



DEFENDERS

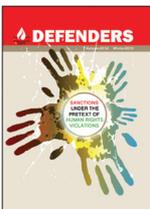
Autumn2012 Winter2013



SANCTIONS
UNDER THE
PRETEXT OF
HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS

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Editor's Note

The year 2013 has started with hope and belief of human rights defenders for the improvement and promotion of human rights through commitment to the function of international institutions, the Human Rights Council and the UPR mechanism in particular.

This is while in the first round of the UPR in 2012, Israel was not present in its UPR. In fact Israel has set precedent in non-cooperation with the UPR mechanism.

What is cause for concern for human rights defenders is the fact that Israel's refusal to take part in the session of the Human Rights Council will in fact undermine the effectiveness levels of the UPR mechanism and the Council; something that needs a serious determination of states and international institutions to confront with.

In any event we at the ODVV hope that 2013 will be a year full of advances and improvements in human rights structures for all mankind and the UN and its bodies. We hope that this year the political objectives of states in protection or ignorance of human rights situation of a country reaches the minimum, and the real meaning of the inalienability, universality and fairness in all human beings of their rights, will get closer to its realization.

This issue of Defenders includes a report of the ODVV's move towards the recommendations accepted by Iran in the UPR on Iran, a review on the developments in the Islamic Punishment Law, and transparency regarding gender discrimination in universities in Iran. As mentioned above, the grave violation of human rights in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the Occupied Territories are not subjects that human rights defenders can easily. For this reason a part of this issue is dedicated to these subjects. Also the severe sanctions against Iran which have been followed by the violation of human rights are other subjects of this issue of Defenders.

Also reflected in this issue are written and oral statements submitted to the Human Rights Council sessions, educational workshops and technical sittings, the commemoration of Human Rights Day and Nelson Mandela Day which were some of the ODVV activities over the recent months, and also human rights news from around the world.

Editorial

Presence of NGOs in decision making

Introduction

Overall it can be said that the concept of participation is interlinked with the function of NGOs and participation in decision making is one of the subjects that human rights NGOs have considered for the purpose of the promotion and protection of human rights. With an overall promotion of human rights objective, the ODVV has placed the influencing strategy in various decision making levels in its working agenda through activities such as consultation meetings, seminars, colloquiums etc.

Subject

Over the last two years the ODVV has held numerous meetings with governmental

organizations with the aim of increasing the influencing of the decision making process of governmental organizations. Also through holding education workshops and seminars for NGOs, the ODVV has promoted the function of participation in the decision making process and managed to focus the will of a number of human rights NGOs on being influential in the decision making process. In this regard the ODVV has been able to sign NGOs related consultative contracts with the Interior Ministry's NGOs General Department, and to present its expertise and consultative views on the subject, which can be seen as an achievement in nongovernmental organizations' sphere. The setting up of the Think



COUNTS

Thank by representatives of NGOs in the Interior Ministry's NGOs General Department, in order to benefit from the views of NGOs is another instance which can be seen as an effective step towards the influence of nongovernmental organizations.

Following the preparation of the dialogue environment between governmental and nongovernmental organizations, a series of interactive dialoguesittingsbetweengovernmental and nongovernmental organizations started in autumn 2012 with the ODVV's initiative.

As a nongovernmental organization active in the field of human rights and with an understanding and siding with UN's slogan for Human Rights Day "My Voice Counts", and with its preset strategy regarding influencing decision making, the ODVV held the second in a series of sittings coinciding with Universal Human Right Day for an interactive dialogue between NGOs and governmental organizations involved in the activities of NGOs, in order to further the role of NGOs in various areas of decision making.

In this sitting nongovernmental organizations active in various women, children and refugees rights issues gathered together alongside governmental institutions from the Interior Ministry, Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Judiciary, the Information Ministry and the Presidency's Centre for Women.

1 – Necessity for pathology of the cooperation of NGOs and GOs.

2 – NGOs request for having a more colourful role civil society institutions in the decision making process.

3 – Stress on holding empowerment courses for NGOs and the necessity for the implementation of education courses for governmental organizations.



4 – Stress on the expansion of interactive dialogue sessions with governmental organizations on subjects such as those discussed in the abovementioned sitting.

The summing up of the subjects raised in these meetings will result in adoptions which are due to be reviewed in the official meetings of the NGOs Monitoring Group and ratified and become enforceable. One of the adoptions of the recent meeting is the necessity for the governmental technical institutions support for NGOs project on the accepted UPR recommendations.

Achievements

Following its stressing on its strategy on influencing the decision making process, the ODVV has managed to put governmental institutions on the same side, in such way that following the ODVV's invitation, a good response was made by the decision makers to participate in these series of interactive dialogues between NGOs and GOs. In view of the objective of these sittings which is increasing the influence and role of NGOs in governmental decision makings and programmes, it can be said the initial objectives have been covered.

Amendment and Improvement of the Islamic Penal Code in Iran

This report is the conclusion of a study on the new Islamic Penal Code, conducted by ODVV experts, which attempts to take a scientific and professional view on the weak and strong points of this law and evaluate it, without any political angles.

Introduction

Following two years of debate and expertise reviews, in the winter of 2012 the new Islamic Penal Code was ratified by the Islamic Parliament and the Guardian Council. This new law in comparison to its predecessor is more practical, realistic and closer to human rights principles, and several positive changes can be seen, all of which show a going forward approach and amendful approach of the Iranian judicial system. Of course this new law is still in the legal administrative stages and to-date (early September) it has not been applied but it has been ratified and soon will be applied in a pilot stage. Although from the viewpoint of some jurists there are still faults and weaknesses within this law, but the amendments made are such that it gives hope and has drawn the positive reaction of most jurists in Iran.

Positive aspects of the new law

1 – One of the most important changes in the new law is the omission of the punishment by stoning for the crime of adultery. Even though this punishment was not being applied in Iran over the recent years, and judges tried to issue alternative punishments, nevertheless this punishment has been omitted from the text of the new Penal Code.

2 – Another important change is the criminal responsibility and what punishments are handed out to individuals under 18 years of age; a subject that over the years has been one of the most

challenging human rights debates in Iran. With this new law, if there are doubts about the mental developments of under 18 year old individuals, firstly the death penalty will not be issued against them, secondly punishments foreseen for these types of criminals will be different from criminals over 18 years of age, and the punishments will be more correctional. These punishments include: there are no imprisonment punishments for these individuals, instead they will be sent to correctional institutions. Overall according to the new Juvenile Penal Code (individuals under 18) criminals are categorised as follows:

a) Until the age of puberty, children do not have criminal liability, and in the event they do not cause material damage to anyone, the father of the offending juvenile must compensate the damage.

b) With regards to 9-15 year old children, in the event of committing a crime, measures that include getting a guarantee by the parents or legal guardian, giving up to private or legal individuals – aside from the parents, warning given by a court judge, and ultimately being held in a correctional and reform institution.

c) With regards to 15-18 year old juvenile offenders there are punishments that include being held in correctional and reform institutions for periods of 3 months to a year, two to five years and 1 to 3 years, or payment of cash fines.

3 – Another change in the new law is the omission of article 131 regarding the crime of lesbianism. According this article women who had been proven to be involved in lesbianism for the first, second and third repeated offences were sentenced to 100 floggings, and if a woman was caught a fourth time in the act, her punishment was death. In the new law this article has been omitted.

4 – In the new law the judge's authority to apply



Iranian NGOs Moves Towards the Accepted Recommendations of the UPR on Iran

Introduction

Iran's UPR took place in 2010, and 126 out of 188 recommendations were accepted by the Iranian government.

Overall it can be said that the recommendations in the UPR is the focal point of the international community, United Nations, relevant state, national and nongovernmental organizations' consensus on the improvement of human rights conditions, the realisation of which requires collective determination from the authorities and civil society.

Understanding the importance of the above in the promotion of human rights, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) has

concentrated its programmes on the accepted recommendations of the UPR on Iran, and taking an initiative on the subject and designed educational, research and promotional projects on this basis.

While planning the activities in line with the recommendations, in this project, interaction with governmental institutions and holding of colloquium sittings are on top of the list of activities. Also the playing of facilitating role for other NGOs whose activities are in line with the UPR recommendations is also seen in all parts of the project.

Executive summary

This project has been planned with the aim of strengthening the capacities of governmental and nongovernmental institutions for protection of human rights. To this aim the below stages have been implemented in a specific timetable:

1 – Introduction to the Human Rights Council and the UPR Mechanism.

2 – Duties and Commitments of International and Regional Human Rights Organizations and Exchange of Experiences Education Course.

3 – Project Formulation towards the Accepted Recommendations of the UPR on Iran Education Course.

4 – Report Writing towards the Accepted Recommendations of the UPR on Iran Education Project.

5 – Colloquium Sittings with Civil Society Organizations

6 – Preparation and Implementation of Execu-



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tive Projects with the Cooperation of Civil Society Organizations.

The action in line with the recommendations in the UPR on Iran project has been planned for a 2 year period, and it is expected that in the second 4 year period to continue its sustainability through the participation of stakeholders. Since this project is a multidimensional one, which involves various stakeholders that include civil society institutions, NGOs, GOs and governmental departments, national and academic institutions, also in view of the fact that a major part of the project has been dedicated to empowerment and capacity building of these institutions, it is expected for this project to produce and implement other projects from within itself. The introduction of human rights in development projects and programmes which is another one of the outputs of this project, is a suitable method to while resulting in the promotion of human rights, to also have suitable budgets for the produced human rights projects be allocated.

In the first stage of the project, the movement and activation of NGOs towards the recommendations has been foreseen. For this reason the following activities have been planned and implemented with the aim of the capacity building and raising the ability of NGOs in the direction of the accepted recommendations of the UPR on Iran.

1 – Colloquium Sitting on the Role of NGOs in the UPR Process

On 30 January 2012 the ODVV held a colloquium sitting on the role of NGOs in the UPR

process.

This sitting was planned and held with the aim of increasing the role of NGOs in the promotion of human rights on the basis of the accepted UPR recommendations. In this sitting 25 Iranian NGOs representatives active in various field of women, children, environment, and human rights, reviewed and discussed subjects such as the Human Rights Council, the UPR mechanism, and the role that Iranian NGOs can play in this process, by experts in the fields.

2 – Introduction to the Human Rights Council and UPR education courses

These courses began earlier in the autumn of 2011 and are ongoing. The contents of these courses are designed and presented by experts with attention to the addressees. Representatives from 30 Iranian NGOs and 30 legal experts from GOs have been the addressees of these courses.

3 – Report writing in line with accepted recommendations of the UPR on Iran education courses and fulfilling the role of facilitator for NGOs to prepare their reports to this aim

These courses were held on two separate days. Fifty NGO representatives from Tehran, Fars and Isfahan Provinces participated in these courses. While getting introduced to the UPR mechanism, through reviewing the recommendations the participants were introduced to Iran's international human rights commitments. The preparation of the activities reports of 24 NGOs in line with the recommendations on the UPR on Iran were compiled in Farsi and English and presented to international organizations, as one of the outputs of these activities.

4 – Project formulation in line with accepted recommendations of the UPR on Iran education courses and fulfilling the role of facilitator for NGOs to prepare their reports to this aim

These courses were held in 3 days in August 2012 and with the participation of 25 NGOs representatives from Fars, Isfahan, Yazd and Tehran

provinces. Depending on their field of activity, NGOs can prepare and implement a number of these projects. The ODVV plays the facilitator role for NGOs who can prepare projects in line with the accepted recommendation of the UPR on Iran. For this purpose the ODVV has designed and implemented the project formulation in line with the accepted recommendations of the URR on Iran education courses.

This course was made up of 6 workshops in three inconsecutive days and separate from each other. On the first day the workshop was entirely dedicated to the review of the accepted recommendations and an overall review of the project formulation procedure. Next in a working group method the subject, objective and description of the issue were reviewed and the participants were given 2 weeks to prepare this part according to their overall objectives.

The second and third workshops were held three weeks from the first workshop, and while going through the activities done on the projects in these two weeks, the rest of the parts of the project were presented.

Overall it is expected for the participants to while getting introduced to the general guidelines

of project formulation, to also practice the ability to design projects in line with the accepted recommendations. While compiling their projects, the participants are in constant interaction with the ODVV experts. Also a model in accordance with national and international standards for the purpose of the compilation of implementing projects of NGOs was prepared by the ODVV experts and given to the participants.

Thematic pathology

The cooperation of the United Nations especially through UNDP with regards to supporting civil society institutions in the implementation of the project on the accepted recommendations of the UPR in different countries has noticeable effect on the implementation of the recommendations and the empowerment of civil society institutions. This is because NGOs need support and funds for their campaigns. This is while NGOs in Iran are denied UN assistance and support, an example of which is the omission of human rights programme from the agenda of UNDP in Iran. Also sanctions have made it more difficult for Iranian NGOs to work in international joint projects. Even when the budget recommended by Iranian NGOs is approved by UN agencies but there is not way to send the funds to Iran due to the international and unilateral sanctions. It is clear that the improvement of human rights and the implementation of the accepted recommendations of a country UPR will not be possible without the role of civil society organizations. It is only right and fair for the UN to facilitate the conditions for the implementation of mechanisms that are adopted by it.

Conclusion

In the first stage of the project, a brief report of which was mentioned above, over 100 representatives from NGOs seriously got involved in human rights debates and accepted recommendations of the UPR on Iran. It is expected for these organizations to play a demanding role thorough implementation of their own projects on human rights and their improvements.



