperation between the APF on one hand, and the NGO's, Asian and Arabic from the other hand. He encouraged, by the same, the Arab countries to establish a network as the one existing in Asia pointing the need for a domestic Human Rights movement, an inside intervention, necessary to the efficiency of the outside support, knowing that the ANI welcomes this kind of intervention. He emphasized the require for the NGO's to participate in the UPR and so, the need of an active civil society to work on these issues.

At the end, the participants were split into working groups in order to come out with recommendation and statement to be delivered during the 14th APF. Their was a general consensus on the necessity of establishing an Arab body in the Arab-Asian region with 2 goals which are defending the human rights activists, as well as monitoring and cooperating with the national human rights centers according to Paris principles. Arab countries that don't have a NHRI are as well highly encouraged and urged to establish one.
On August 2, 2009, the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies in cooperation with the Forum Asia, the International Women Rights Watch-Asia Pacific, the international Services for Human Rights ISHR and The Foundation For the Future, held the Arab Asia-Pacific NGO Workshop on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The conference took place at the Jerusalem International Hotel in Amman, Jordan. There were 44 participants from the following 22 countries, Australia, Bahrain, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nepal, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Syria, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Yemen.

The workshop focused on the NHRIs and the Paris Principles presented by Ms. Emerlynne Gil of FORUM-ASIA and Mr. Henri Tiphagne of People's Watch-India where they discussed the nature of NHRIs and their significant role in the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level. Also, there was a discussion during this session on the Paris Principles and the standards on independence, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability that are embodied therein. Challenges facing Human Rights Defenders in the Arab & Asian were tackled during the seminar, as well as the establishment of NHRIs in the Arab & Asian Regions. In this session, the speakers talked about their experiences as human rights defenders working for the establishment of national human rights institutions in their countries. The speakers also talked about the significance of having an NHRI in their countries and how they see these institu

making an impact on promoting and protecting human rights on the ground.

The Iranian representative, Mrs Farzaneh Davari, of the international campaign for Human Rights in Iran, talked about the situation of Human rights in her country and the post elections violations that came as a response to the civil society movement of protest and urged all the activists to consider the violations of Human rights in Iran as everybody's matter.

Mr Tsou Tzung Han presented the situation in Taiwan.

A discussion on the engagement of Arab & Asia-Pacific NGOs with their NHRIs followed the presentation. It focused on individuals' experiences and best practices noted over the past year of collaborations and cooperation between NGOs and NIs in the protection of human rights defenders at the national level.

Finally, the last session focused on advocacy at the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. This session focused on an introduction of what is the International Coordinating Committee (ICC). The speakers also discussed the work of the ANNI of giving input to the accreditation-review process of the ICC Sub-Committee on Accreditation and how this type of work has contributed to their advocacy at the national level for the development of an independent, effective, and transparent NHRI.
From Last Time: Highlights from 2008

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ACHRS Staff Changes

The International Relations Unit has witnessed the departure of Vienne Muhammad and Emily Crawford. The Centre would like to thank them for their great work and for the valuable contribution they gave to the Center. We hope to keep in touch and we wish them the best. On the other hand, The International Relations Unit welcomes to its staff Atef Aresheh, and wishes him an excellent stay in Amman.
The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS) is an independent, regional, scientific, advocacy center for studies, research and training on issues of human rights and democracy. In pursuit of contributing to the dissemination of a culture of human rights, our work and activities aim at strengthening civil society in Jordan and in the Arab World, and at inducing change to the general level of awareness and sensibility towards issues of human rights and democracy.

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

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

ACHRS is …

- In consultative Status with ECOSOC
- Constituting member of the Federation of Human Rights Centres in the Arab World
- Member of the Arab Network for NGOs
- Member of the Arab Social Forum
- Correspondent member of the International Federation for Human Rights (fidh)
- Member of CIVICUS
- 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

Activities

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

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