



DEFENDERS

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Editor's Note

The rise in acts of terror around the world which is due to extremism and violence, gradually is shifting towards the lesser entered layers, and spread its negative effects in various geographic, political and social dimensions. This has caused grave concern for all, especially human rights institutions. As a nongovernmental organizations active in the field of human rights, and understanding today's world conditions, the ODVV has dedicated this issue of Defenders to these events from the human rights perspective. Below is a summary of the articles presented in this issue.

With the recent events of the world in this issue, Defenders has a note that reviews the effects of terror attacks on human rights, international laws, and also domino effects on other crises around the world, such as terrorism and the refugee's crisis.

The refugees crisis is another crisis of today's world the repercussions of each increase on a daily basis. A review of the refugee's crisis and its effects on international law implementation is published in this issue in the form of an analytical article.

Unrests and conflicts in Palestine, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iraq have all been significant cases of human rights violations in the world in the past year, which are carefully discussed in an article.

The threats caused by ISIS, Boko Haram, Al Shabab and other terror groups acts of violence is an challenge that draws the special attention of all members of the international community. In this issue, an article reviews the roots of terror groups' violence.

Overall, Defender newsletter tries to focus on the promotion of human rights in the world and Iran through transparency of information a microscopic analysis of the situation of human rights in Iran as well as the human rights concerns over the world. To this aim there is an article in this issue on replacement of heavy court sentences in Iran laws, and solutions for alternative punishments have been reviewed. The subject of education of children in deprived regions is also reviewed in the form of an interview.

A brief reflection of ODVV's activities such as a report of a Sitting on Methods of Prevention of Violence against Women, participation in international conferences, alongside a review of the human rights developments in Iran is reflected in this issue.

The ODVV always tries to take steps, however small, towards the promotion of human rights through cooperation with domestic and international human rights organizations. And thus welcomes the cooperation of international human rights activists.

Editorial



Prospects Ahead in the Removal of Capital Punishment in I.R. Iran

By: Seyed Jamaledin Heydari Manesh
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Introduction

Today, capital punishment is one of the harshest punishments. According to many countries and human rights activists, it is an inhuman punishment, and the growing trend of demanding its suspension on the recommendations of states, has influenced many countries decisions to suspend the punishment.

Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the countries in which capital punishment is used for some crimes and has always been criticised and cautioned on the use of death penalty.

Since Islamic laws form the basis of the country's laws, the Islamic Republic of Iran respects the human dignity of all its citizens and all Mankind, and according to the word of Allah "Naqd karmana bani Adam" , Iran guards the sanctity of the human soul. However, according to religious teachings it values the life of individuals and the security of society and violation of people's rights is also punishable in accordance with the law. Therefore, an individual who knowingly and intentionally committes a serious crime will

face severe punishments, one of which is the capital punishment.

The punishment has always been objected and in this narrative we will deal with the basis of the existence of this punishment and the prospects ahead.

The Background of Capital Punishment Restriction in International Documents

Following the universalisation of human rights philosophy, and recognition of individuals' rights, it was realized that capital punishment undermines the respect for human rights, therefore, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), bans cruel and inhuman punishments in five Articles. However, capital punishment is still legal and carried out in many countries

In 1966, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly, Article 6(2) of the Convention states: "In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission

of the crime and not contrary to the provisions of the present Covenant and to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This penalty can only be carried out pursuant to a final judgement rendered by a competent court.”

Therefore it can be seen that steps have been taken in this Covenant to restrict the death sentence and while recognising the right of appeal or commuting of sentence for all sentenced to death, it bans the issuing of the death sentence to individuals under 18 and execution of pregnant women.

For the purpose of the suspension of capital punishment the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was adopted in 1989 by the UN General Assembly which was a major step towards the voluntary suspension of capital punishment by governments.

Capital Punishment in Iran Law

Being committed to Islamic principles and basing the criminal code on Islamic Laws, the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to determine punishments on the same basis.

Capital punishment is applicable in the following instances: Ghasas (punishment in kind): is when an individual intentionally and knowingly commits murder and the punishment is ghasas or execution. This punishment is not a collective right, so it cannot be pardoned by the judiciary, rather, it is the right of the family of the victim. If the family demands ghasas, the Judiciary is obliged to apply this punishment. The clear narration of the Koran, recognises ghasas as a punishment but it also continues to recommend the victim’s family on forgiveness and pardon. Today, we see that with the forgiveness of the victims’ parents, the death penalty is not carried out. That is, the application of capital punishment should not be blamed on the government.

Hodood (prescribed punishment): refers to the fixed punishments determined for certain crimes. Capital punishment is determined for adultery under particular circumstances and sodomy, the proof of the occurrence of these crimes requires



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a very strong evidence, which in practice can hardly be obtained. Also the crime of Moharebeh (enmity with God) which includes threatening the national security of the country, and spreading of fear among people using firearms faces capital punishment so that national security is guaranteed.

Taazir (discretionary punishment): refers to punishments that are determined by the government in the best interests of the general public, which in principle are less severe than Hodood punishment. On this basis a number of Islamic scholars do not accept capital punishment as Taazir, but on the other side of the scale, opponents refer to the observation of the best interests of society and deem acts that cause the society great suffering and jeopardise national security deserve such punishments.

One of the punishments included in this category is capital punishment for drugs traffickers, there is no consensus among scholars on the issue, but since this crime does not have a record in Islamic history, perhaps



On the other hand in spite of huge spending on the fight against drugs trafficking and sensitivity of the issue, Iran is continuously criticised by other countries and organizations for human rights violations of drug criminals and high number of executions has always been an excuse for political attacks against the country.

it can be considered as Taazir or preventive punishment.

Iran's Geographic Location, Transit of Drugs and Rise in Number of Executions

Geographically the Islamic Republic of Iran is situated to the west of Afghanistan. Due to particular regional conditions, the lack of economic infrastructures and numerous wars, Afghanistan has always suffered from lack of job opportunities and gradually turned into one of the centres for cultivation of poppies and production of opium. This trend has grown since the invasion of the country by America and NATO at the end of 2001, and currently according to existing figures, Afghanistan is at the top of the pyramid of drugs producing countries. According to Afghan officials the annual revenue of the drugs mafia in the country has reached 70 billion dollars, something that is pretty much out of control.

Drug traffickers' access the global markets is possible via neighbouring countries. Iran is a very important and vital passage for drug smugglers due to its particular strategic conditions in accessing various points around the world, therefore considering all the aforementioned,

Iran considers strong response to trafficking as its duty.

Thus the high figures of executions and the huge moral and material costs are the results of this all out fight against drugs trafficking and according to the Secretary of Judiciary's High Council for Human Rights, nearly 80 percent of executions in Iran are drugs related.

Steps towards Reduction of Capital Punishment Sentences

In 1976 Iran joined the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. Iran deems capital punishment apt only for serious crimes and has pointed it out in various documents submitted to the second round of the UPR (including the national report). However to-date, Iran has not joined the 2nd Additional Protocol of the Convention, and in general does not deem capital punishment as being stopped. For example, the punishment is applied in Ghesas cases where it is the right of individuals to decide on the punishment and the government cannot effectively interfere into these cases.

According to the recent reviews, many experts believe capital punishment for drug related crimes, has not had a positive outcome. While stressing on the necessity of a relentless fight against production, trafficking and distribution of drugs, the experts have called for a review of determining capital punishment for these crimes.

On the other hand in spite of huge spending on the fight against drugs trafficking and sensitivity of the issue, Iran is continuously criticised by other countries and organizations for human rights violations of drug criminals and high number of executions has always been an excuse for political attacks against the country.

It seems as if the recent reviews, the lessons learned and experts' opinions, has made the authorities, policy makers and ultimately legislators to change their mind on using capital punishment for drug related crimes, an example of which can be seen in the bill introduced to the

Islamic Parliament.

The draft bill of the amendment of capital punishment in the Fight against Drugs Act which has been prepared by a number of parliamentarians from the 9th parliament, was introduced to the Parliament in January 2015, however, because the four year term of the 9th parliament came to an end, the political will and action of the members of the 10th parliament is needed for the draft to go through.

Of course it must be considered that despite the positive existing views for the abolition of capital punishment, there is a large group of officials and influential individuals who deem such punishments necessary to restrict the production and trafficking of drugs. Whether the draft is ratified by the parliament and approved by the Guardian Council (which will then be enforced as a law) or it does not pass these stages, it can be considered as a commendable move indicating that a group of the authorities and parliamentarians are sensitive toward the use of capital punishment. It can be expected and hoped that the change in the officials' viewpoint on capital punishment (reflected in the draft), is welcomed, so that in the near future we can see amendments to the punishments and eventually, abolition of capital punishment for drugs trafficking crimes.

One of the points mentioned in the draft bill states: capital punishment in the fight against drugs, will change to life imprisonment except for armed drugs trafficking.

Thus according to the draft bill, in cases except for armed drugs trafficking (which threatens the peace and security of the public), the traffickers life sentences replace capital punishment.

In the event of the resubmission of the draft bill and its adoption, strengthening of preventive measures could be effective deterrents for the would be criminals including: punishment of criminals through long term jail sentences; limiting some of their social rights, confiscation of the assets they have gained through trafficking



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and heavy financial punishments.

Of course in this regard, the financial and moral support and cooperation of the UN and the international community is needed for public education, strengthening of civil society, prevention and rehabilitation of drugs addicts, reduction of drug demand and increasing its cost. International cooperation can be very effective to make Iran's efforts successful in this regard; a country that is on the frontlines of the fight against drugs, so that other countries are safe from the detrimental effects of drugs addiction.

Sources:

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The Position of Imprisonment Alternative Punishments in the Iranian Criminal Justice System

By: Seyed Mohammad Zaman Daryabari

1 – Background

The main objective of imprisonment alternative punishments is to prevent the occurrence of crime, correction and reform and reintegration of the criminal to society.

