



Amman Center for Human Rights Studies

***Newsletter – no. 16
February—April 2010***

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies — Amman – Al-
Abdali – Sharaf Building Telefax : 00962-6-4655043 Email :
achrs@achrs.org Website: www.achrs.org

In This Issue:

- Briefing Session on Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for the Iraqi Governmental Delegation
- ACHRS Releases Fourth Annual Report on the Death Penalty in the Arab World
- ACHRS Releases Book on the Jordanian House of Representatives
- ACHRS Participates in the International Federation For Human Rights (FIDH) 37th Congress
- Election Network in the Arab Region Monitors Iraqi Parliamentary Elections
- ENAR Monitors Sudan Elections
- ACHRS and Finn Church Aid Launch the Jordanian Institute for Women Leaders (JIWL)
- Eleven Human Rights Training Sessions in Four Jordanian Governorates
- ACHRS organizes Trip for Iraqi NGOs to Attend the UPR Session at the UN Headquarters in Geneva
- ACHRS at a Glance

Greetings from ACHRS

The Amman Center for Human Rights had a busy and productive quarter. ACHRS has engaged in a wide array of rewarding activities from workshops and training sessions, to networking and conferences. The Center released a book on the activities of the 15th Jordanian House of Representatives. The book edited by, center director, Dr. Nizam Assaf saw the contribution of Jordanian professors, attorneys and human rights workers. Moreover, ACHRS released its 4th annual report on the death penalty in the Arab World. The Center strongly holds the stance that capital punishment is inhumane, unjust, and an inefficient crime deterrent. In this regard ACHRS advocates for full abolition of the Death Penalty, in the Arab World and beyond.

Keeping with the commitment of promoting democracy in the Arab World, ACHRS participated in election monitoring activities in Sudan and Iraq. The Center currently holds the secretariat for the Election Network in the Arab Region (ENAR). The network sees the participation of 18 organizations from 10 different Arabic speaking countries. ENAR sent observers to Sudan and mobilized its observers in Iraq to monitor the parliamentary elections in both countries. Further reporting on the monitoring activities can be found in this edition of the ACHRS newsletter. ACHRS has played a leading role in promoting democratic practice in Jordan and the wider Middle East, and North Africa region.

Similar to its regional activities, ACHRS along with Finn Church Aid (FCA) has launched a project to promote women's successful participation in the upcoming Jordanian Parliamentary elections. The project will include the training of 10 women from across the Jordanian political spectrum to run successful election campaigns for a seat in parliament. Currently, ACHRS is in the recruitment phased of the project and will begin the training course early June. The training will include domestic and international field visits and the training will be conducted by experts

from Jordan, the MENA region, and European Union.

As alluded to in previous newsletters and articles, ACHRS has been playing a leading role in the capacity development of Iraqi NGOs. The Center assisted Iraqi NGO networks to compose their report to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) session on Iraq. The reports were submitted to the Human Rights Council in Geneva in the fall. With generous contributions from the Belgian Foreign Affairs Office and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), ACHRS coordinated the trips of 5 Iraqi network directors to attend the Iraq UPR sessions in Geneva. The sessions took place at the United Nations headquarters on 16 and 19 February 2010. Moreover, ACHRS drew on its international partnership base to organize meetings with the Iraqi directors and international organizations and UN rapporteurs. A full report on the UPR activities is featured in this newsletter.

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!

Briefing Session on Universal Periodic Review (UPR) For the Iraqi Governmental Delegation



Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS) in cooperation with UNAMI and UNOPS held a Briefing Session on Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in Amman for Iraq Governmental Delegation from 8 to 9 February 2010. 13 participants from different ministries attend the course.

The workshop include The Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Briefing on Iraq's National Report to the UPR, Preparing for Iraq's Universal Periodic, Exercise on UPR Review Simulation, The Jordanian UPR Experience, Examples of UPR follow-up (from Jordan and other countries).

Moreover, Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS) in cooperation with UNAMI and UNOPS held a workshop on Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in Erbil - Iraq from 2/08/09 - 5/08/09. 25 participants from 25 Iraq NGOs attend the course.

