



# DEFENDERS

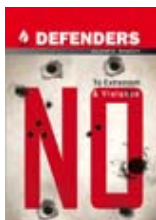
Autumn2013 Winter2014

To Extremism  
& Violence

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# DEFENDERS

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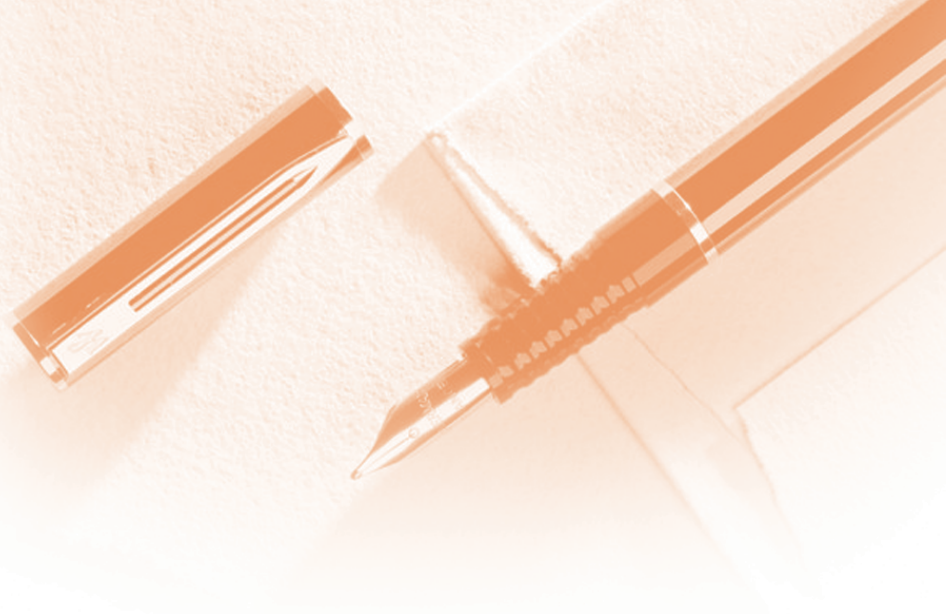
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Human Rights  
News

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## Editor's Note

With all its ups and downs in various arenas, particularly human rights aspects, 2013 came to an end. A lot of the developments and events that began in 2013 did not manage to come to a conclusion and will continue on in 2014.

As a nongovernmental organization active in human rights, the ODVV has tried its best to arrange its programs alongside national and international developments and events. The grave violation of human rights which is the fruit of Islamophobia and extremism, is not a subject that human rights defenders can easily disregard. Therefore the purpose of concentration on the subject of a rise in violence and grave violation of human rights that is due to Islamophobia and extremism have been one of the important focal points of the ODVV programs over the last two years.

With this in mind, sections of this issue of Defenders is a presentation of article abstracts of 2 panels which are being held on the sidelines of the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council on the following subjects "Islamophobia and Violation of Human Rights" and "Shia Minorities, Victims of Extremism". Also a number of articles deal with the subject of the violation of the rights of Shia minorities.

A report of the participation of the ODVV in the Minorities session, ODVV's oral and written statements submitted to the 24th Session of the Council alongside a brief account of ODVV's activities over the recent months alongside a review of the human rights developments around the world have also been given slots in this issue of Defenders.

Furthermore the grave violation of human rights in the Palestinian Occupied Territories is another subject that despite existing efforts are getting worse day by day. This alongside Israel's disregard for international human rights commitments the example of which is Israel's behaviour in its UPR, is another important challenge towards the realization of human rights in the world.

Therefore in this issue some of Israel's human rights violation cases in the form of article and note entitled Israel and its Failure to Cooperate with the UPR Mechanism, the Situation of Refugees in Israel, the Grave Violation of Palestinians' Human Rights by Israel. It is an effort to remind human rights defenders the grave violation of human rights by Israel.

Also in view of the upcoming second round of Iran's UPR, the capacity building of Iranian NGOs and playing the role of facilitator for these organizations which have based their activities on the recommendations accepted by Iran in the first round of the UPR, as in previous years have been put in the working agenda of the ODVV, and this issue includes a review of such activities.

We hope 2014 will open a new horizon for the observation of human rights for the eyes of real human rights defenders to see.

# Editorial

# Panel on Islamophobia and Violation of Human Rights



The Islamophobia and Violation of Human Rights panel is being held at the same time as the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. In this panel whose objective is for the prohibition and reduction of different forms of Islamophobia and raising awareness on human rights violations committed against Muslims, PhD experts, Julien Pelessier, Mohammad Zaraket and Mohammad Hassan Sheikholelami will give speeches. Below is the article abstracts of the experts:



## Western Islamophobia qua its Relation with the Eastern Takfir

**Dr. Mohamad Zaraket**

It could be said that the renown term of Islamophobia made us pay no further attention to its core meaning, let alone the significance it bears. Nonetheless, to enhance understanding, let us suppose that Islamophobia means, primarily, the unjustified fear of Islam. But this ailment-like phenomenon is, in fact, not a pure illusion, even if its causes are not real. This very case of ailment is manifested through a set of behaviors that connote the fear of Islam by two groups of people: the first includes those who bring about this very phenomenon, and promote it as well, and the second includes those who have fallen victims of this fear, driven by either the promotion thereof, or the experiences they have had, in one way or another.

Thus treating this very phenomenon brings us upon asking some questions that assist in its understanding; and, hence, concluding the per se recommendations. So what could drive the first party to frighten people through promoting misunderstood ideas, or exaggerating other real events either, in order to intimidate these people through different western media?

This questions was frequently posed, many answers were also provided. Many scholars tend to hold that the West and the western ideology were in need for an adversary that renders all their behaviors licit, and thus providing them with an excuse for their illicit behaviors. Hence, an urgent need emerged, a need for bringing about an enemy. Thus, scholars say, that at a specific moment of this modern world Islam was chosen. This answer should be revised though, especially because there is no one single country called the West. Even if we consider that it is true that the west was in need for an enemy, this, however, doesn't mean that the need for inventing an enemy, in this case, connotes convincing your very self, or the audience, with the correctness of the brought out theory.

Departing from this, I deem necessary to examine the principles upon which "Islam hatred to west" is being promoted. It is also said that some Islamic cultural aspects drive west man to consider these very aspects as the direct opposite of the western superman that drove history to its end, thus the one and only choice lies in the "clash of both civilizations."

We must acknowledge that there is a wide gap between Western and Islamic civilizations, but rather we shall determine the core differences that lead to contradiction amongst Islam and west, so where is the difference between the very two civilizations? Does the core difference lie in religion which forms the true essence



**Those who promote for Islamophobia take the Takfirism, with its all devastating, exclusionary effects, as a pretext. Now some misbehavior done in the name of Islam, throughout the entire globe, could not be refuted, among which we mention 11 September attacks and car bombs driven by suicidal bombers.**

of the Islamic civilization and upon which the Western Civilization is established? If we examine the history of the relation between Islam and Eastern Christianity, we will, no doubt, find out that they could live side by side so dear, albeit there were some exceptional frictions driven by religious differences, let alone that Europe itself terribly suffered from religious wars between Christians throughout long periods of time. Thus there is no reason that cultural differences between nations and civilizations could be a source for threatening and fear, unless they are rendered into materialistic struggle and actual competition.

Those who promote for Islamophobia take the Takfirism, with its all devastating, exclusionary effects, as a pretext. Now some misbehavior done in the name of Islam, throughout the entire globe, could not be refuted, among which we mention 11 September attacks and car bombs driven by suicidal bombers.

Here, I would like to pose some points: I would like to mention that "Islamic" Terrorism killed Muslims themselves just more than people of other denominations. If we examine terrorist attacks, we would find out that some Islamic countries were among the first terrorist attacks' victims globally. So if this unnatural case continues to exist, it will, therefore, adversely affect international stability, and it will annihilate everything, everywhere.

In this world, in which we, humans, search for stability, development, and human rights, we must take a brief pause to criticize ourselves before criticizing others. In the frame of criticizing ourselves, I would like to reflect

on the importance of re-examining and refuting the Islamic discourse that adopts this fatal interpretation of Islam. We must partake in showing others that Islam has other readings far afield from this terrorist dimension that knows nothing but: killing, fighting, blowing, etc. I truly regret that moderate Islamic voices that constitute the silent or calm majority, sometimes, fall short of finding a mean to echo their very voice.

As for the west, I would like to shed light on four main points:

1. The terrorism hued by Islam had found many valleys that echoed its voice in different parts of this globe. Some people deemed it convenient to exaggerate the image of this monster to intimidate others in favor of some benefits and interests, whether the need for an enemy or other interests.

2. Some of the practitioners of the so called “Islamic” Terrorism have attracted the attention of the western world, an exemplar of these could be found in 11 September attacks.

3. This Terrorism is not merely an individual work. Some countries, no doubt, are fostering this terrorism, and I don’t think that these countries are unknown to western politicians.

4. Couldn’t we consider that some bad acts done in detention camps, in some western countries, form an assisting material to develop the epidemic of Takfirism and Terrorism?

5. Some people consider liberty a cause to justify some bad behaviors that adversely affect people of other denominations. Isn’t it that very same liberty that renders social media a forum for threatening, or for broadcasting the latest act of terror?

Finally, I would like to add that conflict is not a destiny or fate that can not be altered. It seems that the world that was rendered into a small village could do nothing but search for common points to ease intellectual frictions, through restoring the values of right, justice, and forgiveness.

### **Islamophobia worldwide: the real causes of a rising threat to pacific coexistence**

**Dr. Julien Pelessier**

Islamophobia has become a tremendous challenge for both non-Muslim and Muslim societies. We can find various levels of explanation for this growing phenomenon, ranging from short-term to very profound causes. Despite Islamophobia being part of a rising negative stance toward religious affiliations worldwide, this presentation also points out the very specific characteristics of Islamophobia as a particular

manifestation of belief. We also aim at showing the respective share of responsibility of Muslim societies and others, particularly Western countries, for the growth of an alarming assessment which leads to tragic developments on the ground for Muslim populations and neighbouring non-Muslim populations. We finally intend to put forward some recommendations as a way to resolve this threat to pacific coexistence at global scale.

1/ Islamophobia has become a tremendous challenge for both non-Muslim and Muslim societies.

a) “Islamophobia” is a relative new term and concept in the media coverage which in fact corresponds to various situations on the ground;

b) Each form of Islamophobia can be connected to its own reality and its own form of expression;

c) There seems to be a profound antagonism between Muslims and non-Muslims, advocating the thesis of a “clash of civilization” more or less substantiated by the description of a vicious circle entailing official, popular and what I call “overturned Islamophobias.”

d) Each one of these manifestations of Islamophobia runs its own channel of expression, addresses its own audience and triggers its own effects on the public opinion.

2/ However, we have to take things into consideration in order to understand the whole spectrum of causes for Islamophobia:

a) First, islamophobia must not be mistaken with racism, xenophobia, ignorance or what I call “closed nationalism;”

b) Islamophobia is not only fuelled by non-Muslim societies but also to some extent by Muslim societies under the cover of “radical nationalism”, by the expansion of secular ideas among Muslim intellectuals and among Muslim states under the mostly false pretexts for “national security concerns;”

c) To a certain extent, Western countries are suspected to feed Islamophobia largely around the World for political purposes.

3/ We can find various levels of explanation for this growing phenomenon, ranging from short-term to profound and long-term causes:

General atmosphere, psychological fears, historical, intellectual, religious, legal factors, the debate on democratic values versus Islamic values (for instance), and geopolitical issues...

4/ Despite Islamophobia being part of a rising negative stance toward religious affiliations worldwide, this presentation also points out the very specific characteristics of Islamophobia as a particular manifestation of belief.

We have to admit that lack of understanding of Islam by Non-muslims has very deep roots and that the debate between Islamic values and Western (humanistic) values may not end unless we put some rational buffer between two different philosophical views...

That is why islamophobia is to ask the very capacity of the European civil state model (citizenship) to deal with rational handling of a religious power struggle within their societies. For Western societies, the Muslim presence questions the definition of the European identity and their capacity to handle the religious matter under the title of secularism.

At the same time, it is questionable whether Muslim societies can continue to promote a civil state model based on nation-state citizenship excluding non-nationals from any international human rights even recognized by Muslims...For the Muslim societies and groups, the question of minorities is clearly raised as how the current citizenship model in Muslim countries can address the very real question of minorities (especially non-national Muslim minorities) on their soil.

5/ These are genuine concerns since the fate of million people around the World is at stake.

A real debate should be initiated, especially by Muslim countries themselves, engaging such questions as the better model of political governance to be adopted as far as citizenship and religion are concerned.

We also aim at showing the respective share of responsibility of Muslim societies and others, particularly Western countries, for the growth of an alarming assessment which leads to tragic incidents on the ground for Muslim populations and neighboring non-Muslim populations.

6/ We finally intend to put forward some recommendations as a way to resolve this threat to pacific coexistence at global scale.

- Solution of the Israeli problem and the status of Jerusalem (Al-Quds)

- Return to a geopolitical equilibrium and peaceful diplomatic stances between the Muslim countries in the Middle-East region = a new regional, ethnical (Arabs, Turks, Iranians, Kurds, etc) and religious equilibrium is needed

- Muslim minorities in Non-Muslim countries are abandoned by Muslim states; or some of Muslim countries try to take advantage of the minorities in order to promote their own national interests = this game should be ended and Muslim minorities should be politically backed by Muslim countries (in the respect of each country's national sovereignty) in order for Muslim minorities to benefit from freedom of belief and religious



**Fighting islamophobia should be a “number one priority” for Muslim and non-Muslim countries in order to make durable peace wherever Muslim minorities are living. In a context of economic and political globalisation, finding acceptable terms for cohabitation seems to be a prerequisite to peaceful cohabitation at global scale, be it at national or at international level for any country.**

practice

- Foreign minorities of Muslims in Muslim states should be secured normal level of dignity through appropriate legal measures for foreign Muslim minorities in Muslim countries (residence permit, work permit, access to property right, ...)

- There should be support for any initiative to start a dialogue between religious representatives of main Abrahamic religions

- The legal terms of the presence of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries should be clarified as far as political power and legal recognition are concerned

7/ What should be avoided?

- The politics of sentiments, or victimization of Muslim minorities should be avoided, and replaced with a rational and firm discourse on legal and philosophical grounds

- Attempts should be made to fight the causes of Islamophobia, not the effects

-It should not be forgotten that any successful cohabitation should also take into account human links and affection toward the hosting country and its population

Conclusion:

Fighting islamophobia should be a “number one priority” for Muslim and non-Muslim countries in order to make durable peace wherever Muslim minorities are living. In a context of economic and political globalisation, finding acceptable terms for cohabitation seems to be a prerequisite to peaceful cohabitation at global scale, be it at national or at international level for any country.

## **Panel on Shia Minorities: Victims of Extremism and Violence**



**The Shia Minorities: Victims of Extremism and Violence panel is being held at the same time as the 25th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. In this panel whose objective is to raise awareness of human rights violations against the Shia minorities and acts of extremism and violence committed against these Muslim minorities across the world Professor William Beeman, Dr. May El Khansa and Dr. Mohammed Altajer will give speeches. Below is the article abstracts of these experts:**



## Violation of Shi'a Civil Rights in Middle Eastern Communities

Professor. William O. Beeman

Shi'a Muslim populations constitute a majority sectarian community in a number of nations. Although exact population figures are difficult to ascertain, they are a majority or significant plurality in the following nations: Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Yemen and Lebanon.

In addition, Shi'a Muslims are a significant minority in several states, including such surprising areas as Albania, Senegal and Nigeria. For the purpose of this discussion I include all branches of Shi'ism. It is noteworthy that Shi'a Muslims constitute a similar percentage of the Muslim populations of many states (10-15%) as diverse as Afghanistan, Germany, Great Britain, India, Turkey and the United States.

Shi'a Muslims have suffered from persecution and discrimination over many years both in states where they are a majority, but without significant political representation and in states where they are a minority. In general the sources of persecution are the result of long-standing historical precedence that predates the modern era.

One longstanding precedence dates back to the Ottoman Empire where Shi'a Muslims were perceived as a threat to the ruling Ottoman Sultans, who claimed the role of Caliph of Islam. For this reason discrimination against the Shi'a community is largely based on political and cultural differences rather than religious differences. Non-Shi'a rulers and political leaders continue to act on the perception that Shi'a believers are a threat to their power.

In this talk I will discuss some of the reasons for this persecution. Although the reasons for this persecution appear to be non-doctrinal, doctrine is often used as an excuse for these actions. States that allow or directly promulgate Shi'a persecution claim that Shi'a believers hold beliefs that the most conservative Sunni Muslim communities have declared to be out of line with the tenets of Islam, resulting in a "license to persecute" the Shia. This has provided an excuse for persecution of Shi'a based on political, economic and ethnic differences.

Examples of this discrimination against the Shi'a community are extensive. Of particular note are the



Examples of this discrimination against the Shi'a community are extensive. Of particular note are the Hazara of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan's constitution of 1923 guaranteed equal rights and protections to all religious communities. However, following Soviet occupation, under the brief Sunni rule of the Taliban in 1996-2001, the Hazara faced discrimination and massacres of some 25 000 people.

Hazara of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan's constitution of 1923 guaranteed equal rights and protections to all religious communities. However, following Soviet occupation, under the brief Sunni rule of the Taliban in 1996-2001, the Hazara faced discrimination and massacres of some 25 000 people. For good reason, then, the Hazara fear a return of the Taliban to power.

The profiling of the Hazara may be racial in nature. The Hazara may be of Central Asian or Mongolian origin. Their distinctively Asian features make them easily identifiable, and thus easier to persecute. The persecution of the Hazara in Pakistan is even more extensive, though largely unreported by international media.

The following table documents attacks against Hazara men, women and children in the city of Quetta early last year (2013):

Date	Number of Hazara Killed	Number of Hazara injured
10 January	107	120
16 February	89	192
2 March	200	350

The extremist Pakistani Sunni party Lashkar-e Jhangvi ("Army of War"), affiliated to al-Qa'ida, carried out these strikes, but were never punished, and the strikes continued throughout 2013. The per-

petrators announced their intention to “wipe out” all of Pakistan’s Hazara community - now some 600 000 - by the end of 2013.

Similar persecution has taken place in other areas of the world. In the balance of this paper I will document additional, similar events in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Malaysia. I conclude by noting that Shi’a Muslims have by and large not engaged in the persecution of minority populations

in states where they are a majority. In this way, persecution of the Shi’a community appears to be a “one-way street,” where those who are persecuted largely do not engaged in persecution themselves.

I recommend in closing that the international human rights community draw attention to this largely ignored persecution, and petition the United Nations and other bodies to control the violation of Shi’a civil rights throughout the world.