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A look at Gender Discrimination at Iranian Universities

Introduction

Over the recent years reports on the prohibition applied by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology in Iran on the acceptance of the number of women in some university courses were published which stirred a lot of debates and opinions. The ODVV tries to view the subject in a scientific and subjective way and to clarify the issue for its international addressees. For this reason a general review of the subject, opinions, official replies and related reaction and the main areas of its conclusions are presented as follows.

Executive summary

1 – In the nationwide university and higher education centres entrance exams in 2012, in 22,800 “local course” codes, and 314 “courses” in test mathematics and technical science, practical sciences, human sciences, arts and languages, there have been student acceptances. The number of local courses acceptances in 2012 in comparison to the previous year has increased approximately by 14 percent, with the number of courses being similar to 2011. The initial media coverage regarding the 77 local courses is out of a total of 22,800 local courses (0.3 percent of local courses) which unfortunately instead of using the term local courses, the term courses was used, and this led to the belief that 77 out of 314 main courses were denied for female applicants.

2 – In fact the news regarding this subject, after a news release by one of the Iranian news agencies, in a way was a misinterpretation of the subject. In fact four universities in Iran have stopped ac-



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cepting female students for the coming education year, and a total of 77 courses are to do with these universities. But in the published news, 77 courses were mentioned and this interpretation was made that female applicants were not being accepted in the business management course for example. The fact is that only the Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz does not take on new students for business management. In some other instances too, this university has stopped accepting females students solely because of its employer’s announcing they are not needed, which was interpreted as the restriction on the education of girls. For example the Oil Industry University of Iran this year in view of the requirements announcement of the Oil Ministry as the employer of the university and the number of current graduates and female students being enough, this Ministry had announced that female students not to be accepted.

In spite of all of this, following the objections, the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology amended a major portion of these instances, and released a statement on the clarification of the story, which sadly disappeared from the main news headlines.

Some important statistics

a) Currently in the higher education system of Iran the local courses nationwide exam for 2012 separated in test groups are as follows: in mathematics and technical sciences 7859 local courses with 5.34 percent, in mathematics science 6475 local courses with 28 percent, in human sciences 7662 local courses with 33 percent, in the arts 304 local

courses with 3.1 percent, in languages 500 local courses with 2.2 percent which in total include 22800 local courses.

b) According to official figures the total capacity of the nationwide entrance exam for 2012 (for both genders) was 570,026 individuals. Among this the acceptance of the capacity of courses special to women 30,068 which is the equivalent of 7.4 percent of the total capacity and acceptance levels in courses special to men was 30,161 which is the equivalent to 5.3 percent of the total capacity of students. The total acceptance capacity of university applicants (mixed and single gender) is 631,155.

c) In past years in Iran some courses were only for male students, and in some instances women only. The acceptance of women students where they were accepted for their genders are accepted in universities and higher education institutions such as Alzahra University, Dr. Shariati Girls Technical and Professional College, Hazrat Maasoomah Girls University, Kosar Higher Education Institute, Abrar Higher Education Institute, Refah higher Education Institute...

As of the acceptance of students in courses where the acceptance gender is only male, from years ago this was done in universities and higher education institutions such as: Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training, Seafaring and Sea Sciences of Chahbahar, Industrial University of Ghom, Malek Ashtar Industrial University, Entezami Oloom Paye, Ghom Revolutionary Guard Higher Education Centre for ideological-political teacher Training, Imam Ali Higher Education Institute...

Presently this proportion exists. According to official figures, overall 10 percent of the capacity is allocated to universities with special conditions which are only permitted to admit women or men only, but the majority of universities and higher education centres have mixed



In all of this, any form of misinformation and or media sensationalisation will only hurt the atmosphere for resolving issues in a scientific and without discrimination, and will lead the atmosphere to further radicalised behaviour from both those in favour and those against.

gender classes in all courses and course locations.

Conclusion

In the education system in Iran, the presence of men or women in some courses is very low, and this is an accepted fact of the Iranian society. But the subject of gender separation at times have been included with selective approaches of university heads and or government officials, and naturally cause a problem. Over the recent months some individuals objected to the low level of the share of girls in some technical courses, which in the view of the ODVV was a rightful objection.

Nevertheless what is important and will have more sustainable effects is the existence of live and serious debates among university and education academics, government officials and also civil society representatives on the repercussions of the probable gender separation of education centres, probable further presence of women graduates in the employment market of Iran and the losing of the balance between men and women jobseekers, their effects on the family and a clash with the set cliché of “Man is the breadwinner, and the woman is the home keeper”, probable rise in men’s unemployment in the next few decades, the changing hands of the responsibility of staying at home and raising the children to men and many other effects that might happen as a result of this gender separation in education centres.

In all of this, any form of misinformation and or media sensationalisation will only hurt the atmosphere for resolving issues in a scientific and without discrimination, and will lead the atmosphere to further radicalised behaviour from both those in favour and those against.

The ODVV shall try to keep this issue ongoing in its working agenda.



Economic Sanctions and Human Rights: What Western Societies Need to Know?

Nabi Sonboli, Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) Research Fellow
<http://www.iranreview.org>

Multilateral and unilateral economic sanctions imposed on Iran are contrary to the following principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The declaration begins with the preamble that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”. As we see in the following, economic sanctions seriously undermine freedom, democracy, justice and peace both inside a society and at international level.

According to the preamble “human beings shall enjoy ... freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people”. Limiting the access of Iranian people to International trade and financial system has clearly put in danger the life of millions of people. An economic sanction clearly prevents a nation from achieving what has been called as “the highest aspiration of the common people”.

According to the forth paragraph “it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations”. The EU and the US sanctions have not contributed and will never contribute to such a relation between Iran, EU and the US nations. To the contrary, it is destroying existing relations among our nations.

Base on Article 1. “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” The US and EU sanctions are limiting freedom and rights of the people in some specific countries and are far from “a spirit of brotherhood”. They contribute to enmity among nations with severe consequences.

According to Article 2: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other

opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs. Most of the sanctions imposed on Iran are discriminatory and the whole nuclear problem began with discrimination of Western countries against Iran.

Furthermore, Iranian people, especially those who are living in the US and EU, are discriminated while they have nothing to do with nuclear issue. Closing banking accounts of Iranians or preventing students who study in the West from receiving money for their family and preventing them from studying some courses in Western universities are clear violations of the article.

According to Article three “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”. Current sanctions against Iran have clearly endangered all aspects of life and security of Iranians. By limiting access of the people to medicine, Gasoline, job etc; they have endangered job security, health security and in general human security.

Based on Article 5, “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”, Crippling sanctions are leading to mass suffering and mass punishment. How western governments can justify punishing 75 million people for a crime that they have not committed.

Article 7th says “all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law”. It is true about nations because sovereignty rights are also the right of all individuals who live in a country. And that’s the basis of equality of nations. Iran as a NPT member has fully implemented its commitments according to NPT while the EU and the US try to impose discriminatory obligations on Iranian people by passing UNSC resolutions.

The US and EU have begun to target specific individuals in the Islamic Republic. These behaviors are contrary to the Article 10 of the Declaration. According to this article “Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.” The US and EU



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behaviors are arbitrary in this regard. They enlist individuals and institutions without any clear charges. They are using economic measures to achieve political purposes.

According to Article 12, “no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Naming individuals and companies in the declarations and resolutions and imposing penalties on them undermine the reputation of individuals and are clear interference and attacks against them without letting them know their charges before. If individuals are subjects to international law, individual rights are also should be observed.

Article 18th, 19th and 20th are about freedom of thought, expression and assembly as the most important rights that Western countries emphasize too much on them. During the past few years in numerous cases we have witnessed that assemblies related to Iran has been canceled, publication of opinions by those who support Iran’s rights has been limited and recently Iranian TVs have been removed from Satellites. These are all violation of basic human rights.

According to Article 23(1) “Everyone has the



The US and EU sanctions clearly violate Article 25 (1). Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control



right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.” Economic sanctions against Iran have destroyed favorable conditions for work and endangered job security. Furthermore, by weakening the middle class, it has undermined democracy, too. It is not acceptable to say that the Iranian government is responsible because, according to IAEA reports, Iranian government has fully implemented all its obligations.

The US and EU sanctions clearly violate Article 25 (1). Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. Every day we have the news about degradation of living standards and health in Iran and death of patients

in Iranian hospitals because of shortage of medicine. These are consequence of preventing Iran from having access to international markets that have nothing to do with nuclear facilities. As humanitarian consequences of sanctions against Iraq during 1990s demonstrated, these economic pressures will lead to malnutrition among women and children. For the same reasons that the life of innocent people should be taken into account in time of military strike, international community should pay attention to human and humanitarian costs and damages that are imposed on targeted society in times of economic war.

These behaviors has put into question legitimacy and credibility of the West and undermined its positions around the world. Unfortunately mainstream media in the EU and the US are controlling public opinion and there is no democracy on foreign policy issues. As Afghanistan and Iraq cases proved, it may be possible to win a war by economic sanctions and military intervention but not the peace. To win the peace the US and EU need to practice human rights and democracy, not preach them. Economic sanctions violate the first and undermine the second.



Islamophobia: the Producer of Misunderstanding and Alienation with Muslims

By: M. Salimi

Islamophobia is a historic, social and political phenomenon and a recognition subject in the field of religion. It's an alert, purposeful, united and forward going phenomenon, which is manageable, and results in visible outcomes, a planned and controlled phenomenon.

But who are the creators of this multi-dimensional movement which on one hand can be studied in a political and social atmosphere, and takes its identity from psychological criteria on the other hand?

Are they a collective of people atheists and agnostics? Or are they a collective of radical religious people? Or are they a balanced group who criticize any form of religious extremism;

Who and with what motives benefit from this

increasingly incisive phenomenon; Religious people; Secularists? Are they religious people who in the political arena are seculars or are they seculars who have political commitments to religion? Those that have issues with the subject of religion or religious people whose religious interpretations clash with the religious interpretations of others? Which religious people from which gender throughout history have been in warn and conflict with other religious people? Which religious people have in the life of mankind always been the harbingers of holy wars? Wars that were not in defense but were the harbingers of anger and blood.

Aside form the studies of the recent decade showing this phenomenon is controllable, and aside from the fact that this phenomenon is attributed to racist activities, and for this reason



The religious experiences of mankind especially after the appearance of Islam shows the religious efforts of some against the anti-religious thoughts of others; where the area of thought and culture full of the appearance of mankind's thought flows is an amalgamation of its extremism with religious beliefs

be applied correctly does not necessarily mean the rejection of these principles., but on the contrary the history of mankind is filled from extremist moves which consequentially is a pendulum move from mankind's theoretic and practical currents, and the destination of these movements in all directions are not recognizable from the human behaviour in balance and proportion. But are involved in these movements and during their maturity are the balance between the thoughts of mankind and religious tendencies are high peaks of theocratic human experience, and is identifiable to today's thirsty and wandering mankind.

Humanity which deems its health and peaceful existence in recognition of God and being God oriented, but has redefined its path of religious life in a collective of non-religious and even anti-religious principles.

Today's world is the world of religious people and those with knowledge, but which religion? Which principles? Which dimensions? And or which degree of knowledge?

The religious experiences of mankind especially after the appearance of Islam shows the religious efforts of some against the anti-religious thoughts of others; where the area of thought and culture full of the appearance of mankind's thought flows is an amalgamation of its extremism with religious beliefs. Atheism, materialism, Marxism and humanism are all the produce of the experienced thought of mankind in the maturity of religion, and in answer to the thirsty human minds from religion.

Once again I ask: which religion? Which principles? And which dimensions? With what knowledge?

Violence, inequality, discrimination, animosity, unkindness, enmity, lies and trickery are all strife in the world.



the approach of the international community at the religious studies levels to this subject is concurring and coordinated with human values, a new and accurate study is required so that we do not forget that Islamophobia in today's world is not necessarily a reaction towards the subject of religion outside of reality, but on the contrary it is the preparatory fire of a targeted attack against Islam, and a political religion. The example we witness is the association Islamophobia with Iranophobia with the formation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, or Brotherhoodophobia over the recent months and at the same time as the coming to power of Islamists in the presidential elections in Egypt.

Perhaps the historical experience of mankind with regards to political religion or governing religion has not been so successful and clear, but without a doubt the wrong implementation of principles which have the possibility to

Inhuman behaviours of mankind have religious skin.

Tired of its religious and nonreligious experiences, mankind is in the realm of politics and thought.

Mankind is alone and being God oriented is an instinctive need which drives it constantly towards new experiences in religion and thought.

Today's mankind is trapped between different products which are produced in the thought and knowledge market. But there are no tools at hand to distinguish between the genuine and counterfeit.

Members of the human community, esteemed humans, religious humans, morality observant humans, followers of Moses, Jesus and Mohammad, lovers of the heavenly city of morality and human dignity, the world needs a new study!

Our religions are full of common concepts and teachings which are for the reaching of mankind to religious maturity and to follow the shortest route to bliss!

Although as religious human beings have made many mistakes, and our improper behaviour have tarnished the religious memory of the world, but let us give ourselves another opportunity and reread Islam, Christianity and Judaism to find subjective and conceptive commonalities, without considering our mistakes.

Our recommendation for a rereading of religion and moral conciliation movement is as follows:

- The formation of a global unity at scientific and university levels for rereading and finding of common fundamental concepts and understandings in Semitic religions through the formation of religious technical committees.

- The formation of technical monitoring bases for unbiased studies of the followers of religion for the purpose of assessment and preparation of accurate distinguished reports of the religious



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and nonreligious behaviours of the followers of religions.

- The creation of conflux opportunities and recognition among the technical religious seedings for the purpose of removal of ambiguities and assumed religious questions in the collective of groups that suffer from Islamophobia.