(continued on page 4)

Briefing Session (continued)

The ACHRS organized previous workshops on the UPR for the HR NGOs with deferments Arab counties in July 2009, and 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 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. ACHRS published in 2009 a book on the UPR reflecting the Jordanian experiment.

As an institution with prior Universal Periodic Review (UPR) experience, ACHRS has helped six Iraqi NGO networks (Justice Network for Prisoners, Iraqi Child Rights Network, Network on Human Rights Trafficking, Alliance for Human Rights Organizations in Iraq, Alliance for Political Freedoms in Iraq, Alliance for Migrants in Iraq) to compose and submit their UPR report to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). As a follow up to the report, ACHRS organized a work-related trip to Geneva, Switzerland for the six Iraqi network directors who helped compose the report. The Iraqi NGO delegation along with a representative from ACHRS attended the UPR session on Iraq at the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva during the period of 15-20 of February 2010.

ACHRS Releases Fourth Annual Report on the Death Penalty in the Arab World

ACHRS opposes and actively campaigns against the death penalty in all cases and every form no matter where it is used. The organization considers the death penalty a violation of the right to life and the ultimate form of inhuman, cruel, and degrading punishment. In its stance against the death penalty, the organization in no way condones violent crime nor questions the responsibility of governments to ensure that those who commit such crimes are brought to justice. In carrying out this responsibility, however, governments must abide by relevant international law and standards, including the abolition of the death penalty and the prohibition of torture.

ACHRS recognizes that capital punishment has not proven to be an effective deterrent for violent crimes. The organization also emphasizes that execution is permanent and that as long as the death penalty is in practice, the risk of executing the innocent can never be eliminated. To read the report please see the following link:

http://www.achrs.org/images/stories/news/pdf/Death_Penalty_in_the_Arab_World_2009.pdf

ACHRS Releases Book on the Jordanian House of Representatives

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS) continues its monitoring of the Jordanian Parliament by releasing a book entitled: *The Legislative and Control Roles of the 15th Jordanian House of Representatives (Periodic Control Reports)*. The book is the latest in a series of publications released by the Research Unit at ACHRS.

The book includes a series of reports published by ACHRS on the legislative and control roles of the 15th House of Representatives in its successive meetings held since its election in November 2007 and until the parliament was dissolved in December 2009. Specifically, the reports consist of presentations of the work of the House of Representatives and of a documentation of the main conclusions and recommendations that can activate the control and legislative roles of the Jordanian House of Representatives.

The book includes documentation of all four sessions including the extraordinary session held by the Jordanian Parliament, the laws passed the sessions, and an analysis on the legislative process of the governmental body. The book also includes several appendices that further document the nature of the now dissolved parliament including a list of the members, budget, laws passed, and texts of Royal Decrees pertaining to the body.

ACHRS began to monitor the work of the Jordanian Parliament as of 2007 by establishing an electronic website for this purpose called "the Parliamentary Observer." The research center at ACHRS monitored all four sessions of the Jordanian Parliament including the extraordinary session before the body was dissolved late 2009.

Legislative and Control Roles of the 15th Jordanian House of Representative (Periodic Control reports)



Prepared by
Research Unit at ACHRS

Edited by
Dr. Nizam Assaf

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies



in

ACHRS Participates in International Federation for Human Right (FIDH) 37th Congress

