

# Annual Report 2018

— Organization for Defending Victims of Violence —






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Organization for Defending Victims of Violence



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# FOREWORD

In 2018 practically in all corners of the world horrific violations of the most natural of human rights took place in all corners of the world, and from this aspect it was not much different of a year than 2017. The Yemen, Myanmar, Palestinian occupied territories, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Sudan, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain catastrophes were all just a part of the bitter display of the true meaning of human rights among those who claim to these rights. Alongside these, the violation of the right to clean environment, adequate housing, freedom from extreme poverty, the right to freedom of peaceful association and assembly, the right of access to clean drinking water, the right to free movement, right to self-determination and in most instances, the right to life of a notable number of human beings were violated, and unfortunately due to impunity, these violations continued on. Meanwhile and particularly in Iran, unilateral and unlawful coercive measures imposed by the United States of America have gravely violated the human rights of the most vulnerable sectors of the Iranian society, and sadly this continued on with the silence of the international community.

Nonetheless with the expansion of mass media and social networks and people's awareness raising in this heavy atmosphere is a shining light for shaming and accountability of at least some of the violators, and perhaps it is this fact that still gives human rights defenders and victims of violence some hope. In spite of the domination of politicisation and putting aside fair and honest procedures in the international environment, but still if there is a will and commitment, human rights can highlight its presence and un-ignorable.

In 2018 our Organization tried to take a more resolute step towards awareness raising of its addressees inside and outside the country, with a more scientific and practical approach. Hope for positive changes in the human rights situation, however little, both in Iran and all around the world is an incentive which removes the weariness from me and my colleagues at the ODDV's bodies.

With the hope for brighter and stronger days,  
Mahmoudreza Golshanpazhooh  
Director

# Introduction

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-political organization in Special Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). The ODVV was established in 1988 in Tehran and has been active in the field of human rights and humanitarian activities.



The ODVV is also associated to the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), a participatory of the NGOs Coalition for an International Court (based in New York), and member of the Global March Against Child Labour (based in New Delhi) which cooperated in a variety of issues with international organizations and has working relations with many NGOs in Iran and around the globe. The ODVV is also member of the, Asia Youth Network, Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO), and the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), and International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) and member of the Central Council, and AMAN Network of Middle East and North Africa Rehabilitation Centres for Torture Victims and first deputy of the Network.

ODVV

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# ODVV Mission Statement

## **Being committed to its moral principles the ODVV's mission is:**

- To respect high human values;
- To respect the rule of law and be committed to national values, moral principles and laws,
- To respect national interests and to avoid entering political groupings,
- To respect human dignity and status, and to recognise individual's rights and respect of society's public interests,
- To believe in justice, equality and observe everyone's rights (women and children in particular),
- To believe in being responsible, transparent, answerable, honest and virtuous;
- To accept the expansion and promotion of creativity;
- To respect knowledge, competence and experiences of individuals;
- To accept ideas, notions, recommendations and constructive criticisms;
- To be committed to collective unity and cooperation;
- To promote the spirit of service and voluntary campaigns;
- To promote and expand a culture of non-violence;

## **For the purpose of reaching its goal which is to promote and expand a human rights culture the ODVV shall utilise the following practices:**

- Hold educational, seminars, forums and workshops with the aim of information dissemination and raise the society's culture, preparation of articles and research in this regard;
- Protect and defend the rights of victims of violence and society;
- Promote and expand a culture of non-violence;
- Present advisory and counselling services for the rehabilitation of victims of society, and to refer these victims to the relevant centres to receiving care and services;
- Establishment and facilitation of links with national, regional and international organizations that follow similar objectives, and to facilitate the opportunity to exchange views, experiences and knowledge;

# Structure

## **ODVV conducts its activities and campaigns under the following structure**

■ Research Department ■ Education Department ■ Communications Department ■ Rehabilitation Department ■ Administrative and Financial Management

Through benefiting from experienced experts in its board of directors' structure and also the use of the expertise of close to 100 experts and volunteers in human rights, international law, international relations etc. the ODVV endeavours to through the combination of science and strategy to have the best effectivity in the field of nongovernmental human rights activities of the country. The following is a brief narration of the activities that the aforementioned departments conducted in 2018.

## Workshops, Conferences and Education Courses

### UN System Education Course

The Specialised Education Course on the UN System and Its Activities in Iran was held on 13 August 2018 by the ODVV and with the cooperation of UNA-Iran, with the attendance of 75 law and political science students. Through the utilisation of the ability and expertise of UNIC, UNODC, UNHCR and UN-HABITAT this expertise course was held with the aim of the participants' achievement of a deep knowledge on the theoretic, objectives, activities, accomplishments and capacities of UN Agencies in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

At the end of this specialised education course the guests of which included experts from management and top experts from UN offices and projects in Iran, the participants received international certificates signed by UNIC, the ODVV and UNA-Iran.







## Prevention of Violence Education Course

The workshop on Prevention of Violence was held for associations active in the field of prevention of social damages. It was held by the General Office of Popular Prevention and Civil Participations and the cooperation of the ODVV in the assembly hall of the Judiciary's Social and Crime Prevention Deputy on Monday 12 March 2018.

The specialized planning and preparation of scientific materials of this workshop were done by the ODVV, and Dr. Jaafar Bolhari was introduced as the workshop lecturer.

The concepts, history and definitions of violence, preventive interventions in three levels of prevention, urgent intervention and the most important functions and effectiveness of nongovernmental organizations for the prevention of violence were the main subjects of this workshop.

Seyed Ahmadreza Salamti, the ODVV Rehabilitation Deputy in the beginning of the workshop while pointing out some of ODVV's successful experiences in preventive interventions in prevention of violence said: "the adoption of a passive position due to activity problems and legal problems for the prevention of violence does not work with the voluntary and brave message of nongovernmental organizations, and all existing capacities must be utilized for preventive action in any capacity.

Dr. Ali Asghar Refahi, the Judicial Emissary and director general of the Judiciary's Popular Preventions and Civil Participations talked about the education programs, workshops and researches that have been done towards the prevention of violence and said: "the Judiciary announces its full readiness to implement preventive programs and ideas regarding violence."



### **A Conference on “Entrepreneurship: Empowering Women & Life without Violence”**

On the occasion of International Refugee Day a conference entitled “Entrepreneurship; Empowering Women and Life without Violence” was held with the presence of over 150 Afghan and Iraqi refugees by the ODVV and ILIA Charitable Institute. In this Conference which was held on Thursday 21 June at the ILIA Charitable Institute, representatives from Relief International, the Norwegian Refugees Council, Denmark Refugees Council, the UNHCR, BAFIA, Citizen’s Affairs Bureau of Tehran Province and Afghan Embassy were present This Conference began with the speeches of Dr. Jaleh Afshari-Monfared on the role of job creation and promotion of women’s empowerment in the reduction of violence. This was followed by an educational workshop on job creation methods and experiences by Dr. Negin Fallah, Tehran University lecturer.