### Estimated World Shi’a Population

Nations with over 100,000 Shia					
Country	Shia population	Percent of Muslim population that is Shia	Percent of global Shia population	Minimum estimate/claim	Maximum estimate/claim
Iran	66,000,000 – 70,000,000	90–95	37–40		
Iraq	19,000,000 – 22,000,000	65–70	11–12		
Pakistan	17,000,000 – 26,000,000	10–15	10–15		43,250,000–57,666,666
India	16,000,000 – 24,000,000	10–15	9–14		40,000,000 – 50,000,000.
Yemen	8,000,000 – 10,000,000	35–40	5		
Turkey	7,000,000 – 11,000,000	10–15	4–6		
Azerbaijan	5,000,000 – 7,000,000	65–75	3–4		85% of total population
Afghanistan	3,000,000 – 4,000,000	10–15	<2		15–19% of total population
Syria	3,000,000 – 4,000,000	15–20	<2		
Nigeria	<4,000,000	<5	<2		5-10 million
Saudi Arabia	3,000,000 – 4,000,000	15–22	<1		
Lebanon	1,000,000 – 1,600,000 <sup>[82]</sup>	30-35 <sup>[83][84][85]</sup>	<1		Estimated, no official census.
Tanzania	<2,000,000	<10	<1		
Kuwait	360,000 - 480,000	30-40 <sup>[62][63]</sup>	<1		30%-40% of 1.2m Muslims (citizen only)
Germany	400,000 – 600,000	10–15	<1		
Bahrain	375,000 – 400,000	66–70	<1	375,000 (66% of citizen population)	400,000 (70% of citizen population)
Tajikistan	400,000	7	<1		
United Arab Emirates	300,000 – 400,000	10	<1		
United States	200,000 – 400,000	10–15	<1		
Oman	100,000 – 300,000	5–10	<1		948,750
United Kingdom	100,000 – 300,000	10–15	<1		
Qatar	100,000	10	<1		

## Review of the Violation of the Rights of Shia Minority

Dr. May El Khansa

As we are following criminals everywhere we found that a part of people living in Malaysia and Indonesia are facing the most serious crimes of aggression and crimes against peace. Those people are in challenge of seditious Salafi or Wahhabi elements that are trying to destroy the peace of the two countries by a frenzied campaign against followers of the School of the Ahl al-Bayt of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), whose numbers are growing steadily in both Indonesia and Malaysia.

The Global politics have played an important role in raising the specter of a Shiite threat and escalating hatred towards Shiites in whipping up anti-Shiite sentiment.

Also the Global media has been widely reporting about the seditious statements by Sheikh Yusuf Qaradhawi, who periodically indulges in anti-Shiite rhetoric. His words, along with those of the Wahhabi clerics in Saudi Arabia, are largely responsible for the upsurge in against attacking.

I want to ask a question here, what we can say about hate speeches that are disregarded by the state either indirectly or unintentionally? How dare the government to be silent? Where is the power of law in Malaysia?

According to the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), the Fatwa Council in 1996 had declared that Shia was forbidden in Malaysia and made it compulsory for Malaysian Muslims to only follow the teachings, customs and beliefs of the Sunni branch of Islam.

If we return back to law, we can see in Article 11(4), the right to propagate any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the religion of Islam may be controlled or restricted by State law and Federal law in respect of Federal Territories, Kuala Lumpur and Labuan.

In both Malaysia and Indonesia We need to talk about the crime of aggression, and crimes against peace, we notice some leaders are planning, and preparing for a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties, agree-



**Otherwise, nothing will change and state sanctioned ideology will continue to kill people which contradicts with the Principles of Equality and Nondiscrimination.**

ments or assurances, or participation in a common plan or conspiracy against Shia for Crimes against peace which involve unlawful conduct.

Indonesia is living the same situation as Malaysia. According to Asia Times Online, on December 7, 2012, Indonesian authorities have committed since 1965, at least three massacres that could be considered genocides.

The crime of genocide is governed by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

So by law – which is the only power we use - It's clear that these attacks against Shiites and other religious minorities in Malaysia, Indonesia is a mirror to what is happening in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and other parts of the Muslim world closely allied to the West.

An alarm is ringing now, remember always that Saudi Arabia is funding countless institutions which are spreading this dangerous ideology.

From here, we need to call on the international committee to move immediately to put pressure on Saudi Arabia and other nations which support killing those who believe in a religion other than theirs.

Otherwise, nothing will change and state sanctioned ideology will continue to kill people which contradicts with the Principles of Equality and Nondiscrimination.



## **Lightings on the Violated Rights of the Shiites Majority in Bahrain**

**Mohammed Isa AlTajer**

There is difficulty in reaching a definition to be accepted widely in the multiplicity of situations where minorities live. Some of them live in specific areas, separate from the dominant population. While other groups spread across the country. And some minorities have a strong sense of collective identity and recorded history; while others only keep a fragmentary idea about their common heritage. In human rights treaties there are provisions prohibiting discrimination against minorities.

Minorities have the right to protect their cultural identity, religious or linguistic. Which leads to both positive and negative obligations: as in all other human rights. Respect the rights of minorities, protection and identity to achieve it is a key factor in the management of diversity and stability. It should not prevent minorities from expressing their identity through undue restrictions or through state policies, including policies of assimilation.

According to the United Nations independent expert on minority issues, there are four general obligations that must be considered by the state in order to respect and ensure the rights of minorities:

1. Protect the existence of minorities, including the protection of their physical safety and the prevention of genocide.

2. Protection and promotion of cultural and social identity, including the right of individuals to choose their ethnic groups, language or religion they want themselves to identify with, and the right of these groups to assert their

collective identity, protect it and to reject forced assimilation.

3. Ensure the effectiveness of non-discrimination and equality, including putting an end to systematic discrimination.

4. Ensure the effective participation of members of minorities in public life, particularly the decisions that affect them.

Because it is not possible to cover all aspects of rights in regards to the rights of minorities. Therefore, we will focus on some aspects of the right to education as an example for illustration. The direct and indirect distinction of education has a significant impact on the rights of persons belonging to minorities. For example, it may result in curricula and textbooks used to the persistence of discriminatory attitudes toward minorities.

Persons belonging to minorities of non-citizens may suffer if education laws provide education for citizens only, although the international law imposes providing of free and compulsory education for all. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, call on



states to ban and eliminate discrimination in education (Article 5).

sectarian discrimination against Shiites in Bahrain (a majority in a minority):

Article (4) of the Constitution of the Conservatory of Bahrain (2002) says that “justice is the basis of governance and equal opportunities between citizens and the people are equal no discrimination whatsoever on grounds of sex, origin, language, religion or creed.” The Constitution of Bahrain (1973) Article (18) says that “people are equal in human dignity, and citizens are equal before the law in public rights and duties without discrimination on grounds of sex, origin, language, religion or creed.” Despite the explicit constitutional provision which equals citizens and prohibits discrimination among them, individually and collectively, the reality experienced by Bahrain contradicts the constitutional provisions of equality.

The political practice of the regime in Bahrain in relation to equality among citizens and discriminatory practices are inconsistent with the most basic principles of human rights.

According to the logic of the tribal political system in Bahrain and in accordance with the facts and figures, the Shiite citizens, who are one of the basic components of Bahraini society, face discrimination and exclusion by the Al Khalifa regime and without preventing the majority being.

The situation in Bahrain is contrary to the other states, regarding the policies and practices of exclusion and discrimination because it excludes and discriminates the majority to the minority, and that of course is unacceptable and condemnable. In Bahrain, what happens is the exclusion and discrimination by the system (Al-Khalifa Tribe) and that does not represent more than 1% of the total population and the Sunni community, and this is a unique situation. Where the minority abuse the majority; and the discrimination is practiced in broad daylight. Discrimination in Bahrain over the Shiite community is not new, it started with a moment of takeover Old Al Khalifa on the islands of Bahrain more than two centuries, but it takes different forms according to the changes



**If we take the phenomenon of exclusion and marginalization during the last ten years since the imposition of the new constitution in 2002, we find that the policy of discrimination has expanded and is now practiced in public against the Shiite Albaharna in all areas.**

and developments and changing conditions. But what concerns us in this paper is a form of modern and contemporary discrimination.

If we take the phenomenon of exclusion and marginalization during the last ten years since the imposition of the new constitution in 2002, we find that the policy of discrimination has expanded and is now practiced in public against the Shiite Albaharna in all areas.

Conclusion:

It is clear that discrimination policy supported by the ruling regime in Bahrain against an essential component in this country. There is no doubt that this policy is not the result of time but they stand out to the public in times of crisis. No, but we can say that what happened on February 14, 2011, is partly due to the causes of sectarian discrimination. It is true, it would seem on the face of sectarian discrimination, as if the Sunni community is the one who reap the benefits of this distinction, but the issue is that this political system backs to AlKhalifa Regime and the treatment of royal family with the communities of the Bahraini people, Sunnis and Shiites.

# Malaysian Shi'ites Lonely Struggle

Dr Mohd Faizal MUSA

## Introduction

Since 2010, Malaysia, one of the largest strongholds of Sunnism in the Islamic world, has been stigmatizing Shia followers tremendously. Historical accounts show that Shi'ism has existed in Malaysia for ages. The discrimination and sectarian apartheid originated from a 1984, and 1996 fatwa by Malaysia's top Islamic clerics that Shia Islam was banned, and considered as a deviant teaching. Lately the oppression is getting worse as Wahabi movement is growing. This paper looks into Malaysian Shi'ites lonely struggle to demand their rights and how the religious edict and policies contradict to Malaysia's international commitments.

1. Shia, Sunni and Wahabi in Malaysian Context There are so many books, and articles giving many kinds of definition on Shia. I have committed to follow the definition of Shia as suggested by Muhamad al Tijani Samawi (2000), which is as follows:

They are the Islamic sect that follows the guide of and imitate the Twelve Imams of the Prophet's Household, Ali and his sons...

The status of Ali is central in Shia Islam. Farhad Daftary (2010) explains that Ali is accepted as the real successor of Prophet Muhammad; and 'it is the fundamental belief of the Shi'a of all branches that the Prophet himself had designated Ali as his successor.

The Shia accepts the authority of the Quran but differ from the Sunni as regards the traditions and other sources of law.

The Shia do not admit the genuineness of any tradition not received from the Ahl al Bayt (the People of the House) consisting of the Prophet's son-in-law Ali, the Prophet's daughter and Ali's wife, Fatimah, and their descendants, and repudiate entirely the validity of all decisions not approved by their own spiritual Imams" (p.53).

What is Imamate then to the Shi'ites?

Shia Islam sees the existence of an Imam necessity after the demise of the Prophet. Imam is "the person on whose shoulders lies the responsibility for the guidance of a community through Divine Command" and he is "the most virtuous and perfect of men" (p. 211).

There are different groups of Shia Muslims round the world, so it is to be mentioned that this study is only focusing on Ithna who believe in Twelve Imams and "form an absolute majority among the Shia" and "played an active role in central regions of the Muslim world" (Etan Kohlberg, 1983, p. 110).

Ehsanul Karim (2007) in explaining the differences between Shia and Sunni mentions that the Imamology is the main pillar in Shia Islam. Other than Imamate, another central teaching in Shia Islam is taqiyah.

What is taqiyah? According to Etan Kohlberg (2008, p. 235), "taqiyah means fear or caution", or "self protection through dissimulation" to safeguard secrets.

After understanding the Shi'ites and part of their doctrines, the next question will be who are the Sunnites and how do Shi'ites

regard the Sunnites? Ahl al Sunnah wa al Jamaah or Sunnism was founded by Abu Hasan al Asy'ari (d. 324 CE) and Abu Mansur al Maturidi (Mustaffa Suhaimi, 1993, p. 23). The Mutazilites “stressed human free will and the justice of God” (Ehsanul Karim, 2007, p. 818). The Islamic jurisprudence between Shia and Sunni school of thoughts “has no clear line of demarcation”.

It is recorded in all Muslim histories that Abu Hanifah, the founder of the Sunni school of the Hanafi fiqh, fully supported Zayd ibn Ali ibn Husayn ibn Ali. Similarly other Imams of Sunni fiqh and hadith, such as al Shafi'i, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, al Tirmidhi and al Nasa'i are known for their great reverence and love for Ali.

It is also to be noted here that Abu Hanifah an Nu'man ibn Thabit, the founder of Hanafi school was also

a student of Imam Jaafar as Sadiq, the sixth Imam of Shia (Ahmad Ibrahim, 1965, p. 64).

Indeed, in the modern world Shi'ites have no problem with the Sunnites. Ayatullah Kamreh-yi, a notable Shia scholar of Iran once said in an international conference on Sheikh al Tusi, “If Sunnah is the criterion of Islam, all the Shi'ah are Sunni and if the love of Ali is the criterion of Shi'i faith, all the Sunnis are Shi'ah” (Ali Dawani, 1362 Sham, p. 44-45).

Denying Shia as part of Islam will only result in denying more than half of Islamic heritage and civilisations. It is a fact that Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the famous religious institution and academic

centre in the Sunni world was “founded upon Shi'ite theology” (Abdul Aziz Muhammad al Shanawi, 1983, p. 3).

Another important Shia figure that contributed in the Sunni world politically was Sayyid Jamal al Din al Afghani. He was better known in Iran as Sayyid Jamal al Din al Asabadi, a Syaikhi Shiite “who abandoned his national and sectarian orientations for the sake of promoting the unity of Muslims.”



**Muhammad Nashiruddin al Albani (Hasan Ali as Segaf, 1992, p. 20) suggested changing the name from Wahabism to Salafism due to negative perceptions by other Muslims toward Muhammad Abdul Wahab, as his followers were responsible for aggressive military attacks that killed many people specially Shi'ites. Among them, were Karbala and Najaf attacks , the centre of learning for the Shi'ites in 1801.**

If Sunnites and Shi'ites are actually Muslims, what is the issue then between them?

A plain answer: there was no issue until the Wahabites arrived into the picture. The Wahabites “accept various commentaries including Muhammad Abdul Wahab’s Kitab al-Tawhid.”. They currently prefer to use another term –‘Salafism’ or ‘the Salafist’ (Ehsanul Karim, 2007, p. 796).

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Salafism due to negative perceptions by other Muslims toward Muhammad Abdul Wahab, as his followers were responsible for aggressive military attacks that killed many people specially Shi'ites. Among them, were Karbala and Najaf attacks, the centre of learning for the Shi'ites in 1801.

The killings led by Saud ibn Saud resulted in the death of 5,000 residents and pilgrims of Karbala.

In 1802 an "army led by the sons of Muhammad ibn 'Abdal-Wahhab (the founder of Wahabism) and Muhammad ibn Saud occupied Taif and began a bloody massacre. A year later, the forces occupied the holy city of Mecca and

statesman's restraint, for fear of arousing the hostility of the entire Islamic world" (Dwight McDonaldson, 1933, p.145).

Ahmad Ibrahim (1965, p. 92-94) stressed how Wahabism first came in contact with the Malay world, according to him "where the Paderi War 1803-1838 took place in the Minangkabau region, the Wahhabi influence contributed to the outbreak of militant movements."

Today in Malaysia, the Wahabites, using their softer name, the Salafist, influenced many aspects of religious activities. It is important to understand that the term Salafist shouldn't be confused with Salafism promoted by Muhammad Abduh and Muhammad Rashid Rida in Egypt.

First of all, their geographical origins are different. Second, Abduh and Rida's salafism at the end of 19th century "emphasised political aims; anti colonialism, Islamic solidarity and Arab unity, and of course, opposition to the Jewish 'invasion' of Palestine" (Menahem Milson, 2004, p. 4). While Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab salafism "based their call on Ibn Taymiyya's al-Salaf al Salih doctrine" (p. 5). Third, Abduh and Rida's Salafism was "not as puritanical as that of the Wahhabis of Arabia" and upheld "reformist principle of utilitarianism in ethics and law" (P. J Vatikiotis, 1985, p. 196-199).

Karim Crow (2005) explains the Wahabites programs of 'deformation' outside Saudi Arabia are threatening Islam in many ways:

Regrettably, such a Deformist mindset is now becoming widespread, misleadingly labeled 'Salafist', 'Deobandi' or 'Wahhabi'. This mentality strongly condemns spiritual experience represented by other streams of Islamic thought and practice, particularly the Sufis and the Shi'ah (p. 34-35).



**This paper is purely an academic attempt to understand one of Malaysia's forgotten minorities – the Shi'ites. Thus, this essay is not interested to venture into any sectarian quarrel or any unnecessary religious debate.**

destructured sacred places and leveled all the existing domes even denied permission for the Iranian, Iraqi, Syrian and Egyptian pilgrims to perform Haj in 1805 and 1806 (Faizah Saleh Ambah, 2006, p. 10).

On 21st April 1925, the Wahabites managed to raid the Baqi' cemeteries.

The domes in the Baqi' were demolished once more along with the tombs of the holy personalities in Maqbarat'al-Ma'la in Mecca, where the Holy Prophet's (pbuh) mother, wife Khadija, grandfather and other ancestors are buried.

In 1932 the Wahabites, planned to "throw down the dome of Prophet but their leader, Ibnu Saud, exercised the



It cannot be denied that the Wahabites played crucial role in demonizing and marginalizing the Malaysian Shi'ites.

Another aspects to understand is that in Malaysia, there is legal pluralism that is very much intertwined and therefore make legal cases in many situations rather complicated. There are three sets of law in Malaysia. A secular law inherited from the British, a Malaysian version of Sharia law and a custom law especially related to the indigenous.

It is under the 'second legal system' or the Sharia law that stated Shia is not part of Islam as the religion of the state since Shia is considered 'deviant teachings', thus "Shi'ite Islam and certain Islamic sects, are banned and their adherents are discriminated against" (Andreas Ufen, 2009, p. 320).

This paper is purely an academic attempt to understand one of Malaysia's forgotten minorities – the Shi'ites. Thus, this essay is not interested to venture into any sectarian quarrel or any unnecessary religious debate.

## 2. Is Shi'ism New Phenomenon in Malaysia?

It is common assumptions by the media and layman that Shi'ism arrived in Malaysia after 1979, following the Islamic Revolution of Iran. However this notion is very much inaccurate. Among the first scholar writings on Shi'ism in Malaysia is by Syed Farid Alatas (1999) arguing that the emergence of Shi'ism in Malaysia is not something novel:

...[ there is] the assumption that the rise of the Shi'i school in the region is .. a result of the establishment of a Shi'i republic in Iran in 1979. It would be more accurate to say that the Iranian revolution had resulted in whatever Shi'i tendencies that had already existed among the Alawiyyun of the Malay world being

articulated with greater clarity, fervour and sense of mission (p. 323).

There are so many evidences that Shia Islam has been in this region for an extended period of time. For instance, it is stated in Commentarios, a document on the conquest of Melaka in 1511 by the Portuguese, that there were "at least three thousands Khorasones or Persians" in Melaka during the fall of Melaka (Mc Roberts, 1984, p. 26-39).

It is also seriously noted here that perhaps the Melaka Malay Sultanate had already established the intimate relationship with Shi'ism. The Shi'is claimed the rightful place of the descendents of Ali in leading the Islamic state.

... Shi'i or not, there is certainly a strong Persian flavor in the literary works that were rendered into Malay, the most outstanding of which at this early period is a version of the Tuti-Namah (Book of the Parrot) known in Malay as Hikayat Bayan Budiman (Story of the Wise Parrot) (p.185).

Some of the Malay narratives about the Prophet Muhammad were based upon the Persian works of Shi'i literature. The Shi'i view of speculative thought, especially in regard to the theory of creation which dominated Shi'i literature, had been transmitted into Malay Islamic hikayat (p. 76).

R.j.Wilkinson (1908, p. 5-6)says it is not strange then that the Malay culture is indebted to Shi'ism. Taib Osman (1987, p. 110-149) claimed that many Mlay cultural points are 'borrowed' from "works of Jaafar Sidik the sixth Imam within Shia Islam." As a notable Malaysian cultural anthropologist, Taib Osman's observation that Shi'itic culture is visible and dominant in Malay culture until today shows how Shi'ism still manages to survive since its old days.