Imprisonment alternative punishments are entitled “punishment transformation” and existed in the form of reducing punishment, following the authentication of reduced sentences in the criminal laws of pre and post Islamic revolution legislative history.

Article 22 of the Islamic Criminal Code (1992), did not clearly define alternative punishments and had only said “and or transformation of punishments to other forms that are more suitable for the accused” and therefore the court was able to use alternative punishments for imprisonment.

Also according to article 17 of the former Islamic Criminal Code (1992), the judge could deny some social rights of the convicted and or make him or her reside in a particular location, and or prohibit the convicted to reside in a particular place.

2 – The New Criminal Code in Iran

According to article 66 of the Islamic Criminal Code “the perpetrators of premeditated crimes, whose maximum punishment is between 91 days and six months imprisonment, will be sentenced to alternative to imprisonment punishment.” According to note 1 of article 427 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of Iran with regards to imprisonment replacement punishments, the criteria for an appeal, is the same initial legal punishment.

According to article 516 with regards to the alternative to imprisonment punishment sentences, such as flogging and cash fines, the prison time



already served by the criminal is calculated as follows:

- a) For each day already served, one day’s cash fine, eight hours of community service and five days from incarceration is deducted.
- b) With regards to flogging as a prison punishment, for each day already served, three hits of the flog is deducted.
- c) With regards to cash fines, the punishment is done according to the regulations regarding financial convictions.

2-1 – Mandatory Instances of Application of Imprisonment Alternative Punishments

According to the unanimous vote of the 746 procedure (19 January 2016) of the general assembly of the National Supreme Court of Iran and the contents of the articles:

- The intentional crimes offenders with a maximum legal punishment of three months imprisonment.
- The intentional crimes offenders who’s legal punishment is a maximum of 91 days to 6 months,

unless the convict has a criminal history as follows, and five years have not passed since the beginning of imprisonment term:

a) Getting convicted, more than once, with a sentence for up to six months imprisonment or cash fine in excess of 10 million Rials or flogging.

b) Getting convicted, in one case, and being sentenced to six months imprisonment or Hadd or Ghasas or the payment of more than a fifth of Diah.

- Those who commit non-intentional crimes, unless the legal punishment of the crime committed is more than 2 years imprisonment.

- The perpetrators of crimes for whom, the types or discretion of punishments have not been determined in the law.



According to article 529 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of Iran, anyone who in accordance with the certain decision of the court is sentenced to paying cash fine and does not pay it, his or her properties will be identified and confiscated by the sentence implementation authority and the sentence is implemented by the sales of the confiscated properties.

2-2 – Cases of Prohibition of the Application of Imprisonment Alternative Punishments

- Crimes against domestic and international security of the country.

- When someone has committed numerous cases of intentional crimes and the legal punishment of one of them is more than six months imprisonment.

- In intentional crimes whose legal punishment is up to a year imprisonment, in the event of reduction of sentence to less than a year.

2-3 – Implementation Method of Imprisonment Alternative Punishments in Cash Fine Crimes

According to article 529 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of Iran, anyone who in accordance with the certain decision of the court is sentenced to paying cash fine and does not pay it, his or her properties will be identified and confiscated by the sentence implementation authority and the sentence is implemented by the sales of the confiscated properties. In the event of lack of property or failure to identify the property, the sentence implementation authority can fulfil the payment of the cash fine by suspending part of the convict's income, and or all or part of the rest of the incomes of the offender according to the implementation of civil law sentences. In the event of the offender's request to pay in instalments and proving his or her ability to pay the instalments, the initial court under whose authority the decision is implemented, can decide, through suitable guarantees, if the offender can pay in instalments.

Whenever the implementation of the sentence is not possible through the aforementioned methods, imprisonment alternative punishments will be applied through the observation of relevant regulations:

a) For cash fines of up to 15 million Rials, each 30 thousand Rials will exchange for one hour of community service.

b) In cash fines of over 15 million Rials, also in the event of lack of implementation conditions of paragraph (a) of this article, each 300 thousand Rials will exchange for one day imprisonment.

3 – Alternative Punishments in Restorative Justice

Reaching objectives such as the reduction of the criminal population of prisons, reintegration of the criminals to society, prevention of repeat offence through communication with other criminals, reduction of the cost of punishment, compensation for victims of crime, and the free use of skills of individuals in social services etc. are reasons behind the use of alternative to imprisonment punishments. These alternative punishments are methods based on Restorative Justice principles. Restorative Justice focuses on bringing the perpetrators to justice and healing of the wounds of the victims.

Unlike “diversion programs” that prevent offenders from entering the criminal justice

system without offering any recommendations for alternative punishments, the new criminal justice methods endeavour to prevent offense not only through preventing offenders from entry into the criminal justice system but through using social integration methods or rehabilitation methods and mending the broken social relations. Criminal arbitration can be seen as a three sided process and begins without the usual procedures in criminal justice based on the previous agreement of the plaintiff/victim of crime and the accused/criminal in the presence of a third party as the arbitrator, for resolving disputes and compensating for the negative consequences of the crime. And it can result in the application of imprisonment alternative punishments. But there are challenges in the process of using alternative punishments in Iran including: ambiguity in how to implement and monitor the punishment; lack of proficient people to implement the punishment and limited opportunity of continuous monitoring of the convicted individuals because these types of punishments are so widespread.

4 – Different Types of Alternative Punishment

According to article 2 of the executive guidelines of article 79 of the Islamic Criminal Code, free public services are important forms of imprisonment alternative punishments including:

a) Education: including literacy education and education of scientific skills, culture, religion, arts, sports, technical and professional skills and life skills.

b) Health and treatment: including diagnosis; treatment; rehabilitation; midwifery and nursing; looking after senior citizens, the disabled and children; counselling and psychotherapy; environmental hygiene and addiction treatment.

c) Technical and professional work: such as working in workshops, factories, industries.

d) Public Service: including guarding, being a janitor, public places cleaning, protection and taking care of urban green spaces and parks, and gardening of the said places, repair of public transport and governmental vehicles, taking care of sports centres and taking care of parks.

e) Labouring: including labour in construction sites, road construction, mines, fisheries, land,

dam construction and other construction projects.

f) Agriculture, livestock, farming, forestry and land: which include planting trees, gardening, harvesting, poultry farming and fish farming.

5 – Main Cases of Alternative Punishment - Medical Crimes

Because of sensitivity of medical professions, the head of the Judiciary, in a memorandum, has asked judges presiding in medical crime cases, to use imprisonment alternative punishments of cash fine types and or a probation period if the crime has been committed through negligence and or lack of attention to regulations.

- Juvenile Crimes

In order to use imprisonment alternative punishments and according to article 88 of the Islamic Criminal Code regarding children and juveniles offenders whose age is between 9 and 15 at the time of committing the offence, the court will make one of the following decisions depending on the case:

a) Given up the child to the parents or legal the guardian while they are obliged to offer a written commitment to train and raise their child or juvenile offender and take care of them in good manners.

Clause – whenever the court deems it necessary, it can order the mentioned individuals depending on the case, to perform the following and announce the result to the court in the set time:

1 –Referring the child or juvenile offender to a social worker, psychologist or other experts and while the parent or guardian is cooperating with the experts.

2 – Send the child or juvenile offender to an educational, cultural institute for education or learning a profession

3 – Take necessary measures to treat or detoxify the child or juvenile offender under a doctor’s supervision

4 – Preventing the child or juvenile offender from having harmful communications with other individuals through the decision of the court.

5 – Preventing the child or juvenile offender from commuting to predetermined locations.

b) Giving the child or juvenile offender to another natural or legal individuals that the court deems to

be in the interests of the child, with a necessity to carry out the orders in paragraph (a) in the event that the parents or legal guardian is unfit and or there is a lack of access to them while observing the regulations of article 1173 of the Civil Code.

Clause – handing over the child to qualified individuals is dependent on their acceptance.

- Advice by the court judge

c) Warning and or getting written promise not to repeat crime

d) Holding in the Reform and Correctional Centre from three months to a year for discriminatory crimes of first to fifth degree level (crime level).

- Military Crimes

According to article 11 of the Iran Armed Forces Crimes Penal code and articles 5 to 8 of the guidelines to incarceration with military service, if the accused sentenced to incarceration is not more than a year, on the request of the convicted and recommendation of the prosecutor and agreement of the sentencing court or replacement court, the incarceration punishment will be replaced with incarceration with military service punishment.

Also with regards to military servicemen in Iran, imprisonment alternative punishments include: cash fines, adding to the time of military service, military promotion denial. The existing judicial process in military servicemen crimes considers alternative punishments such as protection and guarding of armed forces green spaces and parks, working in the military factories, industries and profession and skills training centres.

- Clergy Crimes

According to article 1 of the guidelines to Special Clerical Court (2005) adopted by the Supreme Leader, this court is an exclusive judicial body independent of the Judiciary, and it deals with all clergy crimes. This article deems that: “for the prevention of the infiltration of wayward individuals and criminals into religious centres, preservation of clergy’s dignity, and to prosecute clergy offenders, special prosecutor’s office and court for the clergy will be created under the top supervision of the Supreme Leader. These courts have the following duties (in accordance with article 2 of the duties of prosecutor’s office and court guidelines):

a) Adopt necessary measures for the prevention



Therefore in the processing of the offenses of clergy offenders in Iran, this special court can decide to use the aforementioned alternative punishments (disrobement on permanent or temporary basis and in some cases house arrest).

of offenses and crimes being committed within the judicial issues jurisdiction

b) Offer guidance in matters that go against dignity

c) Processing clergy crimes and files that are connected to the objectives of this prosecutor’s office in an effective way.

According to article 43 (23 November 2015 amendment) of the said guidelines: “those offenders who damage the dignity and reputation of the clergy by committing an offense, and or individuals who do not deserve to wear clerical robes, will be sentenced to disrobing (permanently or temporarily) by the court.”