- The creation of a special opportunity for the unbiased and scientific study of existing theories with regards to religious governance or governments subject to Semitic religions for the establishment of a clean and without anti-human moral values world, from the commonalities of religions for answering the needs of the followers of Semitic religions who are interested in religious living.

- The establishment of committees for the settling of religious differences with a tendency to the commonalities of religious fundamentals at the international level.

Human Rights and the Islamic Republic of Iran

**Mahmoud Reza
Golshanpazhooh
(Ph.D.)**

**Member of
Board(ODVV)**

Introduction

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a member of the United Nations which has acceded to most international human rights documents and is committed to them, represents a country that despite its brilliant historical background and efforts made to promote human rights, has been a regular target of human rights accusations and criticism. However, a cursory glance at the cultural backdrop of the country as well as efforts made by its state-run and civil institutions will show that the issue of respecting people's rights and protecting all citizens against any kind of injustice, inequality and tyranny, have been among profound concerns of this country in many of its civilizational eras. Since the advent of Zoroastrianism and formulation of the rights of nations by Cyrus the Great, whose influences on the Iranian culture can still be observed, up to the entry of Islam and acceptance of the divine approach of Islam to humans, rich traces of respect for human rights and humanity can be detected in the Iranian culture. Islam has paid the highest attention, compared to other religions, to human dignity as a foundation for basic human rights and freedoms. In Quran, the exemplary Islamic society has been described by such characteristics as equality among people, originality of individual and society at the same time, moderation and tolerance, brotherhood and solidarity, as well as such public responsibilities as Jihad, Zakat and Khums (two forms of Islamic tax), and ordering good and prohibiting vice. In addition, social relations have been a function of Islamic and humane equality, solidarity, cooperation and peaceful

coexistence.

Hundreds of years later, Iran's Constitutional Revolution triumphed and the country's first constitution was drawn up with the ultimate goal of establishing a "House of Justice [Justice Department]." The drafters of that constitution dedicated eighteen articles (articles 8 through 25) of the complement to the constitution, which was approved on October 7, 1907, to nation's rights. Therefore, for the first time in Iran, natural rights of human were supported by an official legal text. That law had foreseen and stipulated such basic rights of the people as equality of all persons before laws (article 8); security of people's life, property, houses and honor (article 9, 13, and 15 to 17); freedom of correspondence (article 22), freedom of communications (article 23); people's judicial security (article 19); the right to litigation (article 11); due process of law for investigating crimes and dispensing punishments (article 12); independence of the Judiciary (article 27); openness of trials at courts of law (article 76), freedom of education and training (article 18); compulsory education and obligation of the government to build schools...as well as legal guarantees on the equal status for all the citizens in the Iranian society.

The first Iranian constitution which was approved after the Constitutional Revolution was later changed and those parts which were related to regulation of power were revised after Qajar dynasty went defunct and was replaced by Pahlavi dynasty. The rights of the nation, however, remained unchanged. Under Reza Shah Pahlavi, a large part

of people's rights especially civil and political rights which were related to the government, were mostly ignored due to dictatorial regime which had been established by Reza Shah and which was later handed down to his predecessor. However, approval of new laws such as the civil code, trade act, registry act, and the law of due process paved the way for the explanation and stabilization of many of the nation's rights in the same way that had been earlier enshrined in the first version of the constitution. Although Iran acceded to many international treaties and conventions on human rights under Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the actual extent to which people enjoyed and were given their basic civil, political and social rights was quite limited. Many experts believe that the first sparks of the Islamic Revolution in Iran were set off due to absence of legitimate human freedoms for the nation.

In late 1970s, the Islamic Revolution of Iran, which was inspired by divine revelations of Islam and new demands in the modern Iranian society, led to profound changes in the previous constitution and formulation of the new constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The third chapter of the constitution is about "Rights of the Nation" which reflects the basic rights of the Iranian citizens as enshrined in the national convent of the Islamic Republic of Iran. A cursory glance at this chapter and other articles of the Iranian constitution will substantiate what a former head of the Islamic Republic's Judiciary said about the Islamic Revolution: "Our revolution was based on human rights."

1. Fundamentals of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

A. Human Rights in Shia Fiqh (Jurisprudence)

At present, there is a transparent and powerful debate underway about the

foundations of human rights, just as is the case with other parts of the Islamic world. The experts involved in this debate, however, divide human rights according to their foundations into two groups: human and divine. According to the divine theory of human rights, what is called the international human rights is in no way compatible with Islam's approach to human rights. The proponents of this theory differentiate between natural rights and spiritual rights of humans, putting the highest emphasis on the human spirituality. They

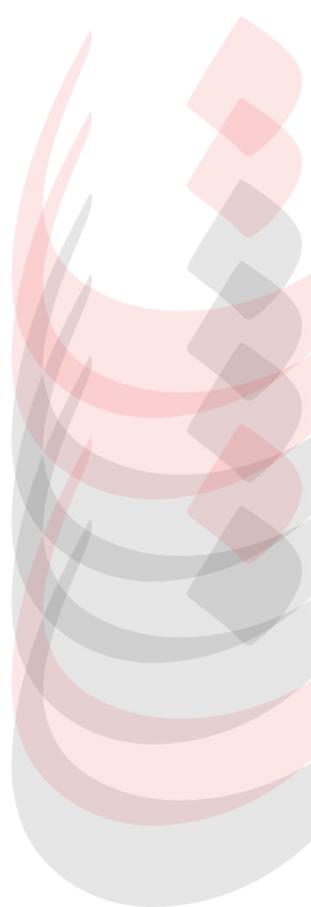


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believe that inattention of the modern human rights to spiritual soul of humans which is common among all human beings and, they believe, constitutes the main essence of humanity, is one of the main drawbacks of the human rights concept which is based on natural needs of human beings. Freedom to change one's religion, allowing men and women to marry regardless of their religious faith, and considering equal rights between men and women, which are against the absolute rules of the Islamic



There is a second viewpoint which believes that both Islamic and non-Islamic legal systems of human rights can coexist. The proponents take two approaches to this issue. In the first approach, they believe that the Islamic legal system can coexist with the current system of human rights because it is more complete and more profound than the latter system in every respect. There are, they argue, many verses in the Holy Quran which have paid attention and elaborated on the human rights centuries before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was even drawn up



jurisprudence, is believed by them to represent the essential conflict between the Western and Islamic approaches to human rights. It is noteworthy that in this theory, the religious human rights is believed to be a general concept as they firmly hold that monotheistic religions can meet all the human demands for communications.

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In the second approach, they believe that a large part of Islamic rules and regulations are in line with international

standards of human rights and when there is incompatibility, the two viewpoints can be brought close together by drawing on the dynamism of the Islamic jurisprudence. Those who believe in this approach, who mostly belong to a current of new religious thinking, can be found both among moderate and radical Muslims. In the moderate group, proponents have already accepted that in some areas there is no possibility of a compromise between the religious and non-religious systems with regard to human rights. As a result, they have focused their attention on common grounds and overlapping features of both systems and believe that by doing so the maximum amount of common points can be achieved in order to turn the conflict between the two systems into dialogue. Among the radicals, however, the proponents have finally reached the conclusion that due to precedence of international obligations over domestic rights and also due to necessity of being committed to international obligations by any country, if religious obligations or rights are at odds with extra-religious rights and obligations, precedence should be given to extra-religious rights and obligations. Most secular intellectuals belong to this group.

As said before, disputes between these different groups have been going on through the entire post-revolution years and have had consequences for the country's human rights policies both inside and outside the country.

B. Human Rights in the Iranian Constitution

The third chapter of the Iranian constitution is entitled "Rights of the Nation." It includes 24 articles (from article 19 to 42) which focus on legitimate and legal rights and freedoms of people in order to guarantee them.

In this chapter, article 19 is about

people's equality in rights and lack of discrimination among them; article 20 is about people's equality before the laws and enjoyment of all human, political, economic, social, and cultural rights according to norms of Islam; article 21 is about women's rights; article 22 is about supporting private sphere as well as honor, life, rights, housing and occupation of all people; article 23 focuses on freedom of conviction and bans inquisition; article 24 is about press freedoms; article 25 revolves around freedom of correspondence; articles 26 and 27 are related to freedom of association and assembly; article 28 is about occupational freedoms; article 29 is about social security rights; article 30 stipulates the people's right to free education; article 31 is about housing right; articles 32 to 39 are about due process including judicial security, proportionality of crime and punishment, right to litigation, right to representation, assumption of innocence, as well as the ban on torture and mistreatment of prisoners; article 40 prohibits abuse of rights; and finally, articles 41 and 42 emphasize on the freedom of nationality by noting that no person can be stripped of his/her nationality.

In addition to above articles, there are many more rights which have been enshrined in other articles of the Iranian constitution the most important of which include: the right to have one's case heard by an independent and impartial judge in Paragraph 3, article 158 and articles 163-164; the right to open trial in articles 165 and 168; prohibition on retrospective application of laws in article 169; and the right to self-determination in articles 6 and 56 of the constitution.

There is a delicate point here. Stressing the need to secure the rights of all citizens, including women and men, in Paragraph 14, article 3 of the Constitution, the emphasis on human rights in Article 21,

and the rights of individuals in article 21 of the constitution have provided a good ground for the expansion of all rights of people. The phrase "human rights" used in article 20 denotes a vast concept which goes well beyond the specific rights of the nationals of Iran. It means to denote all the basic human rights to which every human being is entitled simply because of their human nature.

2. Institutions Active in the Field of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

a. State-Run Institutions

There are many institutions in the judicial, legislative and executive spheres of the Islamic Republic which are playing active roles with regard to human rights. Some of them are as follows:

- The Human Rights Headquarters of the Judiciary which is national coordinator and policymaker body with regard to human rights;
- The Human Rights Subcommittee of the Iranian parliament's Article 90 Committee which plays a supervisory role with regards to human rights issues that are usually assigned to an "ombudsman" in other countries. It has the right and privilege to take action on all cases of violation of human rights and can also publish its report on such cases;
- Women and Family Affairs Center of the Presidential Office;
- Women's Cultural and Social Council which is affiliated to the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council;
- Special Women and Youth Committee (which is affiliated to the Expediency Council);
- Special working groups for women and the youth (part of high planning and development councils of all provinces across the nation) which are tasked with coordinating and bolstering provincial capacities to support the rights of women and the youth;

- Human and Women Rights Department of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Women and Children Rights Committee at Judicial Development Studies Center which carries out fundamental and applied research on the rights of women and children; and
- Human Rights Committee of the Iranian Bar Association.

b. Non-Governmental Institutions

i. Academic Institutions

- Human Rights Studies Center at University of Tehran's Faculty of Law and Political Science;
- Human rights, peace and democracy course at Shahid Beheshti University;
- Human Rights Studies Center at University of Shiraz; and
- Human Rights Studies Center at Mofid University of Qom.

ii. Non-Governmental Institutions

At present, there are more than 7,000 registered nongovernmental organizations along with tens of thousands of unregistered nongovernmental organizations across Iran most of which are active in such fields as charity, empowerment and interest-free loans. Up to July 2012, a total of 27 Iranian nongovernmental organizations were granted advisory status by the UN Economic and Social Council which is the highest number in the region compared to other regional countries after Turkey and Pakistan. It is noteworthy that all of these nongovernmental organizations have obtained their advisory status following the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

3. Some Human Rights Data on Iran

In addition to considering high value for civil and political freedoms, the Islamic Republic of Iran has focused more than anything else on the materialization of the second and third generation of human

rights of the Iranian nationals. The reason is rapid pace of the economic development in the country; the need to meet rapidly rising demands of the Iranian population in nutritional, educational and health-related fields; and also the necessity of making up for the destructive effects of eight years of imposed war with Iraq (which was imposed on Iran through all-out support of the so-called human rights advocates for the former Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein!). At present, many per capita figures on such human rights indices as the number of newspapers and publications, the number of presidential or parliamentary elections, the number of urban and rural representatives in the parliament as well as a strong system of division of power are among prominent examples of adequate attention to political and civil rights in the Iranian society which differentiate it from most other political systems in the Middle East. However, the Islamic establishment has been striving to further improve people's livelihood and promote their standards of living. Growing economic, social and cultural indices such as high literacy rate in the country; increased number of girls admitted to universities compared to boys in the past few years; reduced maternal mortality ratio through better maternal care which caused Iran to achieve the fifth of the Millennium Development Goals in 2008 when maternal mortality hit 30 per 100,000 childbirths; supplying power, sanitary water and clinical services to more than 90 percent of the urban and rural population; providing wide insurance coverage; and promoting primary and secondary education are major steps taken by the Iranian government in this regard.

4. Some Prominent Measures Taken to Defend People's Human Rights

Following the Islamic Revolution in Iran, many laws have been passed a great number of which is directly or indirectly

related to human rights. Unlike the pre-revolution trend when the government's main approach was just to accede to as many international instruments and conventions as possible without providing necessary legal grounds in the country, the post-revolution legislative trends have been focused on providing domestic legal grounds before accepting obligations as a result of commitment to those international instruments. Many amendments have been made to the country's civil code in order to make it more attuned to human rights norms. Prominent examples include passing a law to give custody of a child to his/her mother up to an age of 7 and a note about custody of a child after the age of 7 if the parents are discrepant about custody which will be then decided by the court; giving more marital rights to women such as considering alimony for them and giving them the right to divorce their husbands under specific conditions; passing the law of "hardship and difficulty" for women which allows them to request divorce when they are abused by their spouses or in case of addiction of their husbands; as well as allowing wives to inherit from immovable property of their husbands and, in fact, from everything that their husbands leave behind.