### **Workshop on an Introduction to Human Rights Terminology**

On 1 January 2018, the ODVV held a series of workshops on an Introduction to Human Rights Terminology to increase the technical knowledge international field experts for students and post-graduates and doctorates, at the ODVV conference hall.



The aim in holding these series of workshops is the introduction of the participants to the technical texts of the field in English, introduction to technical terms, conversation in English in this regard and also strengthening their listening to technical literatures in English. One of the education contents which was used in these courses was the texts of Human Rights Council reports and resolutions and video clips of the Council Sessions. These workshops will continue into 2018.

## Workshops on the Empowerment of NGOs for Prevention of Violence

The ODVV with the cooperation of the Judiciary's General Office of Popular Prevention and Civil Participations held a three-day workshop entitled the "Empowerment of NGOs in Prevention for Violence". These workshops were held on 28 November, and 12 and 18 December 2018, and the participation of representatives from NGOs active in the prevention of social damages.

The aim in holding these workshops increase the capacity and empower NGOs in violence prevention interventions, creation of an empowered network of NGOs alongside the Judiciary's General Office of Popular Prevention and Civil Participations and also to create a common language between the parties to prevent social damages in general and prevention of violence specifically.

Scientific and specialized theories of the occurrence of violence (social theory, resources theory, micro culture of violence theory, feminism theory, between individual relationships theory, and the most famous psychological theories), myths that as belief can be facilitators and seed up the occurrence of types of abuse (mention and defining of at least 15 myths dominant in general belief, how these mythologies are created and ways to challenge them, the nature of violence and physiological signs, its cognitive and behavior, before and after violence cognitive and behavioral changes , differences between the rage anxiety with anger and destructive, insulting and threatening behaviors, inner and between individuals conflicts in following committing abusive

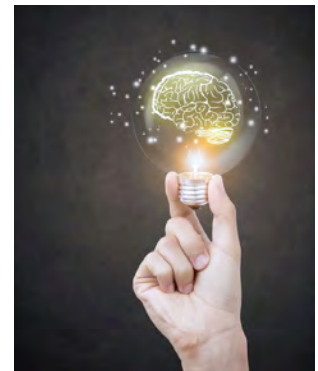




behaviors, presentation of operational models and solutions based on cognitive and behavioral approaches in anger management to not commit angry, destructive and insulting behaviors, skills and methods for awareness to recognize tension creating situations, and recognition of physical and mental changes in committing abuse, recognition of violence creating situations and factors skills, emergency assistance skills for victims of violence, the most important micro and macro strategies and skills in abusive behavior management, and effective training of these subject methods to others were all some of the topics discussed in these workshops.

### Workshop on Memory and Learning

This two-day workshop was held by the Rehabilitation Department of the ODVV on 10-11 December and with the presence of 52 psychology and counselling students and post-graduates with the Dr. Mansooreh Fazilati, Shahid Beheshti University lecturer facilitating the workshop. The aim in holding this workshop was to further understand the brain as one of the most complex organs of the body in learning and keeping data. The superior learning power of humans over the rest of creatures the physiology of learning and memory, review of neurological processes in learning, encryption, adding to memory what is learned, the length of time of keeping information, recovery, remembering stored information, memory stages, types of feeling memory, short and long-term memories, memory capacity were all some of the subjects that were taught in this workshop.



## Commemoration of International Days

### Commemoration of the International Day of Non-violence

On the occasion of the International Day of Non-Violence, the ODVV held the technical workshop on Problem Resolution and No to Violence with the participation of 50 psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and counsellors on 3 October 2018 in the ODVV conference hall. The aim of this workshop was to reflect the message: “a world free of violence” through education and public awareness raising with a stress on the



“non-violence” principle as a global link for the “guaranteeing of a culture of peace, conciliation and understanding and non-violence.” The workshop began with the speech of Ahmadreza Salamati, the rehabilitation deputy of the ODVV on the activities of the department in the prevention of violence. Then representative from UNIC in Iran, Mohammad Rajae Moghadam spoke about the reason for the naming of the day by the UN as the International Day of Non-Violence and remembered Mahatma Gandhi the leader of India’s independence movement and flagbearer of the non-violence philosophy. He also gave a brief report of the activities of the UN towards the prevention of violence. Next, Dr Mir Saeed Jaafari who through the defining the meaning of violence, spoke about education on fundamental skills relevant to the subject of violence, social facilitation education for the acquirement of social-oriented intervention skills to utilize popular abilities for the prevention of physical, mental, sexual and economic violence. The workshop ended with a Q&A session with the participants and presentation of certificates of attendance.

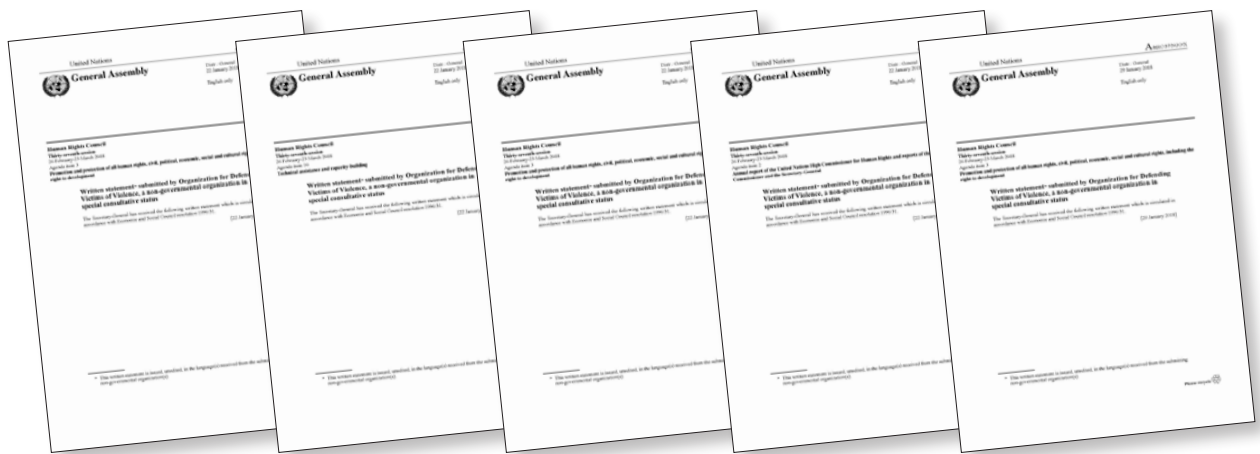


## International Conferences

### Participation in the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council

The 37th Session of the Human Rights Council took place from 26 February to 23 March 2018 in the European headquarters of the UN in Geneva, Switzerland. This Session was held at the same time as important global events such as the human crises in Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Iraq, the refugee crisis, inhuman unilateral coercive measures, and widespread violence against Rohingya Muslims. Thus, through all its activities in this Session that included preparation of written and oral statements, holding sidelines panels, preparation of thematic reports, sittings with sister NGOs, the ODVV ensured not to be left behind from the situation around the world, Activities that were planned for this Session are as follows:

#### *- Preparation of Written Statements and Submission to the Council's Directory*



The ODVV prepared 12 written statements under the 10 Items of the Council's Working Agenda. These statements are available in the Human Rights Council directory.