Ibnu Batuta, the great Muslim traveller, Shi'ite mentioned religious teachers in 1336 A.D., Amir Dawlasi from Delhi, Kadhi Amir Sayyid from Shiraz and Taj al Din from Isfahan. Also, the gravestone belonged to Naina Husyam dating back to 1420 A.D. was crafted with a fragment of poetry written by a famous Persian poet, Sa'di. Further information regarding historical aspects of Malaysian Shi'ites can be found in Mohd Faizal Musa's (2013b, p. 411-463) essay entitled 'The Malaysian Shi'a: A Preliminary Study of Their History, Oppression, and Denied Rights'.

3. Malaysia's Sectarian Apartheid: The Wahabi Factor In 2013, United Nation Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt stated that Malaysia should reverse a ban on a Christian newspaper using the word Allah to refer to God; according to him, state has no business in people religious life:

Freedom of religion or belief is a right of human beings, not a right of the state. It cannot be the business of the state to shape or reshape religious traditions, nor can the state claim any binding authority in the interpretation of religious sources or in the definition of the tenets of faith (Heiner Bielefeldt, 2013).

While Christians in Malaysia easily get many supports whenever they stumble in difficulties, the Malaysian Shi'ites are left alone in their struggle. It is perfectly accepted to be non-Muslim in Malaysia;

however, there is no tolerance in being Muslim but practicing any branches of Islam besides Sunni.

What are the discriminations suffered by the Malaysian Shi'ites nowadays? A news portal Free Malaysia Today published a report regarding this matter stating briefly their worsening conditions

of marginalization, repression and State stigmatization over the years:

The many misunderstandings have led to what Shiites regard as religious persecution. In 1997, the government detained 10 Shiites under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for not being Sunnis. Three years later, six more Shiites were arrested under the ISA. Since then, there have been no ISA arrests. Even so, anti-Shiite sentiments in Malaysia do not appear to have died down, especially with a 1996 fatwa declaring Shiism as a 'deviant ideology'. In May 2011, a lunch celebrating the birthday of Fatimah Zahra, daughter of Prophet Muhammad was broken up by JAIS officers. Four Shiites were arrested that day, including Kamilzuhairi. Shiites were also allegedly targeted in mosques around the country. In September 2011, Kamilzuhairi said that the Islamic Affairs Department of Terengganu issued anti-Shiite sermons to all mosques in the state, ordering them to be read on the 23rd. According to a police report lodged by Kamilzuhairi, the sermon included accusations that Ar-Ridha members beat themselves with chains to absolve themselves of sin and that Shiites used a different Quran than Sunnis did. Other alleged accusations by local clerics included the killing of Sunnis as halal. A Dec 20, 2010 Sinar Harian report said that the Malaysian government 'respected foreign Shiite teachings', but prohibited Shiism from being practised in the country. At the time, the minister in charge of religious affairs Jamil Khir Bahrom warned of bloodshed if more than one Islamic school of thought was allowed to be taught (Patrick Lee, 2012).

The recent attitude of the establishment towards the Shi'ites in Malaysia confirmed a despair situation for them. Shi'ites are Muslims and discriminating them is wrong

as Islamabad Declaration (2007, p. 91-93) adopted by The Thirty Fourth Session Of The Islamic Conference Of Foreign Ministers stressed that “no Muslim, whether he or she is Shi’ite or Sunni, may be subject to murder or any harm, intimidation, terrorisation, or aggression on his property; or forcible displacement, deportation, or kidnapping.

The Amman Message (2004) issued a ruling on three fundamental issues (which became known as the ‘Three Points of the Amman Message’):

They specifically recognised the validity of all 8 Mathhabs (legal schools) of Sunni, Shi’a and Ibadhi Islam; of traditional Islamic Theology (Ash’arism); of Islamic Mysticism (Sufism), and of true Salafi thought, and came to a precise definition of who is a Muslim.

Based upon this definition they forbade takfir (declarations of apostasy) between Muslims.

Based upon the Mathahib they set forth the subjective and objective preconditions for the issuing of fatwas, thereby exposing ignorant and illegitimate s in the name of Islam (The Amman Message, 2004)

Another international declaration violated here is The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action “to combat racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”. It is difficult to legitimate the treatment towards Shi’ites in Malaysia. The discriminations have been institutionalised and have been done systematically.

Shia structure is completely different from the Sunni. The late Kallim Siddiqui (1982) explained the difference saying that Shia are unlikely to revolt or become a threat since they obey their marja’ in all aspects of religious life:

History has proven that Shi’ites remained silent and chose to be a well-

mannered minority under Sunnite control, as shown in Southeast Asia, or the Malay region before the existence of Wahabites.

4. The Current Stigmatization of Malaysian Shi’ites Malaysia is a multireligious and multiracial nation, however Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Jamil Khir Baharom clearly stated in his remarks that Shi’ites in Malaysia have no rights; “we have rules, we practise the teachings of Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah under the Shafie School,



**Mustapha, is reported to be suffering from serious diabetes and to be almost blind. Four of those detained are from the east coast state of Kelantan, ruled by the opposition Islamic Party PAS.**

so we do not allow proselytising of Muslims. So, there is no issue of human rights violation here” (New Straits Times, 2013a). According to Malaysian Home Ministry Secretary General on August 5th 2013, an estimated 250 000 Shia have been identified nationwide (A. Azim Idris, 2013).

There are numerous crackdowns have been targeted towards the Shia community, one being in 1997, where 10 people were arrested under the Internal Security Act for alleged grounds of practicing Shia Islam. One of those held, Lutpi Ibrahim, is a professor at University Malaya’s Islamic Studies faculty. The oldest detainee, 63-year-old Paharuddin Mustapha, is reported to be suffering from serious diabetes and to be almost blind. Four of those detained are from the

east coast state of Kelantan, ruled by the opposition Islamic Party PAS.

As mentioned earlier, in December 2010, more than two hundred Shias including Iranians and Pakistanis were arrested by Selangor State Religious Department in a lightning raid at a local Shiite community centre called Hauzah Ar Ridha Alaihissalam (Associated Press, 2010).

In another raid conducted in May 2011 during a lunch celebrating the birthday of Fatimah Zahra, daughter of prophet four Shiites were arrested .

In 2013 two Shia adherents were arrested on August 5, right before Muslims celebrate Eid . A Minister in the Prime

centre in Selangor (Hariz Mohd, 2013). Religious authorities seized properties, a sum of charity money for orphans and numerous valuable items belonging to Shia adherents from the mentioned location. The raid has caused severe damage to the premise. Also, on the same day another Shia adherent was arrested in the state of Pahang.

The violence, aggression, abuse, and cruelty committed on minority Shiites .

Even teenagers at schools are not spared. Perlis Islamic Religious Department claimed to have ‘spotted’ a student who happen to be a Shia adherent (Wartawan Sinar Harian, 2013a) and there are attempts to bring awareness on the dangers of Shiism at schools.

On 9th March 2011, Malaysian Minister Jamil Khir Baharom (2011, p. 8-11) responded to a question by two Members of Parliament; he insisted that Malaysian government permits Shi’ism to be practised in Malaysia with a condition it cannot be propagated to others. This confusing ‘fact’ is not definitive as the term ‘not allowed to propagate Shi’ism’ was never defined properly in the law and subjected to many interpretations by religious agencies and law enforcers.

Forcing Muslims to adhere to the teaching of Sunni Islam under the Shafii school basically negates the co-existence of other schools of thought in Islam that have been practiced for ages. This is a clear assault on the percept of freedom of religion and an aggression against fundamental liberty.

Rather than applying pressure to the Shia community, violating their rights and provoking them to retaliate, the government should promote policies that ensure the right of every religious group to exercise its faith free from legal, political, or economic restrictions, this includes the



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Minister’s Department reported to say that “enforcement authorities have detained 16 people and carried out 120 inspections in connection with those identified as linked to the dissemination of Shia teachings in the country and that 139 more cases were being monitored” (The Malaysian Insider, 2013).

In commenting the arrest made in the state of Perak, Perak Islamic Religious Department enforcement chief Ahmad Nizam Amiruddin stated that, “Shia is a serious issue and we will try our very best to eradicate it” (New Straits Times, 2013b).

On the 28th September 2013, another raid was conducted at the community



Shia minority. However, the government is not showing any signs to take decisive action to protect the group from threats and violence; in fact, it's playing a major role in carrying the stigma towards the community. This clearly undermines Malaysia claims to being a rights-respecting democracy.

### 5. Conclusion

There are so many misconceptions and confusions among the public on Shia and Shi'ism. In 1905, the third Congress of Muslims in Russia declared "Ja'farite Shi'ism as a fifth legal school, equivalent to the Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali, and Shafi'i madrasahs" (Ehsanul Karim, 2007, p. 805). It is difficult to contradict a study by S. Waheed Akhtar (1988, p. xx), a former Professor at Aligarh Muslim University, as in his book entitled, *Early Shi'ite Imamiyyah Thinkers*.

His assessment is clear, "the main differences between the Sunnis and the Shi'ah are no more than the differences that exist among various Sunni schools of fiqh and kalam. As for fiqh, the Ja'fariyyah Imamiyyah fiqh on each furu'i issue conforms to one or the other fiqhi school of the Sunnis."

According to Ahmad Ibrahim (1965), it is not a new experience to the Muslims in Malaysia to change their school of law; his words are quoted in the following:

The law as applicable to individual Muslims is personal and hereditary. A man is Hanafi or Shafi'i because his ancestors were so. An adult Muslim is, however, free to choose the law by which he is to be governed and some authorities allow a man to change his school of law in one particular matter if his conscience so permits. The courts in India and Malaysia have allowed a person to change his school of law partially to avoid an inconvenient rule of his own school" ...

Having the Ja'fari school recognized by so many official bodies at the international level through many declarations and edicts, therefore the Malaysian orthodoxy, intolerance and rigidness towards the Shi'ites is questionable. Shi'ites as 'the minority' have contributed to the Malay civilisation and modern day nation building. It is about time that, Malaysia particularly, recognises their contribution, and look upon other threats portrayed by the Sunni extremist:

The time has come to accept them and learn how to communicate, accommodate and live with them without fear. A logical and rational approach should be adopted towards them. Chandra Muzaffar (2005) a well-known scholar in Malaysia insists that Shia's contributions to the Muslims world are plenty:

Let us underline the fact that at least 13 percent of the global Muslim ummah are Shi'ite. Shi'ite majority states such as Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Bahrain are full fledged members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Shi'ism has been a major force in shaping Muslim history, philosophy, science and culture. Without the illustrious Shi'ite scholars and their illuminating scholarship, the content and character of Islamic knowledge would have been much poorer (p. viii).

One of the biggest reasons why Shia Islam is treated badly in Malaysia is "the establishment ulama in Malaysia" who "have seen themselves as the protector, the custodian of Islam and Muslims in the country", and they felt responsible "to preserve the purity of the Shafi'i legal school" (p. ix). This egoistic attitude should be toned down and more tolerance should be adopted. Malaysia should stop being hypocrite. Meanwhile, the lonely struggle of Malaysian Shi'ites continue.



## Sixth session of the Forum on Minority Issues of the Human Rights Council

The Sixth session of the Forum on Minority Issues of the Human Rights Council took place in Palais des Nations, Geneva, Room XX on the 26th and 27th of November 2013.

The meeting which is held annually in November is one of the most important minority events held in the United Nations. Different items are normally chosen for discussion in the forum on minority issues and a number of statements are written based on the items. The items discussed in the Sixth session of the Forum on Minority Issues included: adoption of the agenda and organization of work; legal framework and key concepts; promotion and protection of the identity of religious minorities; promotion of constructive interfaith dialogue, consultation and exchange; protection of the existence of and prevention of violence against religious minorities; and concluding remarks.

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence attended the Sixth session of the Forum on Minority Issues of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. Having reviewed the previous sessions and discussions, ODVV tried to have an active and good presence in the Sixth session. Also, three other NGOs from Iran attended the session: Prevention Association of Social Harms and

Imam Ali's Popular Students Relief Society, the Geneva branch both in Special Consultative Status to ECOSOC; and Global Horizon Institute.

ODVV submitted oral statements on items 3 (protection of the existence of and prevention of violence against religious minorities) and 4 (promotion and protection of the identity of religious minorities). In the oral statements submitted by ODVV a number of issues were pointed out: violence against Shia minority; extremism with the excuse of defending minority rights; the necessity for special rapporteurs to pay attention to increasing violence against Shia minorities etc. The statements are presented below:

### **Necessity for further attention of international mechanisms towards rights of Shia Minorities**

Attention towards the rights of minorities as a component of human rights, has always been one of the principles of the activities of international organizations and institutions. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to religion and belief is a fundamental right, and freedom of religion is

The right to same equality as the majority, the right to a healthy environment, the right to education with atten-

tion to minority characteristics are all rights that must be considered for all minorities.

This is while Shia minorities in many countries are not only deprived of their rights, but also they are faced with numerous problems and abuses. Various discriminations over time in Saudi Arabia is indicative of the fact that the Shia minority have continuously been under pressure and cannot enjoy their fundamental rights alongside ordinary citizens, and furthermore gain access to political, economic and social positions.

In spite of demographically the Shia in Bahrain are not a minority, but politically they are deemed a minority and any form of peaceful objection towards the existing discrimination is met by government crackdown.

In Pakistan, the Shia minority is targeted by acts of violence of terror groups, and there are no protection mechanisms for them.

The aforementioned instances alongside many other cases show the increasing violence committed against the Shia minorities around the world, which requires the special attention of international institutions and mechanisms.

Although international mechanisms for the implementation of minorities rights principles to-date have seen a lot of changes and improvements, but the connection between minorities related issues are some of the instances that with attention paid towards them a better future can be guaranteed for minorities rights at the international level.

Welcoming the activities and he reports of the Special Rapporteur on Minorities, this NGO does not deem minorities issues to be solely his mandate and the minorities working group, but the extent and interconnection of minorities issues calls for other Human Rights Council mandate holders such as the Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression, peaceful assemblies, freedom of religion and belief, should seriously pursue the rights of Shia minorities around the world.

### **Extremism and defending minorities rights**

#### **Support for the existence of religious minorities and prevention of violence against them**

One of the most important challenges of the governance of any country is the reduction of disputes related to cultural, social and religious differences. The diversity of cultures in any country can be seen as an opportunity and on the other hand in the event of disregard result in grave violation of human rights as well as violence, and also be seen as an important threat for any country.



**Also some political groups and even countries exploit the situations of minorities in other countries on the pretext of the defense of minorities rights and in pursuit of their political objectives, through putting the public order and calm of the society into chaos and take violent measures such as assassinations and bombings.**

Understanding the importance of this subject the international community in various international conventions and covenants stresses on the observation of the rights of minorities and refraining from violence, and allocated important conferences such as the Minorities Form for the solving of minorities issues.

Nonetheless the world continues to face the violation of minorities rights, and the existing solutions have not been able to result in the full observation of minorities rights. One of the important reasons that violence reduction solutions have not brought results is the extremism and violence of groups who for the sake of the protection of minorities rights resort to acts of terror and spreading of fear, and the outcome of these actions have not only not led to the observation of minorities rights, but they have increased violence within society too.

Also some political groups and even countries exploit the situations of minorities in other countries on the pretext of the defense of minorities rights and in pursuit of their political objectives, through putting the public order and calm of the society into chaos and take violent measures such as assassinations and bombings.

While condemning any form of extremism and violence, our NGO believes that for so long as there is not a comprehensive view towards the solving of minorities problems, and the role of extremist and opportunist groups who on the pretext of defending minorities rights entice and commit violence are not considered, violence shall continue to be committed against minorities. This NGO stresses that new and deeper solutions must be considered for the protection of minorities, and various aspects of minorities related issues.

This NGO believes that the intertwining of minorities rights related issues and the condemnation of the role of extremist groups can play a significant role in the realization of the rights of minorities.





## Israel's lack of cooperation with the Universal Periodic Review

By: Farzane Mostofi

The UPR mechanism is one of the most important monitoring tools of the Human Rights Council with the aim of monitoring promotion and protection of human rights in all countries, based on dialogue and cooperation, and based on reliable information and equal treatment of all states. With the use of this mechanism and based on an organized program, the human rights commitments of all 193 countries of the world are reviewed and evaluated. The UPR process is in such way that countries under review in an interactive dialogue with the international community are fully engaged in their human rights debates.

Without a doubt the power of the UPR is in its universality, which is the basis of this mechanism. For the purpose of the preservation of the successes achieved to-date, equal treatment of all countries in the UPR is vital. 192 countries were reviewed in the first round of UPR, and the UPR mechanism cannot let countries not to turn up in their review sessions, particularly in the second round which is the time to review the recommendations.

This is while Israel did not turn up in its UPR working group which was planned on Tuesday

29 January 2013. This is the first time that a country does not turn up in its UPR without any given reason, and this has worried human rights defenders that a dangerous tradition for the UPR mechanism and respect for human rights across the world may come about.

A review of Israel's communication trend with the Human Rights Council, clearly indicates failure to cooperate and shows the adoption of double standards by some states with regards to human rights.

### Israel's severing relations with the Human Rights Council

On 14 May 2012, Israel suspended its relations with the Human Rights Council. This action of Israel was because of the Council's decision to set up a special committee to prepare a report on the situation of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Based on this decision in the 19th Session of the Human Rights Council (Resolution 19/17) a three person fact finding committee was set up to review the human rights situation in the West Bank settlements.

In October 2012 Israel did not present its nation-



**The only country that had postponed its UPR session till then was Haiti, following the earth quake on 10 January 2010, the Council held a meeting to review the subject, and in that meeting the Haitian representative asked for the UPR of the country to be postponed. In its decision adopted on 27 January 2010, the Council accepted the request.**

al report and on 10 January 2013 in a telephone conversation with the HRC president the Israeli representative requested the postponement of Israel's UPR Session. On 14 January 2013 Israel did not turn up for the selection of its troika, and on 29 January it did not show up for its UPR.

In response to Israel's no show in its UPR according to decision number A/HRC/OM/7/L.1 The Council decided to plan for Israel's UPR in 2013, in the 17th session of working group (21 October till 1 November), and called on the country to cooperate with the Council. The Human Rights Council asked the Council president to make a report in the 22nd and 23rd Sessions about his efforts for bringing Israel back to the UPR.

The Council president initially suggested that he select the troika for the country, because this is the usual procedure for countries that do not have representatives in Geneva. Then he announced that this organizational session to be postponed until Tuesday the 29th of January (Israel's review in other words), in order to establish whether Israel will attend on this day or not. In the event of Israel's absence on this day, the Council would make a decision on the 29th of January.

Israel was asked to give its request and reason for postponement by January 29.

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### **Reaction of NGOs towards Israel's non-cooperation with the HRC**

A number NGOs such as the ODVV and UPR Info in 2012 expressed their objection to Israel's failure to cooperate with the Council and the Council's reaction through a number of written and oral statements.

The "UPR's power" is in its universality, which is the basis of this mechanism. For the purpose of the preservation of the successes made to-date, the equal approach of all countries in the UPR is vital.

Israel's decision to "suspend its cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Human Rights Council and related mechanisms in May 2012, is to put to challenge the universality of the UPR. It must be said that such a unilateral decision has no legal basis."

Nongovernmental organizations expressed their regret in the way the Council responded to Israel's non-cooperation and said: the simple postponement of the review of this country because of its absence can to an extent ease non-cooperation of other countries in their own UPRs. A decision (L.1) that was made by the Council on 29 January 2013 is not satisfactory and must not be the basis of future non-cooperation. Instead the Council must have a strong mechanism to confront "continued non-cooperation".