Therefore in the processing of the offenses of clergy offenders in Iran, this special court can decide to use the aforementioned alternative punishments (disrobement on permanent or temporary basis and in some cases house arrest).

6 – Conclusion

In view of this narrative, we are witness to improvements in the legislator’s approach in providing basis for the implementation of criminal justice policies based on the use of imprisonment alternative punishments, which must be institutionalised and expanded in the judicial process.



The Cause of Refugee Crisis

By: Zahra Mirabian

The refugee crisis is leading the world into a new phase of seeking human rights and international law solutions. It is an issue which will result in terrible consequences if the international community does not reach a consensus on it and in today's world this crisis is intertwined with other crises such as terrorism. Terrorism and refugee crisis have a reciprocal relationship. A relationship that makes the world face bitter realities on a daily basis. Terrorism and refugee crisis, each on its own, can undermine the successful implementation of international law. This article will point out the connection between refugee crisis and terrorism and the threat that these two crises pose on effective enforcement of international law.

1 – Terrorism and Refugee Crisis

The roots of terrorism and refugee crisis; who is to blame?

a) Extremist ideology and support of some governments

Looking at figures published by the UNHCR, more than half of the refugee population

(approximately 54 percent) are from the three countries of Afghanistan, Syria and Somalia. Each one of these countries have been experiencing terrorism and refugee crisis for years.

Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, groups affiliated to Al-Qaeda and ISIS in Syria, and Al Shabab, Boko Haram and ISIS in Somalia have created complicated problems.

<http://unhcr.org>

54% of refugees worldwide came from three countries



Every time terror attacks escalate in these countries, there is a rise in the number of refugees flowing out of the region.

Widespread terrorist activities are fed by

one ideological source in these countries and across the world. The terrorist groups have been supported by some Middle Eastern governments and their allies for years. Finding the root cause of extremist ideology in the region and the world is not very hard. Religious schools and institutions that promote extremist ideology, are sprawling out of Pakistan to Europe and America and get financial backing from bodies and organizations in the Middle East region.

A researcher from the Brookings Institute in an interview with the New York Times says:

“In the realm of extremist Islam, some countries promote a very toxic form of Islam that draws sharp lines between a small number of true believers and everyone else, Muslim and non-Muslim, providing ideological fodder for violent jihadists. Yet at the same time, they’re our partners in counterterrorism.(1)”



b) Escalation of the conflicts, an opportunity for terrorists

Perhaps one of the reasons behind the escalation of war and conflict around the world is the arms race and weapons trade. War and conflict undermine the political stability of governments. The political instability and displacement of thousands of people, strengthens the terror groups. For example, since the start of the Yemen crisis and conflict, and displacement of thousands of people, terror groups such as Al-Qaeda have been able to consolidate power in the absence of security.

2 – Endangering International Law Enforcements

With the spread of crisis beyond the Middle



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East region into Europe and other parts of the world, we are witnessing the threat to many international agreements since some UN member states are not abiding by them.

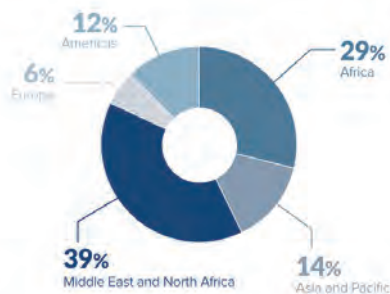
Currently there are 20 million refugees worldwide. According to UNCHR figures, 86 percent of the world’s refugees are in the Middle East, Africa and other less developed regions.

Five million displaced Palestinians are spread around the Middle East, 8.4 million Syrians are in neighbouring countries, and 5.2 million Afghans are living in Pakistan, Iran and other countries as refugees. Currently, in Kenya, there are over 430,000 Somali refugees.(2)

Despite having limited financial means and existing economic pressures, majority of countries that take in refugees have the necessary cooperation with the UNHCR in the implementation of the Refugees Convention and have been partly meeting their international commitments in spite of their limited economic resources. On the opposite side of the scale, from the outset of the refugee crisis in Europe, we hear unpleasant reports coming from some politicians and right wing parties and or some European governments on a daily basis, regarding leaving international conventions and treaties on refugees and refusal of cooperation with the UNHCR.

Confusion of EU politicians, when confronted with the refugee crisis, leading to a written agreement with Turkey for further control of refugees and forcing them to stay in turkey is a sign of lack of cooperation and commitment to

Where the world's displaced people are being hosted



international human rights agreements.

Australia: A clear example of ignoring international commitments towards human rights and refugees rights

The Australian government recently made the news through a recent report in the Guardian newspaper and publication of two thousand documents. In a joint report, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch criticised the refugee's conditions, inhuman treatment and ignoring the dire conditions of these individuals by Australia and the international community. The report shows that since 2012, the Australian government has transferred 1200 individuals to the Naoro refugee's camp without going through the legal due process of their asylum cases. This joint report states: "Australian government's failure to investigate the terrible conditions and exploitation of the asylum seekers can only be a systematic policy adopted by this country to prevent the entry of the vulnerable people.(3)"

Some solutions for the refugee crisis

The refugee crisis is not just a cause of concern for the neighbouring countries of a conflicted area and or refugees' destination states. Based on the commitment to international peace and security and protection of people's rights, governments and international organizations should not hesitate to seek a solution to the problem. They must make necessary attempts to reach the MDG, in which the preservation of peace and security is one of the main goals. Commitment to the preservation of peace can be reviewed from various aspects, and the following solutions can help to establish peace in the world.

The necessity for governments to be committed to international laws

a) Governments that have not joined international conventions and treaties

International cooperation should be done through adoption of the conventions by all countries, as well as the countries that are already committed to international laws. For example, there are neighbouring countries of the Middle East conflicted regions, who have not joined international conventions such as the Geneva Convention on refugees' rights and disregard humanitarian law commitments. The rich governments of the region must be committed to refugees' problems not only because of religious similarities of the countries with the displaced people, but also because of the necessity of cooperation and creation of an atmosphere of accountability and international commitment. This is while the governments have not even let one refugee enter their country despite their vast financial capacities and cultural, religious similarities to refugees.

The international community and human rights organizations must demand more accountability from these countries.

b) Governments that do not meet their commitments

Meeting international commitments must also be encouraged by key players in international relations, the UN and international organizations can play an important role in this regard.

Fundamental need to global consensus and cooperation of governments to establish sustainable peace

The international connectivity of countries must reassure governments that the preservation of global security, reaching sustainable development and sustainable peace is only possible through observation of human values by all. In other words establishment of international peace and security is conditional to peace and security of all governments.

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Roots of Violence against Women Committed by ISIS

By: Samaneh Yahyapoor Komeleh
Women and family issues researcher

Introduction

Mankind has never been at rest from violence, cruelty and discrimination. But, the types of violence have changed in different periods of history. In the recent years, global attentions has been drawn to emergence of violent groups such as ISIS. The brutal and horrendous crimes of ISIS, being committed round the world, has become a huge challenge for peace and security activists. Violence and cruelty have different causes and roots in various societies. In this article we try to discuss the answer to two questions: 1. what are the root causes of ISIS violence, particularly towards women. 2. Is there a link between ISIS and Islam? That is, in view of the terror groups' members, "is there a link between the violent inhuman actions of and Islamic principles"?

1) About ISIS

It is a terror group which calls itself the Islamic State, or the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, ISIS

for short. The group justifies its brutal violence and aggression against the lands of the east or Levant, particularly Iraq and Syria as an attempt to form an Islamic caliphate. Currently, ISIS violence has spread across the world. Overall, ISIS is a terror group, with false interpretations of Islamic laws, contributing to the Islamophobic campaign round the world. It is a violent and violence creating group which targets innocent people in different countries. Furthermore, it associates its acts of violence to Islam and creates a wrong picture of Islamic laws and Muslims in the world. This method is a form of cruelty and violation of Divine laws.

2) Examples of Violence against Women by ISIS

ISIS commits crimes against all individuals, including men, women and children. But in this article we concentrate on cases of violence against women. We classify this violence into



Some documents and reports indicate that after capturing women, particularly Yezidi women, ISIS fighters force them into conducting Islamic acts such as Nimaz (prayer) and reading the Koran, and or they forbid women from wearing colourful clothes or jeans, and they are forced to wear the burqa or full body hijab

women to the regions under ISIS control for “sexual jihad”. It is a term through which women across the world are encouraged to join ISIS men. The women receive a promise of happiness⁷. In sexual jihad women marry a different ISIS fighter every day and may even get divorced on the same day and marry another ISIS fighter. Some of the documents, evidence and testimonies⁸ of women who escaped from ISIS captivity indicate that at times a woman can get married to as many as 5 ISIS fighters in one week and divorce them. This is while the woman herself has no control in choice or decision making, cannot protest this process, since her objection will cause other types of violence and abuse⁹.

5) Suffering from various forms of mental, psychological and physical illnesses¹⁰ are the direct consequences of the abuses women have been subjected to. Most of the women who have managed to flee from this terror group and have saved themselves, are suffering from STD such as HIV/AIDS, and mental and psychological damages have been inflicted on them, which makes their integration into society difficult, it takes them a long time to get back to their normal lives, and be able to forget their horrendous experience. This is while many of these women have lost their families, including parents, husbands and children¹¹.

6) Some documents and reports indicate that after capturing women, particularly Yezidi women, ISIS fighters force them into conducting Islamic acts such as Nimaz (prayer) and reading the Koran, and or they forbid women from wearing colourful clothes or jeans, and they are forced to wear the burqa or full body hijab. The teachings are imposed on them in the name of Islam. These women are repeatedly told they must convert to Islam, and if they refuse they are subjected to rape¹².