Some of the subjects of these statements include: interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Minorities Rights, teaching mother tongues to Iranian ethnic groups interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion, Crackdown on the Shia in Saudi Arabia, interactive dialogue with Special Rapporteur on the Environment: the regional environmental repercussions of Turkey's dam construction, complaints about landmines leftover from the Iran-Iraq War.

## - Preparation of Thematic Report with Infographics

With the efforts of ODVV experts and through extensive studies, 7 thematic reports were prepared with consideration of respecting human rights priorities. Also for the first time 3 infographics with up-to-date information were distributed in the Session. Some of the titles of these thematic reports and infographic included: A Look at the Right of Access to Information Act in Iran, Review of the Limitations on Capital Punishment in Iran, New Amendments to the Fight against Drugs Act, A Look at the Border Couriering Phenomenon and Smuggling by Border Couriers in the Bordering Regions of Iran, A Research and Statistical Look at Deaths Caused by Landmines Leftover from the Iran-Iraq War and the Effects of Sanctions on Access to Mine Sweeping Technology, Review of the Participation Levels of Women in the Iranian Social and Political Scenes.



**- Preparation of Oral Statements and Presenting them on the Floor of the Session**

In this Session of the Council the ODVV prepared and read a total number of 8 oral statements under Working Agenda Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 with consideration of going concerns and human rights priorities.

It must be said that 3 statements were read by Iranian NGOs in the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran. Some of the subjects of the oral statements included: Review of the Human Rights Violation of Children in Yemen, Review of the Repercussions of Armed Conflicts on Mental Health, Saudi-led Coalition Crimes Committed in Yemen, US and British Military Assistance to the Saudi-led Coalition, Repercussions of Sanctions Imposed on the Aerospace Industry in Iran, Review of SWIFT Sanction and its Effect on Increase in Pollutant Industries, Violation of International Commitments by the United States of America Through Official Recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's Capital.





## *- Holding Human Rights Council Side Events*

With the cooperation of number of NGOs, the ODVV held 5 sidelines panels on the following subjects.

### **1) The Human Rights Situation in Yemen: War, Children and Education**

This panel was held with the presence of three speakers, Dr. Aiman AlMansor President of INSAN Organization, Ms. Engelline Kramer human rights activist, and Mr. Al-Dhari lawyer and human rights activist on 2 March 2018 in Palais de Nations. Some of the subjects discussed by the panel included:

Description of children's conditions in the war in Yemen and stress on the fact that these children are deprived of hygiene, medical treatment, education and human dignity and according to the Human Rights Ministry

the main problems that children suffer from are hunger as a result of war. Yemen's infrastructures have been destroyed, hospitals cannot function properly, thousands of people have cholera, 14 million people that include children do not have access to clean drinking water. Lthe use of banned weapons in Yemen has resulted in infants being born with physical problems.



### **2) Human Rights in Yemen: Children's Conditions**

This panel was also held with the presence of three speakers, Ms. Safa Al-Shami human rights activist, Ms. Kim Sharif lawyer and director of the Yemen Human Rights Organization and Dr. Peyman Raooft from Children's Fun on 6 March 2018. Some of the subject discussed were as follows:

There are not many psychologists and psychoanalysts in Yemen. Due to the loss, arrest or torture of their loved ones the people in Yemen suffer from terrible mental conditions. Many children are deprived





of education, suffer from hunger or have been recruited as soldiers. These children suffer from various mental problems. It is necessary for mental problems of the people in Yemen to be studied and its conclusion be made available to local NGOs and involved international organizations. The international community has not managed to protect the people and children of Yemen, millions of homes have been destroyed, millions of children are displaced and hungry. Each day 130 children die because of blockade, and hunger is used as a weapon against the people.

### 3) Human Rights in Yemen: Sanctions

This panel was held with the presence of four speakers who were, Abdullatif Elwashaali Secretary General of INSAN Organization, Mr. Mohammad Abo Taleb human rights activist, Ms. Fimmen Elka deputy of La Rouché-Initiative Germany, and Mr. Abdullah Alkebsi human rights activist on 13 March 2018. Some of the subjects discussed by the panel included:  
Saudi-led coalition's aggression | Yemen has to-





date left tens of thousands of people dead and injured and the displacement of millions. The United States, Britain and France must stop their arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

#### 4) Human Rights in Occupied Palestinian Territories

This panel was held with the presence of 3 speakers, Dr. Alireza Deihim member of ODVV board, Mr. Bahar Kimyango journalist and director of Human Rights Agency, and Mr. Maram Dawood human rights activist and member of Scandinavia Human Rights Institute, on 14 March 2018. Some of the subjects discussed in this panel were as follows:

Barriers put in place in Jerusalem which prevent children from getting to school. These barriers also create economic problems for the residents of the region and this is while the ICJ deems the Security Barrier as illegal. Children's conditions in Palestinian



prisons is dire. Eighty percent of these children have signed confessions in Hebrew and are not aware of the contents of these confessions. 91 percent of Palestinian children interviewed have said that they were arrested while they were asleep and do not have access to legal counsel and don't have enough information about their case files.



### 5) Human Rights in Yemen: Illegal Weapons

This panel was held with the presence of 3 speakers, Dr. Andrew Josef Feinstein Executive Director of Corruption Watch UK, Dr. Abdulqader Alamdi human rights activist, and Ms. Kajsa Sofia Sorman Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, on 15 March 2018. Some of the subjects discussed in this panel included:

The amount of money that is spent on weapons globally can be spent on better things. When threatened world leaders invest in the military which does not

facilitate peace but brings instability. Democratic countries spend a lot of money on healthcare. Undemocratic countries invest in weapons. If weapons expenditures are guided to other quarters, we would accomplish four of the MDG. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates purchased a lot of weapons and they use them in Yemen.





### ***- Preparation and Publication of Media Products***

With the aim of expanding its international links and making an impact in the Human Rights Council, through publication of media products and reports of its activities, the ODVV produces various items such as Defenders Newsletter, annual reports, paper on sanctions and also participation in drafting and publishing of an open letter by 800 international journalists and photojournalists to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights calling for the release of Ahd Tamimi from Israeli prison which was extensively reflected in the 37th Session of the Council.

### ***- ODVV Annual Report***

The English Annual Report for 2017 is a reflection of ODVV's various departments' activities and actions.



### *- Defenders Newsletter*

The winter edition of Defenders Newsletter was published and distributed in the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council. Some of the topics of the contents are as follows:

Review of changes made in the application of capital punishment in drugs crimes, effects of sanctions on air disasters in Iran, review of crimes committed in Myanmar and Bahrain from the international law aspects, human rights in Saudi Arabia, unilateral coercive measures and violation of human rights, human rights crises around the world in the past year.