Furthermore for postponement of the UPR, a country must present an official request which includes "emergency conditions" and announce the next possible date for the review.

Many NGOs believe that lack of presence in the UPR without prior information to the Council for its postponement must come with consequences, such as referral to the UN General Assembly, selection of a special envoy for restarting cooperation, and planning for follow up session inside the HRC before the next UPR.



A number of NGOs such as the International Association of Democratic Lawyers and WILPF, in a joint statement stated that Israel's failure to participate in the UPR, is assumed a threat to the credibility of the Council and can endanger this mechanism. “

Canada, Costa Rica, Germany and Ireland (representing the EU), Gabon (representing the African group), and the United States of America supported the Council's decision to postpone Israel's UPR. Pakistan (representing the IOC) agreed to the postponement of the organizational session, but asked for the Council to make its decision before 29 January. Furthermore, Pakistan assumed Israel's situation as “failure to continued cooperation with the mechanism” which is stated in paragraph 38 of Resolution 5/1.

Countries did not agree with Israel's lack of participation as “failure to continue cooperation”



**This report also calls on Israel to release Syrian and Palestinian prisoners, to leave the Occupied Palestinian Territories, end the Gaza blockade, and prevent constructing new Jewish settlements.**

based on paragraph 38 of HRC Resolution 5/1. The fact that on 10 February 2013 the Israeli representative called the HRC president and requested the suspension of the country's UPR is assumed as cooperation by some countries, and other countries believed that it was not an official request. Representing the EU, Ireland saw the telephone contact of Israel as a “positive signal”, but Venezuela believed that Israel's behaviour “still” is not deemed as failure to cooperate, but is not deemed as a positive step either.

The Egyptian delegate believed that Israel's letter to the HRC dated March 1 was a sign of the cooperation of the country, while Tunisia believed Israel's absence from the UPR session and its decision to suspend cooperation with the Council in May 2012, was in fact deemed as fail-

ure to cooperate.

Overall it can be said that this is the first time that a country refuses to turn up for its review without any reason, and this has worried human rights defenders that a dangerous tradition for the UPR mechanism and respect for human rights across the world may come about.

Not only has Israel made a mockery of the UPR mechanism by refusing to participate in its review, but it has set 2 conditions for participation in the second round of the UPR which is deemed as undermining of the mechanism more than before. The first condition becoming a permanent member of the Western Europe and Others Group, and secondly Item 7 regarding Occupied Territories to be limited.

Due to the review of the human rights situation in Occupied Palestinian Territories by the Human Rights Council, Israel had boycotted the Council for 18 months, but finally put an end to the boycott, participated in UPR.

During this review, Israel handed in reports of its activities for the promotion of Human Rights to the Council.

The Human Rights Council adopted the conclusions of Israel's UPR on First of November, 2013. According to this report Israel should treat all citizens equally, end any form of discrimination, mistreatment and torture and the use of force in all territories that are sacred to Islam and Christianity.

This report also calls on Israel to release Syrian and Palestinian prisoners, to leave the Occupied Palestinian Territories, end the Gaza blockade, and prevent constructing new Jewish settlements.

### **NGOs' approach to the second round of Israel's UPR**

38 nongovernmental organizations have evaluated the human rights situation in the Occupied Territories for the UPR on Israel and sent their reports. Amnesty International has expressed regret for the 133 recommendation that were given in the first round and Israel has not responded to them. This NGO believes that there are problems with the three recommendations that Israel has

accepted: violation of the Torture Convention, imprisonment of people on charges of beliefs and discrimination against minorities.

Around 76 countries had registered to speak in this adoption of the UPR on Israel report session. The extent of criticisms started from inviting Israel to stop settlements construction in the West Bank and freeing of all Palestinian prisoners, and reached other subjects such as for Israel to allow all Palestinian refugees to return to their homes in Israel.

In this session, the representatives of Palestine, Egypt, Pakistan and Israel spoke in order of succession. The Palestinian delegate criticised Israel for not recognising the Palestinian government, while it has no right in denying the existence of this country.

In confirming the Palestinian delegate, the Egyptian delegate stressed on the necessity for Israel to recognise the Palestinian government and the Pakistani delegate spoke in confirmation of the other two delegates.

In the second round of UPR, 246 recommendations were given to Israel by various countries. And Israel was supposed to review 237 of these recommendations until the 25th Session of the Human Rights Council. Israel has stated that it will not review 9 other instances where the term “Palestinian State” has been mentioned. Israel believes a country by the name of Palestine does not exist

In this Session Israel was asked to put an end to its human rights violation cases, establishment of gender equality, equal treatment of all Israeli citizens, stop any form of discrimination, mistreatment and torture of individuals, put a stop to illegal activities in Muslim and Christian holy sites, setting up of an independent human rights organization in Israel, and cooperation with all international human rights mechanisms were some of the recommendations given to Israel in the UPR.

Israel’s refusal to take part in the UPR process is a heavy blow to the universality, non-selectivity and responsiveness of governments to this mechanism. Unfortunately Israel has founded a trend, where if no serious measures are taken the UPR mechanism will easily lose its credibility within



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**We hope that the lessons learned from the first round of UPR, along with the decision of countries to distance themselves from politicizing the UPR or using double standards, help the second round of UPR turn into a tool for real improvement of human rights in different countries.**

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the next few years. The Council must adopt a mechanism where the cost of taking any similar measures to be to an extent that it deters countries from doing similar things.

It must not be forgotten that disruption in the solidity of the UPR, the created opportunities for civil society in effective intervention or the improvement of human rights in various regions of the world in coordination with the UN and relevant government be influenced negatively.

The Human Rights Council must consider the point that the simple postponement of the review of this country due to its absence from the session can really simplify the lack of cooperation of other governments with the UPR. And the decision made by the Council on 29 January 2013 in postponing Israel’s second round of UPR is not satisfactory and there is the fear that this can be the basis of non-cooperation by different countries. The Council must define examples of continuous non-cooperation, create a strong mechanisms to fight “continued non-cooperation” such as referral to other credible international bodies such as the UN General Assembly for the offending country.

We hope that the lessons learned from the first round of UPR, along with the decision of countries to distance themselves from politicizing the UPR or using double standards, help the second round of UPR turn into a tool for real improvement of human rights in different countries.

# Shiite Rights Violations in Different Countries



Shiites are one of the largest religious minorities in the world, which have been far from achieving their legal and certain rights in some countries. Although Shiites have had a peaceful coexistence with their countrymen from other religion, section or race, but some governments have stifled their legal rights.

This report aims to highlight the Shiite rights violation in some countries, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Syria, Indonesia, Pakistan and Malaysia.

## **Shiites in Saudi Arabia**

In Saudi Arabia, Shiites are the largest minority group and compose approximately 15-20 percent of the population. From Saudi Arabia establishment in 1932, Shiites have been subject to discrimination and sectarian incitement. Currently, Shiites in Saudi Arabia are subject to a plethora of religious, political, educational and economic discriminatory policies.

Religious minorities, especially the Shia, in Saudi Arabia are not allowed to hold their

ceremonies. According to the report of Human Rights Watch, Saudi Arabia systematically discriminates against its Muslim minorities, in particular Shia and Ismailis. The chief mufti in March 2012 called for the destruction of all churches in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>1</sup> Building of mosques is also restricted.<sup>2</sup>

Shiites of Saudi Arabia cannot establish political parties. They are deprived of their rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, the right of determination of fate etc.

Also Shiites in Saudi Arabia are restricted from equal access to educational system, they can't study religious fields and face employment discrimination .

Since the Arab Spring began in early 2011, Shiites of Saudi Arabia began their peaceful demonstrations against Saudi rulers and continued that until now, especially in eastern provinces like Qatif and Al-ahsa.

According to the Annual Report 2013 of Amnesty international , there were protests in

Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia by members of the minority Shi'a community, who alleged long-term discrimination on account of their faith. The security forces used excessive force against the protesters and shot 10 people dead .

Some 155 men and 20 children were believed to be held without charge in connection with the protests.<sup>5</sup>

Several men were sentenced to flogging or banned from travelling abroad. Shi'a clerics, like Sheikh Nimr Baqir al Nimr and Sheikh Tawfiq al-Amer, who criticized the government were detained or charged with disobeying the ruler .<sup>4</sup>

### Shiites in Bahrain

Bahrain is one of the five countries in the world which in Shiites compose majority of population, but it is the only country that Shia majority is led exclusively by the Sunni minority. Because of that, Shiites in Bahrain have been deprived from their human rights.

Since the Arab spring wave began in early 2011, Shiites of Bahrain renewed their precedent protests against decades of discriminations and injustice made by Al-Khalifa ruling family. According to the 2012 Human Rights Report of the

Bahrain, made by US embassy in Bahrain, Discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, nationality, and sect , especially against the Shia population is one of the significant human rights problems in Bahrain.<sup>5</sup>

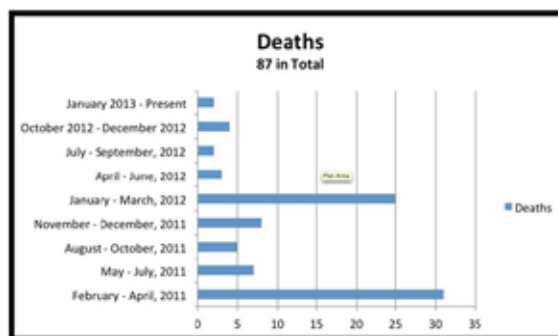
### • Death of protesters

Since 2011, unfortunately the large number of death, torture, detention, kidnapping and other forms of violation of human rights has been occurred by Al-Khalifa ruling family. The Bahrain center for human rights (BHCR) has documented total of 87 deaths since the start of the pro-democracy movement that began on February 14th, 2011. Tear gas, direct



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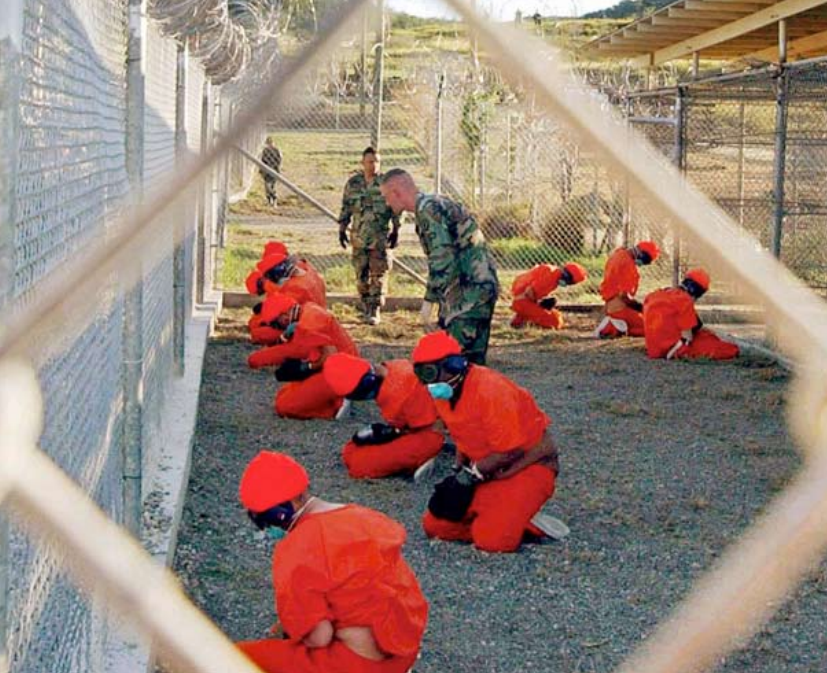
shooting and torture are the main causes of the protesters death.<sup>6</sup>



Also, in spite of the United Nations conventions for the rights of the child (CRC), the number of Bahraini children who have died as a result of excessive use of force is alarming. The list of victims includes thirteen children under the age of eighteen. The highest percentage of cause of deaths amongst children is direct shootings (6), teargas (5) and 2 who were run over by police.

Despite the large number of deaths that have resulted from the government's systematic excessive use of force, no high-ranking government official has been held





**There are many international instruments related to protecting the rights of detainees including the United Nations convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.**

accountable.

**• Political Detention and Torture**

There are many international instruments related to protecting the rights of detainees including the United Nations convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

According to reports by human rights groups, some detainees were held for weeks with limited access to the outside world. There were cases in which detainees were denied access to lawyers, until the day of their trials. In addition the government sometimes withheld information from detainees and their families about the detainees' whereabouts for days .

The constitution prohibits “harm[ing] an accused person physically or mentally.” Nevertheless, domestic and international human rights organizations reported numerous instances of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. Detainees

reported to local human rights activists that security officials beat them, sometimes while they were blindfolded, and often with clubs, whips, or rubber hoses.

According to local human rights groups, many individuals were detained or imprisoned for activities related to the unrest or were leaders or prominent members of political groups and societies.<sup>9</sup>

The BCHR regularly receives reports of torture throughout the prison system in Bahrain. Several prisoners were tortured to death while in prison, including Hasan Jassim Mohamed Maki, Ali Isa Ibrahim Saqer, Zakariya Rashid Hassan Al Asheri, Abdulkarim Ali Ahmed Fakhrawi, Jaber Ebrahim Yousif Mohamed Alawiyat. Despite these well documented and torture related deaths at the hands of authorities, the government stubbornly refuses to reform the prison system.<sup>10</sup>

**• Kidnapping**

The Bahraini security forces consider the kidnapping of suspects to be a legitimate form of law enforcement. The BCHR has documented numerous incidents of kidnappings by the security forces; the majority of victims in these cases are boys under the age of 18. They are often tortured into providing false confessions about other children in the neighborhood. One example of this brutal practice, is that of 16-year-old Ali Al- Singace who has been the victim of numerous kidnappings, beatings and sexual harassment. He sustained severe cuts all over his body.<sup>11</sup>

**Shiites in Pakistan**

According to reliable estimates CIA World Fact Book and Middle East institute, Shia Muslims make up to 20% of total population of Pakistan which is close to

200 million. Thus the 40 million Shia Muslims are the second largest religious group in the country.<sup>12</sup>

Shia Muslims in Pakistan face a dangerous ideology, called Takfiri. This ideology that declares Shia as apostate or infidels and worthy

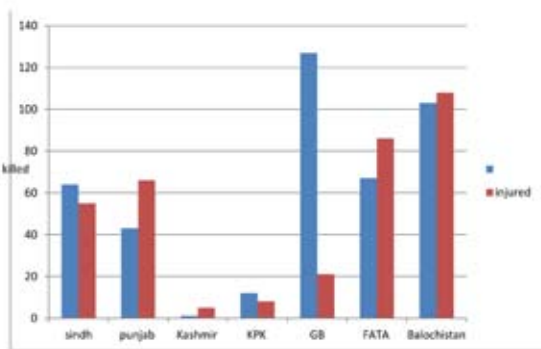


of being killed is the reason behind their faith-based killing.

There are some terrorist organization formed with the intention to intimidate, threaten and kill the Shia Muslims, including “Sipah Sahaba” and “Lashkar-e- Jhangvi (LeJ)”. These terrorist organizations operate in coordination with Taliban and Al-Qaeda.<sup>13</sup>

During the last decade, over 2000 Shia Hazara community children have been killed or wounded in attacks perpetrated by terrorists in Quetta of Pakistan. Many hundreds of Shia Muslims have been killed in northern areas of Pakistan such as Gilgit, Baltistan, Parachinar and Chelas. The attacks on Shia Muslims since the year 2000 have not been limited to Balochistan or the northern areas and major cities like Karachi and Lahore have also seen target killings of Shias.<sup>14</sup>

In 2012, at least 325 members of the Shia Muslim population were killed in targeted attacks that took place across Pakistan, about one-third of them in Balochistan province, which is the smallest in terms of population and accounts for just around 4% of Pakistan’s total population of 190 million.<sup>15</sup>



This chart shows the large scale shia genocide since January 2012 in Pakistan.<sup>16</sup>

### Shiites in Syria

Syria is a diverse society. Specific demographic data is unreliable, but estimates suggest that Sunni Muslims comprise about 74% of the population, Allawite (a branch of Shia Islam) 11%, Christians 10%, Druze 3%, and other Muslims 2%.<sup>17</sup>

Since the beginning of protests in Syria in March 2011, the situation of shias has dramatically



**Shia Muslims in Pakistan face a dangerous ideology, called Takfiri. This ideology that declares Shia as apostate or infidels and worthy of being killed is the reason behind their faith-based killing.**

worsened. Shias have been tolerating high level of violence

made extremist groups like Alnusra Front (linked to Al-Qaeda). These terrorist groups have started a sectarian war, killing minorities, especially Twelver shia.

They have been involved in mass killing of shia Muslims by using barbaric

ways, like cutting head, pulling the body of dead people by cars in front of other people and hang their bodies in public places.

Reuters reported on Aug 15, 2013 that two youths from Shi’ite villages in northern Syria have been executed by members of an alQaeda-linked Islamist rebel group, according to a video uploaded to the Internet on Wednesday by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.<sup>18</sup>

Shia place of worship and pray, shrines and mosques, are also being destroyed.

Because of these threats, the situation of shia in Syria is very catastrophic. The

table below summarize the concerning situation



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Syria is a diverse society. Specific demographic data is unreliable, but estimates suggest that Sunni Muslims comprise about 74% of the population, Allawite (a branch of Shia Islam) 11%, Christians 10%, Druze 3%, and other Muslims 2%.<sup>2</sup>

unlawful attacks carried out by anti-government armed

groups and violations of international legal obligations in Syria. Anti-government armed groups continued to shell the Shia settlements of Nubl and Zahra . There have also been attacks on specifically protected persons and objects. Such as the Medical personnel. Shia Al-Rasoul Al-Muaddam mosque.

**Shiites in Indonesia**

The population of Shia Muslims in Indonesia, in spite of official reports, is several millions. Many of whom practice their faith in secret to protect themselves and their families from attacks.

Unfortunately Shia Muslims in Indonesia have been suffering high levels of discrimination and persecution made by government in recent decades.

In February 2006, a statement was issued condemning Shia Islam as heretical. This statement is signed by 40 Sunni clerics and four police officers. Shia Muslims are at increased risk of attack and are being pressured by anti Shia groups to convert to Sunni Islam.

of Shia in Syria.<sup>19</sup>

city	Damascus	Aleppo, nubole and alzahra	Homs	Idlib: Kafira and Fowa	Daraa	Deir-ozor
Population	75000	65000	170000	30000	20000	6000
Number of families	15000	13000	40000	6000	4000	1200
Martyrs (killed persons)	348	212	492	170	48	38
Missing	174	65	196	80	17	50
Wounded	513	300	700	82	45	N/A
Kidnapped	109	>200	N/A	>200	40	N/A

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, in its report to the 24th Session of the Human Rights Council, report points to the

Amnesty international reports that On December 29, 2011, Sunni militants attacked a Shia village in Sampang regency, Madura Island, burning houses



and the madrasa, causing around 500 Shia residents to flee. Police arrested and charged only one of the militants for the arson attack. On August 26 hundreds of Sunni militants again attacked the same Shia village and burned down around 50 Shia houses, killing one man and seriously injuring another. Several police officers at the scene failed to intervene to stop the attack.

Human rights watch issued a report in July 2012 about Tajul Muluk, a shia cleric who is facing two years in prison for blasphemy.

