



# DEFENDERS

Spring-Summer 2012



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## Editorial

The second round of the UPRs have begun under circumstances where the concerned eyes of human rights activists still witness grave violations of human rights in all corners of the world, the most concerning ones of which occur in Syria, Bahrain and Myanmar. As the most important monitoring tool for the Human Rights Council, the PUR mechanism through monitoring, promotion and protection of human rights has tried to have a function based on dialogue and cooperation with states; and the review of the human rights situation of countries based on reliable information, and equal treatment of all states. Now how much in practice has the UPR mechanism been able to stick to these methods and its practice on this basis results in the improvement of human rights, is something that can be answered in the second round process of the recommendations.

As nongovernmental organization active in human rights, the ODVV tries to plan its activities in line with national and international human rights decisions and developments.

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

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

Understanding the importance of the above in the promotion of human rights, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) has concentrated its programmes on the accepted recommendations of the UPR on Iran, and taking an initiative on the subject and designed educational, research and promotional projects on this basis.

While planning its activities in line with the recommendations, the ODVV has also placed on its agenda interaction with governmental departments and holding of colloquium sittings. Also playing the role of facilitator for other NGOs whose activities are also on the accepted recommendations, is in the working agenda of the ODVV.

The thing that is covered in this issue of Defenders is a report of the ODVV's activities in line with the accepted recommendations of the UPR on Iran. As stated earlier, the grave violation of human rights in these countries is not a subject that human rights activists can easily put aside. For this reason, parts of this issue are dedicated to articles on the issues. The written and oral statements submitted to the Human Rights Council, reports of technical sittings and education workshops which are some of ODVV's recent activities and human rights developments around the world are also included in this issue.



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

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Understanding the importance of the above in the promotion of human rights, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) has concentrated its programmes on the accepted recommendations of the UPR on Iran, and taking an initiative on the subject and designed educational, research and promotional projects on this basis.

For this purpose, being in Special Consultative Status to ECOSOC, the ODVV has placed in its working agenda the "Action in Response to

Accepted Recommendations of the UPR on Iran" project.

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

After technical reviews of the specialised subjects of the recommendations (human rights, development, international commitments, discrimination, international system, correct judicial process, social, economic and cultural rights, education, women, children, the disabled, minorities, civil and political rights) have been categorised. These subjects have been considered in this project in five groups:

- 1 – Human rights data and links
- 2 – Iran's human rights commitments in accordance with international conventions.

3 – Nongovernmental human rights institutions and organizations

4 – Bilateral cooperation with the international community especially the Human Rights Council

5 – Human rights approach in development programmes

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

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

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

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

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



**Understanding the importance of the above in the promotion of human rights, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) has concentrated its programmes on the accepted recommendations of the UPR on Iran, and taking an initiative on the subject and designed educational, research and promotional projects on this basis.**

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

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

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

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



**Overall it is expected for the participants to while getting introduced to the general guidelines of project formulation, to also practice the ability to design projects in line with the accepted recommendations.**

compiled in Farsi and English and presented to international organizations, as one of the outputs of these activities.

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

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

Depending on their field of activity, NGOs can prepare and implement a number of these projects. The ODVV plays the facilitator role for NGOs who can prepare projects in line with the accepted recommendation of the UPR on Iran.

For this purpose the ODVV has designed and implemented the project formulation in line with the accepted recommendations of the URR on Iran education courses.

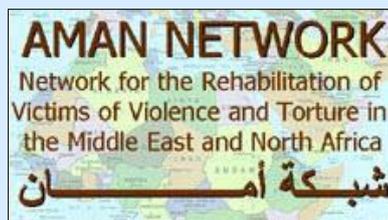
This course was made up of 6 workshops in three inconsecutive days and separate from each other. On the first day the workshop was entirely dedicated to the review of the accepted recommendations and an overall review of the project formulation procedure. Next in a working group method the subject, objective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

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

Overall it is expected for the participants to while getting introduced to the general guidelines of project formulation, to also practice the ability to design projects in line with the accepted recommendations.

While compiling their projects, the participants are in constant interaction with the ODVV experts. Also a model in accordance with national and international standards for the purpose of the compilation of implementing projects of NGOs was prepared by the ODVV experts and given to the participants.