### *- Preparation and Distribution of Sanctions Research No. 2 "Corruption and Money Laundering: Negative Effects of Economic Sanctions"*

The issue of unilateral sanctions imposed against Iran is one of the subjects that due to the extensive violation of human rights, they have always been a concern for research and executive organizations. Thus, following the publication of the first issue of the Sanctions Booklet which had been prepared for the March 2017 Human Rights Council Session with the subject of thematic study on the effects of sanctions on the supply of drugs and medicines in Iran, and had received the positive response of national and international organizations, the second issue of this research in English, with the subject of "corruption and money laundering, the negative effects of economic sanctions" was placed in the working agenda of the ODVV for the 37th Session.

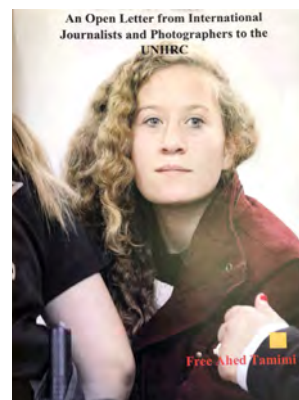
In this research the fact that sanctions are one of the crippling tools for governments in the fight against corruption and money laundering, and this results in serious damages inflicted on human rights, were raised. The main topics of this booklet included: Effects of Sanctions on Human Rights, Trans-border Commitments of States in the Fight against Corruption and Money Laundering, Sanctions: Facilitators of Corruption and Money Laundering.



It must be said that as in previous Sessions, the PDF copy of this research was sent to the Permanent Member States in Geneva emails.

***- Joint Request of the ODVV, Association of Peace Reporters and 800 International Journalists and Photojournalists for the Release of Ahd Al-Tamimi***

In a joint action by the ODVV and Association of Peace Reporters, 800 domestic and international journalists and photojournalists released an open letter addressed to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights calling for the release of the Palestinian youth Ahd Al-Tamimi. While pointing out Israel's inhuman Apartheid treatment of Al-Tamimi, the prison conditions of Israel was strongly criticised and asked the Human Rights Council, the UN General Assembly Third Committee and the UN Special Rapporteur on Rights of the Child to resolutely investigate her case, and pressure the security and justice officials of Israel in order to release Al-Tamimi and all the children imprisoned in Israeli jails.



***- Human Rights/Arts: Cultural Diversity in Iranian Arts and Handcrafts Exhibit***

With the use of the repeated experiences of having continued presence in the Council, the ODVV has reached the conclusion that cultural activities can be influential in promoting a proper and real image of Iran. Thus, by utilising the successful experience of March 2017 in holding the "Arts for Peace" Exhibit in Palais de Nations, also for March 2018 the ODVV held an exhibit of Iranian Arts and Handicrafts entitled: "Mankind's Art/Human Rights: Cultural Diversity in Iranian Arts and



Industry” was held from 5 to 15 March 2018 in Geneva Switzerland.

In the form of a cultural action the Exhibit put on display the dynamic presence, participation and peaceful living of Iranian ethnic groups in the Iranian society. On this basis ten of the important and historic ethnic groups i.e. Lors, Azeris, Kurds, Baluchis, Frasnians, Karmanj, Turkmen, Qashqai, Bhakhtiari and Arab were selected and their arts and handicrafts such as rugs, gabbeh, carpets, inlays, turquoise inlaying, tradition clothes etc. put on display for visitors. Some of the important points of holding this Exhibit include: the news of the Exhibit was reflected in Facebook. The Exhibit received a warm welcome from Permanent Representatives, international organizations and NGOs. Ambassadors of many countries including, the United States, Germany, Sudan, Morocco, Sweden, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, France, Russia, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Greece, and Pakistan visited the Exhibit.





## Participation in the 38th Session of the Human Rights Council

The 38th Session of the Human Rights Council was held from 18 June to 6 July 2018. The ODVV also had an effective and active presence in this Session

### *- Preparation of Written Statements*

Through the writing and submission of 2 written statements to the Council directory the ODVV highlighted subjects such as protest against continuation of weapons sales to Saudi Arabia by America and Britain, the complicity of these two countries in the crimes committed by Arabia in Yemen, the effects of these crimes on Yemeni children, call for all sides involved in the conflict to put an end to the human catastrophe in Yemen, and Islamophobia in Europe.

### *- Oral Statements*

ODVV representatives from the Geneva Representative Office participated in this Session and read 9 oral statements under Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. The subjects of the statements included the High Commissioner's attention to the effects of unilateral coercive measures in Iran, human rights situation in Hodeida, interactive dialogue with the Syria Investigation Commission, negative effects of unilateral coercive measures on human rights, UPR on the United Arab Emirates, criticism of the United States moving its embassy to Jerusalem, human rights and cultural diversity, Islamophobia in Britain and humanitarian assistance to Yemen.

Also on the sidelines of the Session, ODVV representatives distributed materials that included annual reports and Defenders Newsletter.

### *- Holding Human Rights Council Side Events*

With the cooperation of a number of NGOs, the ODVV held 2 sidelines sittings on the following subjects.

#### **1) Side Event on Peace in Yemen**

This sitting was held on 19 June 2018 with the speeches of Matias Tershog human rights activist and journalist, and Ms. Fimmen Elka deputy of La Rouche-Initiative Germany.

The subjects discussed in this sitting were as follows: the necessity for humanitarian assistance expansion in Yemen, the blockade of Yemen by the Saudi-led Coalition threatens human rights in Yemen, necessity for the continuation of peace talks in Yemen, development of Yemeni infrastructures with regards to water supply and health is a serious urgency in the present conditions, and active groups and also governments involved, the Saudi-led Coalition states in particular must remain committed to peace talks.

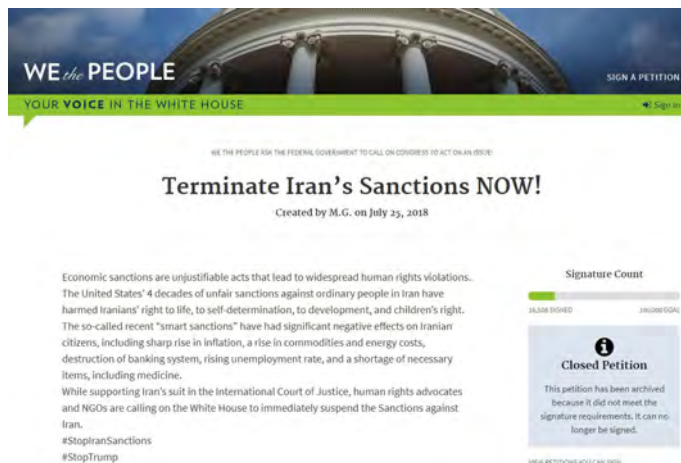
## 2) Side Event on the Human Rights Situation in Yemen

This sitting was held on 26 June 2018 with the speeches of Mr. Nabil Elwashali human rights activist and member of INSAN Organization, Ms. Engelline Kramer human rights activist, and Mr. Al-Hassan Al-Wazir communications director of INSAN Organization.