### **Shiites in Malaysia**

In Malaysia, shia make up 10 to 15 percent of the population. They are one of several Islamic sects under close watch by governmental religious authorities. Freedom of religion, despite of being guaranteed in the constitution, faces many restrictions in this country. Shi'ism is considered as a non-Islamic deviation from "true Islam" and Shia Muslims are not allowed to freely practice their faith and religious rituals. The 1989

Islamic law and 1996 Fatwa by Malaysia's top Islamic clerics banned shi'ism, declaring it as a deviant ideology. Increasingly influenced by Saudi Wahhabi ideology, Malaysian government actively promotes false propaganda and hate speech against Shia Muslims.<sup>20</sup>

Shiite Muslims are among the most marginalized and forgotten. Their unchecked population can be as few as 10,000 or as many as 40,000. They are under severe oppression, frequently raided, imprisoned, denied the freedom to worship and to participate in public life. Left only one choice: convert to Sunni Islam or remain persona non grata.<sup>21</sup>

Numerous crackdowns have been targeted towards the Shia community, one being in November 1997, where 10 people were arrested under the Internal Security Act for alleged grounds of practicing Shia Islam.<sup>22</sup>

Those who were released early in 1997 were told to renounce their Shia faith and to revert to the Sunni

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**The Shias have often been maltreated by detentions without trials under the Internal Security Act. For instance, Abdullah Hassan, one of the Shia adherent was detained without trial under the ISA (Internal Security Act) from October 2nd 1997 until December 31st 1999.**

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Sect as a pre-condition of their release from ISA. The reason of arrest according to the police then was "activities prejudicial to national security and Muslim unity". The arrest violated Article 12 of the International Bill of Human Rights: "Rights to personal security. Everyone has the right to live in peace and free from fear of arbitrary arrest and detention without fair and public trial".<sup>23</sup>

Dr Mahathir in a speech in 2005 had said that the Shia sect should not be tolerated; "any other sect than Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah should be disapproved and only Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah can be tolerated."<sup>24</sup>

The Shias have often been maltreated by detentions without trials under the Internal Security Act. For instance, Abdullah Hassan, one of the Shia adherent was detained without trial under the ISA (Internal Security Act) from October 2nd 1997 until December 31st 1999. He filed a report to The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM) on 2012. Also there were six other Shia followers under the ISA within October 20th 2000 to January 5th 2001. In December 2010, more than 200 Shia were arrested by a raid at a local Shiite community centre.<sup>25</sup>

In May 2011, a lunch celebrating the birthday of Fatimah Zahra, daughter of prophet was broken up by Selangor religious officers. Four Shiites were arrested that day. Also, two Shia adherents were arrested on August 5, 2013, right before Muslims celebrate Eid.<sup>26</sup>

On the 28th September 2013, another raid was conducted at the center in Selangor. Religious



authorities seized properties, a sum of charity money for orphans and numerous valuable items belonging to Shia adherents from the mentioned location. On the same day another Shia adherent was arrested in the state of Pahang. The violence, aggression, abuse, and cruelty committed on minority Shiites are run in tandem with the speech given by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at the 68th UN General Conference addressing Sunni-Shia devotees to commit to concord and peace.<sup>27</sup>

### Conclusion

As we mentioned in this report, the situation of human rights of Shiite Muslims in some countries, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Syria, Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia is not acceptable.

They face high level of discrimination, persecution and harassment and in whole; they face serious violation of human rights. The estimates of killed and injured Shia Muslims as very catastrophic.

Unfortunately, Shiites Muslim has been suffering discrimination and persecution because of religious excuses. They are introduced as infidels by extremist groups like Wahhabi and Takfiri groups.

Also, the governments far from accepting the responsibility of these crimes, support the extremist groups. It seems that all forms of discrimination and persecution and violation of human rights against Shia Muslims shall be removed and all international instruments regarding to protect of human rights must be obeyed.

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# Israeli Refugees

21<sup>th</sup> century ghetto: Israel plays with human rights, using gaps in international law



December 17, 2013 09:45

African illegal immigrants take part in a protest march on the highway near Lahav junction in southern Israel on their way to Jerusalem on December 16, 2013 after they fled a detention centre in the south where they were being held. (AFP Photo/Oren Ziv)

There are two situations to capture the moral imagination in Israel: the plight of undocumented migrant workers from sub-Saharan Africa who are living in Israel, and the even direr humanitarian emergency in the Gaza Strip.

Reports about illegal immigrants from Eritrea, Sudan and other African countries who have entered Israel in recent years, seeking asylum and refugee status, being sent to a “de facto jail” raise questions about how a modern and progressive state can deprive people of liberty without charge or any specified release date.

So far, Israel has taken the position (which seems generally accurate) that these African migrants, of which there are some 55,000, are not entitled to refugee status because their motivation was economic, and

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African illegal immigrants take part in a protest march on the highway near Lahav junction in southern Israel on their way to Jerusalem on December 16, 2013 after they fled a detention centre in the south where they were being held.

that there is no evidence that they face persecution. Unfortunately, governments have virtually unlimited authority to make such a determination without any right of the immigrant to mount a legal challenge – beyond what may be granted in the domestic legal system. International law is vague and unsatisfactory, although the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees does confirm the rule that no one can be forcibly deported to their country of nationality if





they face the prospect of persecution upon return as a result of their race, religion or political views.

The issue has recently surfaced in an ugly form as right-wing extremists in Israel have demanded that the government take stronger measures to prevent future entry and to detain and deport those who are currently present. They argue that such immigrants pose security problems by engaging in crime and they also dilute the Jewish character of Israel.

In response, the government has constructed a fence along its 230-kilometer border with Egypt. Israel has also been negotiating deals with several African countries who are agreeing to take tens of thousands of migrants in exchange for a package that includes military equipment and training, and economic assistance relating to agriculture.

What has caused concern among human rights groups is the prospect of putting these illegal migrants in a large detention center that is being built in the Israeli desert. A leftist Israeli politician, Zahava Galon, raised a poignant objection: "Is this how we, as a people who have asylum, treat human beings?" Of course, in Nazi times the Jews of Israel, more than any people of Earth were both asylum seekers and victims of exclusionary policies by the cruel self-righteous liberal democracies that invoked their sovereign rights.

African illegal immigrants take part in a protest march on the highway near Lahav junction in southern

Israel on their way to Jerusalem on December 16, 2013 after they fled a detention centre in the south where they were being held. (AFP Photo/Oren Ziv)

The official response is that the state in Israel is doing its best to strike a balance between protection of borders and infiltration and human rights, but with such historical memories, we might have expected more empathy by the leaders and public in Israel.

Actually, international law and human rights standards have far too little to say about the vulnerability of these migrants. Israel is entitled to conclude that according to the legal definition of refugee these individuals do not qualify, as their motivation appears to have been economic, although some claim they face harsh punishments if they are deported to their country of nationality. Once denied refugee status, a government has broad discretion to detain and deport migrants. The whole situation points up the dangerous gap in the law that leaves such individuals in acutely vulnerable situations.

What is obviously needed is a lawmaking treaty that addresses the challenge of illegal and unwanted economic migrants as a humanitarian challenge to the international community as a whole. Until this happens, and it is unlikely in the current internationally stressed situation, the tragic fate that confronts these undocumented migrants in Israel is likely to be repeated elsewhere.

However, such an ethically disappointing approach



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**The silence of neighboring Arab governments, with the notable exceptions of Turkey and Qatar, which have sent Gaza money and fuel, and of the UN, is unforgivable. Even the normally apolitical relief agency, UNRWA, has called publically upon Israel to end the blockade in recognition of the emergency conditions.**

is nothing new for Israel, taking into consideration that no less compelling and even more dramatic is the situation in Gaza, where the 1.7 million resident Palestinians have been blockaded by Israel since the middle of 2007 when Hamas took over the governance of the territory. The blockade, which has slightly eased in recent years, was a form of collective punishment, violating Article 33 of the 4th Geneva Convention, and amounting to a crime against humanity. It was a punitive measure imposed by Israel to punish the people in Gaza for voting in favor of Hamas in 2006 legislative elections and partly to make political life as difficult as possible for Hamas. To ease the burdens on the population, Gaza depended on an extraordinary tunnel network to bring supplies across the border from Egypt, and although it meant Gaza residents would be paying black market prices, it did provide the people with the necessities of life.

African illegal immigrants take part in a protest march on the highway near Lahav junction in southern Israel on their way to Jerusalem on December 16, 2013 after they fled a detention centre in the south where they were being held. (AFP Photo/Oren Ziv)

Since the Egyptian coup of July 3, 2013, the situation in Gaza, always bad, has turned critical. The tunnels have been mainly destroyed by Egypt as an expression of its anti-Hamas outlook and in connection with its Sinai security concerns, resulting

in crippling fuel shortages that imperil the health and wellbeing of Gaza in potentially catastrophic ways. Children are wading through streets overflowing with raw sewage, hospital machinery needed for the care of severe kidney and cardiac ailments is unavailable, and there is insufficient fuel for the minimal necessities of life, a situation aggravated in recent days by freezing temperatures.

The silence of neighboring Arab governments, with the notable exceptions of Turkey and Qatar, which have sent Gaza money and fuel, and of the UN, is unforgivable. Even the normally apolitical relief agency, UNRWA, has called publically upon Israel to end the blockade in recognition of the emergency conditions.

In 2011 the UN Security Council invoked R2P, the Responsibility to Protect, to justify a military operation in Libya to protect the civilian population of Benghazi, and then proceeded to seek regime change that had never been authorized. In the context of Gaza, double standards are all too evident. There is no international call for R2P, despite the desperate plight of Gaza residents trapped in an emergency situation, cut off from help by an unlawful blockade. It is time to act. We all have a responsibility to raise our voices and cry, “Shame!”

**Richard Falk for RT**

<http://rt.com/op-edge/israel-international-human-rights-371/>

# Palestinian Rights Violations in Israel

A HISTORY OF DISPOSSESSION

Dr.Cesar Chelala, co-winner of an Overseas Press Club of America award, New York.



Increasing acts of violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have been repeatedly denounced. Together with the increasing number of settlements being built on Palestinian land, those acts of violence betray justice and seriously undermine the prospects for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. In 2007, Israeli prosecutors established that of 515 criminal suits related to Israeli settlers' violence against Palestinians and Israeli security forces, 502 were related to right wing settlers in the Occupied Territories.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs(OCHA), the annual rate of settler attacks (2,100 attacks in eight years) had almost quadrupled between 2006 and 2014. B'Tselem, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied

Territories, has consistently denounced acts of violence against Palestinians. According to B'Tselem, last January 6, masked settlers, accompanied by soldiers, arrived at the village of "Urif." The settlers destroyed the electric meter of a USAID-funded reservoir under construction and threw stones at the home of Osama Safdi, a local resident, and at the village school.

Footage by Safdi shows that the soldiers didn't protect the Palestinian local residents and only acted when the latter retaliated. Instead of protecting the Palestinians who were attacked, the soldiers chose to protect the settlers who had conducted the aggression.

In Hebron, a city located in the West Bank and home to approximately 250,000 Palestinians, there live between 500-800 settlers concentrated in the Otniel settlement and around the old quar-

ter. According to B'Tselem, there are almost daily incidents of “physical violence and property damage by settlers in the city.”

There are also curfews and restrictions of movement that are “among the harshest in the Occupied Territories” and violence by Israeli border policemen and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) against Palestinians who live in the city’s H2 sector. B’Tselem also reports that settler actions include “blocking roadways, so as to impede Palestinian life and commerce.

The settlers also shoot solar panels on roofs of buildings, torch automobiles, shatter windowpanes and windshields, destroy crops, and uproot trees, abuse merchants and owners of stalls in the market.

Some of these actions are intended to force Palestinians to leave their homes and farmland, and thereby enable the settlers to gain control of them.” In December 2008, Hebron settlers, angry at their eviction from a disputed house rioted and shot three Palestinian rock-throwers and burned Palestinian homes and olive groves. The attacks against Palestinians were characterized as “a pogrom” by then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who said he was ashamed “as a Jew.” Graffiti reading “Gas the Arabs! JDL” were reportedly sprayed by settlers on the Qurtuba girls’ school in Hebron.

Violence by settlers is particularly frequent in cases where settlements have been established in close proximity to Palestinian communities and their agricultural land.

Because olive farming is a major industry in the Palestinian West Bank it has become a common target of attacks.

According to OCHA, roughly 10,000 Palestinian olive trees and saplings have suffered either uprooting or damage from Israeli attacks in 2013, a rise from 8,500 trees damaged in 2012. Yesh Din (named after a Hebrew phrase that means “there is law”) is an Israeli human rights group which provides legal assistance to citizens of the Palestinian territories.

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Footage by Safdi shows that the soldiers didn’t protect the Palestinian local residents and only acted when the latter retaliated. Instead of protecting the Palestinians who were attacked, the soldiers chose to protect the settlers who had conducted the aggression.



This organization states that 94.7% of complaints to Israeli police by Palestinians who had suffered damage to their olive groves between 2005 and 2013 were closed without indictment. Acts of violence are not limited to people and trees.

Amnesty International has denounced that scores of Palestinian-owned sheep as well as gazelles and other animals were poisoned with 2-fluoracetamide near At-Tuwani, a small Palestinian village in south Hebron, on March 22, 2005, depriving Palestinian farmers of their livelihood. As settler violence continues unabated, I cannot but reflect how a people who have suffered so much from intolerance, hatred and outright vandalism would practice those same tactics against those they perceive as their enemies, while in the process brutally dispossessing them of their homes and livelihoods.



# ODVV Statements for the 24th session of Human Right Council

## **Item3 : Contradiction of unilateral and multilateral sanctions with Right to Development principles**

In its first article, the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Right to Development (1986) defines the right to development as follows: “the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realised.” In fact the right to development in this definition has roots in the fundamental concepts of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two International Conventions.

Respecting different views regarding “justice” and “duty” of the right to development, the ODVV deems this group of rights and part of the Third Generation of Human Rights, and sees it as a “right”. From this aspect, not only the right to development is a legal concept, but it is also seen as factors in the realisation of human rights; in a way that we believe that if there is no development or not be in a proportional all inclusive form, the realisation of human rights will rarely take place.

With this approach, whatever is an obstacle in the way of the development of society from five political, civil, economic, social and cultural aspects with the right to development principles, and more importantly, contradicts the two fundamental human rights covenants frameworks.

In fact, examples of the right to development can be seen in many human rights treaties and conventions. Articles 15(2) and 15(4) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, name development as a right Article 15(2) speaks of provisions for the full implementation These commitments include necessary measures for the provision,

protection and development and promotion of science and culture. The main pivot is science and culture which must be considered in three stages of protection, development and promotion. 15(4) deals with the recognition of state parties to the covenant of the benefits from encouragement and expansion of cooperation and international communication with regards to science and culture.

Also the introduction of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women states: “...the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields “ This paragraph considers development in all dimensions, due to a comprehensive concept that with its unique characteristic is not possible without the integrated participation of women.

In many other human rights treaties, wherever there’s word of the necessity of mankind to improve and promote children, women, disabled, the elderly and minorities’ condition, the necessity for the bringing about of suitable conditions for these situations as “inherent and human rights”. For the preservation of human dignity and preservation and bringing about the conditions for a decent life, people have the right to through proportionate - not necessarily equal - enjoy the conditions. With this in mind, the ODVV believes the imposition of unilateral and multilateral sanctions is the blatant violation of the right to development. We believe that sanctions quickly destroy the political, economic, social, cultural and civil infrastructures of a healthy society, and this is in the event that the true reasons behind sanctions, are more political nature than being legal, which will have more destructive effects.

In our view regarding the contradiction of sanctions with the right to development a number of points can be raised:



a) According to paragraph 2 of Article 1 and also paragraph 55 of the Charter of the United Nations, unilateral sanctions in a way have negative effects on the right of the citizens of the target state in the right to self determination. At the same time the punishing sanctions, affect the right to development of the target state, and in the long and short run threaten this right.

b) Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/19/32 (18 April, 2012) clearly bans unilateral coercive measures in the form of economic pressures against a state. Paragraph 3 of the resolution states: “Condemns the continued unilateral application and enforcement by certain powers of such measures as tools of political or economic pressure against any country, particularly against developing countries, with a view to preventing these countries from exercising their right to decide, of their own free will, their own political, economic and social systems:”

Article 9 of the resolution states: “Underlines the fact that unilateral coercive measures are one of the main obstacles to the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development and, in this regard, calls upon all States to avoid the unilateral imposition of economic coercive measures and the extraterritorial application of domestic laws that run counter to the principles of free trade and hamper the development of developing countries:”

c) In the general opinion presented by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2007 regarding the link between economic sanctions and the respect of economic, social and cultural rights, four rights (right to life, right to enjoyment of suitable living standards (food, housing and medical care), right to freedom from hunger and right to health are deemed as the main measures for the determination of the legality levels of economic sanctions. On this basis, it can be concluded that whenever these sanctions violate one of these rights, their inhumanity and contradiction of sanctions with human rights principles will be more justifiable.

d) The banning of the use of economic and sanctions tools against a state and also criticism of aggressive and non-cooperative approaches have repeatedly and glancingly been mentioned in other international documents. For example the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in articles 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 18 speak of rights such as the right to have fair and suitable working conditions, the right to a decent living and right to food, clothing and adequate housing, education, and a right to enjoy advancement in science and technology, the right to enjoy the benefits of the art. These instances show the importance of these rights and the necessity to respect the most basic relations between states.

The ODVV believes that the important point that must be noted when studying the effects of sanctions on human rights, is the reiteration in many documents on the effects of unilateral (like the ones imposed by the United States against Iran on the pretext of nuclear activities) sanctions on the human rights of the target state. In fact lesser attention has been given to the study of the effects of multilateral (such as the ones imposed by the United Nations Security Council and the European Union against Iran) sanctions within international documents. This is in instances where a state, such as Iran, is subjected to both types of sanctions at the same time, and it makes it impossible to distinguish the effects of negative sanctions on the human rights of the people of Iran, while increasing the bad effects of sanctions, receiving their feedback for neutral international observers is very difficult.

It must not be forgotten the issuing of four sanctions documents alone in 2011, and also 5 sanctions documents in 2012 by the United States, is a record unprecedented in the last three decades. These records have been matched by the EU too, where from the beginning of 2013 the total number of Iranian institutions having sanctions imposed on them 40 and the total number of Iranian nationals who have been sanctioned has reached 105.

It must be said that among the America

imposed sanctions, one of the strangest ones, is the new sanctions that were imposed in February 2013, which put pressure on countries that imported oil from Iran, where the money for the purchased oil would be kept in bank accounts in these countries and only be released for purchasing necessary goods for Iran. This factor alongside the numerous problems created by America and the EU in the transfer of money in Iran, has resulted in the import of many vital goods, medicines in particular to be disrupted, and Iran's choice to buy drugs to be restricted to a number of specific countries.

Associating sanctions with the right to development in this statement, the ODVV tied to point out in brief the hidden and visible effects of unilateral and multilateral measures of a limited number of countries against another UN member state, which no body or international document has managed to prove a diversion in the peaceful nuclear activities of Iran. We believe the sanctions have had a huge negative effect on the right to development of the people of Iran; and we call upon the Security Council to adopt a practical measure in the form of a resolution or raising the subject in the Council and review the negative consequences of these measures, and prevent the continuation of the use of these tools to put political pressures on countries.

#### **Item4 :Unilateral Sanctions are Equal to Human Rights Violations**

The imposition of sanctions against Iran by the West, the United States in particular over the recent months on the pretext of Iranian nuclear activities, in such way that not only economic activities, but a major part of the everyday private and social living of the people are affected.