Review and Analysis

In the first part of this article we dealt with the most important acts of violence and abuse committed by ISIS against women and girls, such as forced marriages and divorces, sexual slavery, forced pregnancies and abortions, as well as mental, psychological and physical abuses.

two categories: 1. women who are enslaved these groups and are brutalised and raped, and the 2. Women who have willingly joined the terror group to help and co-operate with them. The existing evidence indicate that there are not much differences between the situations of women in these two groups. All of them are forced to submit to the wishes of the ISIS men. Some of the important cases of ISIS violence against women are:

1) Forced sexual relations: where if a women refuses the sexual demands of an ISIS member, she is getting beaten up¹, as well as being forced into a horrific gang rape. Women have no right to choose what to do, make suggestions or express their objections to what they are supposed to do. Instead, they must fulfil the demands of men. In fact sexual abuse is one of the most important abuses ISIS commits against women and girls².

2) Sale and exchange of women among ISIS members is another form of ISIS violence against women³.

3) Sexual rape leads to women’s mental and physical injuries⁴, additionally, most of the women and even girls who are still children⁵, become pregnant. Because these women do not have the least of options and opportunities to take care of themselves, the pregnancy leads to either miscarriages⁶ or the birth of children who have no identities or families and an uncertain fate awaits them.

4) Another form of ISIS violence is inviting



Also according to article 1050 of Iran Civil code, no man can take a married woman as wife. But ISIS force women to marry no matter they are single or married. Also Article 1103 of the Civil code states, good behaviour is one of the duties of men and woman towards each other

Sexual abuse is an intentional practice to create fear within the public, which has been used in armed conflicts throughout history. Sexual abuse is one of the important tools for ISIS, and the practice of such abuse is confirmed by a lot of evidence such as images and video clips that have been posted by the group on the internet. Sexual abuse is not limited to women, but women and girls are the majority of the victims of the abuse. Some human rights activists see the roots of these abuses in religion or religious ideology. Even though ISIS declares itself the “Islamic State” and uses terms associated to Muslims such as “la ila illallah” and “Mohammad Rasololah” and “Allah Akbar”, but in reality the Muslim world considers the terror group to have nothing to do with Islamic laws and Muslims. The ISIS ideology is based on Takfirism¹³ and Wahabism¹⁴ which includes incorrect and fake interpretations of Islamic laws.

Therefore all ISIS brutal activities are against Islamic laws and principles. Islam strongly rejects violence, aggression, genocide, discrimination along with any other inhuman acts, and rejects any form of violence and oppression. One of the brutal acts committed by ISIS is the killing of innocent people. The group continuously posts images and video clips of its violent activities online. This is while the Holy book of Muslims condemns the killing of innocent human beings and sees the killing of one innocent human being as the killing of all human beings. Islam deems

the saving of the life of one human being as the saving the lives of all human beings, because of the value given to the existence of Mankind, and deems this existence – for both men and women – as life itself (Maedeh Surah, verse 32). Muslims’ holy book stresses on treating women with kindness, recommends men to treat their wives with kindness, and if they cannot live together, get separated with kindness and good treatment (Baqara and Nessa Surahs). The customs and conditions for marriage and even divorce for Muslims, be they Sunni or Shia, it is totally different to the actions of SISI in marriage and divorce of women. The explanation of marriage rituals and conditions in ceremonies of Muslims require extensive expertise debates beyond the scope of this article.

Iran is a country with a population of Muslim majority, and the government is an “Islamic Republic”. Article 1070 of the Civil Code of Iran states that the full consent of man and woman is a necessity for marriage, and no one can force a man or a woman to marry. This is while, ISIS, who claims the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate, uses force, violence and rape against women and girls.

Also according to article 1050 of Iran Civil code, no man can take a married woman as wife. But ISIS force women to marry no matter they are single or married. Also Article 1103 of the Civil code states, good behaviour is one of the duties of men and woman towards each other.



Article 1115 states that in the event of physical, emotional or financial suffering, the woman has the right to live apart from the man and refer to the courts. But ISIS believes in no civil or human codes, consequently, aggression and invasion of the privacy of people – men and women – is clearly visible in the areas under ISIS control.

Iran is a country whose culture and laws are based on Islamic principles. It gives importance to the status of the woman and mothers in the family, has suitable laws for the observation of civil and family rights. We published a full article in the previous issue of Defenders on a review of violence in Iran laws, which dealt with the important articles of the law with regards to women and the family.

ISIS has disproportionately aggressed against people who do not have the most basic ways to defend themselves, the Yezidi people are a group of the victims subjected to inhuman attacks and treatment. ISIS crimes started in the eastern lands or Levant, have infiltrated most parts of the world. ISIS methods to spread violence across the internet and post vile images, is a psychological tactic to spread fear among the people of the world. Presenting incorrect and false interpretations of religious texts and using

the terms exclusive to Muslims, ISIS makes its best to reach its inhuman objectives. In fact they use a fake ideology in the name of Islam to reach their interests, trick the world public opinion, and associate their crimes to the teachings of Islam. While real Islam strongly encourages peace and friendship. The Holy Koran states: no human is superior to another human, and no tribe is superior to another tribe. People's superiority depends on their behaviour and acts of kindness. (Hojarat, Verse 13) Religious principles that reject ethnic, geographic and even gender discrimination, only deems good deeds and behaviour as a sign of superiority of one person to another, cannot encourage violence, cruelty and discrimination?

Conclusion

The review of the recent existing reports and news shows the main roots of ISIS violence and the fact that the terror group pursues two main objectives. First is to create a wave of "Islamophobia" at the global level, presenting Muslims as terrorists, associating Islam with barbarism, and crime, while deeming the followers of the ISIS ideology and aggressions as followers of Islam. But as we explained earlier in this debate, the aggressive and violent



The second objective of ISIS campaign of violence in Levant is to cause distraction from the existing unrest and chaos in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, whose people are subjected to historic cruelty and aggression

acts of this terror group are not based on Islamic teachings. Groups like ISIS are driven by Takfirism and Wahabism ideologies which are called faked or distorted Islam. Through incorrect interpretations of Islamic texts to reach its interests, ISIS uses “fake Islam”. The use of terminologies associated to Islam such as Laila Ilalah and Mohammad Rasoololah and Allah Akbar, only tricks public opinion across the world, to portray Islam as violence seeking and Muslims as aggressive and barbaric. Therefore Islamic teachings and the Muslims of the world have become victims of violence and aggression by the appearance of ISIS.

The second objective of ISIS campaign of violence in Levant is to cause distraction from the existing unrest and chaos in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, whose people are subjected to historic cruelty and aggression. Before the appearance of ISIS, the subject of Palestine and the killing of innocent people was at the centre of attention of critics and peace seekers of the international community. Many people from different parts of the world were saddened by the unjust violence in Palestine and a wave of protests had spread globally. However, with the designing of the Islamophobia project

and violence in the Levant, has driven the world attention towards ISIS.

But the question remains unanswered: While Islamic principles do not deem any human superior to another human, i.e. white over black, and man over woman, deem all humans as equal, the superiority of humans (regardless of their ethnic, geographic, gender, racial and class differences) is considered to depend on good behaviour (Hojarat Surah, verse 13), how can such a religion approve such brutal acts, and deem murder, aggression and oppression as precursor in the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate?

Therefore researchers and global peace and security activists must conduct further studies and research on monotheist religions and their differences; because there are many Muslims living around the world, who have been marginalised and isolated through the fake picture of Islam that ISIS is showing.

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Education as a Foundation of Development (Report from an Interview the Book Tour Manager)

By: Faranak Bozroghvari



Talking about human rights and cultural development, we need to focus on the factors that contribute to enjoyment of human rights realization of cultural development goals.

Experts believe that education and development have a two way relationship that is, on one hand, education creates the foundations of development and on the other hand development is the necessity for success of education system. Therefore if the individuals of a society are educated in a proper way, they are counted among the main resources for advancement and development.

To this aim Article 26(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) deems everyone has a right to education, and article 27(1) gives everyone the right freely to participate in the cultural activities of his/her community. Also Article 2(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) deems

that all state parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his/her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political views, nationality, ethnicity or social origin, property, disability, place of birth or other personal characteristics. And Article 6(2) instructs that States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child. And finally paragraph 7 of the goal 4 of Sustainable Development deems the accomplishment of peace, avoidance of violence and realisation of human rights is necessary to reach sustainable development and is possible through education.

The promotion of book reading is one of the forms of education, and today, book, book reading and tendency towards studying are seen as one of the indicators of development, because they lead to cultural development. Nowadays, NGOs and civil society institutions, help governments in social, cultural and human planning towards accessing development by investing on education and manpower, and this team play can be the harbinger of a future with access to all sided development. In Iran the educated and intellectuals have always played a role in awareness raising on the importance of education. Some intellectuals have formed nongovernmental organizations that are active in various fields and work towards humanitarian goals.

We interviewed a member of one of the organizations on education which comes as follows

The Children's Book Tour Group is an NGO founded in 2013, with the "Gift of book, gift of thought" slogan and with the aim of promoting book reading among rural and nomadic children. The Organization is among the aforementioned groups, and to-date it has conducted 7 gift of book tours in various regions of Iran. To better know this group an interview was conducted with Dr. Abbas Vishteh who is a member of the management council of the Book Tour Group. He is a university lecturer, lawyer and legal consultant.

Q: Dr. Vishteh, to better know, please first of all give us an overall picture of the group and its activities?

A: Yes certainly. The initial idea of the Children’s Book tour came about during the opening day of the Tehran International Book Festival on 1 January 2013, from Esmael Azadi, journalist and chief editor of an engineering journal. Writing a note in Shargh newspaper entitled “Each Child, One Book”, he raised the idea in the paper. Through the links that he had established with some culture fans of Alamoot region including Ms. Maasoomeh Vahae and her friends in cyberspace, the vast and historical region of Alamot was picked for the first book tour. The first round of book tours was also held in other regions including Razmian and Moalem Kelayeh Alamoot Bozork 23 days later, and more than 1050 books were donated to two libraries of the regions. The second book tour was held in the Taram Safli region and Sirdan district. A library was started in the district as a result of donation of over 1400 books. On the third tour, donation of seven computers and modem equipments lead to start of two coffeenets for 2 libraries of Moalem Kelayeh and Razmian.