Some of the subjects discussed included: economic blockade of Yemen with the destruction and airstrikes of Saana airport by the Coalition forces reached its peak and for a long time the people of the country were denied access to food and medicine, various dimensions of economic and political blockade of Yemen through the closure of ports and airports must be investigated and its unhumanitarian effects be analysed, in Yemen Saudi-led Coalition forces have killed children, an independent investigation must immediately be carried out on the human catastrophes and killing of children dimensions, attacks on Al-Hodeida port a new blow on the lifeless body of Yemen this attack has prevented the people of Yemen from having access to basic and health resources.

## Anti-sanctions Campaign

With the imposition of sanctions by the United States against Iran, the ODVV came up with the idea of a petition campaign on the internet, representing Iranian human rights NGOs. Because of this, the White House website's petitions page was approved and a text regarding objection against America's unilateral coercive measures against the people of Iran going back four decades was prepared and published without any partisan or political bias. Also this action took place at the same time as the complaint of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the ICJ. It must be said that this petition for the first time was published by Iranian NGOs representing the people of Iran on White House's website, and ultimately it accumulated more than 16,500 signatures. This action of the ODVV received extensive coverages in Telegram groups and also domestic Iranian news media. (<https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/terminate-irans-sanctions-now>).



## Letter Sent to High Commissioner for Human Rights and 13 UN Special Rapporteurs

In a letter on 8 August 2018 for the purpose of informing member states of the Human Rights Council, communication with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, special rapporteurs, diplomats, and international organizations with regards to America's unilateral exit from the JCPOA, condemnation of unilateral coercive measures against the people of Iran and presenting proper information, called for the addressees to while paying special attention to the negative effects of sanctions on the right to life, health, good, education, development, employment, suitable living standards and right to a safe and healthy environment for Iranians, to condemn on the Council floor the imposition of unilateral coercive measures and violation of the rights of Iranian people.

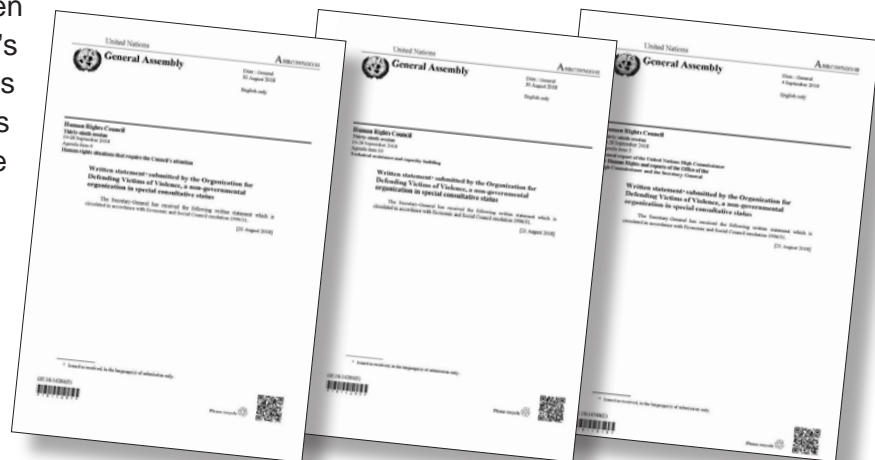
## Participation in the 39th Session of the Human Rights Council

The 39th Session of the Council took place from 10 to 28 September 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland. This Session took place at the same time as important global events such as the human crises in Yemen, Syria and Iraq, the refugee crisis, and unilateral coercive measures. Therefore in all its activities in this Session which included written and oral statements, holding sidelines panels, preparation of thematic reports, reading of statements in the Session, holding sittings and meetings with other international organizations and experts, the ODVV was not left behind from these important debates.

## ODVV's Activities in this Session included:

### - Preparation of Written Statements and their Submission

The ODVV prepared 8 written statements under the 39th Session's Working Agenda. These statements are accessible in the Human Rights Council's website. Some of the subjects of the statements included: Item 2: Human rights violations in the United States and the World due to Trump's approach, Item 3: human rights situation in the UAE with a

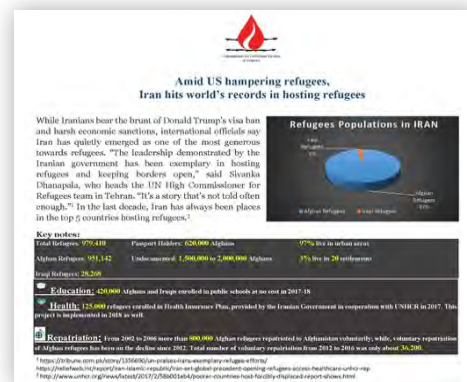


concentration on women, freedom of expression, migrants rights, Item 3: interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Unilateral Coercive Measures regarding re-imposition of sanctions by the United States, continuation of human rights violations, Item 3: United States leaving the UN Human Rights Council, Item 4: violation of humanitarian law and human rights in Yemen, condemnation of Saudi-led Coalition attacks against civilians.

**- Preparation of Infographics and Sanctions Research**

**a) Infographics**

The ODVV prepared an up-to-date infographics on the positive activities and actions of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the last three decades with regards to the education and health situation of Afghan and Iraqi refugees residing in Iran and distributed it in the Council Session.



**b) Preparation and distribution of sanctions research No. 3 on sanctions: “Bank Transactions and Violation of Human Rights”**

The subject of unilateral coercive measures against Iran is one of the subjects which due to the extent of human rights violations has continually been centre of attention of organizations in research and executive activities. Thus, following the publication of issues 1 and 2 of the Sanctions Booklet in the September 2017 and March 2018 Sessions, this research entitled “Bank Transactions and Violation of Human Rights” was prepared and distributed in this Session.



**- Preparation and Reading of Oral Statements in the Council Session**

In this Session under Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 and with consideration of going concerns and top human rights issues, the ODVV prepared and read a total of 9 oral statements. Some of the subjects of the oral statements were:

Expressing concern towards the election of Council member states mechanism i.e. Saudi Arabia

and Bahrain and requesting the Council to further review the worthiness of the candidates; concerns of international human rights activists and organizations towards US Government's latest policies; violation of right to life, right to health, right to development, right to education, right to enjoy adequate living standards and right to self-determination of citizens of target countries due to imposition of sanctions; reiteration of the damages imposed on the vulnerable sections of society such as children suffering from cancer; heart disease, thalassemia, haemophilia and MS; reference to medicines supply and also their cost; accountability of the UAE and Saudi Arabia in extensive human rights violations and war crimes in Yemen; critical environmental conditions in the southern and western regions of Iran over the last decade; and the need for regional cooperation in this regard; the drying up of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Iraq and the critical conditions of Hoor Ol-Azim river in Iran and Iraq which causes environmental problems such as droughts and sandstorms in the region; stress on the fight against terrorism in Syria and total destruction of ISIS, Al-Nusra and all Al-Qaeda; affiliated groups concerns over the racist policies in Canada and the violation of the indigenous people as a result of these policies; the killing of women and children in occupied territories which has turned into a routine operation for Israeli soldiers; condemnation of violence against Muslims in Austria, France and Germany; call for the Human Rights Council to appoint a special rapporteur to investigate Islamophobia and finally call for multilateral international efforts to establish peace in Yemen.