# AMAN Network



Although international humanitarian law and human rights have always under all circumstances condemn crimes against humanity and torture in particular, but existing realities show that grave violations of human rights, torture and mistreatment take place in more than half the countries of the world. There is a notable lack of balance between anti-torture and other cruel, inhuman treatments laws and the real statistics of its extent in today's world which confirm the fact that nongovernmental organizations and especially governments must promptly take measures in the proper understanding of the subject and fulfil effective measures for the prevention of torture and protection of people against human rights violations.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions have always been focal points of various crises and developments, and due to particular strategic sensitivities, the regions have always been the centre of attention of the world. In many instances these sensitivities have resulted in other countries interferences, the establishment of police systems in the region and as a result grave violations of human rights including torture take place in the regional countries. In view of these realities, the AMAN Network which is made up of rehabilitation centres for victims of torture and violence in the MENA region, was set up following the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) conference in Cyprus in 1999 followed by conference in Egypt.

Presently there are centres from Sudan, Lebanon, Iran, Morocco, Palestine, and Bahrain that are members of this Network and the membership application of a number of other countries of the region are currently under review.

AMMAN Network has had several different ups and downs periods; but despite the existence of various national and international challenges it has been able to hold several conferences in member countries. One of the achievements of the Network was the setting up of a secretariat to guide the Network which was set up in its 11th conference held in December 2007 with the attendance of the majority of the members. Currently the elected members of the secretariat are from Khiam Centre from Lebanon (secretary general) Organization for Defending Victims of Violence from Iran (first deputy), and the Centre for the Rehabilitation of Torture Victims from Morocco (second deputy), which have held a number of meetings in Lebanon, Iran and Morocco for the improvement of the function of the Network.

In a meeting in July 2012, of the secretariat members in Tehran, it was decided to hold a colloquium sitting and further strengthening of the Network with all its members in Geneva coinciding with the 21st Session of the Human Rights Council in September. This sitting will be an opportunity to while reviewing the human rights situation of different member countries, to also hold meetings with other international organizations, and also the internal issues of the Network to be reviewed so that the members can find suitable solutions in facing their problems and issues.

Some of the objectives of this Network are as follows:

- Support for rehabilitation centres in the MENA region
- Exchange of information and experiences.
- Holding of education programmes for rehabilitation centres.
- Establishment of links with important human rights institutions such as the UNHCHR, thematic special rapporteurs and the International Fund in Support of Torture Victims.
- Monitoring human rights situations at national and international levels, and information dissemination in this regard.

# International Sanctions: Violator of the Right to Development

By:  
Reza Shirzadi  
Member of Islamic Azad  
University Science Group  
(Karaj)

The international sanctions against Iran and their increased intensity over the last few months, which are imposed on the pretext of the nuclear issue, have an economic and financial concentration in an unprecedented way, that have not only affected the people of Iran economically, but all their social living aspects have also been affected.

The economic sanctions against Iran and their tightening up through the latest UN Security Council Resolution, without a doubt is a real incident and effective in the long run, and these sanctions have already increased the pain and suffering of the people. On the other hand, since the Iranian economy is tied with major international trading, is affected by sanctions by international banks. In the recent years Iranian international trade has been high towards domestic gross production. The total volume of international trade of the Iranian economy is approximately over 150 billion dollars. If the ratio of the domestic gross production which is over 280 billion dollars is taken into consideration, the rate of Iran's foreign trade is over 50 percent, and puts it in the top countries.

Therefore it can be said that Iran's economy is almost international, and has a lot of international trading. Although the major part of this trade is on one hand based on oil exports and on the other hand goods imports, but this volume of trade can also bring about numerous problems for the Iranian economy. What is important

here is that the economic growth of a country is facilitated through extensive intercommunications with international financial institutes, and sanctions by these institutes, will reduce the economic facilities of the country, be it the private or government sector.

Furthermore, the costs of trading will also rise. Therefore as well as suitable services and opportunities will not be available in different parts of the Iranian economy, higher costs must also be tolerated, and in this way the economy of the country must continue its life with minimal opportunities and maximum costs. Overall by creating a high risk environment, sanctions reduce inclinations for investment in economy and its output levels, and the inflation that has come about through these conditions, over the recent months has practically entered the lives of the people in such way that all sectors of society with all income levels do feel the bite of the rising prices within the country. Therefore the Iranian economy's move towards development is at a very slow pace.