At the same time as the improvement and advancement of general international law and the daily increasing organizing of the international community, the necessity for the gradual transfer of the authority to use punishments from states to international organizations is observed. In fact it is because of this that one of the basic and foundational

principles that formed the United Nations, the promotion of friendly relations, controlling any form of bilateral or multilateral tensions, and finding solutions through talks, research and arbitration of disputes between states. Taking a look at the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and hundreds of other international documents over the last seven decades shows that all of the international community's efforts have been the injection of the spirit of cooperation, equality and friendship among nations so that mankind does not have to experience the evils of war again. What is interesting is that in the rich literature of the United Nations, very little is said about the prescription of legitimacy of economic sanctions, often unilaterally and coercively, Exactly the opposite, most of the prescriptions have been with observation of people's rights, referral to arbitration, investigation, fact finding and wisdom, the necessity for increasing international cooperation and avoidance of unilateral coercive measures (economic and military. This factor becomes more highlighted especially if we consider the human rights approach of these documents.

In fact it can be said that paragraph 2 and 55 of Article 1 of the UN Charter, that unilateral sanctions in a way have negative effects on the right to self determination of the target country. Furthermore these punishment and sanctions collectives affect the right to development of the country, and threaten it in the short and long term basis.

Overall, rights such as the right to life, right to enjoyment of good living standards (including food, clothing, housing and medical care), the right to free of hunger, and the right to good health, are some of the stipulated human rights in the Universal Declaration, which during the imposition of general and or unilateral sanctions, greatly have negative effects on the people of the target country.

The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights governed on friendly relations and cooperation between countries in accordance with the UN Charter, were both important steps taken by the international

community in reaffirming the importance of friendly relations between nations. Overall with consideration of the fact that the guaranteeing of peace and establishment of friendly relations and cooperation of countries is one of the most important goals of the United Nations, then not only all its member states must avoid threats to use of force in their international relations, but they must also avoid actions that undermine international cooperation.

In any event unilateral coercive sanctions and their effects on the enjoyment of human rights, takes part a vast volume of international human rights documentation. In this regard between 1995 and 2013 there have been 6 UN Secretary General reports, 1 UN High Commissioner for Human Rights report, 6 UN Commission on Human Rights reports, and 5 Human Rights Council reports are the basis of the literature on the subject of unilateral coercive measures within the human rights institutions of the UN. In 1989 a resolution entitled Economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries, was drafted by the Countries of the South which in its first proposal received 118 votes for, 23 against and 2 abstains. Until 1995 this resolution alone and after 1996 alongside with the Human Rights and Unilateral Coercive Measure resolution were put to vote in the Third Committee and the UN General Assembly and have always received high votes.

Currently the latest document in this regard is the Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/RES/19/32 of 18 April 2012 which condemns the continued imposition of unilateral measures by some powers as a means of political and economic coercion against a country, particularly developing one.

In spite of the consensus of international organizations in this regard, the United States in the meantime does not stop at these self imposed sanctions, and by using its power, it forces other countries to observe these sanctions which have been devised within US domestic laws. In return this action not

only interferes in the domestic affairs of Iran as the country under sanction, but also other countries are also forced to observe internal American laws and join in these sanctions.

Another point that must be noted is that the US Government's position has been that by imposing targeted sanctions, no harm will be done to the people, while this reason solely shows that America does not want to accept responsibility for the grave violation of rights that these sanctions commit, and diverts world public opinion away from the human rights violations that follow these sanctions.

The results of sanctions against the people of Iran are so obvious that American academic studies confirm that sanctions are the main cause in a rise in prices, currency and shortage of goods.

As a nongovernmental organization active in the field of human rights warn about the consequences of the human rights violations from the imposition of sanctions on the people of Iran; and call upon the Human Rights Council to ensure the commitment of western governments, the United States in particular, to international institutions and international law, and avoid the imposition of unilateral sanctions against the people of Iran.

#### **Item4:Countering the Breeding Grounds of Radical Violence and Terrorism**

Survivors of terrorist acts and families of victims of terrorism have all experienced the state of horror and fear and sustained the pain and sufferings resulted from terrorist attacks. We , reflecting the demands of the victims of terrorism and supporting survivors and families of victims, endeavors to provide the chance for them to attend before public sphere and international assemblies. These victims try to take an active role in the fight against terrorism and supporting victims. Due to the damages they have sustained in terrorist attacks, they pursue their fight against terrorism free from any consideration.

According to the Resolution 49/60 of the UN General Assembly, "criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror for political purposes are in any circumstance

unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them". we, along with international laws, condemns any act of terror and recognizes any support voiced for terrorist groups in contradiction with counterterrorism laws and regulations.

Victims of terrorism, beyond the official lists of foreign terrorist organizations, are concerned about the conduct of terrorist organizations and on this basis declare that:

Terrorist groups,

- so long as have their pugnacious ideology,
- and until they are insisting on their past terrorist background which includes the murder of innocent civilians and taking responsibility of their attacks,
- And while are still safeguarding the same agenda for perpetrating terrorist acts stated in their doctrine,

would be still considered terrorist entities.

Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK/MKO) has resorted to a lot of violent acts against civilians in order to achieve its political and ideological goals. Keeping its aggressive ideology and cultic nature, this group still emphasizes on its doctrine based on which it used to justify the bombings and terrorist attempts. The propaganda activities and the supports made for this cult at international assemblies is the obvious violation of international laws which all clearly have opposed providing any ground for the activities of terrorist groups.

Violation of counterterrorism laws is waiving the rights of the victims of terrorism. Accordingly, supporting Mojahedin-e Khalq is negligence in countering terrorism and ignoring the rights of victims.

According to the Resolution 60/288 of the UN General Assembly adopted on September 20, 2006, appropriate "measures must be undertaken to prevent and combat terrorism, in particular by denying terrorists access to the means to carry out their attacks". Despite, what we are witnessing today about the case of Mojahedin-e Khalq is the total admission and encouragement of terrorism. How could it be

possible that on one hand, terrorism is defined as a means of weakening and destroying the human rights, freedom and democracy but on the other hand, a group which has a file replete with killing a lot of innocent people is being supported under the name of democracy and freedom and promotion of human rights?

Terrorism targets the values of the democratic societies; the support of Parliament of the European Union and the support voiced by the American senators and officials, are all in contrary to the anti-terrorism laws. It is really an unimaginable pain for the families of victims to observe the support offered for Mojahedin-e Khalq by these parliamentarians. The group which has brutally killed many civilians, children and parents, and even assumed the responsibility of those attacks, not only has not been duly punished for its crimes but also is being backed under a double, instrumental approach on terrorism.

The condemnation of terrorism by parliaments and human rights communities, shows the contradiction of terrorism with the fundamental human principles, human rights and humanitarian law principles, and ultimately the fundamental anti-terror laws principles.

The result of supporting this terrorist group which has perpetrated many inhuman terrorist acts is nothing more than weakening the human rights.

Mojahedin-e Khalq has repeatedly violated the existent values of the UN Human Rights Charter including the laws governing the armed conflicts and protection of civilians. For many years MEK has threatened the peace and security of the human beings and targeted many innocent people.

Accordingly, the international community must conduct the immediate intensive efforts for preventing and combating terrorism. Here, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy must take into account some critical issues for stopping the perpetration of terrorist acts. It is worth mentioning that for addressing each of these issues, we can refer to certain institutions and agents:



From the United Nations and all Member States:

There is a strong connection between terrorism and radical cultic inclinations, in a manner that most of the terrorist groups contain their members in their closed structure through mental indoctrinations and brainwashing methods. Preserving the cultic features and insisting on the ideology which allows them to kill or resort to violence, is a terrible threat against the security of the civilians. States must take effective measures in the face of such a danger and hold an extended approach toward terrorist threats and the grounds for the occurrence of terrorist acts.

Adopting a comprehensive definition of terrorism, The United Nations and member states have to take into account the causes of violence appeared specifically in the form of the cults.

By articulating the concerns of this international entity beyond the relocation of members of Mojahedin-e Khalq and recognizing the cultic relations governing this group, confirmed in many international reports including the Human Rights Watch report (2005) and the RAND Institute report (2009), the UN can provide the ground for the freedom of MEK members from this cultic structure.

**The necessity of observing counterterrorism laws and resolutions by Member States:**

According to the UN General Assembly Resolution 60/288, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, before granting asylum, appropriate measures have to be taken by member states, for the purpose of ensuring that the asylum-seeker has not engaged in terrorist activities.

Now how it is possible that countries like Albania and Germany have granted refugee status to the members of this group without any precondition requiring their repentance for their past activities. Even the United Nations has merely focused on the relocation of the group and completely ignored the gross violation of human rights by this group. So, appropriate decisions have to be reached

for suppressing the cultic features of these members too. It is worth mentioning that this cultic aspect offers high potential for this group to commit aggressive violent measures.

**From the International Committee of Red Cross:**

Granting collective asylum to the residents of Camp Liberty, has been the ongoing effort of the leaders of this cult for detaching their members from human rights institutions including the International Committee of Red Cross and therefore protecting the cultic structure of the organization.

Taking necessary steps to return back members of the MEK and reconnecting them with their families is one of the main responsibilities of the ICRC. Considering the existent link between cult and terrorism, ICRC's efforts in this regard, are considered as a critical move for fighting against terrorism and radical violence.

**Countering the breeding grounds of radical violence and terrorism**

We believe that transferring members of Mojahedin-e Khalq from Camp Liberty to third countries is a suitable opportunity for concluding the terrible condition of human rights within this cult and releasing members of MEK. For the realization of this objective, the collaboration of human rights bodies like High Commissioner for Refugees is essential.

**Item 7: Human Rights in Palestine and Other Occupied Territories**

[Paste your statements text here] Human rights violation cases against Palestinians in Occupied Territories rise in number each year. On one hand in pursuit of its interests and objectives, Israel targets international organizations with lobbying and its influence, and on the other hand, not only does it not implement international human rights principles and laws, but it acts contrary to them, and is recognized as one of the most certain violators of human rights. This is while they try very hard to draw public opinion and

present democratic images of itself.

The deliberating point with regards to Israel's human rights violations is the condemnations that it receives from international organizations, particularly the Human Rights Council. In spite of these condemnations, Israel continues to violate human rights. As a nongovernmental human rights organization, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) recommends that while condemning the Israel's grave human rights violations, international organizations must bring about ways to investigate these violations and show international legal reaction towards these grave human rights violations committed by Israel. The following are some examples of human rights violations in the Occupied Territories:

- **Violation of the right to life:** According to human rights organizations' reports, in the first six months of 2013, the IDF abducted 1719 Palestinians and shot dead another 16.

The IDF extensively show violent and disastrous reactions towards Palestinian peaceful demonstrations against the construction of the security barrier and settlements building. For example, in the West Bank, between March and April this year, the IDF killed two civilians and injured another five which included a child and an Irish journalist. Also in June 3 Palestinians who were involved in peaceful demonstrations against settlements construction and the security barrier were injured.

- **Gaza blockade:** The daily economic and living conditions of the residents of Gaza following the blockade of the region have greatly been affected by energy threats. Poverty, hygiene and medical problems, family and street fights, mental disorders such as depression, hidden and visible anger, behavioural disorders and etc. are all the results of energy security crisis. The reduction of fuel imports to the Gaza Strip has even caused problems for the people's cooking. Many hospitals and medical centres cannot provide medical treatment due to power shortages, because they only get 20 percent of the electricity that they need, as a result these

centres are closed most days of the week and cannot provide medical services to patients. The energy crisis in Gaza has also noticeably affected the water supplies.

- **Palestinian prisoners' conditions:** Up to the end of May there were approximately 4800 Palestinian inmates in Israeli prisons, 236 of which were children.

Some sources put the figures for July at 6800, 169 of which were under administrative detention, and were in prison without being tried or charged with any crimes. Most of these individuals are residents of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, among which of course there are women and children. The PA's Prisoners' Affairs Ministry announced that there are at least 235 children in Israeli prisons, and among them there are 35 children below 16.

350 Palestinians in January, 236 in March, 259 in April, 263 in May and 300 in June were abducted and transferred to Israeli prisons. Currently there are 13 Palestinian prisoners on unlimited hunger strikes, and Israeli officials ignore their terrible conditions. Israel has been deemed responsible because of large scale abusive behaviour towards prisoners and must be condemned. The death of Arafat Jeradat in February due to nervous shock and excruciating pain, and injuries as a result of torture and failure to treat him, and also the death of Meysareh Abu Hamdieh in April 2013 are clear examples of the violation of the rights of prisoners committed by Israel.

- **Settlements constructions and Jewfication of Jerusalem:** The illegal settlements construction by Israel in the Occupied Territories is another clear violation of human rights committed against the Palestinians. It is in such way that the majority of European countries and international organizations have opposed and criticized it; nevertheless, Israel has not stopped this trend, and even within the framework of its claims regarding welcoming peace talks, Israel simultaneously continues the construction of settlements.

The illegal settlement constructions take place while Israel has dozens of checkpoints in the West Bank and detains and interrogates

civilians. For example in July this year, around 51 attacks took place against Palestinian assemblies in the West Bank and during this period 15 civilians among which were 8 children (that included one under 5) and 2 civilians from the Gaza Strip were detained at the checkpoints.

**- Demolition of homes and confiscation of lands:** This is another aspect of Israel's human rights violations committed against Palestinians. In the first three months of 2013, one hundred and fifty-five Palestinian properties were demolished in East Jerusalem and the West Bank making 379 individuals homeless. Nevertheless, the confiscation of Palestinian lands is on the increase. For example in May 2013 final warnings were issued to the residents of Ramoon as part of the confiscation of Palestinian lands by Israel. What is interesting is that the warning meant that no money would be given to the landowners.

**- Violation of children's rights:** Children are an important part of the concerns of human rights organizations in Occupied Territories. The IDF actions in arresting and imprisoning children near the security barrier and other regions is the violation of article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Also by failing to do its duty to create a safe and healthy environment for the children of Gaza Strip and military attacks against their schools, Israel violates article 24 of the same Convention, and endangers the mental health of children. It is estimated that in the last 10 years, Israel has imprisoned 7000 Palestinian children between 12 and 17 or been subjected to interrogation. On this basis in the time period from January 2010 to March 2013 there were 14 instances of the use of children as human shields or forced to spy by the IDF were reported to human rights organizations. According to latest until June 2013, 193 Palestinian children were detained or under investigation, 41 of which were between the ages of 12 and 15. It can be said that there's been a 14.6 percent drop compared to the previous year, nevertheless this figure is still the highest in the last 3 years.

**- Violation of Palestinian women's rights:** Women's conditions in Palestine is one of the most blatant violations of human rights in the Occupied Territories. In a ceremony in commemoration of the International Women's Day on 8 March which was held at the United Nations, two videos were shown on Palestinian women's conditions. The effects of extensive demolition of homes and administrative detentions on Palestinian women's mental and physical conditions were points the video clips had concentrated on. Mental and physical pressures and problems in every day life were subjects discussed by the women interviewed in the clips.

**- Freedom of expression:** Journalists in the Occupied Territories are subjected to abuse just for speaking the truth. This only means cracking down on the truth, freedom of speech and silencing of the media in preventing journalists from doing their jobs.

#### **Item9: The Need for Renewed Attention to the Islamophobia Phenomenon**

Islamophobia can be described a enmity and hatred towards them or illogical fear from Muslims. This definition includes discrimination against Muslims in the form of rejecting them from political, economic, social and public life, believing in the subjugation of Islam and Muslims towards the West and the assumption of Islam being a political and violent ideology and not a religion.

In 1996, An independent policy research organisation focusing on equality and justice through the promotion of a successful multi-ethnic society, Runnymede Trust published "Islamophobia: A Challenge for us all" in which as well as the above definition of Islamophobia, it also puts discrimination against Muslims n the form of depriving them from a natural economic, social and public life in this circle.

Although Islamophobia is not a very new phenomenon, but since the early 00s most western societies have been witness to the noticeable expansion of Islamophobia, and many deem the turning point was the 9/11 attacks and a general increase in hating

immigrants in these societies. Nevertheless, the influence of Islamophobic networks in public decision making processes and mainstream media, wrong policies and literature of some western governments towards Muslims, relative use of Islamophobic mentalities in the western media (in comparison to other forms of xenophobia), and historical negative views of Islam and Muslims all have played important roles and created an environment of anti-Islamic sentiments in these societies.

For example according to a poll in 2010, only 37 percent of Americans had positive views of Islam, and according to another poll in the same year around one third of American voters believed that Muslims should not be allowed to run for president. This trend is on the rise in America, to an extent that in 2011 Americans' positive views towards Islam has dropped to 30 percent.

According to the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, regarding intolerance, prejudice and discrimination in Europe also, often times Europeans do not have positive views of Muslims and Islam, a trend that is stronger in Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, with France, Britain and the Netherlands ranking next.

This negative view has resulted in the formation of extremist groups in America and Europe, who have been campaigning to increase pressure on Muslims and also justify their aggressive policies. According to a report called "The Right Wing Playbook on Anti-Muslim Extremism", these groups in America use the following eight guidelines to create suspicion against Islam as a religion and the Muslim community in America:

Strategy One: Frame Muslim-Americans as dangerous to America

Strategy Two: Twist statistics and use fake research to "prove" the Muslim threat

Strategy Three: Invent the danger of "creeping Sharia"

Strategy Four: "Defend liberty" by taking freedoms away from Muslims

Strategy Five: Claim that Islam is not a religion

Strategy Six: Maintain that Muslims have no First Amendment rights under the Constitution

Strategy Seven: Link anti-Muslim prejudice to anti-Obama rhetoric

Strategy Eight: Claim an "unholy alliance" exists that includes Muslims and other groups targeted by the Right Wing

Overall Islamophobia can be defined as a world view with a view based on unreasonable hatred of Islam and Muslims which ends in rejection, deprivation, discrimination and written, spoken and practiced violence against them. The roots of these attitudes existed prior to the 9/11 attacks, and the assumption of Islamophobia being solely a product of these attacks is unrealistic. Just as reducing it to racist tendencies of west's extremists groups is not credible.

Nonetheless, Islamophobia turned more visible and aggressive following the 9/11 attacks and it was during this period that the terms "Islamic terrorism" or "Jihadist terrorism" found new places. The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) the 9/11 attacks gave a new life to enmity towards Muslims, and increased hatred and violence, violence that went farther than just physical violence, and in a more extensive form and in the form of a bad image, verbal abuse and appears in an atmosphere of created fear. The findings of this report stresses on the "deep and rooted nature of Islamophobia and Xenophobia" and shows that anti-Islamic trends have numerous resources and have different outwardly examples.

But alongside Islamophobia there is another creeping disaster called sectarian tensions on the rise, especially in the Middle East region, a clear example of which is the rise in Salafist ideology. This has resulted in a rise in the last few months in the number of sectarian attacks in unrest regions such as Syria, Iraq or Egypt against Christian and particularly Shia minorities by religious extremists. In fact after years of historical efforts to marginalise the Shia in the regional countries, after years of international organizations turning their blind eyes, have now turned into official policies of religious extremists, and a number of ME regional governments such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. For example during its years of rule in



Iraq, the Baathist regime - despite being secular - had turned the Shia majority population of the country to a marginalised community. Discrimination against the Shia escalated when following the 1991 uprising, the Saddam Hussein regime began its organized crackdown on the Shia. Following the fall of Saddam, Al Qaeda and its regional backers, with the reasoning that the Shia government of Iraq cooperates with Washington, they turned it into a part of their anti-American war. As a result bombings began in Shia towns in Iraq began, and the Shia holies shrines and hundreds of their pilgrims became victims of Al Qaeda and its regional supporters' violence in such way that the Shia turned into the main victims of sectarian violence in Iraq.