### *- Meetings Thematic Special Rapporteurs*

#### **1) Meeting the assistant to the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty**

On the sidelines of the 39th Session representatives from the ODVV, ILIA Institute and Association of Iranian Women Supporters of Sustainable Development of the Environment met Ms. Tadaki Jonko, the assistant to the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty (Philip Alston). Some of the subjects discussed in this meeting are as follows:

Highlighting America's exit from JCPOA and re-imposition of sanctions against Iran which has affected the fall of Iranian currency, and this has affected the vulnerable sector of the population in Iran, stress on people suffering from certain diseases, particularly Thalassaemia, who mostly live in the south-eastern regions of Iran due to economic problems they have practically cannot afford medicines. A rise of 15 percent for the treatment of this disease has resulted many patients across the country to opt out of medical treatment, which means a gradual death for these individuals.



## 2) Meeting the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development

In a meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development Mr. Saad Alfaragi stressing on Iran being underdeveloped in the border regions, particularly the south-western regions, and the need for better access of the people of the regions to crucial services such as medicines and medical treatment for Thalassemia patients, and the expensive costs of their treatment which is the equivalent of a labourer's month's wages. The ODVV representatives also pointed out the

dust storms problems and their serious effects on the lives of the people in southern Iran and called for the Special Rapporteur to help facilitate regional cooperation between Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia to work towards solving the dust storm problem which at times causes schools to shut down for a week and disrupt the everyday lives of the people. Also the negative effects of the current conditions on illegal bank transactions and damages caused as a result were reiterated.



### *- Side Events*

Holding Side Events is another opportunity in the Human Rights Council which can through the utilisation of the expertise and experiences of experts, to benefit from in the best way. Therefore with the cooperation of a number of NGOs, the ODVV held 4 sidelines sittings on the following subjects:

### **1) Human Rights Situation in Yemen: Violation of Human Rights and Crimes Committed against Children by Saudi Arabia**

On 11 September 2018, with the cooperation of INSAN Organization the ODVV held a sitting

on “Human Rights Violation: Crimes Committed against Children by Saudi Arabia”. The following subjects were discussed in this sitting:

Currently we are witnessing a genocide in Yemen, and this genocide’s target are women, children and civilians. Evidence of the extent of this genocide has been collected by international organizations and are documented

in international documents. In its attacks, Saudi Arabia has targeted business, religious, and education centres, hospitals and city centres. America’s role in the Yemeni crisis is undeniable, while it proclaims to being a human rights defender, the United States continues to supply weapons to the aggressor countries. Children are the main victims of Coalition airstrikes. The death rates of children shows that an extensive war crime is being committed by the Coalition forces.



## 2) Side Event on the Human Rights Situation in Yemen: Violation of Children’s Rights in Yemen

This Side Event was held on 17 September 2017 with the speeches of 4 human rights activists, Mrs. Ashwaq Al-Gobi from INSAN Organization for Human Rights and Peace, Mr. Samuel Walton human rights activist, Mr. Abdullah El-Kebsi from INSAN Organization for Human Rights and Peace, and Mrs. Engline Kramer human rights activist.

The focal points of this Event included, the worsening of women’s situation in Yemen following Saudi-led Coalition’s blockade has resulted in rise in poverty, low incomes, smuggling, gender based violence and under age marriages due to economic problems, the impact of Saudi-led Coalition’s blockade on the physical and mental health of women in Yemen and 4.7 billion pound sterling of weapons sold to Saudi Arabia by Britain since the outbreak of conflict in Yemen back in March 2015, the use of these weapons in attacks against civilians, the illegality of the Yemen blockade and continuation of efforts of the Fight against Arms Trade Campaign to condemn Britain selling arms to Saudi Arabia in the British High Court, and the negative effects of the Yemen blockade on the economic, health and hygiene, children’s education, transportation, the national currency and the social conditions of the people.



## 3) Side Event on the International Community and War Crimes in Yemen

This Event was held on 24 September 2018 in Room XXIV by the ODVV and cooperation of INSAN Organization for Human Rights and Peace on the sidelines of the 39th Session.

The speakers were Mr. Abdullatif Elwashali Secretary General of INSAN Organization for Human Rights and Peace, Mr. Mohammad





Abo Taleb from INSAN Organization for Human Rights and Peace, and Mr. Abdulmalek Al-Maqaleh human rights activist.

Some of the points of discussion of this sitting were: stress on the application of justice in Yemen with regards to the prosecution of war crimes, negative effects of the Yemen blockade especially in the medical sector and health issues, economic and social effects, lack of reflection of the real news from inside Yemen in the mass media, children's conditions in Yemen who make up approximately 20 percent of the number of civilians killed in the conflict, crimes committed in Yemen clear examples of crimes against humanity with consideration of article 7 of the Rome Statute.

#### **4) Side Event on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on Humanitarian Issues and Human Rights Situation in Iran**

With the aim of informing Human Rights Council Member States about United States unilateral sanctions against Iran, took the initiative to hold a Side Event on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on humanitarian issues and human rights situation in Iran. In this sitting the main speaker was Mr. Idriss Jazairy, UN Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive measures, and Mr. Haytham Manna, President of Scandinavian Institute for Human Rights, and Mr. Dawid Bastiat-Jarosz, PhD candidate in political science and international economy, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

Some of the subject discussed included:

According to studies, 70 percent of sanctions in the world are unilateral and only 12 percent have been imposed through collective decision. In July 1995, former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Gali said, "the use of non-military tools (such as



sanctions) increases the problems of the people who have previously been affected by political and economic system problems.” Sanctions have negative impacts on poor people and the function of humanitarian organizations. United States sanctions have many negative impacts for the people and the weakest sector pay the highest cost of sanctions. In Iran smart sanctions have turned into indiscriminate sanctions. The media does not cover the subject of sanctions and their impact on human rights, even international NGOs who claim to defend human rights do not speak much about this, and this is puzzling. Countries that impose sanctions say there are humanitarian exemptions to sanctions but the reality is that due to actions such as sanctions by SWIFT, these exemptions are not put to practice. It must be said that in this sitting the Special Rapporteur said that he had officially told America, “you claim the sanctions imposed against Iran will be the toughest in history. But on 28 August you said in the International Criminal Court that humanitarian exemptions will remain in place. My question from you is, how do you intend to implement the exemptions in practice so that the weight of the sanctions is not put on the shoulders of the impoverished and vulnerable people?”



## Preparation of “Human Rights Developments in Iran Booklet” for the International Audience

For the purpose of information dissemination of specific international audience such as diplomats, experts, ambassadors, and employees of international organizations and different countries inside and outside Iran, the ODVV placed the preparation of the human rights developments in Iran booklet in its working agenda. In this booklet notable legal and human rights developments in Iran are collected and sent to the addressees. The first issue came out in August, the second in November and the third in December 2018 and was sent to the addressees via email.



## Rehabilitation Department: Raha Counselling Centre

With a wish to mend and end mankind's pains and sufferings, and expansion of humanitarian campaigns, the ODVV Rehabilitation Department provides advisory and educational services. For the protection of victims of domestic and social violence, the department presents counselling and therapy in legal, family, marriage, psychological disorders at the Rehabilitation Centre .