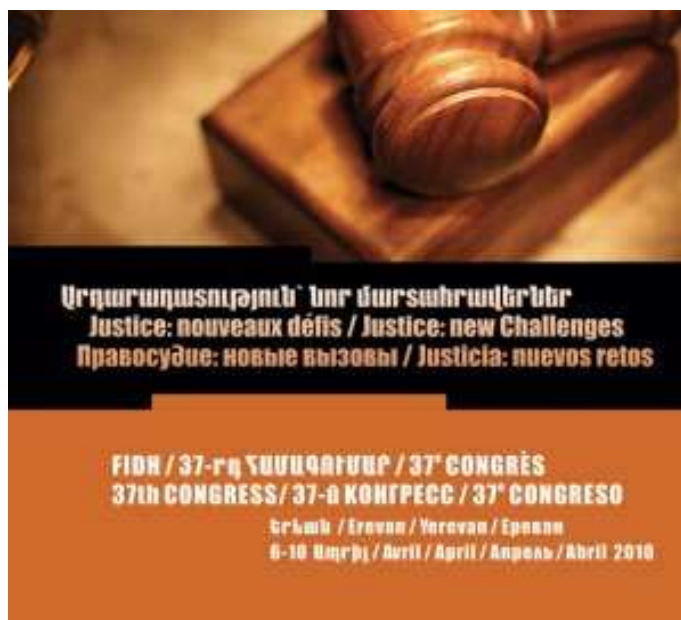
The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) held its 37th Congress in the Armenian capital of Yerevan from 4th—11th of April, 2010. The congress was held in a post-Soviet country for the first time in the history of the organization. The International Federation has a long history of human rights defense across the world. Founded in 1922, FIDH currently sees the membership of 164 human rights organizations representing over 100 countries across the globe.

ACHRS has been a full member of the network since 2004. Throughout the past six years the Center has developed strong ties with the FIDH secretariat in Paris and the organization's office in Geneva. As previously mentioned, FIDH generously agreed to sponsor the trips of two Iraqi network directors to attend the Iraq UPR session in Geneva last February. ACHRS will like to formally thank FIDH again for their continued support and commitment to human rights and NGO development.

The 37th congress saw the participation of over 350 NGO representatives from over 100 countries. The congress was an opportunity for all members to develop their international solidarity network and reinforce their commitment and the effectiveness of their human rights work. Furthermore, the congress included multiple workshops on the problems and challenges affecting human rights workers across the world. The workshops were concluded by a series of recommendations and solidarity mechanisms that can assist in the nature of this field.

ACHRS sent its international relations coordinator to attend the congress. The coordinator participated in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) meetings as part of the congress. The NGO representatives of the MENA region discussed different ways that the organizations can work together to enhance the activities of the civil society in this region. The meetings were highly productive because they produced a fresh interest to cooperation between FIDH affiliated organizations.

The congress was concluded with the election of a new international board. For more information please visit www.fidh.org



Election Network in the Arab Region Monitors the Iraqi Parliamentary Elections

Elections in Jordan

Elections were free and fair and were conducted in a smooth, safe manner

With the interest of promoting free and fair elections across the Arab World, the Elections Network in the Arab Region (ENAR), led by the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS), deployed a team to monitor the Iraqi Parliamentary Elections held for the sizeable Iraqi community in Jordan. The monitoring campaign was conducted on a voluntary basis from 5 – 7 March, 2010 in 16 polling centers, 150 polling stations, in 4 Jordanian Governorates (Amman, Madaba, Irbid, Zarqa). The ENAR team was able to cover all of the polling centers in the country.

By the initiative of ACHRS, the Elections Network in the Arab World was founded in 2006. The network currently sees the participation of over 50 civil-society organizations representing 14 Arabic-speaking countries across the Middle East and North Africa. Since its establishment the network has conducted formal monitoring campaigns in Yemen, Mauritania, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain Kuwait, and Egypt. Moreover, the network recently obtained permission to monitor the Sudanese General Election in April. Lastly, the network publishes 42 monthly reports on elections issues in the Arab World (www.intekhabat.org).



The result of three days of monitoring produced the conclusion that polling was conducted in a transparent atmosphere that gave the sense of free and fair elections amongst the voters and observers. A couple mildly negative events that took place at the polling centers in Jabal Amman and al-Zarqa and did not have an effect on the voting process as a whole. The incidents were based on individual error and in no way represented any systematic malfunction. In both incidents, an individual staff member of the IHEC got into an altercation with some voters or observers. The situations at both polling stations were quickly resolved. In other observations, some voters were redirected to polling stations other than the ones that they were registered to vote in, due to the fact that some polling centers ran out of supplies (as they did not expect the number of voters to exceed a certain amount on the first day). Also, some observers were asked to go to other polling centers because there were already observers and representatives of political entities inside the polling centers at the time.