The Book Tour Group who gained particular popularity in the Alamoot region, was asked to enter the field of writing. Thus, in 2014, the Book Tour published an electronic journal called Eghlim Chaharom (“Fourth Climate” in three series and on local cultural and literature, 1500 copies of which were published on paper; and following that the Book Tour ended its activities in Alamoot. While working in Alamoot, skilled local people were trained to continue the publication of the journal, so that the book tour group could start the second phase of their tour to help children in other parts of the country.

Following the first three tours the group organized another five tours in other regions of the country - Masal, Langerood, and Ashkevarat in Gilan, and one tour in 6 Sib villages in the Sib Sooran town in

Baluchistan.

Q: Please tell us the goal of the group, the aim Book Tour Group is trying to achieve, and the principles governing the group.

A: 1) One of the key factors contributing to sustainable development and improvement each society is enhancing the knowledge of its individuals which leads to a change in the people’s behaviour. All leaders, legislators and directors are trained in society. When the general knowledge level goes up, we will have better directors, better laws more law abiding citizens, and more social capital.



2) Reading books and studying result in a raise in level of knowledge.

3) An interest in reading books should be developed in childhood.

These are our goals and we have ways to reach them:

First, we pay attention to lack of access to books, which is different from poverty eradication, because being financially poor is a result of and cultural poverty.

Second, we travel to different geographical regions of the country, in order to spread our ideas throughout the country, and at the same time have social interaction with people of different ethnicities.

Third, we pay attention to promotion of moral values and culture regardless of people’s religious beliefs while avoiding to politicize the issues.



Q: You pointed out that improvement of people's character in a society, is the result of the advancement of cultural knowledge of individuals. If we consider that we are taking positive steps forward, then will there be a connection between the raising of the awareness of individuals and reduction of violence? In other words how influential can awareness be as a preventive factor?

A: There is no single absolute answer to this question. In other words we cannot say that if the cultural knowledge and information levels of individuals go higher, violence levels will drop for certain, because the cause of all violence is not lack of knowledge so that we can claim that by eliminating it violence goes away.

Violence has different interpretations at different levels. For example there are various forms of violence by definition, there is a difference between international organized violence, the violence we consider as genocide, and domestic violence committed by a man against his wife. A lot of the international violence cases, wars and conflicts are not due to illiteracy and ignorance.

If we limit our discussion to internal affairs of a country and domestic violence, ignorance seems to be highlighted as a cause. The connection is in such way that in a domestic or tribal violence or state violence against its citizens, we have two groups of people: victims and perpetrators.

Most of the times, the victims, due to their ignorance and unawareness of their rights, do not know how to resist, protest or complain about violation of their

rights and therefore accept the violence and abuse.

Furthermore, for, abuse has turned into a norm for an individual who commits violent acts, because she /he/ has grown up with it inside the family.

To prevent violence, children must be raised with love and kindness from the outset, and be informed of their rights, so as not to become the oppressor or the oppressed. The conclusion is that if awareness and increase in knowledge make people have more respect for life, and more attention to moral values and a change in cultural beliefs then knowledge will cause reduction in violence and abuse.

But if adding to the level of people's knowledge is not fruitful, and the expansion of knowledge is one dimensional, its outcome will not be reduction of violence, and only the tools and methods of the violence will change. For example cold weapons will be replaced with guns.

Q: In addition to the theoretic principles that helped you from your organization, what feedbacks did you receive while meeting the children in deprived regions?

A : Based of our experience, we deeply believed that rural and nomadic children are really interested in reading books. But they don't have access to any books other than their school textbooks. I remember on the Lnagarood tour in the Komele region of Gilan, when we donated children's books to the last school, the school finished for the day and we were on our way back. On the way, many children were running alongside and behind our minibus, and kept repeating "please come again to our village and bring us books". The children's enthusiasm was very moving for us and made us more determined to promote book reading of rural children deprived of books.

Q: Has there been a moment or a memory from doing the book tours which you shall never forget?

A: My first memory is regarding the children's book tour we did in the Sib village in Baluchistan. Our host was a teacher called Esfandyar Payam. He had a 4 or 5 year old son who accompanied us in the book donations to the school children. One afternoon while we were having a rest, the boy came out of his house and came to where we were staying bringing his friends with him. He asked us to give books to his friends too. The day before he got books for his sister and her friend. I shall never forget the look of pride and joy on his face as we gave them books.

Another memory that I have is when we visited the hut dwelling nomads in the Paskhooch region of



Baluchistan. We decided to start a library in the Kale Ghalandar School. A very young woman who was the daughter-in-law of one of the nomads told us that she has a high school diploma, and that she can run the library. She said: “if it’s possible give me the books, I will read them and encourage the children to read them too and swap them.” We could not be happier. She was not a stranger to the children, because she was married to one of the nomads, and she became the first librarian in the school.

Q: Do you think the Book Tour Group has the readiness to expand its activities over the borders of Iran? For example neighbouring countries?

Countries such as Afghanistan and Tajikistan are Farsi speaking countries, we feel them so close to us, and the feeling is mutual. In addition, we have great children’s books writers in Iran, and Iranian publishers publish the best Farsi children’s books. Therefore, if there are donations from these countries and other parts of the world, even the Iranians who are interested in expanding the Farsi culture and are ready to fund children’s book tours in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and other Farsi speaking regions, then we are ready to take children’s books for the children of these countries. But till now our concentration has been on our own rural and nomadic children who are deprived of books.

Q: Where is the next book tour? Has the date and region been determined?

A: Our next tour will take place on 7 October this year coinciding with International Children’s Day for a number of villages of Gorab country in

Lorestan’s Kouhdasht. We will also donate books to schoolchildren, we are also starting a library. Of course this time we are launching a library which will turn into a cultural activities centre. We shall prepare enough drawing tools for the library, in order to help the children develop their creativity and art skills and drawing skills. And each month one drawing will be selected as the top drawing and will be awarded a prize. And to be assured, we have provided enough prizes for one year and will give them to the curator of the library. Another thing that the group is doing in this tour is we are donating a TV set and video player alongside a number films to the library so the children can watch kid’s movies. These two sets of activities will result in the success of the library and will have the function of a small cultural centre with very little cost, which can be a model for other regions of the country. By the way our biggest book tour will be in the winter of 2017 in the hut dwelling regions of Sistan and Baluchistan, and Hurmuzgan which can be deemed as a turning point in the activities of the children’s book tour group.

Q: In the event that international nongovernmental organizations and bodies are interested to cooperate, please tell us in what ways they can cooperate and how they can establish links?

A: The children’s book tour deems the donation of books to rural and nomadic regions of the country with the help of those who see cultural solutions the only path to sustainable development, and for this reason Iranian NGOs and charitable individuals can donate money to the group’s bank account. With regards to international organizations and bodies, we welcome any kind of cooperation. Internet provides a good communication opportunity for our group’s cultural activities and by using this potential the group has managed to attract members from all corners of the world. Thus as well as a blog and an email, the Children’s Book Tour Group has Facebook and Instagram pages too. (<http://toureketab.blogfa.com>; gkk@yahoo.com)

Thank you very much for giving us your time.

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Kashan : City of Originality and Iranian Arts and Architectural Treasure

By: Ali Faraji
Kashan Municipality International Relations Head

Introduction

According to the findings in Silk seven thousand year old archaeological region, Kashan is one of the oldest sources of human civilisation with traditional architecture, blue domes and mud-brick wind-trappers (ancient form of natural air-conditioning) which has become known as the town of grand Iranian homes.

Beautiful architecture, winding alleys, tall wind-trappers, and interesting house ponds, present the best architecture for the fight against the scorching heat of the summer. Kashan has more historical monuments than other cities after Isfahan, Shiraz and Yazd. Blessed shrines, and its beautiful mosques, such as the Aghabozorg Mosque as the bride

of mosques in the Middle East is soothing the visitor's spirit.

This city has been one of the most important large cities of Iran which is located in the spread of Dasht Kavir Sahara², and over the centuries it has witnessed movements of various societies. The climate of Kashan varies in relation to altitudes like other central Iranian cities. This is why the plains of the region are affected by warm and dry seasonal winds. The mountainous regions are affected by the northern winds which blow from the north-west. The winds create nice weather in Ghamsar³ and Niasar⁴ foothills, which are a centre for cultivation of Damask rose and the distillation of rosewater. This is why due to having a diverse climate, this city is seen as a top tourist spot from desert

to mountains.

Due to being located in the path of main trade and communications routes throughout history, Kashan is of particular importance, and due to being located on the well-known Silk Route has had a dynamic and advancing economy in weaving and carpet production.

Without a doubt, considering the riches of historic buildings, natural attractions, handicrafts, weaving, Kashan is ranking as one of the best of Iranian cities. This is why from the distance past, the non-Iranian travellers and orientologists such as Marco Polo, the Shirley brothers, Pietro De Lavale Jean Chardan, Ernest Holter, Tania Grishman etc, mentioned the treasures of the heritage of this city in their numerous travelogues and books, and leaving valuable commentaries behind.

Also in different periods in history this city has also has trained many artists and renowned people such as Ghayat-e-din Jamshid Kashani, great astronomer and mathematician of the 15th Century, Baba Ashghar Morghi, philosopher of the 13th Century, 16th Century painter Reza Abbasi, Farrokh Khan Ghafari famed 19th Century gentleman, Kamal Olmelk famed 20th Century painter, and Sohrab Sepehri, famed contemporary poet and painter, were all nurtured in Kashan.