With the cooperation of 40 mental health experts and lawyers the Centre provides pre-marriage, education and legal counselling. The statistics of the cases is determined on the basis of gender, age, occupation, marital status, education levels and the reason for coming to the Centre. In 2018, 2813 cases benefited from the Centre's services. 1688 of them were women and 1125 were men. According to the statistics most of the cases were married and the majority of them had family problems.

As an active member of the Employment and Education Committee the ODVV Rehabilitation Centre, through the preparation of the "Prevention of Domestic Violence" document, has always endeavoured to work towards the prevention of violence. For the realisation of the goals of this Committee, by participation in all meetings with a description of practical activities in this regard, the Rehabilitation Department has undertaken a number of important measures, the important ones of which are:

- Identification of victims of violence at the Raha Rehabilitation Centre
- Review of effective approaches in counselling and psychotherapy in prevention of violence.
- Identification of suitable titles for technical sittings on prevention of violence and treatment of the victims, to hold at the Raha Rehabilitation Centre.
- Setting a suitable research method to review the link between violence and impractical schemas, depression and anxiety among victims of violence cases.- Identification of counselling problems of related governmental departments with the Rehabilitation Centre project for treatment intervention and counselling towards increasing the mental health of target group.

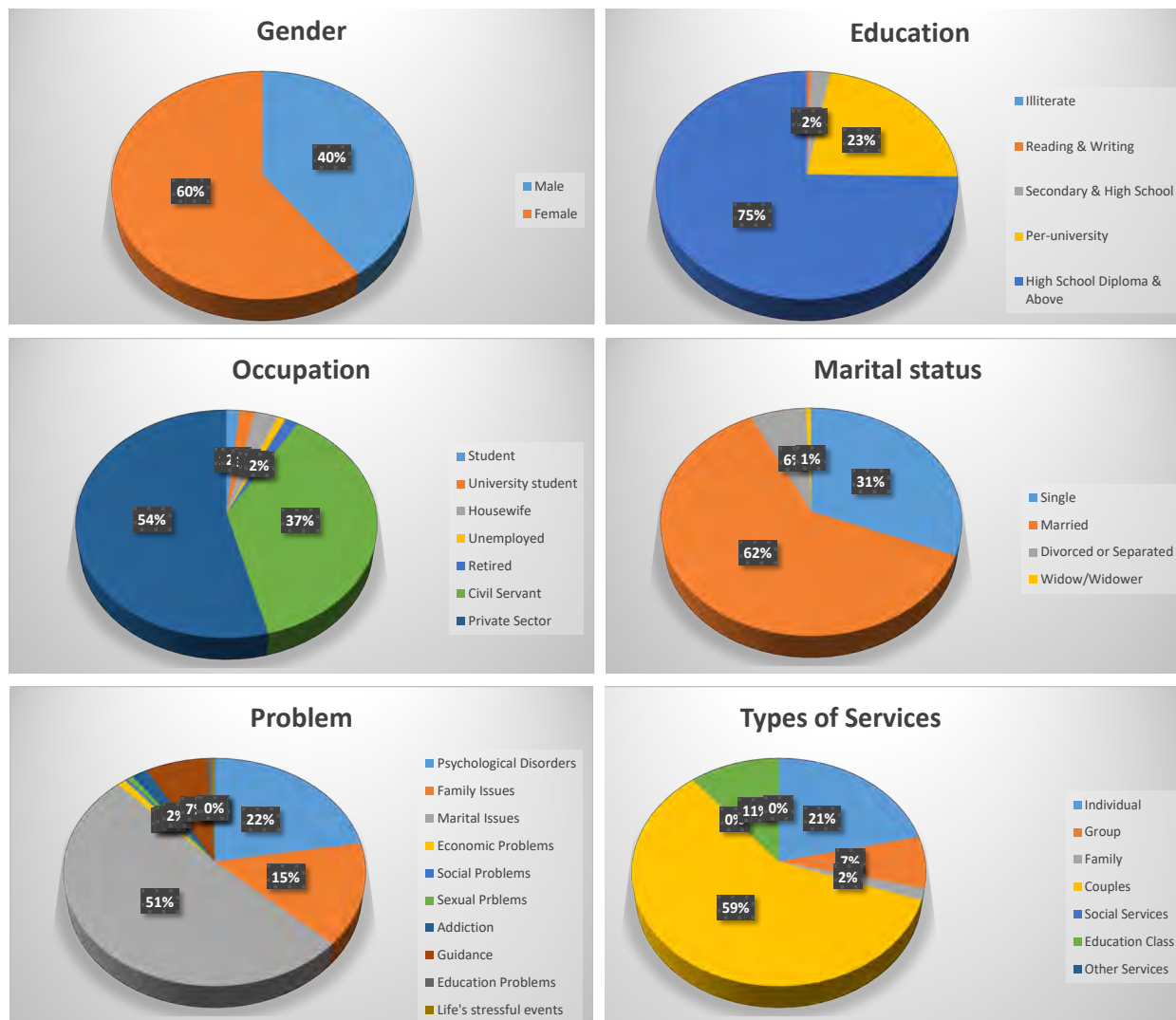
## ODVV Raha Rehabilitation Centre Working Agenda for 2018:

1. Expand direct communication with the Centre's audience through increasing the audience number via Telegram to 845 and uploading materials daily. (Telegram is one of the most popular Social networks in Iran)
2. Expand the Centre's team of counsellors, psychologists, psychoanalysts and psychiatrists in various fields.
3. Preparation of product packs and introduction of Raha Centre.



4. Talks with services centres for cooperation with Raha Centre.
5. Uploading Raha Centre's activities reports on its website.
6. Signing letter of understanding with two rehabilitation centres in Iraq (the Bejat Al-Fawad Medical and Psychological Centre in Basra and Wachan Organization for Victims of Human Rights Violations).