The following list enumerates certain laws which have been passed and enforced in the past three decades in order to protect the human rights and human dignity of the Iranian nation: law for the establishment of General Inspection Organization which is missioned to supervise good implementation of executive affairs and correct implementation of laws by administrative bodies; the Labor Act which was approved by the parliament on November 20, 1990, in order to put a ban on compulsory labor and child labor and also to enforce safety, health, and social security regulations; the Islamic Punitive Code and its amendment which, in 2012,

abrogated stoning as a form of punishment and execution of people who are less than 18 years old when committing a crime; the law for attaching a note to Article 297 of the Islamic Punitive Code, which was approved in 1991 according to which the blood money for Muslims and religious minorities was considered on an equal basis following a fatwa issued by the Supreme Leader who ordered the judicial apparatus to consider equal blood money for Muslims and non-Muslims; the law for hearing lawsuits on personal matters and religious issues of Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians, which was

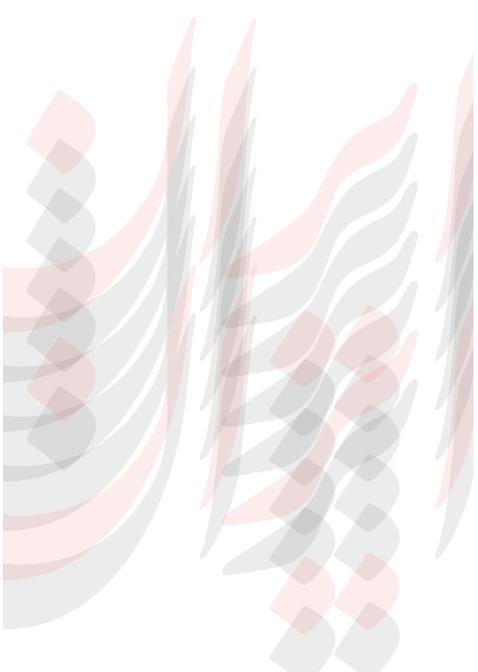


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approved on June 24, 1993, according to which Iranian courts should hear cases filed by non-Muslim nationals according to their own religious regulations; the law for respecting legitimate freedoms and protection of citizenship rights, which was passed on May 4, 2004, and the executive bylaw related to its Article 15, which was approved on November 20, 2004. This law, for the first time, introduced the concept of citizenship rights into Iran's regulations and set



The issue of correcting legal and criminal law systems and attuning them to international human rights norms, claims about ignoring women’s rights, allegations about Iran’s disregard for the rights of ethnic and religious minorities; anti-Iranian claims about high number of death penalty and physical punishments; the issue of freedom of association and assembly as well as alleged restrictions on freedom of conviction and expression have been among major claims raised against the Islamic Republic of Iran during the past three decades



certain rules for protecting dignity of the convicts. According to Article 15 of the law and its executive bylaw, a special board was set up to supervise the implementation of citizenship rights. Another law which were passed to promote human rights in Iran was the law on the nationality of children born to Iranian women who marry foreign men based on which children of Iranian women marrying foreign men whose children have been born in Iran up to one year after the approval of the aforesaid law can request Iranian nationality after they turn 18. There are many other laws and regulations which have also been passed in the past three decades to protect human dignity and human rights of the Iranian citizens.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has also acceded to a great number of international conventions and treaties on human rights the most important of which include:

- International Covenant on civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Convention on

Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination

- International Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Optional protocol to the Convention on the rights of the Child (both Optional Protocols)
- Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
- International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery
- The Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid
- The Convention on the Fight against Apartheid in Sport
- Convention against Discrimination in Education
- Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
- Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees
- ILO Convention concerning Worst Forms of Child Labor
- ILO Convention concerning Abolition of Forced Labor
- ILO Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation
- International Convention Against Hostages Taking
- Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of Poisonous Gases and Bacteriological Methods of Warfare
- International Conventions on Counter-Terrorism
- The Convention on Prohibition of forced and early marriages

5. Brief Review of Human Rights Accusations against the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iran’s

Viewpoints

Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been a regular target of irrational and politicized criticisms and accusations with respect to human rights and that trend has continued through all ups and downs that the country has been through in the post-revolution era. The high number of resolutions adopted against Iran by the United Nations General Assembly and its former Human Rights Commission (which was later replaced by the Human Rights Council) along with reports prepared by special human rights rapporteurs and other parallel processes like annual reports issued by secretary-general of the United Nations, have caused the Iranian officials to reach the conclusion that the political aspect of human rights pressures on a country whose human rights records are much better than many neighboring countries in various human rights-related fields, is much more powerful than their legal aspect.

The issue of correcting legal and criminal law systems and attuning them to international human rights norms, claims about ignoring women's rights, allegations about Iran's disregard for the rights of ethnic and religious minorities; anti-Iranian claims about high number of death penalty and physical punishments; the issue of freedom of association and assembly as well as alleged restrictions on freedom of conviction and expression have been among major claims raised against the Islamic Republic of Iran during the past three decades.

In its efforts to promote human rights, Iran has constantly tried to rely on a logical and insidious trend which is based on its cultural, Islamic and historical features in order to improve human rights-related procedures and laws inside the country. A list of laws and procedures was given above. At the same time, the country has been trying to avoid hasty acceptance of

human rights claims against it and draw a sharp line between the West's cooperative and goodwill measures with regard to human rights, and politicized measures which represent double standards applied to the issue of human rights by certain European countries and the United States. For example, Iran has vehemently objected to the existing approach of international bodies for appointing a special human rights rapporteur on Iran at a time that the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism is already in place. Tehran announced that when a country is closely cooperating with all the member states of the United Nations, as well as other nongovernmental organizations and institutions which are affiliated to the UN, and is also assessed under the most comprehensive human rights supervisory mechanism (namely the UPR), appointment of a human rights rapporteur for the country is a blatant example of politicization of human rights. This is more so considering that special rapporteur is being appointed for a country which has held at least 30 elections in the past 30 years and is located in a region of the world where some countries have never held even a single election for their highest ranking authorities.

Due to high sensitivity as well as the inherent potential of issues related to human rights to feed untrue propaganda efforts by the West against Iran, it seems that as long as tension between Iran and the West over human rights has not ebbed and the two sides have not taken steps to bring their viewpoints close through logical, scientific and balanced dialogue, politicization will continue to plague the West's human rights concerns with regard to Iran. This will also leave its mark on all forms of relations between the two sides and will prevent them from achieving a common understanding in order to take coordinated steps to end the current situation.

ایران



In Iran, sanctions take toll on the sick

By: Najmeh Bozorgmehr

TEHRAN — The tightening of U.S. banking sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program has had an impact on all sectors of the economy but is increasingly hitting vulnerable medical patients as deliveries of medicine and raw materials for Iranian pharmaceutical companies are either stopped or delayed, according to medical experts.

The effect, the experts say, is being felt by cancer patients and those being treated for complex disorders such as hemophilia, multiple sclerosis and thalassemia, as well as transplant and kidney dialysis patients, none of whom can afford

interruptions or delays in medical supplies.

Milad, an 8-year-old Iranian boy suffering from severe hemophilia, lives in Kuhdasht, a town 400 miles southwest of Tehran, and relies on injections of a U.S.-made treatment, Feiba, which is no longer available locally in large enough quantities.

His parents took him on the 12-hour bus journey to the capital hoping to find supplies of the vital medicine but were given enough for only two days. The boy is now at risk of losing the use of his right leg and is suffering continuous nose bleeds that could be life-threatening.

“I am really worried. My son’s life is at risk,” said Afsaneh, his mother. She says she does not know which countries have imposed sanctions

on Iran but believes “no human beings can be so brutal to patients.”

However, Ahmad Ghavidel, head of the Iranian Hemophilia Society, a nongovernmental organization that assists about 8,000 patients, says access to medicine has become increasingly limited and claims one young man recently died in southern Iran after an accident when the blood-clotting injection he needed was not available.

“This is a blatant hostage-taking of the most vulnerable people by countries which claim they care about human rights,” Ghavidel said. “Even a few days of delay can have serious consequences like hemorrhage and disability.”

Health analysts say that although the volume of imports affected may be small in percentage terms, the products that are involved are vital for chronic diseases for which domestically produced replacements either do not exist or are not as effective.

Iran’s pharmaceutical factories are said by health analysts and medical importers to be dependent on imports from Western countries, as well as China and India, for more than half of their raw materials.

The U.S. Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has made “the commercial exportation or re-exportation of food and medicine to Iran . . . subject to licensing requirements,” while most goods and technologies in other sectors are banned.

However, even those with a license report problems. Importers say that despite resorting to various more expensive financial channels, such as changing from one European bank to another or using middlemen and unofficial transactions, medicine does not arrive on time or in sufficient quantities.

“We hold a license from the OFAC, but our imports have dropped by more than half while we pay much more than before,” one importer said.

“The exemption of medicine from sanctions is only in theory,” said another. “International banks do not accept Iran’s money for fear of facing U.S. punishment.”

Hengameh Ebrahim-Zadeh, of the Tehran Province Thalassemia Association, an NGO,

says patients — estimated to number about 20,000 across the country — now receive enough medicine to cover just a few days of their monthly needs.

She said she knows of four deaths in Tehran over the past month that were a result of the shortage of medicine for thalassemia patients.

Kidney dialysis and transplant patients suffer from similar problems. Daryoush Arman, an adviser to the Iran Charity Association to Support Kidney Patients, an NGO that helps about 65,000 people, said those patients who are prescribed imported medicine by their doctors are struggling. However, he added, “the biggest challenge” lies ahead, as a shortage of dialysis and transplant equipment is likely to worsen.

Many Iranians fear they will face similar shortages for treatments of more common diseases when stocks of medicines are depleted.

But for Afsaneh, Milad’s mother, the concern is more immediate as she keeps an eye on her son’s leg. “His right leg has become softer since



this morning thanks to the injection,” she says. “I have to go back to the pharmacy tomorrow to see if I can get more Feiba. Milad’s life is bound to Feiba.”

Source:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/sanctions-take-toll-on-irans-sick/2012/09/04/ce07ee2c-f6b2-11e1-8253-3f495ae70650_print.html

Human Rights News

Children are suffering from the devastating and lasting impact of the Gaza Crisis – UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

GENEVA (22 November 2012) – While welcoming the ceasefire which started last night, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on Thursday expressed its “deep concern at the devastating and lasting impact the crisis in Gaza and Israel is having on children.”

“This impact extends from a large number of deaths and injuries in Gaza to deep trauma and other psychological effects on children on both sides of the border,” the Committee said. “These experiences may affect them for many years to come, including into adulthood.”

Since the beginning of the current crisis, at least

26 children have been killed and, according to the Ministry of Health, more than 400 have been injured, some gravely, by Israeli attacks on Gaza. In Southern Israel, 14 Israeli children have been injured by shellfire launched by Hamas.

“Many other children in Gaza have lost parents or other loved ones, and are left deeply traumatized,” the Committee said.

UNICEF had drawn attention to the fact that many children had been forced to sleep in the cold in Gaza, because their windows had been shattered by explosions, or because they had kept the windows open, to avoid injury from shards of glass. In

southern Israel, children also lived in fear and were forced to go into bomb shelters or to seek shelter in other parts of the country. “All parties to the conflict should abide by their unconditional obligations to provide special protection for children,” the Committee said, noting that “human rights law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, applies at all times, including in situations of armed conflict.”

United Nations Office – Geneva



Kuwait police using ‘excessive force’ on protests: HRW

During huge demonstrations staged by the opposition since October 15, police frequently used tear gas and stun grenades and beat up protesters, leading to the injury of dozens and the arrest of many more, said HRW. The Islamist, nationalist and liberal opposition, angry over an amended electoral law, has been staging protests almost

every night since the December 1 poll to demand the parliament’s dissolution and scrapping the amendment. The parliament, described as totally pro-government, has however begun normal business after it was inaugurated by Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah on December 16.

The Daily Star (Lebanon)



Human Rights Watch Pushes Bureau Of Prisons For More Compassionate Releases Of Sick Prisoners

For humanitarian and economic reasons, the federal Bureau of Prisons should grant more early releases to incapacitated and terminally ill prisoners, two advocacy groups say in a report depicting current policies as sometimes "cruel as well as senseless."

The report, issued Friday by Human Rights Watch and Families Against Mandatory Minimums, says the Bureau of Prisons oversees more than 218,000 inmates, yet has recommended an average of only two dozen compassionate releases a year since 1992.

Human Rights Watch senior adviser Jamie Feller, a co-author of the report, said Congress in 1984 granted federal courts the authority to reduce sentences under "extraordinary and compelling" circumstances. However, the report says federal prisoners can't seek such a sentence reduction from the courts on their own; only the BOP has the authority to file a motion requesting judicial consideration of early release.

Responding by email, the BOP said it reviews each early-release request on a case-by-case basis and also takes into consideration information provided by the U.S. Attorney's Office.

"It is the bureau's responsibility to consider public

safety" when determining whether to pursue these motions, the BOP statement said.

Though the new report is generally critical of BOP policies, it cites some "promising signs" – including formation of a BOP working group to look at the compassionate

release program. It said the BOP's new director, Charles Samuels, has expressed interest in reforming the program and noted that the number of release cases forwarded to the courts had risen slightly under his leadership, to 37 between Jan. 1 and Nov. 15 of this year. The report urges Congress to change the existing law, which gives prisoners no right to challenge BOP decisions in court. It also says the BOP should bring compassionate release motions to court whenever a prisoner presents compelling arguments, regardless of whether prison officials believe early release is warranted. The BOP's budget is more than \$6 billion, and care of ailing and aging prisoners is a major factor in rising expenses. The report says one way to curb these costs would be increased use of compassionate release for prisoners posing minimal risk to public safety.