No official reports are released detailing the amount of Iraqis in Jordan. Most estimates maintain that there are at 300,000 Iraqis living in Jordan. Of those 300,000, about half are eligible to vote. Through ACHRS, ENAR trained a team of observers in Jordan, which also included the participation of 22 international observers. The observers were trained based on international principles and were all briefed with instructions from the Independent High Electoral Commission in Iraq (IHEC).

*Enar also deployed observers to monitor the Iraqi elections in Syria and within in Iraq proper. This report only details the elections in Jordan. For full coverage please visit us on the web.

ENAR Monitors Sudan Elections

The Independent Arab-European Mission for Monitoring the Sudanese elections which consists of 18 election observers who were chosen by the Arab Committee for Human Rights and the Election Network in the Arab Region who come from the four Arab countries of Iraq, Yemen, Jordan and Bahrain and the European countries of France, Norway watched the Sudanese elections in 350 electoral centers in the Wilayas of Khartoum, Nile River, Red Sea, Al-Ghadarif, Kasla, White Nile, Blue Nile, Al-Jazirah, Star, south Kurdufan, north Darfur, south Darfour, West Darfur, the Lakes, Bahr Al-Ghazal, and the central equatorial Wilaya.

The observers of the mission have recorded the following remarks on the elections:

- Most polling centers were opened in the first days on time in the presence of the personnel of the election commission, and the necessary requirements of the electoral process were provided. Facilities were offered to the disabled persons, elderly people and pregnant women.
- Despite minor incidents in scattered places, the electoral process was held in a proper way in the presence of the police who protected the polling centers and guaranteed the safe arrival of the voters.
 - The election commission took into account the remarks and proposals of our mission constructively and responsibly.
 - Some mistakes were found in the voters' registers, i.e. printing mistakes, the failure to list some names, the repetition of other names, or the registration of names in other polling centers.
 - Measures in some polling centers were not proper because of lack of training and non-professionalism of the personnel of the commission, the appearance of cards of geographic constituencies in the places other than their natural places, and this can be viewed as a printing mistake.
 - The voter registration card was given precedence over the confirmation documents.
 - There was an administrative problem in some polling centers and shortage in the number of the polling centers to maintain secrecy. There was some cases of collective voting in some cases.
 - Complicating and delaying the polling process as a result of the presence of eight election cards in the north and 12 election cards in the south. This has caused the appearance of spoiled cards in some cases.
 - Continued election publicity in front of the polling centers on the polling days despite the instructions on the need to comply with the instructions barring publicity on these days

Elections Network in the Arab Region – Monitoring



Iraq

ACHRS and Finn Church Aid Launch the Jordanian Institute for Women Leaders (JIWL)



ACHRS and the Helsinki based organization, Finn Church Aid Launch launched a new project titled the Jordanian Institute for Women Leaders (JIWL). ACHRS recognizes that Jordanian women are severely underrepresented in political decision-making processes. The small but growing number of women candidates demonstrates the timeliness of a leadership institute which will encourage and empower more potential leaders not only to take office as leader but serve as mentors to their peers.

ACHRS' objective is to empower women with the practical and theoretical knowledge required to take on leadership roles in government and in civil society and the network of support they need to take initiative to pursue leadership positions.

A secondary objective exists in the publicizing of JIWL activities in Jordan. As local media outlets in both English and Arabic are invited to cover the training sessions, the workshops given by the regional and European international trainers, JIWL participants' field visits to different organizations and individuals around the city of Amman and to Madaba, as well as their excursion to learn about the workings of the Finnish government, they will serve to raise awareness about women's rights, contribute to the normalization of educated and politically active women as leaders, and set tangible, inspiring examples for their peers.

A total of ten women would be recruited to complete the training program (two each from the four northernmost and four southernmost provinces, and 6 from the more heavily populated central provinces).

The timeframe for the JIWL is a year and a half, from an initial six months of planning beginning with the baseline study and organization of the course syllabi to the graduation of the first year-long class. ACHRS envisions this JIWL as a pilot project which upon successful completion could be deepened and expanded, duplicated in other MENA region countries and/or on a regional level.