Traditional arts and industries of Kashan some of which blossomed in the several thousand year civilisation of the ancient Silk region, over periods in history have gradually reached peak advancement by Kashan master craftsmen and artists. Thus, Kashan can be seen as the focal point of weaving, pottery, tile production, golden Brocade, coppersmith, and dozens of other arts.

Home, a Place of Comfort and Learning

In the Iranian culture, home has always had a meaning more than a shelter or roof over the head, and its architecture mirrors the Iranian culture and worldview. Home is a place for the comfort of mankind which must provide people with a chance to meet all their physical and emotional needs.

If we take a look at some of the old homes,



This city has been one of the most important large cities of Iran which is located in the spread of Dasht Kavir Sahara², and over the centuries it has witnessed movements of various societies.

particularly in cities with hot and dry climates such as Kashan, and compare them to today's homes, most of the time we find that the atmosphere is more familiar and pleasant to us than most of the today's modern homes, and we discover that the people who would live in these homes had a viewpoint toward life which was different from us.

Old Kashan homes with their traditional architecture and grand spaces with mysteries and beautiful doors, have specific and unique attractions which cannot be seen anywhere else.

The tranquillity that can be found in old Kashan homes is because of the designer's view to human nature, and its demands and needs. Whereas in modern architecture individualism



and the tastes of the designer forms the design. This is why in today's world we see different schools of architecture, some of which are at the forefront and the rest follow suit.

The traditional home coordinates with the spirit of human beings and the feeling of tranquillity, peace and safety is provided in this home. It's harmony with human spirit can be seen in all parts of old homes.

Having a long history of using art and skill of high quality, Kashan carpets are rich and full of beauty, and it is Kashan carpet that benefits from both industrial developments and artists skills to create such a beauty.

This valuable heritage which has been transferred to modern times from thousands of years ago, has various patterns called Lachak and Taranj, Taranj and Mehrab, Goldani and Charbagh each of them conveys a philosophical concept such as human friendship, paradise ideal, having respect for nature and encouraging

people to think about creation of the world and cosmos and the fact that all creations are in unity because they are created by one God although they look different form each other.

Five years have passed since the global registration of the handwoven Kashan carpet technology, one of the main birthplaces of this ancient Iranian art in 2010, it was the first ever global registration of Iranian carpets in UNESCO. Also the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) International Register identifies the geographical origin of Kashan carpet. The 1300 year old Mashhad Ardahal of Kashan "carpet washing ceremony" has

also been registered by the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Intangible Heritage.

“Espandi” Ritual Encourages Sympathy and Kindness

In the past the Esbandi Ritual was always held all across the Kashan region. At least in some regions of the Province, the ritual was approximately as important as Nowrooz. People used to get ready for the rituals from days before, cleaned their houses top to bottom, bought new clothes.

Villagers came to Kashan to buy groceries and supplies. In Kashan bazaar, the shopkeepers decorated their shops and put up lights. Exchange of gifts and presents play key roles in the Esbandi ritual and it is deemed necessary to eat seven things that started with the “s” sound.

The ritual also consists of eating certain foods, singing certain songs, and performing certain ceremonies and avoiding some tasks.

Terrorism

By: Parichehr Shahsavand Baghdadi
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Introduction

Without a doubt, terrorism is one of the important problems of today's international community, a violation of the human rights of people and a reason to start wars.

Terrorism is not an individual or sentimental act, but is a group act, organized by political strategies.

Importance of the issue

The peak of terror activities took place in the sixties and seventies. For example groups like Brigade Rosa in Italy and Baader-Meinhof Gang in Germany emerged, their activities are considered as a political-social struggle. The groups used various modern methods of terrorism such as kidnappings, hostage takings, bombings of public places and hijacking planes which gave terrorism international aspects and attracted world public opinion's attention towards their demands. Overall, it can be said that terrorism is a vile act. The roots of terrorism in a way are

embedded in the violation of human rights and injustice. If the political norms of human rights are realized as much as possible, the world would be witnessing less acts of terrorism.

Just Hoffman sees fundamentalist terrorism a strong reaction to the separation of religion from politics which is strengthened by ideologists for the formation of a religious and faithful society.

Hoffman believes that this reaction takes place in countries that have the following conditions:

- 1 – Strong modernization policies have been implemented.
- 2 – The national identity is based on religion.
- 3 – Countries in which people have strong religious tendencies.

Hoffman believes that fundamentalist terrorists see themselves in a global fight.

Unfortunately the existence of outside imperialism and internal autocracy, have created ideal foundations for the growth of terrorism in the Middle East.

Other reasons can also be considered as

follows:

1 – During the Cold War, under the excuse of the Communist threat, the West justified its presence in the region, and took steps to further its own interests which according to Hoffman’s theory were in contrast to the region’s cultural values and demands.

2 – Following the fall of the Soviet Union, the West decided to continue its presence in the region by proposing a fictitious enemy. The 9/11 attacks created the opportunity for the supporters of terrorism to compensate for the lack of the Communism ideology and present terrorism as a new threat. Consequently, the Middle East became the heart of political Islamism, and the world saw the appearance of phenomenon such as the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, ISIS etc. The groups not only made the Middle East unsafe but also, in a glance, it can be seen that this evil anti human rights phenomenon uses individuals with mental problems to attain its goals in a way that other regions are also threaten by their activities, and every day we see insecurity and grave human rights violations throughout the world. The world has got involved in a violent behavior. Blind and unjust violence is spreading fear and inhuman acts are threatening the international community. And every day we witness the unjust bloodletting. The acts of terror jeopardize the internal security of the countries of the world. Europe, Asia, North America, Africa and the Middle East are faced

with serious threats. Being familiar with military and guerilla warfare tactics, the terrorists have turned into dangerous elements. Some of these acts of terror can be seen in the table below.

Sadly the Middle East, Iraq, the Kurdish autonomous region, and most regions of Syria are witness to deadly violence more than other parts of the world.

Conclusion

Today the fight against terror has become an international order infliction, because the chaotic situations as a result of terrorism, not only has jeopardize people’s safety, but also attacked national and international peace and security. In many of these international challenges, particularly terror threats, governments have consensus in the fight and cooperation with international organizations and are filling the existing gaps through consensus in ratifying international documents to reach a world free of all forms of threats and insecurity. The realization of a global peace requires more international attention because it will result in the removal of national and international chaos.

In the event that the ideals and principles enshrined in the UN Charter are applied, there will be hope for a world full of peace and friendship and we can pave the way for a better prospective for the future generations.

No.	Attacks	Killed	Injured
1	ISIS attack on Brussels airport and metro on 22 March 2016	34	136
2	ISIS attack on nightclub in Orlando USA	50	53
3	ISIS attack on Al-Karadeh in Iraq	hundreds	12
4	ISIS attack in Iraq a day after Eid Fitr	30	12
5	Suicide attack in Ansbach Germany	10	16
6	Suicide attack in Rublinen Germany	10	16
7	Suicide attack in a restaurant in Germany	1	12
8	Suicide attack in Istanbul	More than 80	More than 100
9	Attack on Charlie Ebdu office	12	10
10	Suicide attacks in Paris 2015	130	More than 200
11	Attack using a truck in Nice on Bastille Day celebrations	More than 83	hundreds
12	Attack on disabled patients in Japan	19	45
13	The long Syrian conflict	More than 100s	thousands



Human Rights Violation in Some Countries of the Middle East

By: Negar Paidar

Today, there are over 65 million persons of concern in the world, unfortunately most of which are in the Middle East. This year was a year of war and conflict. In the Middle East, terrorists and dictatorial regimes, stomp on people's rights and their dignity on a daily basis; and the victims of these breaches are women, children and civilians who are faced with threats and violation of their fundamental rights. In this narrative, we take a look at the human rights situation in a number of countries, such as Yemen, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palestine and Bahrain in brief.

Yemen: the right to life and self-determination are among the rights that are seriously and openly violated in the country. According to UN report from the start of the civil war in Yemen to-date 10,000 people have lost their lives(1) . Saudi military forces intervention has brought about many further problems in the country.

- Killing of civilians by parties in conflict using western made cluster munitions

According to an Amnesty International report, on 6 June 2016, a British cluster munition was used by the Saudi coalition in an attack on Al-Khadhra village on the border with Saudi Arabia, and the British government's claim to denial is false. It is necessary to explain that according to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which Britain has ratified, the use of these kinds of weapons is prohibited, and can be considered as war crime. Reviews conducted by Amnesty International show that from July 2015 to April 2016 at least 16 Yemenis, 9 of which were children, were killed or injured by unexploded cluster munitions which exploded weeks and months later; and many lives are still in danger. Amnesty International also stated that the cluster munitions have also been supplied to Saudi Arabia by America and Brazil as well as Britain

to be used in Yemen.

- Saudi Coalition Forces

The Saudi forces intervention and their air strikes in different parts of Yemen cities such as schools and hospitals in has caused the death and injury of thousands of civilians, most of which were children. The conditions of children in Yemen is dire, for example, on 2 June 2016, Human Rights Watch announced that one third of soldiers in the conflict are children. UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon said that the Saudi led military coalition in Yemen is in the blacklist of the instigators in the killing of children, because they have been responsible for the death and injury of 60 percent of children in Yemen during the past year. Nonetheless, following Saudi Arabia's protests, the UN temporarily removed the Saudi coalition from this blacklist and decided to conduct further investigations on the issue. Following this controversial move, 73 renowned university academics from around the world, in a letter to Moon, criticised the removal of the Saudi led coalition from the list of parties responsible for of the killing of children, because of Saudi financial threats toward the UN.