The Huffington Post

Bahrain princess on trial for torture during Arab Spring protests

Princess Noura Bint Ebrahim al-Khalifa was working as a police officer when the Arab Spring swept across the Middle East and threatened to topple the oil-rich nation's ruling family. Bahrain's so-called "Pearl Revolution" was put down quickly and with extreme prejudice. Prosecutors say al-Khalifa played a role by personally torturing the doctors after they were arrested for tending to injured demonstrators.

"The charge is that she used torture, force and threats against the victims Zahra al-Sammak and Kholoud al-Durazi to make them confess to a crime," Prosecutor Nawaf Hamza told Reuters.

The Kingdom is seeking to prove it is earnest in protecting human rights, even at the expense of prosecuting a high-profile figure like the princess. Supporters of the government highlight the fact that the King himself ordered an inquiry into the events surrounding the demonstrations and the establishment of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) which included independent assessors, a number of whom were

experienced United Nations Human Rights investigators.

But last month, there was strong international condemnation of Bahrain's decision to uphold the sentences imposed on 13 members of the 2011 protests.

Bahrain's government claims the demonstrations were whipped up by Shia agents sent from Iran to try and undermine the rule of the staunchly pro-U.S. al-Khalifa family, followers of the opposing stream of Muslim belief to the Islamic Republic.



Saudi Arabia's treatment of foreign workers under fire after beheading of Sri Lankan maid

More than 45 foreign maids are facing execution on death row in Saudi Arabia, the Observer has learned, amid growing international outrage at the treatment of migrant workers.

The startling figure emerged after Saudi Arabia beheaded a 24-year-old Sri Lankan domestic worker, Rizana Nafeek, in the face of appeals for clemency from around the world.

The exact number of maids on death row is almost certainly higher, but Saudi authorities do not publish official figures. Indonesians are believed to account for the majority of those facing



a death sentence. Human rights groups say 45 Indonesian women are on death row, and five have exhausted the legal process.

Weekly Report On Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

This is Just one Week of Human Rights Violation of Palestinian People

Jerusalem – Israeli bulldozers demolish two houses in Wad al-Rababa quarter in Silwan

Israeli Forces Continue Systematic Attacks against Palestinian Civilians and Property in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)

A Palestinian woman was killed by Israeli forces north of Hebron.

A Palestinian child died of previous wounded he had sustained in 'Ayda refugee camp, north of Bethlehem.

3 Palestinian civilians were wounded by the Israeli forces in the south of the West Bank.

6 Palestinian civilians, including 2 children, were wounded by the Israeli forces in border areas in the northern Gaza Strip.

The Israeli forces continued to use excessive force against peaceful protests in the West Bank.

5 Palestinian civilians, including 2 children, were wounded.

The Israeli forces conducted 75 incursions into Palestinian communities in the West Bank and a limited one into the Gaza Strip.

At least 33 Palestinian civilians, including 5 children, were arrested in the West Bank.

5 Palestinian civilians, including 4 children, were arrested in the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli naval forces continued to fire at Palestinian fishing boats in the Gaza Strip.

Israel has continued to impose a total closure on the oPt and has isolated the Gaza Strip from the outside world.

The Israeli forces established dozens of checkpoints in the West Bank.

At least 11 Palestinian civilians, including 2 children and an old woman, were arrested at

checkpoints in the West Bank.

Israel has continued efforts to create a Jewish majority in East Jerusalem.

2 rooms and some other civilian facilities were demolished in Silwan village.

Israel has continued settlement activities in the



West Bank and Israeli settlers have continued to attack Palestinian civilians and property.

2 houses, 3 tents and 3 barns were demolished in al-Jiftlek village, north of Jericho.

Summary

Israeli violations of international law and international humanitarian law in the oPt continued during the reporting period (23 – 30 January 2013).

Human rights: violence against women in India; crackdown in Bahrain; insecurity in Central African Republic

Human rights situation in Bahrain

In their resolution on Bahrain, MEPs call on the authorities and security forces to stop using violence against peaceful protestors and demand an independent investigation into all human rights abuses, particularly those involving children. The prosecution, detention and torture of protestors must stop and freedom of expression and assembly, both online and offline, must be guaranteed, they insist.

The EP urges the Bahraini authorities to follow the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), implement democratic reforms and pursue a national dialogue aimed at reconciliation.

The House expresses its "strong disapproval" of the EU's lack of response to the ongoing crackdown in Bahrain and calls for sanctions against the individuals directly responsible for the human rights abuses and for restrictions on EU exports of surveillance technology, tear gas and crowd-control material.

Violence against women in India

Parliament demands immediate action to improve the handling of rape and sexual assault cases by the Indian police and condemns all form of sexual violence, with a specific reference to the treatment of Dalit women and girls. It "welcomes the great wave of solidarity in India and internationally with rape victims and hopes that this will help speed up the necessary reforms."

MEPs point out that, as a democratic partner of the EU, India must uphold the rule of law and ensure respect for fundamental and human rights, in particular women's rights. They regret the lack of assistance for victims and call for open trials in

cases of sexual violence. Parliament also calls on the EU and the member states to prioritise programmes addressing violence against women and focusing on women and girls.

Central African Republic (CAR)

Parliament is gravely concerned about the situation in CAR since the launch of Seleka rebel offensive on 10 December 2012, which has put civilian lives at risk and threatens the security and stability of the country. It welcomes the peace agreement signed on 11 January 2013 in Libreville, calls on the parties



to respect the ceasefire and condemns all attempts to take power by force.

MEPs welcome the decision to hold parliamentary elections, call for them to be internationally monitored and insist that the government of national unity must represent all the country's political forces. The EP is worried by reports of an increase in the recruitment and use of child soldiers and also stresses the need for close monitoring of the regional dimension of the conflict. The three resolutions were adopted unanimously. European Parliament

ODVV's Statements

ODVV's Statement on the Continued Suppression of the Bahraini Opposition

Since the beginning of the Arab Awakening over two years ago, the Middle East and North Africa region witnessed a chain reaction of events that saw the fall of western backed dictators in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt; and finally after decades of tyrannical rule the people began to shape their own destiny.

The tiny island Kingdom of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf was one of the countries of the region to have also been involved in the Arab Awakening. The Shia Muslims who make up the majority population of the country, merely came out in peaceful demonstrations for equal rights to be recognized for them by the State and Government.

The peaceful demonstrations were met with violent reactions by the police and security forces, and even foreign military involvement, all of which drew worldwide condemnation.

Despite the setting up of an independent fact-finding commission by the King of Bahrain, and despite the commissions findings, the brutal confrontation and crackdown of political and human rights activists has continued unabated.

Another outrageous development that causes the concern of the ODVV is the revoking of citizenship of 31 opposition activists by the Bahraini government, among which are included former members of parliament. This ridiculous move has been done under the pretext of "undermining of state security". And Article 10 of the Citizenship Law permits the "re-evaluation of nationality."

As a human rights NGO that defends victims in any part of the world, ODVV strongly condemns the revoking of Bahraini citizenship on ridiculous excuses, and the decision of the Court of Cassation in upholding the sentences of 20 Bahraini human rights activists that range from five years to life.

The ODVV calls upon the Bahraini government to:

- a) immediately and unconditionally release all political and activist prisoners that were not involved in any acts of violence.
- b) reverse the citizenship revoking decision.
- c) allow the free formation of associations, unions and political and nonpolitical parties and groups.
- d) eliminate discrimination in the public employment sector.
- e) allow independent press and media to operate in the country.
- f) bring to fair trial all those responsible in the brutal crackdowns that have been continuing on for the last two years.

The ODVV firmly believes that only through the aforementioned measures that are supervised by international observers, can peace and stability return to the island Kingdom, where all its citizens regardless of race and religion can live in total equality and freedom.



ODVV's Statement Condemning Canada's Recent Action

An astonishing trend began in June 2008 in the United Kingdom, followed by the EU in 2009, the United States in September 2012 and finally in December in Canada.

All the aforementioned removed the Iranian terrorist group, the Mujaheddin Khalgh Organization from their list of terror groups.

This terror group started its vicious terror campaigns in Iran before the revolution in the seventies, continuing after the revolution to the extent of joining forces with Saddam's invading forces and fighting fellow Iranians.

Today, there are 17,000 families in Iran who are victims of the atrocities of this terror group, who still have not seen any retribution or compensation for the terrible sufferings that they will bear to their grave.

While expressing its shock and total dismay, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, strongly condemns the previous and latest actions in the removal of the MKO from the list of known terror groups.

The ODVV firmly believes these measures to be totally politically motivated with perhaps hidden intentions, and urges the UN and its relevant bodies, and international human rights and humanitarian NGOs to unite in one voice and urge these governments to reverse their decision. These governments must fully realize that the real intent of this terror group is nothing but the subjugation of Iranians in their twisted totalitarian Stalinist ways.

ODVV Statement on the Sandy Hook Elementary School Massacre

Once again America and the world witnessed another senseless heinous act of butchery. The peace and tranquility of the small community in Newtown Connecticut was shattered at 9:30am on Friday the 14th of December, when 20 children aged between 6-7, and six adult were killed by a lone gunman.

While the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence expresses its deep condolences to the families of the bereaved and the American Nation, it also condemns in the strongest possible terms these senseless criminal acts, by anyone in any part of the world. As a human rights NGO, the ODVV cannot help in being outraged by this and other similar incidents, especially when obviously there must be a sensible and logical measure that can be taken.

The ODVV respects the sovereignty and the right to self determination, and the domestic legislations of any member State of the United Nations. The ODVV understands that the 2nd Amendment of the US Constitution highlights "every citizen's right to bear arms" as it was written over two centuries ago during the turbulent times of the new fledgling United States of America, which following its Declaration of Independence on 4 July 1766, for several decades was still at war with the British Colonials. The ODVV, however feels that in today's world the 2nd Amendment as its text stands is somewhat archaic, and the only purpose that it serves is to promote easy access to lethal military grade weapons.

The ODVV firmly believes that the time is here and now that for once and for all a comprehensive solution is found to this problem. Legislators, jurists, NRA representatives, anti-gun representatives, psychologists, psychiatrists and the academia must get together and brainstorm to find a solution where while preserving the 2nd Amendment to adopt nationwide legislations for banning semi-automatic and automatic assault weapons.

The United States government must also find effective and binding solutions regarding the security of schools and universities across the nation. These measures could be the installation of metal detectors, complex CCTV system and increasing security guard presence.

It is heartbreaking to know that 20 innocent lives will not see this Christmas and any Christmases ever again. May they all rest in peace.

ODVV's Statement on the Killing of 8 Polio Health Workers in Pakistan

While expressing condolences to the families of the victims, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence condemns in the strongest terms the killing of 8 polio health workers in Pakistan in a three day spate of attacks in different parts of the country.

Following these attacks UNICEF and World Health Organization suspended all their operations in the country till further notice. There is no reason in the world that can justify these heinous acts committed by extremist terrorist thugs.

Knowing what an invaluable work the aforementioned organizations are doing to help eradicate a crippling disease among children, the Pakistani authorities should immediately and without politicized delay, take assertive measures to:

- 1 – Apprehend all those involved in these terrible attacks and bring them to justice.
- 2 – To provide all the necessary security for polio aid workers in the country.

ODVV Statements Submitted to the 21th Session of the HRC

item 3 : Right to development

Institutionalisation of the realisation of human rights Approximately 46 years have passed since the raising of the right to development issue, and

26 years since the ratification of the Declaration on the Right to Development.¹ With an emphasis on the mutual dependency of mankind, the right to development is the reflection of the common and reciprocal responsibility of humans towards each other for the purpose of the fulfilment of all human needs and realisation of world justice. This is why there is a solid link between development, human rights and global peace and security.

In various international documents and resolutions, the necessity and importance of this right have been reiterated one of which is the Establishment of the Human Rights Council Resolution.²

The preamble of the said resolution acknowledges: “that peace and security, development and human rights are the pillars of the United Nations system and the foundations for collective security and well-being, and recognizing that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing” and in view of this importance, article 4 of the resolution states: “that the work of the Council shall be guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, constructive international dialogue and cooperation, with a view to enhancing the promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development;”.

Nevertheless in spite of a lot of efforts and various international documents, it seems that there are important challenges and obstacles in the way of the right to development. One of the most important of these obstacles is the lack of cooperation and responsibility of developed countries. It must be reminded that the Declaration on the Right to Development was adopted in 1986 by 146 votes for and the only against by the United States of America, and numerous abstains from developed countries, and to-date the positions of the developed countries has always been in the weakening and undermining the importance of the right to development on the pretext of prioritisation of civil and political rights, while the recent years developments such as the far reaching economic crisis and some current international challenges all clearly indicate that the right to development is a prerequisite of all other human rights including civil and political rights, and the right to development is the most logical way to establish stability and development of welfare and encouragement of democracy and increase economic growth. And on the other side of the scale the deepening developed gap between developed and developing countries, threaten the stability and security of all countries including developed countries.

It must always be noted that development requires a process that includes equality and justice both in national and international communities. Any human rights approaches towards economic and social policies must be based on justice because the meaning of justice originates from human dignity philosophy, just as the equality of all people is one of the fundamental concerns of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The contents of the debates held at the United Nations and other international circles during the writing of the draft of the Declaration on the Right to Development, no doubt is left the thing that the right to development doctrine considers is an economic and social system based on equal and fair opportunities. But sadly the realities in the international arena draw a different

picture. Even though the traditional dividing of countries into North and South is not as important as it used to be in today's interlinked world, but discriminatory actions and domineering attitudes and application of pressure from industrial and developed countries towards developing countries still continues; some examples of which are military interventions, ignoring the right of self-determination of nations, application of double standards approaches, application of economic sanctions and putting pressure on nations to impose the political will of global powers.