Pakistan is another country that has witnessed a gradual rise in sectarian tensions over the last two decades. Over the recent years the killing of Shias has taken a new form and routine. Some of the examples of the killing of the Shia in Pakistan is the bombing in 2008 that left 45 dead, the 2009 Karachi bombing that left 46 dead, the 2010 bombing of a religious ceremony that left 49 dead, the Kowaiteh bombing in 2010 on Quds Day that left 80 dead, the suicide bombing in Pachenar in 2012 that left 50 dead. It is clear that the terror attacks against the Shia which is a noticeable minority in the country takes place on a daily and weekly basis, and the aforementioned only include the big terror attacks.

The Shia minority in Saudi Arabia who live in the biggest province (Al-Sharqia) of the country, have almost all the country's oil in their regions; a wealth that in comparison to non-Shia citizens they benefit less from. The Shia sect in Arabia, which is one of the oldest sects in the country is not even recognised as an official Islamic sect by the Saudi rulers, and therefore the Shia are deprived from the benefits of other monotheist religions (Judaism and Christianity) in the country, and most often are deemed Kafirs (infidels) by the Wahabi religious leaders who have the official religious body under their control and consult and advise the king.

Another important regional country that

has sectarian tension on the rise is Bahrain, a country with a majority 80 percent Shia population under the rule of the Al-Kahalifa Shia minority and discrimination takes place in various forms. The Sunni minority in Bahrain has all regime high political positions in its hands, and the Shia are only hired in the lowest echelons of power. The security and military forces of the country is in the hands of the minority. Under these conditions political crackdown turns into sectarian crackdown, and the majority are marginalised and alongside being deprived of the benefits of the minority, are cracked down and do not have the right to any form of dissent.

Therefore with a brief review of the political and regime situation in the Middle East the high potentials for sectarian tension among the people of the region can be noticed. The ODVV believes that if international human rights bodies had timely intervened and taken proper measures against religious extremism, the roots of most of these problems would have been dried both in the Middle East and the West. The United Nations failure in timely and genuine concentration on the subject of dialogue among civilizations and religions, and also failure in serious confrontation with any form of insulting individuals religions, and failing to clarify the boundaries between freedom of expression and defamation have all resulted in most of these dormant processes to rejuvenate again.

Our NGO believes that if the Human Rights Council does not take resolute action that is away from political observations and tendencies against these evil phenomena, in the coming years cases of human rights violations due to sectarian and religious tensions will take the number one spot at the Council.

[http://a.abcnews.go.com/images/US/ht\\_cordoba\\_house\\_100908.pdf](http://a.abcnews.go.com/images/US/ht_cordoba_house_100908.pdf)

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2011799,00.html>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/24/muslim-america\\_n\\_935685.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/24/muslim-america_n_935685.html)

<http://europenews.dk/en/node/50157>

<http://www.pfaw.org/rww-in-focus/the-right-wing-playbook-anti-muslim-etremism>

# Human Rights News

## **IRAN: UN EXPERT HAILS RELEASE OF RIGHTS DEFENDERS, URGES GOVERNMENT TO FREE THE REST**

23 September 2013

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, has welcomed the recent release of a number of prisoners of conscience, and renewed his call for the release of hundreds of other prisoners detained “solely for exercising their rights to freedoms of expression, association and assembly.”

“This recent step taken by the Iranian Government to release more than a dozen prisoners of conscience, including Nasrin Sotoudeh, a prominent human rights activist and lawyer, is a step in the right direction in advancing Iran’s international human rights obligations,” Mr. Shaheed said. Among those released last week were Ms. Mahboubeh Karami, human rights activist and member of the One Million Signatures Campaign, and Ms. Jila Karamzadeh-Makvandi, supporter of the Mourning Mothers of Laleh Park. Stressing the pivotal role of lawyers and human rights defenders in society, the Special Rapporteur called on the Iranian authorities to release other detained lawyers and human rights activists. These include Mr. Abdolfattah Soltani and Mr. Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, who are currently serving sentences for charges that are believed to be related to their work as human rights defenders. He renewed his call on the Government to engage meaningfully and constructively with the United Nations human rights system to improve the country’s human rights record. He expressed hope that there will be opportunities for dialogue with the administration of President Rouhani and reiterated his continued interest in visiting

Iran. Since his appointment in August 2011, Mr. Shaheed has made several official requests to the Government of Iran to visit the country.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\\_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear\\_en\)/65D7B05C358480DEC1257BEF0037BF12?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/65D7B05C358480DEC1257BEF0037BF12?OpenDocument)

## **UN HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICIAL ENDORSES CALL FOR CANADIAN INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN**



October 15, 2013

OTTAWA — A United Nations human rights investigator says the federal government should set up a national inquiry into the issue of murdered and missing aboriginal women in Canada.

James Anaya, the UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, spent the last nine days touring the country, talking to aboriginals and both federal and provincial government officials.

He says governments have pledged a number of steps to deal with the problem of hundreds of missing aboriginal women, but First Nations people lack confidence in that process.

“One community I visited has suffered a suicide every six weeks since the start of this year,” Anaya said Tuesday. Anaya says a national

inquiry would ensure a co-ordinated response to the problem and allow the families of victims to be heard. He says such an inquiry would also demonstrate a responsiveness to aboriginal concerns.

It is estimated there are close to 600 cases of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada dating back to the 1960s, a phenomenon Anaya describes as disturbing. Anaya also urged the federal government not to rush an aboriginal education reform bill. He said, "... I urge the government not to rush forward with this legislation but to re-initiate discussions with aboriginal leaders to develop a process and ultimately a bill that addresses aboriginal concerns and incorporates aboriginal view points."

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2013/10/15/un-human-rights-official-endorses-call-for-canadian-inquiry-into-missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women/>

## **UNITED NATIONS REPORT URGES END TO TORTURE IN LIBYA THROUGH TRANSFER OF DETAINEES TO EFFECTIVE STATE CONTROL**



1 October 2013

**G**ENEVA (1 October 2013) – The United Nations on Tuesday issued a report about the torture and ill-treatment of detainees in Libya, recommending swift action to transfer

detainees held by armed brigades to effective State control and renewed efforts to build the capacity of the criminal justice system.

The report is issued jointly by the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in implementation of UNSMIL's mandate of assisting Libyans in promoting human rights. This includes supporting Libyan efforts against arbitrary detention and torture, by monitoring abuses in detention centres, advocating for remedial action, advising on judicial reform and building the capacity of Libya's corrections system. The report is based on information gathered first-hand during UNSMIL's visits to nearly 30 detention centres over two years, including information from detainees, family members, officials and civil society, as well as documentation such as medical reports.

The report indicates that torture is widespread and most frequent immediately after arrest and during the first days of interrogation to extract confessions and other information. Detainees are usually held without access to lawyers and with only occasional, if any, access to families. The vast majority of the estimated 8,000 conflict-related detainees are also being held without due process. The report records 27 cases of death in custody, where significant information suggests that torture was the cause of death, since late 2011. The UN also received information on several other such cases during this period but was not able to fully document them. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said that torture was a key tool of the previous repressive regime in Libya and called for full accountability for the crimes of the past and for ongoing abuses.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\\_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear\\_en\)/16B2D245BFC8DD8DC125](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/16B2D245BFC8DD8DC125)

# Human Rights News

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## SAUDI ARABIA: EMPTY PROMISES AS CRACKDOWN INTENSIFIES

SOURCE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S PHILIP LUTHER 21 OCTOBER 2013



Saudi Arabia has failed on every count to live up to its promises to address the dire human rights situation in the country, said Amnesty International.

An Amnesty International submission ahead of a UN meeting in Geneva on Monday to scrutinize the country's human rights record details an ongoing crackdown including arbitrary arrests and detention, unfair trials, torture and other ill-treatment over the past four years.

The Saudi Arabian authorities have failed to implement any of the main recommendations from the last review by the UN Human Rights Council – known as the Universal Periodic Review – which took place in 2009.

“For all the peaceful activists that have been arbitrary detained, tortured or imprisoned in Saudi Arabia since, the international community has a duty to hold the authorities to account.”

Torture and other ill-treatment during detention are rife in Saudi Arabia and carried out with impunity. Some of the common methods used include punching, beating with sticks, suspension from the ceiling or cell doors by the ankles or wrists, application of electric shocks to the body, prolonged sleep deprivation and being placed in cold cells.

The heavy reliance by the courts on “confessions” often extracted under torture, duress or deception

has entrenched such abuses.

Many of these violations – against human rights defenders, protesters, Shi'a citizens, men and women – have taken place under the guise of security or counter-terrorism measures.

Other human rights violations committed by the Saudi Arabian authorities documented in Amnesty International's report include: The systemic discrimination of women in both law and practice; The abuse of migrant workers; Discrimination against minority groups such as Shi'a Muslims ; Executions based on summary trials and “confessions” extracted under torture; Torture and other ill-treatment.

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/saudi-arabia-empty-promises-crackdown-intensifies-2013-10-18>

## DRONE ATTACKS: UN RIGHTS EXPERTS EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT THE POTENTIAL ILLEGAL USE OF ARMED DRONES



25 October 2013

Two United Nations human rights experts today expressed concern about the potential illegal use of armed drones. ...The experts called upon States to be transparent in their use of drones as weapons, to investigate allegations of violations of the right to life through drone killings, and to respect all ... international law standards.



The United Nations Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism, Ben Emmerson, focuses his report on the use of armed drones in counter-terrorism operations and its civilian impact. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, Christof Heyns, analyses in his report the use of lethal force through armed drones from the perspective of the right to life and international norms in this regard.

### **Civilian impact and the right to life**

“I urge States to declassify, to the maximum extent possible, information relevant to their lethal extra-territorial counter-terrorism operations and to release its own data on the level of civilian casualties inflicted through the use of drones,” the United Nations expert on counter-terrorism said.

Mr. Emmerson is currently investigating the use of drones in lethal extra-territorial counter-terrorism operations to evaluate allegations that the increasing use of drones has caused disproportionate civilian casualties

### **Legal issues**

“Both States using drones and States on whose territory drones are used have their own obligations to respect international standards and prevent violations,” Mr. Heyns pointed out. “There is no need for new law,” the human rights expert says in his report, cautioning against the wide and permissive interpretations of the current international rules and standards.

### **Accountability and transparency**

“States must be transparent about the development, acquisition and use of armed drones. They must publicly disclose the legal basis for the use of drones, operational responsibility, criteria for targeting, impact (including civilian casualties), and information about alleged violations, investigations and prosecutions”, Mr. Heyns urged.

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/\(httpNewsByYear\\_en\)/472940F06150DB72C1257C0F00534CD1?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/(httpNewsByYear_en)/472940F06150DB72C1257C0F00534CD1?OpenDocument)

## **UN adopts UPR report on Israel**



The report demands Israel to treat all citizens equally, to end all discriminative applications, ill treatments and torture and leave illegal enforcement in holy places of Islam and Christianity. 02 November 2013

UN Human Rights Council’s “Universal Periodic Review” on Israel has been completed with a report adopted today.

Human rights breaches of Israel, which were identified by many countries and suggestions to end those breaches, were included in the report.

Lifting the death penalty, establishing sexual equality, permitting the formation of an independent human rights agency in the country and cooperation with all international human rights mechanisms are among the suggestions in the report. The report also demands Israel to treat all citizens equally, end all discriminative applications, ill treatments and torture and leave illegal enforcement in holy places of Islam and Christianity. UN Human Rights Council carries out “Universal Periodic Review” on all countries in every four years. Israel’s review was originally planned to be made on 29 January 2013 but when the council formed a special commission to review Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, Israel had boycotted the meetings.

The report adopted by the UN Human Rights Council today calls for Israel to release all Palestinian, Syrian and Arab detainees in the

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country, leave occupied Palestinian and Arab soil, end the blockade on the Gaza Strip and stop opening new Jewish settlements in occupied lands.

Israel is expected to reply to the report in a session to be held on March 2014.

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=121998>.

## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH: SAUDI SHIITE ACTIVISTS GETS 13-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE, 15-YEAR TRAVEL BAN



December 19, 2013 Associated Press

**D**UBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – A Human Rights Watch researcher says a judge in Saudi Arabia has sentenced a prominent Shiite political activist to 13 years in prison and a 15-year travel ban.

Adam Coogle told The Associated Press that Adel al-Labbad was convicted Thursday. Coogle says activists in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, including relatives and people close to the case, confirmed the sentence.

State media did not report the sentence, nor has the judgment been published.

Al-Labbad faced five charges, including disobedience to the ruler, disturbing public order and joining a terrorist group.

Coogle says the charge that al-Labbad is a member of the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain dates back to the 1980s before he and others struck an amnesty deal with the late Saudi King Fahd in 1993.

[www.foxnews.com/.../human-rights-watch-saudi-s](http://www.foxnews.com/.../human-rights-watch-saudi-s)

## SETTING OUR HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD STRAIGHT



**T**he Malaysian Government underwent the second Universal Periodic Review on Oct 24. BY SHAILA KOSHY December 1, 2013

At Malaysia's 2nd UPR in Geneva on Oct 24, the Government received 232 recommendations from 104 member states – which says a lot about Malaysia's human rights record. (See [http://www.upr-info.org/IMG/pdf/a\\_hrc\\_wg.6\\_17\\_1.8\\_malaysia.pdf](http://www.upr-info.org/IMG/pdf/a_hrc_wg.6_17_1.8_malaysia.pdf))

The top five clusters of recommendations offer suggestions about: accession of international human rights treaties (28 recommendations); review death penalty, (20); healthcare (17); anti-trafficking in persons (14); and right to education (13).

In an interview, Suhakam chairman Tan Sri Hasmy Agam noted that although some members commended the Government's repeal of the Internal Security Act and Emergency Ordinances, only a few had expressed concern over the recent amendments to the Prevention of Crime Act which were "retrogressive and inconsistent with human rights principles."

By March 2014, the Government must indicate which of the 232 recommendations it will support. A cluster of recommendations called for a review of the death penalty, including a moratorium with

a view to abolishing the death penalty.

Hasmy also, called for greater interfaith dialogue. “We should move beyond tolerance in Malaysia to understanding and respecting differences, that is, differences of behaviour, lifestyles, religious principles... so we understand where we are coming from and why people are sensitive about certain things.”

Urging the Government to finalise the National Human Rights Action Plan as soon as possible, he expressed hope the Government’s statement of pledges in March would be ambitious but doable.

“Statements like ‘steps have been taken or are being taken’ don’t go down too well,” he added.

Malaysians will have to wait and see whether the Government cares about its reputation in the international sand-box.

<http://www.thestar.com.my/News/ation/2013/12/01/Setting-our-human-rights-record-straight.aspx/>

## UN EXPERTS ON TORTURE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM EXPRESS CONCERN OVER PROPOSED OFFICIAL INQUIRY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



26 December 2013

**G**ENEVA (24 December 2013): Two United Nations independent human rights experts today welcomed the publication of parts of Sir Peter Gibson’s interim report,

an official investigation into the extent of the United Kingdom’s involvement in torture and other human rights violations concerning people detained overseas in the context of counter-terrorism operations.

However, the United Nations Special Rapporteurs on torture, Juan E. Méndez, and the Special Rapporteur on the protection and promotion of human rights while countering terrorism, Ben Emmerson, expressed concern that a proposed official inquiry is to be entrusted to a parliamentary body, the Intelligence and Security Committee.

Mr. Emmerson said: “I am concerned that this proposal appears to have been abandoned in favour of a purely parliamentary inquiry which is likely to suffer from many of the same procedural shortcomings,” he warned. “I urge the British authorities to ensure that the fresh inquiry is given the powers it needs to get at the truth.”

Special Rapporteur Méndez also expressed disappointment that the inquiry would now be handed to the parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee to examine and complete the investigations, as announced by the Minister without Portfolio Ken Clarke.

The expert stressed that United Kingdom Government also is obliged to hold responsible, bring to justice and punish all those who encourage, order, tolerate or perpetrate such acts, including the officials in charge of the place of detention where the prohibited act is found to have been committed.

Mr. Emmerson and Mr. Méndez will follow up with the United Kingdom Government over the terms of reference and powers of the Intelligence and Security Committee inquiry, with a view to determining whether it is capable of meeting international minimum standards.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\\_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear\\_en\)/FA33D1AB4986D00EC1257C4D00365F0A?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/FA33D1AB4986D00EC1257C4D00365F0A?OpenDocument)



# Human Rights News

## UN EXPERTS CONDEMN LETHAL DRONE AIRSTRIKES IN YEMEN



26 December 2013

**G**ENEVA (26 December 2013) – United Nations human rights experts today expressed serious concern about recent lethal drone airstrikes, allegedly conducted by US forces in the Republic of Yemen, that resulted in civilian casualties.

According to local security officials, 16 civilians were killed and at least 10 injured when two separate wedding processions were hit on 12 December in Al-Baida Governorate. The victims had been mistakenly identified as members of Al-Qaeda, the officials said.

Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan Méndez also expressed concern about the legitimacy of the airstrikes, highlighting that each State was obliged to undertake due investigation into the reported incidents, including the effect on civilians.

“A deadly attack on illegitimate targets amounts to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment if, as in this case, it results in serious physical or mental pain and suffering for the innocent victims,” Mr. Méndez said. Mr. Heyns stressed the need for accountability when drones were used. He called on the two States involved, the US and Yemen, to disclose whether they were responsible, and if so, what targeting standards were used, how

many civilians were killed, and whether they plan to provide compensation for the victims’ families.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\\_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear\\_en\)/892D6D842A4ADA13C1257C4D0055A131?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/892D6D842A4ADA13C1257C4D0055A131?OpenDocument)

## IN PICTURES: WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



**T**he good news is, however, that they do change and usually in a progressive direction. Seen from this perspective, 2013 brought some notable advances.

In Congo, the UN peacekeeping force, criticized for 14 years of passivity, launched its Forward Intervention Brigade. Fighting alongside government troops, it forced the M23 militia, responsible for numerous rapes and killings, to announce a cessation of hostilities. The French acted similarly when they beat back an Al Qaeda-affiliated militia in Mali. Such actions would have been far less likely before the UN adopted its 2005 resolution on the Responsibility to Protect, affirming the international community’s obligation to protect civilians at risk from war crimes, thereby shifting the norm regarding when active military intervention is appropriate.



Or consider Myanmar's decision to release hundreds of political prisoners. Though the country, also known as Burma, is still battling with Karen rebels and has done far too little to protect the Rohingya Muslims from attack by Buddhist extremists, Burmese President Thein Sein knows that his campaign for international acceptance will be unsuccessful if his country continues to imprison peaceful political dissenters. Would a world indifferent to human rights have taken a young Pakistani girl named Malala Yousafzai to its heart when Taliban gunmen shot her as payback for her advocacy of women's education? Malala became the first girl nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. In her neighboring India, public outrage over the fatal gang rape of a woman in Delhi resulted in improved, if still highly flawed, new laws against rape.

And in the US Maryland became the 18th state to abolish the death penalty. The public demonstrations in Ukraine now reflect not only the attraction of European Union-style freedoms but a resurgence of the "people power" that flourished a decade ago in that country. Perhaps most remarkable is China's announcement that it will abolish "reeducation through labor camps," into which tens of thousands of Chinese citizens have been thrown without trial, often for the pettiest alleged offenses. It is too early to tell whether this is a harbinger of larger changes in China. But abolition would never have occurred absent a growing international insistence that to be a "great power" means to allow those accused of crimes a chance to defend themselves, as the US has learned at Guantánamo Bay.