## Statistics of Cases in the Centre for 2018: 2813



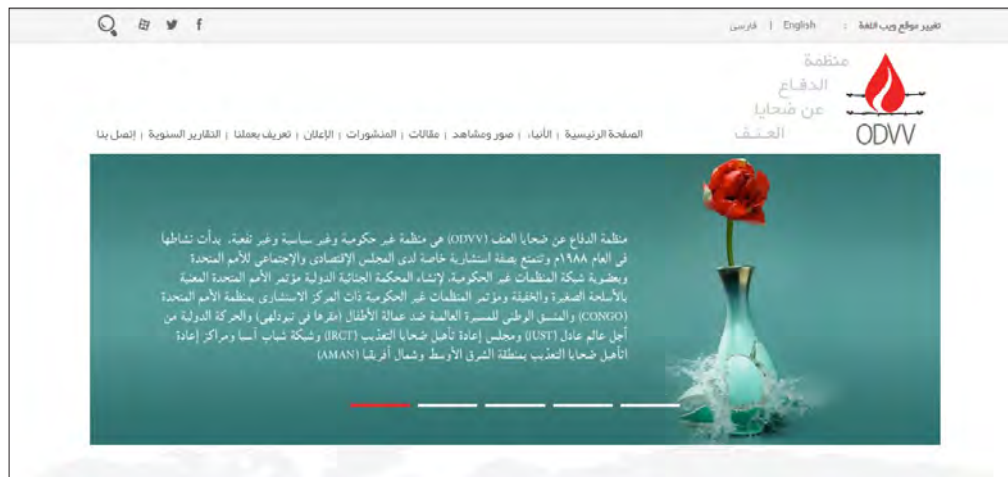
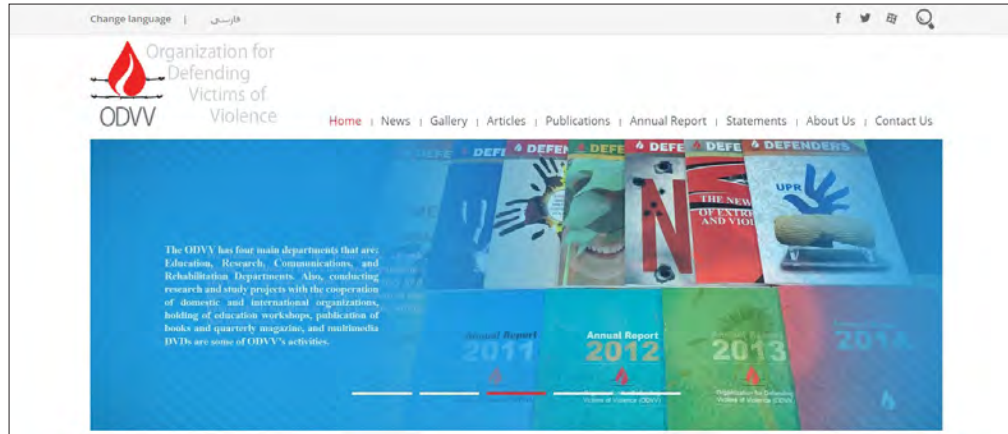
## Communications and Public Relations

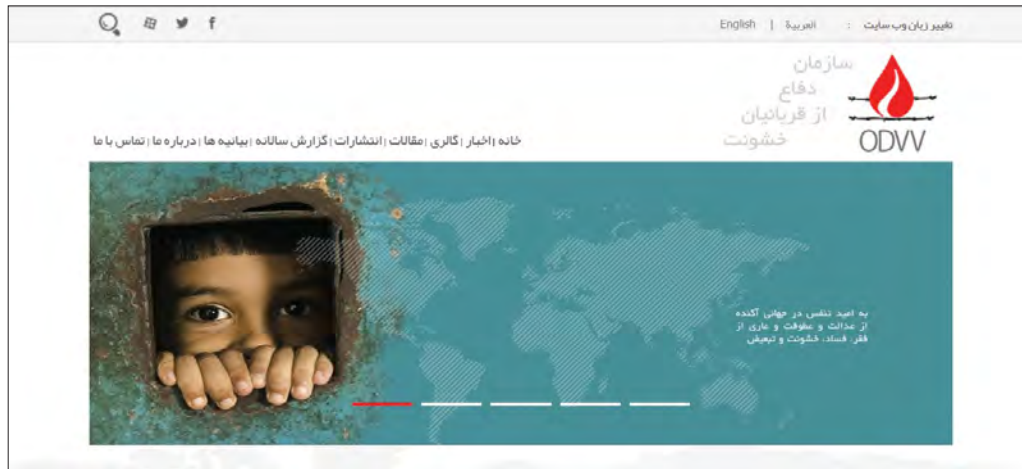
### Publication of Contents in Websites and Social Networks

Information dissemination is another one of ODVV's activities towards its objectives. The ODVV uses various tools to achieve this.

#### - Farsi, English and Arabic Websites

The worldwide web is one of the necessary communications channels to access the audience. Through utilisation of a trilingual website – Farsi, English and Arabic – the ODVV has managed





to make human rights news and development, its activities and positions towards various issues, its advancements throughout the year, objectives and programmes available to the addressees and keep them updated on a daily basis In 2018 a total of 299 articles and 174 various news items on human rights issues were published on the three websites for interested parties to read.

### - ODVV Social Media

For the purpose of strengthening the links of the ODVV with sister international organizations and other addressees, the ODVV is active in Facebook and Twitter. This action is with the aim of the utilisation of new communications tools, identification and creation of networks of institutes





and human rights activists to show the existence of multiple voices from Iran on human rights, and information dissemination of activities and drawing further partnerships. In 2018 these pages published more than 1500 various human rights materials and articles.

### - ODVV's Telegram "Human Rights Studies" Channel

The Telegram "Human Rights Studies" channel was launched by the ODVV with the aim of raising the awareness of the addressees of scientific processes and human rights developments. Up to the end of 2018, with 870 members and daily uploads of human rights related materials, the channel is a communications arm of the ODVV with the addressees, volunteers and honorary members.



### ***- Data Bank of Documents and Reports of Human Rights Situation in Iran***

Through the designing and launching a data bank of documents, resolutions, reports and all important human rights treaties, the ODVV has facilitated the possibility of searching for reference sources and preparation of all its written and oral statements from the first Human Rights Council Session of the year to-date which include 162 oral and 153 written statements.

<http://www.odvv.org/page-category-18-Oral-statements>

<http://www.odvv.org/page-category-17-Written-statements>

### **Links with Honorary Members**

Towards the realisation of its objectives and activities, the ODVV utilises the volunteer force with consideration of their field of expertise.

To this aim, with the launching of the ODVV Volunteers Group on the internet and the facilitation and exchange of up to date communication and information in human rights fields among the group members, the scene for their activities and the blossoming of their capacities and talents was created.

An example of the activities of this group is the active participation and cooperation and presence of these members in holding education workshops and courses and also writing articles for the Farsi, English and Arabic websites and Defenders Newsletters.

After becoming members, the honorary members can benefit from the following facilities:

- Use of the ODVV library
- Access to reports and researches available
- Benefit from ODVV publications and links
- Participation in meetings, conferences, seminars, sittings and education courses

### **Statements**

Towards respecting the high human values and with a belief to justice, equality, promotion and expansion of culture of nonviolence, the ODVV has issued the following statements view of the current events that have occurred in the world.

- Statement on the Occasion of International Human Rights Day
- Statement on the Occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
- Statement on the Occasion of International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
- Statement on the Occasion of World Environment Day
- Statement on Germany's Decision to Halt Arms Exports to Saudi Arabia

- Statement on International Women's Day
- Statement and Letter to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and 13 UN Officials on the Impact of Economic Sanctions

### **Updating the Library**

The ODVV is equipped with a specialist library and up-to-date in the field of human rights which contains books in Farsi and English.

Also in 2018, with purchasing of dozens of new books on human rights and refining of the library and introduction of 2 books from the library in Telegram Channel, the use of booklets, existing researches and articles, ODVV has facilitated the necessary conditions for honorary members, volunteers, researchers and students access for their studies and work.







ODVV

[www.odvv.org](http://www.odvv.org)