As well as the Declaration on the Right to Development, while giving primary responsibility of the right to development to national governments, it also stresses on international cooperation as thus: "States have the duty to co-operate with each other in ensuring development...", and calls upon states "to ensure that the resources released by effective disarmament measures are used for comprehensive development." The important question here is what steps have been taken in this regard to-date? It is clearly obvious that not only have developed countries not taken any steps in this regard, but by further militarization of the international environment, they have strengthened the basis for the stockpiling and use of all sorts of weapons across the world.

These conditions make it necessary for the Human Rights Council to continue its past efforts on the right to development more than before and put the subject in its top priorities.

Conclusions and recommendations

- In view of what's been said, the United Nations has a significant role in the realisation of the right to development, because it's the only place where development, human rights and peace and security are dealt with and at the international level, and is indicative of the will of the international community. Meanwhile through defining, determining and making transparent the nature and dimensions of the right to development and states and international institutions responsibilities and obligations, the Human Rights Council must design a mechanism for monitoring of states and the international community on their commitment levels towards the fulfilment of the right to development, and through provision of advice, publication of reports, provision of technical and expertise recommendations, encourage governments and apply suitable pressures for the realisation of the fundamental right to development.

- After the passage of 26 years since the ratification of the Declaration on the Right to Development, numerous debates and efforts have been made, but it seems that the time has come for the compilation and ratification of an enforceable international document to begin, as the "Convention on the Right to Development", so that the obligations of states are transparently clarified at the national and international levels. The Human Rights Council can be a forerunner in the drafting of this convention.

- In view of the improper and in instance destructive practice of international lobbying and financial institutions and the economic policies of industrial countries which result in some form of division of international work which is to the disadvantage of developing countries, putting restrictions on the transfer of technology, growing income gaps, and unfair distribution of wealth and power at the international level; and also the lack of organized communication between institutions and experts in the fields of human rights, economy and sustainable development, we recommend the United Nations to establish a council for the provision of global economic security. In fact it must be said that the new international economy system includes new concepts of international

trade laws which require the protection of the right to development of developing countries. This new situation must be reflected and realised in the UN structure mechanism.

- One of the most blatant examples of right to development violations is the imposing of economic sanctions against countries with the objective of forcing political behavioural change of the governments. Aside from whether how effective sanctions are in forcing governments to change their behaviour, to which experience has shown that they don't have much influence, the blatant violations of the most natural economic rights of the people and an increased risk in life with the reduction of food, medical, and factories raw materials supplies, unemployment and many other instances and ultimately the creation of serious obstacles to reduce or stop the development of countries, are all grave violations of the right to development. We recommend through a resolution, the Human Rights Council to deem the imposing of international economic sanctions against countries as the violation of economic and social rights of the people and disregard of the right to development.

- 1 UN Documents, A/RES/41198 (4 December, 1968).

- 2 UN Documents, A/RES/60/251 (15 March 2006).

item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Unfortunately the bitter truth is that just as much as international human rights principles (regardless of place, gender, race and religion, and based on human dignity that require respect and observation) have been accepted by a significant part of all states of the world and thus become universal, human rights are violated to the same extent in all corners of the world, regardless of development levels, political systems and human rights commitments.

As a nongovernmental organization active in various human rights fields the ODVV wishes to draw the attention of public opinion towards a number of instances of human rights violations around the world, particularly countries that lay claim to custodianship and promoters of human rights.

The United States of America and human rights

Although over the recent months, America's human rights violations outside of its borders have been more evident (particularly in regions with US military presence), nonetheless still, within the United States, nongovernmental human rights advocate organizations concerns are growing on social trends and even the legalisation of discrimination. As Human Rights Watch has stated, one of these is the immigrants' debate and how they are treated.

On this basis The US Supreme Court's decision to uphold part of Arizona's immigrant law puts immigrant families in Arizona and other states at greater risk of abuse from local authorities. The June 25, 2012 ruling in *Arizona v. United States* overturned several sections of the Arizona law, commonly known as SB 1070, stating that they are pre-empted by federal law. But it left intact a section requiring police to attempt to verify a person's immigration status if they have "reasonable suspicion" that the individual is in the country without authorization.

According to HRW, the court's ruling on the law's "reasonable suspicion" provision focuses on a narrow legal issue and does not foreclose other challenges to this provision. But this ruling could have immediate serious implications for immigrant communities and may encourage other states to adopt similar legislation. In a positive move, the court struck three other sections that would have criminalized unlawful presence and unauthorized work.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which the United States ratified in 1994, requires federal, state, and local governments to ensure that their immigration policies do not have the effect of discriminating against people on the basis of race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin. Even in cases in which specific police officers show no intent to discriminate, if their actions have discriminatory effects, the government is in violation of the treaty.

Furthermore according to another report from an American NGO:

The Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement detained nearly 400,000 people last year; more than double how many people were in its custody four years ago. The growth is largely due to increased collaboration between federal immigration agents and state and local law enforcement officials, including programs such as Secure Communities. People in immigration detention face numerous obstacles to defending their due process and human rights, including inadequate access to lawyers and medical care.

As stated earlier, human rights violations by the United States in conflict regions have always existed in the past years and with the indifference of the country's high officials

these trends have grown. It seems as if they think for the protection of America's national security, as they define, any measure taken outside of the country is legitimate. The rise in the number of US drone attacks and as a result a rise in the number of civilian deaths and injuries in these blind attacks is one of the subjects that is a concern for the ODVV. The intensity of the cases of human rights violations is so serious that even former US President, Jimmy Carter has said: "United States is abandoning its role as the global champion of human rights..." Instead of making the world safer, America's violation of international human rights abets our enemies and alienates our friends." The number of these attacks as the New America Foundation estimates that in Pakistan alone 265 drone strikes have been executed since January 2009. These strikes have killed at least 1,488 people and unfortunately in all these attacks civilians or those that have been thought to be militants but weren't have been killed, and the only thing the US government has done is said that it will look into them.

Human Rights situation in the Palestinian Occupied Territories

We associate ourselves with The United Nations Special Committee on Israeli Practices in the Occupied Territories which has expressed serious concern about the treatment of Palestinian children in detention by Israeli security forces, and warned that a pattern of detaining and mistreating children "links to broader, longstanding concerns regarding Israel detention of Palestinians generally".

According to the Committee's report, "Witnesses informed the Committee that mistreatment of Palestinian children starts from the moment of detention," said Ambassador Palitha T.B. Kohona, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York, and Chairperson of the Committee, at the end of a fact-finding visit to Amman, Cairo and the Gaza Strip.

Ambassador Kohona explained that parents are not allowed to accompany the detainees, and that family members are insulted, intimidated and at times physically assaulted. According to witnesses, the detention and transfer of children can last for hours, and can often include stops in Israeli settlements, Israeli checkpoints and police or military bases.¹

This situation also has been considered by United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, Richard Falk, who has brought the issue under consideration and has declared: "Israel's use of solitary confinement against children flagrantly violates international human rights standards,"

While expressing his outrage that Israel even imposes solitary confinement punitively on child hunger strikers, he has reaffirmed that "Using solitary confinement as a punishment for Palestinian children who wish to peacefully protest their situation, including by commencing a hunger strike against conditions of detention, is an appalling abuse of child prisoners."

"This pattern of abuse by Israel is grave," the Special Rapporteur stressed. "It is inhumane, cruel, degrading, and unlawful, and, most worryingly, it is likely to adversely affect the mental and physical health of underage detainees."²

Two final important points

1. Canada's unexpected reaction towards the UN Commissioner on Human Rights report on the handling of the protesters in Quebec and the violation of their rights to association also show a

reduction in the nation's take it easy levels, and as stated in the NGOs reports (www.upr-info.org) there were a record 908 recommendations given for the improvement were given to Canada in its first round of the UPR. Canada must realise that the subject of human rights is universal, and there is the possibility of their violations, and more importantly the diversity of views on how to make correct approaches towards a human rights issue.

2. The tragic earthquake in our country Iran showed that the meaning of targeted sanctions imposed by the United States who repeatedly claims that the sanctions solely target nuclear and military sectors, are anything but targeted. In view of America going further than the Security Council sanctions and threatening other countries to follow in suit and impose further sanctions against Iran, which do nothing but affect food, medicine and even infants powdered milk, the result of all of which is what took place after the earthquake, when American and Iranian charity institutions lobbied for days to get Congress to temporarily lift the sanctions against Iran, and only on the condition that the sent aid would be received by Iranian aid NGOs and or the victims themselves.

We hope that the Council will set up a panel on the subject of "sanctions and human rights violations" so that the different aspects of sanctions and the real separating lines between sanctions and their negative effects on all three human rights generations are determined, and also determine how free a hand can countries have in imposing sanctions and applying pressure on others to get their cooperation.

1 [http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/B950EF51E193EF](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/B950EF51E193EF)

2 [http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/B956DE74EF2940](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/B956DE74EF2940)

item 6: Bahrain UPR

The situation of human rights in Bahrain is now in its worst scenario, a compilation of continuous and brutal crackdown with an agonizing and meaningful world's most important Medias silence. Unfortunately even during and after working group session on 2nd Bahrain's UPR, something is still missed: A real, genuine, respectful and tolerated approach from the government towards the wishes and needs of protestors, the people who were beaten, tortured and jailed, instead of being listened to.

We, as a nongovernmental organization, that is active in different fields of advocacy and monitoring human rights, especially in the Middle East and Persian gulf region, are concerned about blatant violations of human rights of Bahrainis, specially Shia minorities and human rights defenders and ask government of Bahrain to pay special attention to the cases which have been classified below and our subsequent recommendations.

Human Rights defenders and doctors

One of the most extensive forms of human rights violations in Bahrain are the grave violation of the rights of doctors in the country, which causes Organization for Defending Victims of Violence and human rights defenders in various countries serious concern. Richard Sollom deputy director of the Physicians for Human Rights says in this regard: "in two decades of study on human rights violations in more than 20 countries, I have never witnessed such extensive and systematic violations that take place in Bahrain." Ambulances, hospitals, clinics, doctors, nurses and medical staff are all targeted, and this is very extensive and continues to take place. These attacks seriously violate the neutrality of physician's principle and international law.

While observing their code of ethics in fair and unprejudiced treatment of injured protestors and civilians, the rights of doctors and nurses in Bahrain themselves are violated, and not only we've witnessed their dismissal from medical treatment centers, but in instances these humanitarian acts of theirs has resulted in their arrest and detention. At least 22 medical experts were grabbed by

security forces and sent to solitary confinement.

Meanwhile the situation of other prominent human rights defenders like Nabeel Rajab, Abdulhadi Al-khawaja, Zainab Al-khawaja and Abdul-Jalil Al-singace, who have been sentenced to jail, just for engaging in their inalienable rights of freedom of thoughts and speech, is a matter of concern to us.

Destruction of properties and holy places

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence is deeply concerned over the attacks on mosques and destruction of holy Islamic property and also banning the Shia to hold religious ceremonies and also attacks on mourners over the recent months in the country which are all grave violations of international law with regards to the protection of places of worship, and also Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with regards to freedom of religion and belief and holding of religious ceremonies in public or private.

Violation of the right of self determination

The independent decision making of a nation with regards to internal issues is a value. Thus Article 2 of the UN Charter mentions the objectives and principles of the United Nations with regards to the self determination of nations. Article 2.4 also stresses: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner

inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations". This is while the military intervention of Saudi Arabia is a blatant violation of the aforementioned paragraphs. The philosophy behind the clear military support of Bahrain by Saudi Arabia is for the crackdown of the Bahraini Shia and preventing them from getting political power. This is a clear violation of Article 1.2 of the Charter.

Recommendations

1. The rights of various groups that include human rights defenders and doctors that have been violated in the recent unrests must be compensated in accordance with international laws, and these individuals have a right to complain against the abuse of their rights in national courts as stated in Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. We ask the government of Bahrain to carry out an in-depth inquiry into past and present allegations of torture as well as all allegations of excessive and illegal use of force and bring those responsible to justice and also to continue the reform process and ensure accountability by investigating all allegations of torture and mistreatment and by prosecuting any individuals found responsible, including senior government officials.

3. We ask the government to review convictions, commute sentences, or drop charges for all persons who engaged in non-violent political expression, especially 4 human rights defenders; Nabeel Rajab, Abdulhadi Al-khawaja, Zainab Al-khawaja and Abdul-Jalil Al-singace. In this regard we associate ourselves with 38 human rights NGO's who in the middle of August 2012, called on the government to free these human rights activists.¹

4. We recommend full implementation of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry's (BICI) which cover a broad range of tasks, including the ensuring of accountability, prevention of the recurrence of human rights violations through law reform and training of law enforcement personnel, and respect of due process. ODVV urges the government of Bahrain to implement the outcome of the national conciliation dialogue in order to overcome the effects of unfortunate events.

Alongside of that we ask the government to ensure that all allegation of human rights violations during and after the February – March 2011 protests by the security forces are independently, promptly and thoroughly investigated, bringing perpetrators to justice and providing victims with due redress and rehabilitation.

5. For non-occurrence of those regrettable events, we recommend the Bahrain government to

impose some amendments or ratification of due regulations such as:

- Repeal or amend the 2002 Press Law eliminating all restrictions upon the freedom of the press not in line with relevant provisions of the ICCPR, and also Amend the Penal Code to remove all criminal penalties for alleged libel offences and the press law to bring its provisions into compliance with article 19 of ICCPR;
- The ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the full alignment of Bahrain's national legislation with its provisions;
- Amend any article of its Penal Code that can be used to prosecute individuals for the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly or association, and bring its laws into line with international standards established by the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights.