Iraq: Nowadays, the word "Iraq", reminds us of ISIS crimes more than any other news. ISIS has displaced and destroyed the people of this country. The clashes between the government forces and ISIS have gravely undermined the human rights situation of the country in 2015. This is while, once in a while there is some happy news about overcoming ISIS, for example according to Al—Alam news agency, HIS Research Institute has said that in the last 18 months ISIS has lost a quarter of the territories it had under control in Iraq and Syria. Also from early March to September 2016, Iraqi security forces have detained 120 suspects on terrorism charges, through pre-emptive operations, in the north of Babylon province. Apparently there are 15 high ranking ISIS members among the detainees. But, with regards to security forces operations against ISIS, on 7 July 2016 Human Rights Watch said that during the operations to retake Fallujah, the federal police killed dozens

of civilians and caused the forced disappearances and torture of individuals.

In Iraq, thousands of civilians have been killed and many women have been forced to sexual slavery. The parties have used child soldiers in conflict, tortured civilians and committed enforced disappearances. More than four million children are not in school and live in inhuman conditions. According to UNICEF reports many Iraqi children who have been made homeless and without care, are threatened by sexual exploitation and many of these homeless women and children are used by terror groups for suicide bombing operations.

Some foreign governments are trying to fight ISIS and force it back, offer Iraq with financial and military aid, and train Iraqi security forces.

Saudi Arabia: the membership of the Kingdom in the Human Rights Council was one of the events that in view of the extensive human rights violations committed by the country, was followed by widespread criticisms round the world.

- International organization criticisms

Human Rights Watch is one of the organizations that has objected the membership of this country, and has called for the suspension of Saudi Arabia from the Human Rights Council. HRW report says that regrettably the continuation of Saudi's membership has undermined the credibility of the Council and even the UN General Assembly.

- Killing of civilians in Yemen

In his 26th January 2016 report, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights estimated that since the start of the Saudi coalition military campaign in Yemen, at least 3539 civilians have been killed and another 6268 been displaced. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International to-date have documented at least 69 unlawful air strikes by the coalition forces, most of which are war crimes. On 11th July 2016, Human Rights Watch reported that the Saudi led coalition forces had carried out extensive attacks against factories, goods warehouses, and other economic institutions in Yemen. There is a lack of corroborated and fair investigations into the

crimes being committed in Yemen, therefore, Saudi Arabia and other coalition members must reach an agreement on an international independent investigation committee to be established to assess the allegations of human right abuses and war crimes.

- Violation of women's rights

Other instances of human rights violations committed by Saudi Arabia include discrimination against women both in law and in practice, the most noticeable of which is the women being subjugated by men, which places all adult women in a legal minority. Even though the Saudi government has not banned girls from education, and even free education has been considered for them, majority of girls do not attend high schools and colleges. According to official Saudi government figures, 55 percent of primary schoolchildren, 79 percent of secondary school children and 81 percent of high school students are boys. Traditional views have caused many girls to leave school at young age.

- Violation of Shia minorities rights

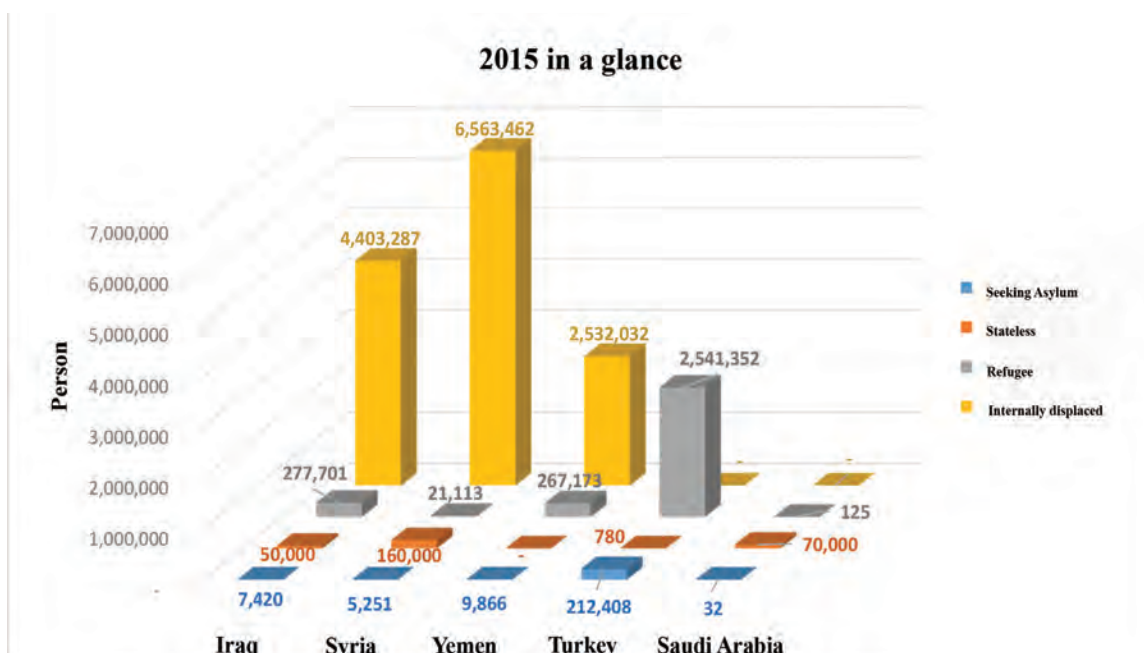
Discrimination against the Shia population continues systematically and extensively, and many Shia activists have been arrested and imprisoned, and they have been executed because of their protests. Also the officials have not taken

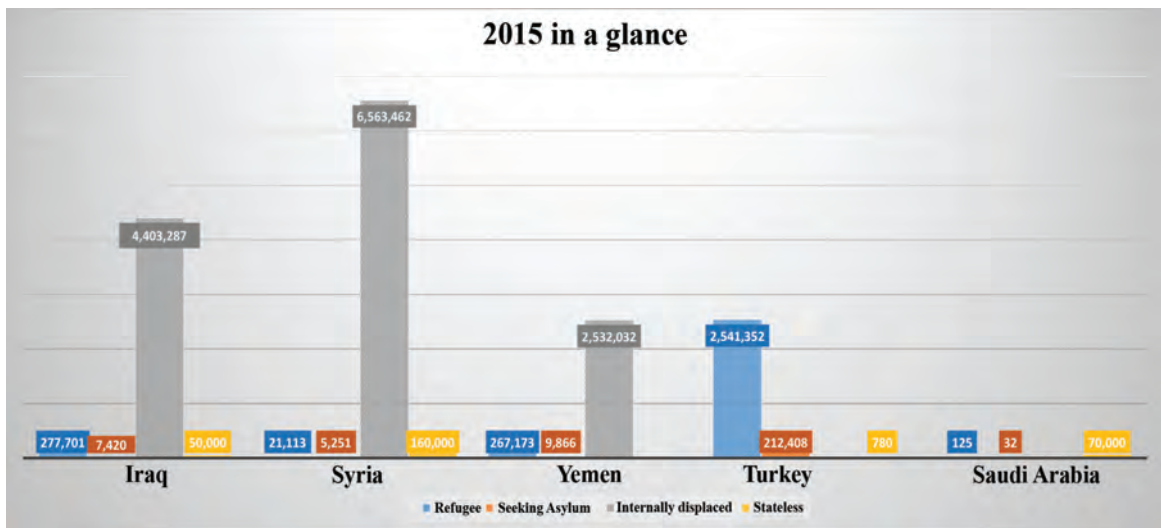
appropriate steps to prevent the exploitation of migrant workers.

Syria: One of the major challenges of Syria is the countless numbers of refugees and the refugee crisis. The outcome of the internal conflicts in Syria from October 2015 to October 2016 resulted in the displacement of more than 4.8 million people, homelessness of 7.6 million and killing of 250 thousand.

The Turkey and the EU March 2016 agreement has resulted in the expulsion of many refugees from Greece into Turkey without the due asylum seeking process. This is while the Turkish laws and policies regarding Syrian refugees do not fully give them refugees rights, and many are denied the rights to education, health and legal work. It must be said that the fact that Turkey is host to more than two and a half Syrian refugees does not give the right to the country to close its borders to other people in danger.

On 23rd May 2016, a number of suicide attacks were carried out in some bus stops and one of the hospitals under Syrian government control that killed 78 Syrian civilians. On 12th July 2016, air strikes on a Syrian refugee camp near Jordan border, left 17 people dead and 40 injured. Such attacks according to Human Rights Watch are





deemed as war crimes, the responsibility of most of which has been claimed by ISIS seem to be part of continued ISIS atrocities.

The result of the conflict in Syria is such that since the Second World War, the biggest number of forced migrations (12,200,000 people) including the internally displaced and the refugees, have stricken the Syrian people, all of whom are in dire need of their basic needs, and this crisis can bring about poverty, prostitution, illiteracy, as well as mental and physical damages.

Palestine: According to Human Rights Watch, in the Occupied Territories, Israel is seriously violating the rights of Palestinians and continues to build illegal settlements in the West Bank. The IDF extensively arrests Palestinian protestors and individuals that are suspected of carrying out attacks, with the intent to kill them extra judiciary. Israel has also re-launched the demolition of Palestinian homes.

On 5 July 2016 and close to the 49th anniversary of the occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank by Israel, Human Rights Watch asked the ICC to launch official investigations into important international crimes such as war crimes and crimes against humanity, carried out by Israelis and Palestinians in Palestine.

Reports indicate that Palestinian authorities, students, activists and journalists are being arrested and tortured because of their political

views and protests.

The UN Development Body UNCTAD in a report details the various methods that the Israeli occupation has hurt the economy in Gaza and the West Bank, and deems one of the most important reasons for high unemployment rates and poverty among Palestinians is Israel’s interventions and restrictions on the people in occupied territories.

Bahrain: the human rights conditions in Bahrain are very volatile. The thing that is more noticeable in the country is the unfair trial procedures. Peaceful protesters are arrested, tried in courts, imprisoned and tortured while the authorities responsible for these human rights violations have never been investigated. The security forces put immense pressure in quelling unrests. According to BBC News, the Bahraini government has cracked down the people’s protests with the help of Saudi Arabia.