Eleven Human Rights Training Sessions in Four Jordanian Governorates

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies organized eleven different training sessions in four Jordanian Governorates during the past three months. The training sessions are part of a wider campaign to increase public awareness about various human rights issues and international agreements to which Jordan is a signatory to.

The following is a list of the topics for the training courses: Universal Declaration for Human Rights, CEDAW, and the CRC.

The training sessions took place in 8 schools and the Zarqa Ahliya University in the following governorates: Amman, Irbid, Madaba, and Zarqa. Over 320 people ages 16-22 (245 women and 75 men) participated in the training sessions. It should be noted that these training sessions were conducted with ACHRS cooperation with local organizations on a voluntary basis.

ACHRS concluded the project for Gender Mainstreaming in Civil Society Organizations at the

ACHRS Announces the Completion of the Gender Mainstreaming Program for Civil Society

end of March. The project was sponsored by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Jordan. The program targeted the development of civil society organizations to promote more gender awareness. In this regard ACHRS conducted a fifteen day Training of Trainer's (ToT) course for 28 trainers. The project began in April 2009 and was concluded in March 2010. The 28 graduates of the course then went on to conduct 20 workshops and training sessions to raise public awareness on gender issues with an eye towards gender mainstreaming.

Pictured: Her Excellency



ACHRS Organizes Trip for Iraqi NGOs to attend the UPR Session at the UN Headquarters in Geneva

The Universal Periodic Review Sessions for Iraq took place on February 16 and 19, 2010. With the help of the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS), six Iraqi NGO networks composed various reports to the UPR—to shadow the government report to the Human Rights Council in Geneva. With generous funding from the Government of Belgium as well as the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), the directors of each of those networks attended the UPR sessions for Iraq at the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva. During the Iraqi delegation's five day stay in Switzerland, ACHRS organized several meetings with international organizations to help further develop the capacities of the six Iraqi NGO networks.

During the week of the UPR Sessions ACHRS organized the following meetings with Iraqi NGOs:

- ACHRS arranged a meeting with Ivana Vuco at the Middle East and North Africa Unit of UNHCHR.
- A meeting with three representatives of the World Organization against Torture (OMCT): Cecile Trochu, Alexandra Kossin, and Orlane Verasano.
- The Iraqi delegation also met with representatives of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH).
- The Iraqi Child Rights Network (ICRN) Director, Nazim Ahmed Ali, met with members of the NGO Group for the CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child)—Lisa Myers, the coordinator at the organization and Shushan Khachyan, child rights officer.
- A meeting with Sandra Carter and Patrick Mutzenberg of the Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR Centre).
- The Iraqi delegation also met with June Ray, Chief of the Civil Society Unit and Executive Director of Management, at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

(continued on page 12)

Iraqi NGO UPR Trip (continued)

(continued from page 10)

The Amman Center for Human Rights Studies has previous experience with reporting to and attending the Universal Periodic Review sessions. With this experience ACHRS assisted the Iraqi NGO networks to compose their UPR reports to the human rights council. ACHRS also has special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC). With membership with UNECOSOC, ACHRS was able to provide accreditation for the Iraqi network directors to attend the UPR session at the UN Headquarters.



Moreover, as an organization with a strong international network, ACHRS was able to draw on its links with international organizations to help further develop the capacities of Iraqi NGOs. The UPR session was a strong mechanism for development as the Iraqi networks now have an idea as to how to better influence the discussion during the next UPR session. The UPR can also serve as a model for other sessions concerning International Treaty Bodies. Furthermore, the meeting with international organizations and representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights were an instrumental first step in establishing an international support base for the Iraqi networks. The meetings and the subsequent cooperation.

ACHRS At A Glance

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
- Initiator for establishing Jordanian, Iraqi, and Arab human rights networks.
- Member of the Arab Network for NGOs
- Member of the Arab Social Forum
- Member of the International Federation for Human Rights (fidh)
- Member of Initiative to Establish Arab Society for Academic Freedom
- Member of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC)
- Initiator for establishing Arab Election Network
- 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.