6. ODVV calls upon Bahraini officials to accept the visit of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of assembly and association and also continue and strengthen cooperation with the UN Human Rights Mechanisms and its various efforts made for human rights capacity building and also Establish an open, genuine, all-inclusive and effective national dialogue among different concerned parties with the aim of effectively addressing the legitimate aspirations and concerns of all the population in a democratic manner.

7. According to Article 1.2 of the UN Charter one of the purposes of the United Nations is: "To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace." Also Article 2.4 of the Charter states: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."; therefore it is expected for other countries, such as Saudi Arabia to while respecting human rights laws to refrain from military intervention in Bahrain.

8. We call upon the government of Bahrain, as it has been endorsed by Bahrain representatives in article 113 of final report of UPR working group, to comply with its commitments regarding reconstruction of all the places of worships that had been destroyed during unrests.

9. We also associate ourselves to the statement made by Switzerland in 20th session of human rights council on behalf of 27 countries, calling on Bahraini authorities to agree to the establishment of an OHCHR office in Bahrain.

>do nothing but affect food, medicine and even infants powdered milk, the result of all of which is what took place after the earthquake, when American and Iranian charity institutions lobbied for days to get Congress to temporarily lift the sanctions against Iran, and only on the condition that the sent aid would be received by Iranian aid NGOs and or the victims themselves.

We hope that the Council will set up a panel on the subject of "sanctions and human rights violations" so that the different aspects of sanctions and the real separating lines between sanctions and their negative effects on all three human rights generations are determined, and also determine how free a hand can countries have in imposing sanctions and applying pressure on others to get their cooperation.

1 <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/5388>.

item 6 :United Kingdom UPR

Human trafficking in the UK

Human Trafficking is the fastest growing criminal activity in the world. The United Kingdom is a destination and, to a lesser extent, transit country for women, children, and men trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. Some victims, including minors from the UK, are also trafficked within the country. Migrant workers are trafficked to the UK for forced labor in agriculture, construction, food processing, domestic servitude, and food service. Women made up almost three quarters of the suspected victims - and half of all the cases related to allegations of sexual exploitation. The other half all related to forced labor.

While the UK government stipulates that victims are not inappropriately incarcerated, fined or penalized for unlawful acts as a direct result of being trafficked, some victims reportedly have been charged and prosecuted for immigration offences. One victim who managed to escape from her trafficker during the reporting period was repeatedly imprisoned on immigration violations, according to media sources. The UK provides foreign victims with legal alternatives to their removal to countries where they face hardship or retribution. This process continues to be cumbersome and inconsistent for victims seeking such alternatives. By filing asylum, humanitarian protection or extraordinary relief claims on a case-by-case basis, such victims may obtain residency.

In the business of slavery, there are cases of child human trafficking, within the UK, where victims have been rescued from slavery only to go missing from UK care systems. It is believed that in such cases victims are tracked down by their traffickers and rarely resurface.

Minority Rights and Islamophobia

Recent years have witnessed incidents of hatred or irrational fear of Islam and Muslims. Islamophobia has led to the practice of discrimination against Muslims by excluding them from the economic, social, and public life of the nation. It includes the perception that Islam has no values in common with other cultures, is inferior to the West and is a violent political ideology rather than a religion.

A perceived trend of Islamophobia has been recognized by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence. Particularly, ignorance of governments to pay more attention to this form of intolerance is the ruling sentiment across nations with Muslim minorities.

Recommendations

ODVV commends the United Kingdom on its implementation of recommendations from the first UPR cycle, and offers the following recommendations:

- We are concerned regarding the impact of the current austerity measures imposed by the United Kingdom Government, which will unfairly affect vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the impoverished, as well as university students concerning their unduly increased tuition fees. ODDV wants the United Kingdom to publish the policies made particularly regarding the rights of the vulnerable.
- We suggest the British Government publish as soon as possible a report concerning its Commission on a Bill of Rights on how the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is protecting and extending British liberties.
- ODDV welcomes the United Kingdom Government's work to tackle human trafficking. It urges the United Kingdom to continue to address this issue. Some measures as temporary residence permits have been taken by the UK government, which are granted on the condition that the victims cooperate with law enforcement authorities. ODDV further urges the UK government to provide a report of the tangible results of the Government's action plan around violence against women and girls, and explain the type of help, legal redress and compensation that is available to them. We request information on measures used to strengthen efforts to combat human trafficking.
- ODDV calls on the United Kingdom to ensure that effective measures are in place to allow for quick and accurate identification of trafficked victims, drawing attention to incidents where victims have been identified as irregular migrants. In such cases, victims are often deported and therefore unable to seek redress. When a safe return to the country of origin was not guaranteed victims must be offered temporary or permanent residence permits.
- ODDV wants to know measures taken to provide protection for overseas domestic workers from abuse. We are concerned with the existence of discrimination migrant workers and increased cases of racist incidents. ODDV wants to know the United Kingdom's practices in tackling hate crimes and in interfaith dialogue. We are also concerned with the United Kingdom's position towards the ICRMW and ILO Convention No. 143 on Migration in Abusive Conditions and the

Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers.

- ODVV urges the UK government to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to enable quick and accurate identification of trafficked persons to prevent any misidentification of trafficked persons as irregular migrants, which often leads to detention and deportation, effectively precluding a chance to seek compensation.

- We urge the United Kingdom to ensure that trafficked persons are equipped with access to information, free legal aid and other necessary assistance such as interpretation services, and regular residence status during the duration of any legal proceedings.

- We are concerned with the existence of discrimination against Muslims and urge the United Kingdom to intensify its efforts to promote multiculturalism at all levels.

- ODVV calls for the UK Government to introduce general anti-discrimination laws. Future policies must ensure they do not undermine the trust Muslim communities have in state institutions nor their sense of belonging in Britain.

- ODVV calls all people of faith to “challenge Islamophobia”. People from all sections of the societies have a crucial role to play in helping to dispel myths about Muslim communities. There is a common misconception that Islam is a religion of Violence. There is no basis for this in Islam. Islam is a religion of peace. Accordingly, ODVV invites nations to improve understanding among all Abrahamic faiths and cultures and avoid incitement to hatred and violence, in order to reach a world of peace and security.

- We are also alarmed by reports indicating the United Kingdom’s complicity in the secret detention of persons as well as torture and punishment in detention facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Given the above, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence urges the United Kingdom to continue to remain committed to its national, regional and international commitments.

item 7: The situation of Palestinian prisoners

One of the human rights going concerns, is the right to enjoy human freedoms which have always been violated by powerful and occupying nations. This is seen in Palestine and Palestinian Occupied Territories more than other places. A place where according to the Human Rights Council 22 February 2012 report (A/HRC/19/NGO/75), from 1967 to-date approximately 700,000 Palestinians, 20 percent of the whole Palestinian population in other words and 40 percent of the total male population have been detained on Israeli Military Orders.¹

Imprisonment and detention has turned into a real nightmare for Palestinians, especially children, because according to the same aforementioned report, each year between 500 and

700 Palestinian Children from the West Bank are arrested, tried in Israeli military courts and instead of enjoying their childhood, they taste the bitter taste of torture.

Glancing at the terrible human rights conditions of Israeli prisons, we can observe the injustice and deprivation of the human rights of Palestinians take place contrary to international law standards and once again Israel’s irresponsibility towards all international commitments are visible.

In various forms such as administrative detention, solitary confinement and temporary detention, the IDF deprive Palestinian citizens from their basic rights; to an extent where according to latest statistics there are now 4423 prisoners currently in Israeli prisons, 250 of which are in administrative detention, and there are 211 children in prisons too.²

This is while according to contents of international law such as human rights laws, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Geneva Four Convention, and international humanitarian law, administrative detention can only be done in exceptional cases and determined necessities by the occupation forces. But in reality arbitrarily and claims to emergency conditions (referring to their Military Order 1651)³ the Israelis have extensively Palestinian civilians under administrative detention, and they are imprisoned without being charged, the right to lawyer and trial and family visitations.

Furthermore, even though the isolation of prisoners in solitary confinement also must be in

accordance with international agreements such as the ICCPR and other UN documents particularly article 32 of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1957)⁴ and the Declaration on the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners (1990). But despite of these the domestic laws of Israel bring about the possibility of the justification and extensive use of solitary confinement for the relevant authorities.⁵

These as well as other measures are contrary to international law standards that include, torture, physical abuse, military detentions of Palestinians, and the double standards with the civil legal system dominating in Israel, and hidden discriminations that include

difference in detention age,⁶ lack of access to legal council during interrogation for detainees and even children,⁷ denying visits and communications with families, forceful transfer of prisoners, attacking prisoner cells and provocative searches, lack of food, and prison stores' goods being expensive, cash fines and collective punishments, mistreatment of women,⁸ a sharp drop in education and medical services, have all brought about grave concerns over the violation of Palestinian prisoners' basic rights, and despite the extensive detailed reports of relevant NGOs, it has all fallen to the deaf ears of international political circles.⁹

This is why Palestinian prisoners on the occasion of Palestinian Prisoner Day and Yom Ol-nikba, and the lack of international support, they went on mass and prolonged hunger strike for their minimum demands and improvement of their conditions which were the removal of administrative detention and solitary confinement and for the recognition of their rights as prisoners of war. This caused grave concern for their health and even some UN officials including Richard Falk warned but unfortunately the reports of legal organizations including Addameer Organization indicated medical neglect and application of inhuman pressures on the prisoners to end their strike and their terrible physical conditions.¹⁰

Even after the agreement of Israeli officials with prisoners to end their hunger strike, Israel's failure to answer the international community and the lack of pressure tools to make Israel observe international and human standards and bilateral agreements, resulted on this agreement to be breached on several occasions.¹¹

Therefore, while supporting the Palestinian prisoners in their bid for the realisation of their rights and application of justice, we express deep concern on their health and physical, mental and hygiene conditions, and call upon relevant international organizations to fulfil their duties for the reduction of the pains and sufferings of the Palestinian prisoners, and force Israel to observe and respect the rights of the prisoners and observe its international commitments.

1. <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/6E9D184DEA0001CF852579C30050B625>.

2. <http://www.arabs48.com/?mod=articles&ID=93582>.

3. Application of article 285 of Military Order 1651 which allows an individual to be arrested and detained for over six months upon the renewal on the condition of "the existence of a logical justification to create the assumption that the regional or public security requires this detention."

4. The ratification of the first UN congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Criminals that was held in Geneva in 1995, and the reviewed and approved by ECOSOC in resolution 663C (XXIV) dated 31 July 1957, and 2076 (LCII) 13 May 1977.

5. Article 56 of the Israeli Prisons Ordinance contains a vast area of prison offences that are punishable by solitary confinement.

6. Report of the 19th Session of the Human Rights Council 22 February 2012: <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/6E9D184DEA0001CF852579C30050B625>.

7. Palestinian human rights organizations statement on not letting lawyers have access to prisoners on hunger strike:

<http://addameer.org/etemplate.php?id=470>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/doc/28/israel-denies-lawyers-palestinian-prisoners/>.

8. <http://samidoun.ca/2012/04/abuse-and-torture-of-women-in-israeli-occupation-prisons> <http://www.abayan.ae/one-world/arabs/2012-03-08-1.1607483>.

9. <http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal/docs/2012%20Geneva/P1%20khaled%20quzmar%20EN.pdf>

And report of the Palestinian Legislative Council on the conditions of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons on 16 April 2012:

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1205/S00056/esa-committee-report-situation-of-prisoners-in-israeli-jail.htm> ICRC's concern over the health of Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike:

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-05/07/c_131573555.htm

Amnesty International report: <http://www.amnesty.org/ar/news/israel-free-palestinian-detainee-prisoners-launch-mass-hunger-strike-2012-04-17> <http://www.alzaytouna.net/permalink/17212.html?print>.

10. <http://www.arabs48.com/?mod=articles&ID=91900>,

<http://samanews.com/index.php?act=Show&id=127954>

11. <http://www.arabs48.com/?mod=articles&ID=91855>.

Item 9: Islamophobia

Efforts to understand the concept of freedom of expression the way the west interprets, for us Muslims for whom one of the most sacred concept of religion and even everyday lives is our prophet, in our view is the blatant violation of freedom of expression and belief.

When on the pretext of freedom of expression, an individual or a group targets the holies of another group, and then describe the pain and anger of this group as inhuman and uncivilised behaviours, that is the violation of all human rights for all.

We believe that one of the biggest mistakes of this Council is its driving of the Defamation of Religion Resolution to the sidelines; a resolution which was a strong obstacle against the developments of the last few days: the defamatory movie about the prophet of Islam and the disgusting cartoon drawings.

Efforts to create obstacles in the way of the theoretic basis of the clash of civilisations are only possible through practical measures. These practical measures require two simultaneous approaches, first the promotion and strengthening of a basis for dialogue among cultures and civilizations in an atmosphere filled with mutual respect and secondly, a serious and legal confrontation with individuals and movements which through insulting the beliefs and religions of others cause the spread of hatred and animosity.