According to Human Rights Watch, a large number of human rights activists and the political opposition members have been arrested and dozens of them have been stripped of their citizenship. For example on 13th July 2016, Nabil Rajab, the renowned human rights activist in Bahrain was put on trial because of his views in the social media and criticism of Bahraini authorities for mistreatment of prisoners and the country’s interference in Yemen war. Also Isa Ghasem, a top Shia cleric, because of his

opposition to the government and running his Wafaq NGO – the biggest Shia political NGO in Yemen – faced the shutting down of the organization and confiscation of his assets. In addition, the cleric has been stripped of his citizenship. From the beginning of 2016 till the end, 208 Bahrainis were stripped of their citizenship.

Despite the Bahraini Shia being the majority population, the Sunni rulers inflict any form of abuse on the Shia. Migrant workers of the country are faced with serious exploitations, too, including, long working hours, delayed or unpaid wages, confiscation of their passports and living in poor conditions in a way that their situation can be considered as a modern form of slavery.

It seems that despite human rights campaigns and efforts of many countries and organizations to promote human rights, people are increasingly becoming victims of extremist's ideologies, violence and wars. A review of the news and events around the world shows that while the violent and extremism ideologies are not eradicated, we shall continue to see all forms of violence reaching all corners of the world. Violation of human rights in the Middle East region, only some of which were highlighted in this narrative, the thing that will make the people struggle with countless problems and crises, there will be a generation of orphaned children, homeless men and women, people who will be vulnerable to committing crimes because of lack of facilities and opportunities available to them.

People who have lost their families and loved ones in these wars and displacements now have nothing else to lose and will grow

up with huge sufferings, and will be willing to make any dangerous decisions such as taking revenge or choosing extremist ideologies. They can play a role in re-occurrence of violence. Extreme poverty will prevent them from social and political participation, therefore, lack of knowledge and illiteracy will be widespread among the members of such communities. That is, lack of access to education will be a violate one of their most important rights.

All these negative consequences can affect the people of the world and threaten international security. The huge wave of refugee's influx into neighbouring countries and Europe showed that the disaster can strike the people and governments of the regions not very close to the conflicted zone. Therefore would be fruitful for governments and NGOs to provide more humanitarian assistance to the affected civilians of conflicted regions and at the same time make attempts to address the root causes of the region's crisis.

At the end of this narrative in the footnote, you will see a link to a chart of the statistics from five countries of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Syria and Yemen which have been gathered by the UNHCR and only show a part of the regions problems and crises.²

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ODVV

Activities

Commemoration of the International Day of Psychology

On the occasion of the day the ODVV held a sitting on the Establishment of the Role of Psychology and Counselling in Prevention of Violence, on the sidelines of the biggest Assembly of Psychology Students and Counselling for the first time on 28 April 2016 in Vahdat Hall. While introducing its services

and works in support of victims of violence, in this ceremony the ODVV dealt with the methodology of the role of psychologists and counsellors in the prevention of violence. This ceremony was held by the Welfare Organization and the Psychology and Counselling System Organization.

Seventh Pathology of the Family National Congress

The Seventh Pathology of the Family National Congress and the Third Family Research National Festival was held in Aboureihan Hall of Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran on 10 and 11 May 2016. In attendance were experts, university students and family activists.

Attending this two day Congress, the ODVV held an exhibit of achievements and productions of its Rehabilitation Department, in the field of families, family therapy, couples therapy, prevention of domestic violence and other related subjects, for the visitors.

Commemoration of the International Day of the Family

On the occasion of the day, on 16 May 2016, the ODVV held a technical sitting on Self-Awareness and its Status in the Prevention of Violence in Families, at the ODVV conference hall.

The ceremony kick started with the reading of UN Secretary General's message for the day by UNIC representative deputy in Iran.

In this technical sitting the status of self-awareness in the prevention of violence in the families was briefed through psycho-analytical, counselling, Islamic morality and training viewpoints by members of the university science group.

In this sitting which was held with the attendance of psychology and counselling students and ODVV honorary members, clinical examples of domestic violence that had been studied and treated, were broken down and analysed by science group



lecturers and therapy experts. Also discussed in this sitting was the attention that should be given to climatic, cultural, linguistic, ethnic and belief differences in defining violence in families.

Recovery of Information and UN Documents with a Human Rights Theme Education Workshop



With the cooperation of UNIC, on 16 May 2016 the ODVV held the Recovery of Information and UN Documents Education Workshop at the UN Headquarters in Tehran, for a group of ODVV honorary and voluntary members.

After getting introduced to the bilingual website of UNIC, particularly its human rights section, the participants received further information on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its history by UNIC librarian Ms. Nazanin Ghaem-Maghani. The participants were also introduced

to the UN main website and UNHCHR website. While surfing the actions of the UN website, with a reference to human rights as being one of the three main pillars of the activities of the UN, the participants were introduced to the documents and information bank of the sight and sound library of international law. Also the research guide to Dag Hammarskjöld Library regarding human rights and bodies based on the Charter and based on treaties was introduced to the participants.

Prevention and Treatment Methods of Violence against Women Sitting



This sitting was held on 29 April 2016 was held by the ODVV in its conference hall. Participants in this sitting included a group of university lecturers, governmental and nongovernmental organizations representatives, and honorary and volunteer members of the ODVV. The experts gave speeches on prevention and treatment methods of violence against women from the psychology, legal, economic and sociological aspects.

At the start of sitting, while welcoming the guests, the ODVV director spoke about the practical and scientific objectives of the ODVV with regards to holding sittings, and also support for women and in the world. Also member of the science group of Azad University, Alieh Shekarbeigi while defining abuse in Iran and its reflection at different levels, she also reviewed the approaches in policy setting for women in Europe, and also presented recommendations and practical programmes at the national level.

Dr. Fatemeh Moghimi, PhD in management and entrepreneurship also reviewed methods for the prevention and treatment of violence against women and pointing out that this violence in the family is a phenomenon as old as the family, pointed out the equality in the values status of men and women in Islam. She then spoke about

the social symptoms of domestic violence, against women and its reflection on children. Moghimi also pointed out the effects of increasing the economic role of women in society.

Next Dr. Mehrshad Shababi, law doctorate and member of Shahid Beheshti University science group while referring to the contents of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, he pointed out the band on violence aspect to the discrimination concept and forms of discrimination, and gender based violence, and deemed them as one of the types of discrimination.

Dr. Shahriari, psychology doctorate, while defining domestic violence said that violence against women is used as a tool for women to obey men, which can be transferred down the generations. This type of violence is one of the main reasons for women's death and injuries in the world.

#at the end Dr. Shahsavand, member of ODVV board of directors while summing up the subjects that were discussed, analysed the statistics of violence against women in different countries and deemed the main root cause of the problem is the lack of awareness and cultural knowledge of individuals in families.

Commemoration of the International Day in Support of Torture Victims

This commemoration was held by the ODV on 28 June 2016 with a focus on the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims for their Return to Life. Among the participants were students in psychology, counselling, behavioural sciences and social work. Dr. Mir Saeed Jaafari held the ceremony.

At the start of the ceremony, while stressing on universal efforts to minimise acts of torture, the ODVV director said: “the ODVV has always utilised all its capacity and endeavours tried to take practical and notable measures towards the rehabilitation and empowerment of torture victims through presentation of psychological services.”

The UN Secretary General’s message for the day was read by Mr. Mohammad Rajae Moghadam, deputy of UNIC in Tehran.

Some of the topics that were discussed by the experts in this ceremony included, the definition of the victim and torture, torture as a crisis



experience, types of crisis experience, objectives of providing support to the torture victim, support provision techniques for the torture victim, practical strategies to help and support the torture victim, and the necessity for receiving social and legal support in support of torture victims for their return to life.

Education Workshop on Writing Methods for Website and Magazine

On 6 September 2016, the ODVV held this education workshop towards capacity building of its honorary and voluntary members at national and international levels.

In this workshop which was held for honorary and volunteer members of the ODVV, methods for writing notes, analytical reports, and article writing for website and magazine were presented in scientific and practical ways by Dr. Mahmoodreza Golshanpazhooh member of ODVV board of directors.





Technical Sitting on the Evaluation of the Functionality of the UN in Prevention of Human Rights Violations

This sitting was held by the ODVV with a stress on Israel and Saudi Arabia. In this sitting which was held on 3 August 2016 in the ODVV conference hall. Mr Hossein Gharibi, Foreign Affairs Ministry senior expert on the fight against terror, Dr. Amir Saed lawyer and university lecturer and legal consultant in international disputes, and Dr. Mahmoodreza Golshanpazhooch senior expert on human rights gave speeches.

Dr. Golshanpazhooch gave the reasons for concentration on Saudi Arabia and Israel and said United Nations recent appointment of Israel as the head of the General Assembly's Sixth Committee and Saudi Arabia's application of pressure for the Secretary General to remove a report on the situation of children, were strange actions that the UN had taken in the past year, and raised the doubt and question in public opinion: how much be hopeful with the UN?

Dr. Amir Saed while deeming these actions, deemed the UN a being with its faults but unavoidable, and said: "the old and eroded

structure of the UN, the existence of 5 permanent Security Council members who represent a select number of countries, the expansion and enlargement of the UN in such a way that the ability for accurate and direct monitoring has been taken away from this Organization, the ever increasing demands of the international community and completion to get seats within the Organization, are some of the faults which can damage the functionality of the UN."

While stressing on the necessity for the existence of the UN in the current situation of the international community, Mr. Hossein Gharibi said: "These limitations and criteria in fact shape the UN, and a world without the UN will not be a better world." He also pointed out the reasons behind the politicised decision makings of the UN and deemed these decisions were due to the existing limitations and faults within the UN, such as serious financial limitations.

The sitting concluded with a Q&A session with the participants.