Those who wrote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 65 years ago knew that they would not live to see the world transformed to their full liking, but they had faith that it would gravitate

in the direction they envisioned. It is impossible to compare the world of 1948 to today and not be convinced that indeed it has.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2013/1231/Human-rights-progress-took-a-winding-road-in-2013>

## HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRESS TOOK A WINDING ROAD IN 2013



December 31, 2013

Though the past 65 years have brought clear progress, a close-up look at the status of human rights today isn't as encouraging. But change takes time. From this view, 2013 brought some notable advances.

When the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 65 years ago, the most genocidal war in modern history had ended only three years earlier. Racial segregation was still the law in much of the United States, the Gulag prison system was active in the Soviet Union, and apartheid reigned in South Africa. By those standards human rights progress since has been huge.

But if we zero in on human rights today, the picture isn't as encouraging. The Arab Spring has

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turned to winter. Russia is a democracy in name only. The Syrian civil war is taking an enormous toll, especially on children. The UN Refugee Agency estimates that there are 43.7 million refugees or internally displaced people around the world due to conflict and violence. And the US Senate appears reluctant to ratify even the noncontroversial Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

But whoever said that the achievement of respect for human rights would proceed quickly or in a linear fashion? Indeed, the advancement of human rights is largely dependent on changes in norms. For better or worse, those norms change gradually, sometimes advancing, sometimes regressing.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/layout/set/r14/Commentary/Opinion/2013/1231/Human-rights-progress-took-a-winding-road-in-2013>

## UK LEAVING ECHR 'WOULD BE DISASTER'



January 14, 2014 by Julianna Chatterton

The president of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has warned that it would be a “political disaster” for the UK to quit the human rights convention.

Prime Minister David Cameron should “be very

careful not to risk [Britain’s] credibility”, Dean Spielmann argued.

UK Justice Secretary Chris Grayling has spoken openly of the possibility of defying an ECHR ruling on prisoners’ right to vote.

This would be a “violation of international law”, the judge said. But he declined to comment on the “political question” of whether the UK would be thrown out of the Council of Europe – the international institution that oversees the European Convention on Human Rights – if it did defy the prisoner votes ruling. The UK has been on a collision course with Strasbourg since 2005, when the ECHR ruled that a ban on all prisoners voting was a breach of human rights, following a challenge by convicted killer John Hirst.

In February last year, MPs voted by 234 to 22 to keep the blanket ban, in response to a government proposal to give the vote to offenders handed a custodial sentence of less than four years.

Mr Grayling has told MPs they ultimately have the power to maintain the current ban, but there would be a “political cost” in doing so. In an interview for the BBC’s HARDtalk programme, Judge Spielmann said: “It is of course a problem if a country with a long-standing tradition of protecting human rights – and I would like also to pay tribute to the work which is done by the UK in the rest of the world promoting human rights – that this country would not comply with the rule of law.

Mr Cameron has vowed that inmates will not be given the right to vote under his government, saying the idea makes him feel “physically sick”.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-25726319#sa-ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_source=PublicRSS20-sa](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-25726319#sa-ns_mchannel=rss&ns_source=PublicRSS20-sa)

## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH SAYS OBAMA NOT GONE FAR ENOUGH ON NSA REFORMS



21 Jan. 2014 Michelle Martin Reuters

**B**ERLIN (Reuters) - U.S. President Barack Obama has not gone far enough in reforming the monitoring activities of the National Security Agency (NSA) and is continuing to violate the privacy rights of individuals, the head of Human Rights Watch told Reuters. On Friday, Obama banned eavesdropping on the leaders of allies and began reining in the vast collection of U.S. citizens' phone data, seeking to reassure Americans and foreigners that the United States would take into account privacy concerns highlighted by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden's revelations.

But Kenneth Roth, executive director of the New York-based group, told Reuters in Berlin that Obama had provided little more than "vague assurance" on the monitoring of communications.

Obama said last week that collecting telephone records under Section 215 of the Patriot Act involved gathering phone numbers, times and durations of calls and said this metadata "can be queried if and when we have a reasonable suspicion that a particular number is linked to a terrorist organization".

"In the end, there will be no safe haven if privacy

is seen as a strictly domestic issue, subject to many carve-outs and lax or non-existent oversight," said Dinah PoKempner, General Counsel at HRW. <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-usa-security-rights-20140121,0,5471834.story>

## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH: TURKEY "INCREASINGLY AUTOCRATIC"



January 21, 2014

Howard Eissenstat Department of History, St. Lawrence University

**H**uman Rights Watch issued its annual report today. The section on Turkey notes some positive steps, including a reform package, efforts at a peace process with Kurds in Turkey, and the hosting of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees. Nonetheless, the overall landscape of Turkish human rights is grim: In office for three terms since 2002, and enjoying a strong parliamentary majority, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) has demonstrated a growing intolerance of political opposition, public protest, and critical media. Positive steps included ending the headscarf ban for women in the civil service; signaling that the 10 percent election threshold that has kept minority parties out of parliament will be lowered; and easing the restriction on mother-tongue education by permitting it in private schools. However, Human Rights Watch highlighted the limits of these reforms: Reforms undertaken in 2013 did not remedy the situation of the thousands of prosecutions of individuals on

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charges of “membership of an armed organization”... Demonstrating the government’s widespread misuse of terrorism laws... hundreds of Kurdish political activists, elected mayors, parliamentarians, officials of the Peace and Democracy Party, students, and lawyers have been in prison for long periods... during their trials for association with the KCK. The human rights defender Muharrem Erbey has spent four years in prison on these charges.

<http://humanrightsturkey.org/2014/01/21/human-rights-watch-turkey-increasingly-autocratic/>

PalestineThe most alarming BDS demand to Zionists is the right of return for Palestinian refugees kicked out in 1948 and their descendants. Their rhetoric, describing a “flood” of Palestinian refugees, is tinged with racism, a fear of the hordes of Muslims and Arabs coming to displace Jews. Aspects of this fear, though, are legitimate, as BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights acknowledged in a report, co-issued with Zochrot, on practical approaches to refugee return.

<http://mondoweiss.net/2014/01/leaders-palestinian-compatible.html>

## BDS LEADERS SAY PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ARE COMPATIBLE WITH ISRAELI JEWISH FUTURE



January 21, 2014

A survey of some of the leading Palestinian supporters of BDS reveals a starkly vision: a shared future in Israel/Palestine, where the rights of everyone are upheld. “Freedom, justice and equality, the ultimate goals of the BDS movement, would only ‘destroy’ an unjust regime, not harm any humans. BDS opposes all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism, advocates for equal rights for all humans,” said Omar Barghouti, a Palestinian human rights activist and a co-founder of ... BDS movement for Palestinian rights. “The Zionist paranoia, ..., about BDS aiming to ‘remove Jewish Israelis from the region’ is clearly based on myth and a long record of Zionist ethnic cleansing and destruction of Palestinian society. ...”

Interviews with BDS advocates show that what the movement takes aim at is Jewish privilege at the expense of the rights of Palestinians. Yet that does not translate into destroying Jewish life in Israel/

## EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS WILL HEAR CASE ABOUT GCHQ SPYING



Fri, Jan 24, 2014

This is huge news: the European Court of Human Rights has agreed to hear a challenge to bulk Internet surveillance by the UK spy agency GCHQ. The case was brought by Big Brother Watch, the Open Rights Group and English PEN, and German Internet activist Constanze Kurz. This is a rare instance of “impact litigation” in the UK, where a bad law or practice can be ended swiftly and decisively by having a court hear a test-case about the law and rule on its constitutionality. This tactic has been incredibly effective in the US -- EFF’s famous Bernstein victory, which legalized strong cryptography, is a good example -- but has been less available to UK activists.ORG and the other organisations in the suit are raising a war-chest to pay for the expensive business of suing the British government in a Brussels Strasbourg court. At stake is the principle that innocent people, suspected of no crime, have the



right to go about their daily business without having all their communications, associations, and activities surveilled and added to giant dossiers maintained by secret government agencies.

<http://boingboing.net/2014/01/24/european-court-of-human-rights.html>

## IRAN RELEASES REPORT ON US HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS



Mon Jan 27, 2014

**T**EHHRAN (FNA)- Iran's Basij (Volunteer) Force released a comprehensive report on the violation of human rights by the US within the country and abroad. The report was unveiled in a ceremony on Monday participated by Commander of Iran's Basij Force Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Naqdi, Lieutenant Commander of Basji (Volunteer) Force Ahmad Esfandiari, Parliament's First Vice-Speaker Hassan Aboutorabi Fard, Iranian Judiciary Chief Sadeq Amoli Larijani and a number of Judiciary officials and experts.

The report refers to different cases of violation of human rights by the US, including the executions, arbitrary detentions, torture of inmates, violation of people's privacy, violation of the rights of the minorities, Muslims and native Americans, racism and US President Barack Obama's opposition to the freedom of expression.

The report also mentions human right violations in Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, and Bagram prisons committed by the US government.

## UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW: SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES OF CHILD RIGHTS ADVOCACY



27 January 2014

**T**he Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is an inter-governmental human rights review within the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The UPR assesses the extent to which governments are meeting their obligations to protect, respect and fulfill human rights, including child rights, in their countries. Save the Children has seized the opportunity of the UPR from the outset (2008) to raise the profile of children's rights, by engaging directly in reporting and advocacy or supporting child rights coalitions. "Universal Periodic Review: Successful examples of child rights advocacy" provides valuable insights for future child rights advocates wanting to engage in the UPR process and more generally in child rights monitoring and advocacy. This document includes eight case studies (Nepal, Philippines, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Peru, Zambia, Bangladesh and Mali,) which give good practices examples of Save the Children's engagement in UPR reporting and advocacy. It sheds light on the different strategies used to push forward child rights priorities to influence UPR recommendations. It also provides some pointers on how the UPR recommendations can reinforce existing advocacy efforts and be integrated into follow-up plans to track their implementation. Key success factors and lessons learned were drawn to capitalise on the experience from these countries over the last 6 years, and inspire others to replicate these approaches in order to maximise advocacy outcomes and impact for children.

<http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/universal-periodic-review-successful-examples-child-rights-advocacy>



# ODVV

## Activities

### **Promotion of the Capacity and Effectiveness of NGOs in the UPR on Iran**

Following the formation and the new work of the Human Rights Council in 2007, called the Universal Periodic Review, The ODVV drew up a project based on the promotion of the capacity and effectiveness of Iranian NGOs in the UPR process, and subsequently the drafting and organization of a wide range of education, research and information dissemination activities regarding the presence of Iranian NGOs and the role they can play in the mechanism.

While holding extensive thematic researches regarding the human rights situation of countries under review and sending relevant reports, this NGO in the first round of the UPR held capacity building and increase the role of nongovernmental organizations in the UPR, and facilitated the participation of a vast number of Iranian NGOs in this mechanism.

Subsequently in the second round of the UPR too the ODVV due to its mission that it has defined towards the promotion of the role and effectiveness of the

Islamic Republic of Iran in the UPR, designed a project for the promotion of the capacity and effectiveness of NGOs in the second round of the UPR. In this project it has been tried to base all education and research activities based on the recommendations accepted by Iran, because the second round of the UPR is based on the recommendations of the first round.

ODVV activities include:

- Extensive research on the human rights situation in countries and preparation of statements and reports to be submitted to the Human Rights Council and UPR.
- Holding educational courses
- Holding of colloquiums with the Iranian authorities
- Holding of meetings with those involved on the subject of human rights in Iran in Geneva.
- Participation in Human Rights Council Sessions.
- Participation in UPR Sessions.

## A Workshop on Introduction to UN Human Rights Mechanisms and Writing Reports for Iran UPR



Introduction to UN Human Rights Mechanisms and Report Writing for the UPR on Iran Workshop was held by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence.

These courses are designed through a continued careful planning with the aim of the promotion of the capacity of NGOs, introducing UPR mechanism to them and describing the role they can play in the mechanism. In the workshop, UN human right mechanisms such as “human right bodies, and treaties” were introduced

to NGOs in general and “The Human Right Council and UPR mechanism” were discussed in particular. The first round of UPR was described, reviewed, the second round UPR was discussed and it was mentioned that in the second round, countries will be reviewed based on the accepted recommendations. The workshop had been planned for 30 NGOs, but due to their eagerness 80 NGOs applied for the workshop which was planned in two sessions instead of one, so that all NGOs could take part.

## Starting the Campaign of Solidarity against Inhuman Economic Sanctions [www.isais.org](http://www.isais.org)

Increase of inhuman economic sanctions against Iranian people with the excuse of stopping Iran’s nuclear activities has made the people face a lot of economic problems, lack of medicine and medical equipment. So, ODVV wrote a statement title: “International Solidarity against Inhuman Sanctions.” Hundreds of NGOs, human right activists joined the chorus of protest and signed the statement on July 2013 in [www.isais.org](http://www.isais.org). The statement was translated to English, French, Arabic and German. The web site which is still running was signed by more than a thousand organization and people, visited by 40,000. The statement signed by NGOs and human right activists was sent to international human right bodies.





## Participation in the 24th Session of the Human Rights Council



Just as all previous Sessions, the ODVV took an active and extensive part in the 24th Session of the HRC. The Session was held from 9 to 27 September 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. With consideration of the Session agenda, the ODVV planned a program through holding of sidelines panels, meeting with those involved, NGO empowerment and submission of written and oral statements.

Also in line with the empowerment of non-governmental organizations at the international level, ODVV facilitated the participation of 8 Iranian NGOs in this session and for the enjoyment of the existing capacities, took responsibility for representation of 2 NGOs in consultative status to

- Oral and Written Statements

Two weeks prior to the start of the Session ODVV submitted 5 written statements on the following Items of the Agenda and subjects: Item 3 on the right to development; Item 4 on the role of western countries in violation of human rights through economic sanctions against Iran; Item 6 a review on UPR mechanism; Item 7 violation of human rights in the Palestinian Occupied Territories; and Item 9 general debate; item 3 general debate and item 4 human rights in Syria.

- Side Panel on Islamophobia and Violation of Human Rights

ODVV had a panel on Islamophobia and Violation of Human Rights in Palace de Nations, Geneva, on September 18th, 2013, at the same time as The Human Rights Council 24th session. The panel was organized by ODVV in cooperation with Lebanon Saint Jones University and Lebanon National University. 4 lecturers of the mentioned universities delivered their speeches in the panel which was attended by 60 audiences, in room XXIII. The topics discussed included: Islamophobia, facts, implications and expected roles; Islamophobia, fear of religion, fear of the religious; and Islamophobia, a new facet of the history of the relationship between Islam and the West.

- Side panel on Shia Minorities Rights

Side panel on Shia Minorities Rights was also held simultaneous with The Human Rights Council 24th session in Palace de Nations, Geneva, room XXII on September 19th, 2013. The topics discussed included: violation of Shia rights, a case study of Syria; violation of Shia rights as genocide, a case study of Pakistan; and violation of Shia rights in Bahrain. 4 university lecturers delivered their speeches in the panel which was attended by 53 audiences.



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

A workshop on Studying violence form a transactional analysis (TA) view point was held in October 2013. The workshop was attended by 42 human right advocates and activists. The issues discussed included the principles of transactional analysis theory, such as the ego-state (Parent-Adult-Child) model, and the Games.

### **Commemoration of the International Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse**



The education workshop on the pathology of abusive parents, and psychotherapeutic new treatments for abused children was held on the International Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse in October 2013. In this workshop which was held in the presence of child and juvenile doctors and psychologists, the UN Secretary General's message for the day was read by the UNIC in Iran representative. Soft child abuse was the main subject of the attention of the education



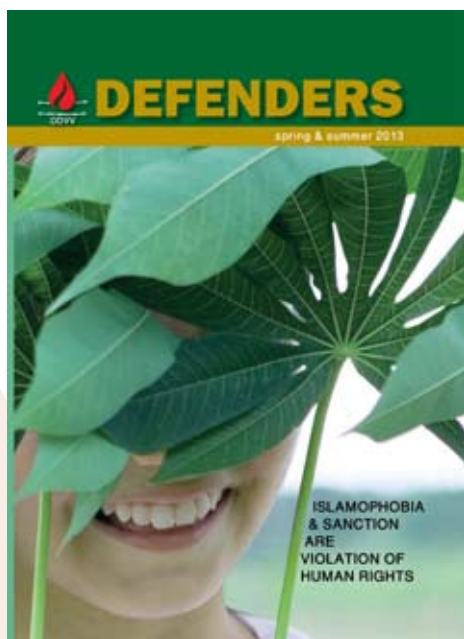
workshop. In this workshop also the characteristic-cognitive and communication of abusive parents in soft child abuse were reviewed and discussed.

### **Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**

The education workshop on emergency treatments in working with victims of spouse abuses was held on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was held by the ODVV and the cooperation of the Tehran Medical Sciences University Psychiatric Institute in November 2013. In this workshop in which 100 psychiatrists, doctors and nongovernmental organizations experts, and social emergency experts of the Welfare Organization, the UN Secretary General's message for the day was red by the representative from UNIC in Iran. In this workshop common intervention models in spouse



abuse (short term and long term interventions), influential individuals in prevention models, spouse abuse in primary healthcare and the primary healthcare models in Iran were discussed.



### **Publishing Defenders (Spring-Summer) 2013**

Defenders (Spring-Summer) 2013 was published in 52 pages, on human right issues such as Islamophobia and condemnation of human rights violations.

The articles discuss islamophobia, violation of Shia minority rights, international economic sanctions against Iran and their effects on the lives of Iranian people. Attempts are also made to illustrate human rights situation in Iran, in the published reports, articles and notes.

### **CD of Islamophobia**

This CD which is in English includes the following subjects: Islamophobia Facts, Implications and Expected Roles; Religiophobia Fear of Religion, Fear of the Religious; Islamophobia A New Facet in the History of the Relationship Between Islam and the West; The Sectarian Unrest in Syria A Genocide in the Making against Shia Muslim; Shia Muslim Genocide and its Roots in Pakistan's Legal System and Constitution System; Sectarian Intolerance and Discrimination in Bahrain.



### **Multimedia CD on ODVV activities**

ODVV products that include books, Defenders biannual, photo galleries, annual reports, documentaries and videos of projects run by ODVV are made available on a multimedia CD.



ODVV and Society of Iranian Women  
Advocating Sustainable Development of  
Environment are Holding a panel on:



# Islamophobia and the Violation of Human Rights

Thursday 13 March 2014  
10:30 - 12:30  
Palais De Nations at Geneva  
Room : VIII

Panelists:

**Dr. Mohamad Zaraket**  
**Dr . Julien Pelissier**  
**Mr. Majid Majidi**



Organization for Defending Victims of  
Violence is Holding a panel on:

## Violation of the Rights of Shia Minorities

### Shia Minorities: Victims of Violence and Extremism

Friday 14 March 2014  
16:00 - 18:00  
Palais De Nations at Geneva  
Room VII

Panelists:

**Heiner Bielefeldt** (Special Rapporteur on freedom of Religion or belief)  
**William O. Beeman** (Professor of Anthropology at The University of Minnesota and Stanford University, USA)  
**May El Khansa** (Chief of International Coalition Against Impunity)  
**Mohammed Isa Altajer** (Human Rights Lawyer)

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



Organization for Defending  
Victims of Violence