The showings of movies or cartoon drawings that create hatred are no different from hate speech. If the use of hate speech in the mass media was deemed a crime by the ICTR in December 2003, then the examples of the recent Islamophobia must also be deemed criminal and seriously investigated.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/B950EF51E193EFDCC1257A410037742E?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/B950EF51E193EFDCC1257A410037742E?OpenDocument)

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/B956DE74EF2940E0C1257A41004AA7D9?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/B956DE74EF2940E0C1257A41004AA7D9?OpenDocument)



ODVV

Activities



Education Workshop on Child Abuse – Secondary Prevention Held

On Sunday 18 November on the Occasion of Universal Children's Day the ODVV held the Child Abuse – Secondary Prevention education workshop. the beginning of this workshop which was held with the cooperation of the Tehran Psychiatric Institute (Tehran Medical Sciences University) and the Safe Society of Tehran's 6th District Municipality, the ODVV director Mr. Siavash Rahpeik talked about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and how Iran joined

this Convention. He also gave a brief on the ODVV's activities in prevention of abuse in the family, and said that in the near future a specialist clinic was going to be launched by the ODVV Rehabilitation Centre for the treatment of child abuse. This workshop ended with the group activity of the participants on the examples and signs of physical and mental child abuse, and effective interventions, communication methods with abusive parents.

Participation in the Annual Consultation Sitting of the UNHCR with NGO in Geneva – 2012

This annual sitting was held in Geneva, Switzerland and focused on "participation in concentration" subject. With the promotion of the participation of NGOs the UNHCR had placed its agenda with the aim of reaching a strategic, transparent, conclusive and trusting link. This year's sitting was held over three days with concentration on the following subjects.

The repatriation of refugees, climate conditions, information management symposium, the Africa, Asia, America, Europe and MENA Offices, protection methods, lasting solutions and refugees, rights, strategies and protection mechanisms for

stateless persons, a framework for the establishment and preservation of UNHCR cooperation, social deprivation of specific refugee populations, readdressing the protection of children during emergency conditions. Having a background of educational cooperation with the UNHCR in Tehran, the ODVV had also been invited to this sitting. While distributing ODVV products and brochures that had been prepared in proportion to the sitting, and in view of the objectives and activities of the ODVV the delegation attended some sideline meetings and exchanged ideas and established links with other participating NGOs.

ODVV participates in the 21st Session of the HRC



The 21st Session of the HRC was held from 10 to 28 September in European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva. The ODVV's agenda in this session was arranged in such way that all subjects relevant to NGOs and statements be covered during participation in the Session.

The reading of oral statements and submission of written statements, holding a meeting with those

involved with the subject of human rights in Iran, holding sideline meetings, meeting international organizations, invitation of NGOs and United Nations representatives to visit Iran, distribution of ODVV products and multimedia CDs that included publications and videos, special reports and introduction of the ODVV were some of the activities that were conducted in this Session.

Annual AMAN Network Meeting

The annual AMAN Network Meeting was held with the attendance of 10 main and one observer members from Tunisia, Lebanon, Palestine, Kuwait, Iraq, Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco and the ODVV from Iran, in Geneva, Switzerland. The expansion of the activities of AMAN Network from the rehabilitation of torture victims to the defense of human rights and increasing the number of members, the utilization of the capacity of the Network, and the holding of internal elections, were some of the objectives of this year's annual meeting, which was held successfully. One of the most important events to occur in this annual meeting was the secretariat's elections. Mr. Mohammad Safa (Lebanon) was elected secretary general of the Network, and Mr. Siavash Rahpeik (Iran) as first deputy, and Dr. Khadir (Palestine) as second deputy of the Network. The launching and updating of a website, change of AMAN Network logo, publication of electronic newsletter, a more colourful presence in IRCT, active participation in human rights issues in the MENA region, and efforts

to draw NGOs active in human rights in the region are all future plans of the Network all of which were placed in the working agenda of the secretariat. In the sidelines of the AMAN Network meeting, meetings were also held with representatives of UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, the UNHCHR deputy and representatives, the UNHCHR representative in the MENA Region.



Annual Meeting of the IRCT Council



The annual meeting of the IRCT's governing council – representing a membership of 144 rehabilitation centers around the world – was held in Budapest, Hungary from 21- 22 November 2012 included the election of the new IRCT Executive Committee. Mr. Siavash Rahpeik, director of the ODVV, who was elected as a member of "IRCT Council" in 2012 for a period of three years (2012-2015), took part in this event too. The Council is the main policy making body of the IRCT and consists of 29 members out of whom 26 are representatives of rehabilitation centers and programs worldwide and three are independent experts. The purpose of the Council is to formulate, support and monitor IRCT policy, and to facilitate the advancement of IRCT's global work. As a result of the election of the new IRCT Executive Committee for 2012-2015, which was held on 21 November 2012, the IRCT council has elected the eight members of its ExCom. Meanwhile, Ms. Suzanne Jabbour from MENA region was elected as President of the IRCT.

Commemoration of Human Rights Day

On the occasion of Human Rights Day, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence held a commemoration ceremony with the presence of representatives from NGOs and GOs.

As a nongovernmental organization active in the field of human rights and with an understanding of the importance of United Nations slogan for Human Rights Day "My Voice Counts" along with its preset strategy that is based on the influencing of decision making, the ODVV held the second in a series of these sittings that coincide with Universal Human Rights Day (10 December) as a platform for interactive dialogue between NGOs and relevant GOs to further expand the role of NGOs in various areas of decision making processes.

Some of the subjects discussed in this sitting were:

- A review of the pathology of cooperation of governmental and nongovernmental organizations.
- NGOs' request for a more colourful presence of civil society institutions in decision making arenas.
- Stress on the holding of empowerment courses for NGOs and necessity for holding education courses for GOs.
- Stress on the expansion of interactive dialogue sessions with governmental institutions.
- Stress on the expansion of the quality and quantity of NGOs in consultative status to ECOSOC.

In this sitting, which itself is seen as an initiative, in his speech, ODVV director Mr. Siavash Rahpeik while



expressing hope that the commemoration of Human Rights Day to be held at an international level, stressed on the effective presence of NGOs in the decision making processes of governmental departments suggested that the decisions of these sessions to be presented in the official meetings of the government's NGOs monitoring group as their agenda. This decision can be seen as a notable achievement of NGOs towards the right to be heard.

The UN Secretary General's message for the day was read by UNIC representative Mr. Mohammad Rajaei Moghadam. The ODVV initially intended to hold the ceremony with the participation of representatives from international organizations, on the subject of the role of NGOs in reforming the structure of the UN, and ways to increase interaction of NGOs in consultative status. This programme had been planned for a four day period in the cities of Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz, and in view of you not being able to make the trip to Tehran was changed to the above stated programme.

Promotion of Socio-psychological Health of Afghan Refugees Project successfully held in Shahr-e-Rey

Following the previous successful “Community Based Awareness Raising on the Prevention of GBV for Shahr-e-Rey Afghan Refugees” and the “Strengthening of the Family Institution and Prevention of Violence for Semnan Refugee Camp Afghan Refugees” projects which were both held with the support of UNHCR in Iran and BAFIA in 2010 and 2011, the “Promotion of Socio-psychological Health of Shahr-e-Rey Afghan Refugees” project kick started on Monday 22 October 2012 and shall conclude on 29 January 2013 with the presentation of the final report.

According to ODVV public relations this project is in 5 stages which include: the preparation of an educational package, holding of 2 education courses of “introduction to life skills” for 30 men and 30 women, “introduction to facilitation methods”, the pilot life skills education course by the course trainers, the sending of evaluation experts to get answers to questions, and the evaluation of the education process, and the evaluation and compilation of the final report.

This project intended to help the young groups of the Afghan refugees community, through education and culture building to promote the socio-psychological health among other individuals of families that have lesser opportunities to have these educations. The life skills education course

was held over 8 days, and facilitation education in two days and two groups, morning and afternoon for men and women from 8am till 7pm. There were 65 participants made up of 35 women and 30 men that attended the courses regularly. Also 35 individuals have in single sessions in some days have benefited from the project courses. The trainings were done through the participation of the participants in concentrated group discussions, brain storming, role play, proposal of question and provision of answer, alongside the showing of slides related to the subjects.

In the beginning the basic knowledge levels of the participants on the subject of life skills was evaluated by using a 109 questions questionnaire. The average score of the individuals in life skills and on the last day their having these skills were evaluated on the last day. The reading of the results in the pre and post tests indicates the effectiveness of these courses.

The education subjects were: self awareness and sympathizing skills, effective communication skills and effective inter-individuals relationships, anger management skills, confrontation with negative anxieties skills, and stress management, problem solving skills and decision making and introduction to facilitation methods education.





A Collective Articles from the Fair Peace, Lasting Peace Conference

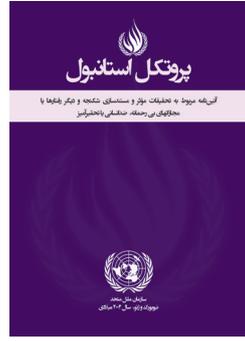
This book was published by the ODVV in English (84 pages) in March 2012. The articles in the book included: Introduction to the Role of International Law in the Provision of International Peace and Security; “Just Peace” Paradigm and the Settlements Construction in East Jerusalem Issue. Peace and Justice in Persian Literature and Culture; the Definition of International Crimes within the Context of International Peace and Security; Islam: Harbinger of Peace and Friendship.



Manual of the Human Rights Situation in Bahrain

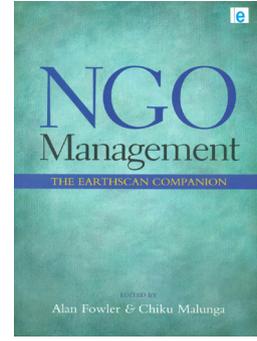
This manual which is in four volumes was presented in the 21st Session of the HRC on the following subjects:

- 1 – Violation of Civil and Political Rights.
- 2 – Violation of Healthcare, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- 3 – Violation of Judicial Rights
- 4 – Violation of Rights of Certain Groups



Translation of the Istanbul Protocol to Farsi

Following the publication of the Farsi and digital version of the Istanbul Protocol (see www.odvv.org), the final preparations for the printing and publishing of the Protocol began at the end of 2012. The Farsi Istanbul Protocol will be published and released by the end of the winter of 2013 following the joint signatures of the ODVV and the Coroner’s Organization of the Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



Translation of NGO Management to Farsi

This is a new book on NGO management in today’s world. The book was published in 2010 and is co-edited by Alan Fowler and Chiku Malunga. The ODVV began the translation of this book into Farsi and shall be published upon its completion in 2013. The book is in ten parts that include: Retro-perspective: NGO-ism in a Changing World Order; From NGOs to Civil Society; Managing Responsibility; Managing Strategically; Managing Organizational Change; Management Applications; Managing for Performance; Managing for Learning and Knowledge; Managing Resources; Leadership.

Video Documentaries

- Promotion of Socio-psychological Health of Afghan Refugees Project in Shahr-e-Rey documentary

- Prevention of Child Abuse Educational Documentary

This educational documentary made with the aim of efforts for the promotion and protection of children’s rights and prevention of and repetition of and the severity of child abuse from occurring in the family, and educational systems, This educational package includes an educational video with the attendance of thematic experts, and comes along with a booklet and a number of flash cards with the subjects of definition-examples-long/short term consequences-signs-prevention and child raising.

- Absolute Oppression Documentary

This documentary was made with the cooperation of five international human rights centres with Arabic and English subtitles, and was distributed on the sidelines of the 21st Session of the Human Rights Council coinciding with the UPR on Bahrain.

Panel on

Violation of Human Rights and Terrorism

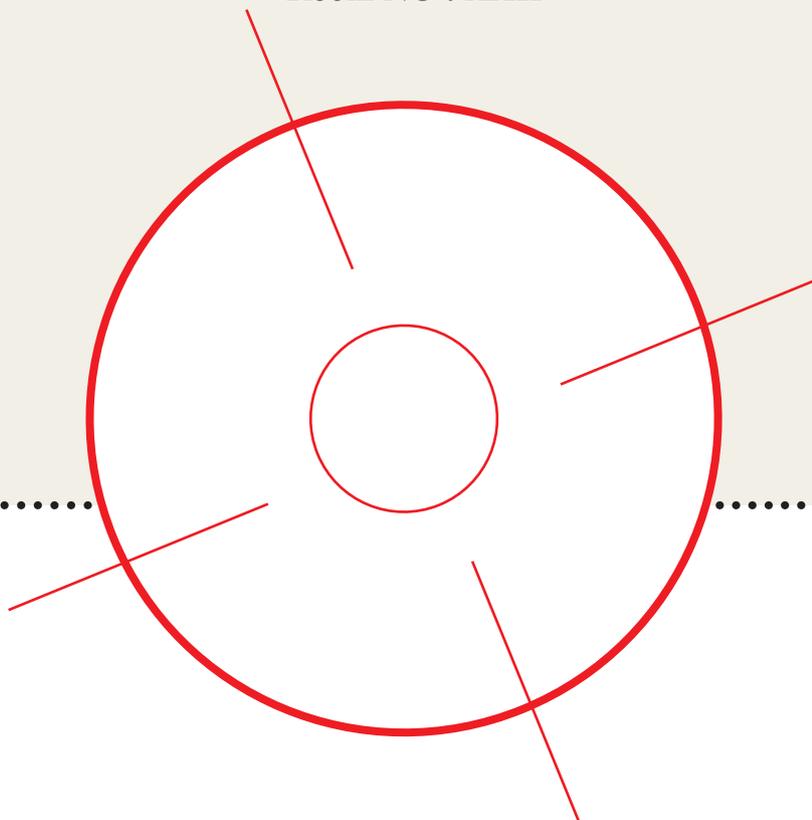
22th Session of the Human Rights Council

Geneva

7 march 2013

16:00

Room NO : XXII



Organization for Defending Victims of Violence

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Victims of Violence