Overall the far reaching effects of the economic sanctions of a country can be reviewed from two angles. The first is the economic growth and development of a country requires to access production factors from different resources which can have satisfactory results in the economic growth. Therefore, in any event economy requires investment, up to date technology, raw materials,

managerial and organizational resources and skilled manpower which in the framework of production factors and with suitable combination can create an economic activity in various sectors such as agricultural and services.

Today no country in the world relies solely on its domestic resources as production factors, but they are reliant on international resources in order to increase their production power and try to use foreign resources many times more than domestic ones. In this event the first overall effect of sanctions is the reduction of international resources. In other words when sanctioned production factors outside of national boundaries will not enter the domestic. As a result, economy cannot be positioned in the development and growth rush through solely relying on domestic resources. Furthermore a healthy economy will have increased competing power through presence in the international markets, and reach growth, and if it does not have a share of the global markets, the economy will gradually have inflation; and by distancing from competitive atmosphere and will lose its practicality.

At the same time getting a share of international markets requires the existence of normal conditions in the domestic and international political atmosphere. If a country is placed under sanctions, it cannot have a suitable share of the international markets, and therefore loses its competitiveness too. Therefore overall sanctions will on one hand reduce the presentation of resources and production factors, and also with the reduction in the share of the global markets, the distance between a country with other neighbouring countries will gradually increase, the manifestation of these two become visible in the reduction of the economic growth of the country. Thus the reduction in economic development is one of the main effects of sanctions.

In one definition, economic sanctions

include the use of economic relations and cooperation for the provision of political objectives or in other terms economic sanctions include hostile measures which are done by a group of countries against another country which violate international laws, and or accepted moral standards are violated. With regards to economic sanctions, countries that support sanctions try in three ways to deal a blow against the country under sanctions:

- a) Restrictions on exports
- b) Restrictions on imports
- c) Preventing the continuation of



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free financial flows (such as financial provisions of trade, International Bank and IMF credits, and bilateral assistance), such as the blocking of the investments of the country under sanctions, which are done through the monitoring of countries that impose sanctions.

Due to various reasons the imposing of financial sanctions are more effective than trade sanctions, because:

1 – States and international financial institutions, are the main providers or guarantors of financial flows for developing countries.



**From the International Law viewpoint, economic sanctions include: “Coordinated sanctions imposed by an authorised body and legally for restrictions upon international trade and finance that one country imposes on another to hurt the economic life of a specific country.” This definition is proposed regardless of legality or illegality, morality or immorality aspects. Sanctions that violate the fundamental economic and social rights of people (and in some instances even the right to life), are illegal.**

2 – Private financial markets are more legalised in comparison to goods markets.

3 – Very few of the major players in the international financial markets are active. Therefore it is much easier to monitor these markets and prevent them from committing possible violations against the imposed sanctions, which is simpler than measures taken in international trade arena.

4 – The tricks in cutting around international financial sanctions is much more difficult and more costly than other measures such as trafficking in goods, storing of goods, reduction of transparency in the registration of customs and duty orders and the like by the country under sanctions.

5 – The market forces also facilitate the strengthening of international financial sanctions, and at the same time prepare the basis for the gradual weakening of trade sanctions. The violation of trade sanctions in a few instances will at the most result in the confiscation of goods trafficked to the country under sanctions, but the violation of these sanctions in the financial, private

bankers and investors sections will threaten them with serious punishments that include legal punishments and the loss of all investments.

6 – Limited risk factors in international investors following political instabilities due to the country being under sanctions, forces them to avoid financial credit to the country even with no existing international monitoring.

7 – The major part of trade and other economic activities in today’s economies and the age of the globalisation of economy is dependent on access to financial resources, and the trading of goods for goods gradually becomes obsolete. Therefore financial sanctions must be treated as the most important dangers in economic sanctions.

From the objectives aspects, economic sanctions are two types: 1) economic sanctions are imposed with the aim of the destabilisation of the political system of the target country, which are from the conflict with the strategic interests of the imposing country and the target country. These type of sanctions’ objective is a regime change. 2) Economic sanctions are imposed with the aim of the political or economic behaviour of the target country. These types of sanctions are much gentler than the first type. When countries are after regime change the first type of sanctions are imposed with the aim of dealing a heavy blow on the target country’s interests. In fact these types of sanctions in practice are economic sanctions that are alternatives to war, and are in fact deemed as “pre-war” options.

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Sanctions that violate the fundamental economic and social rights of people (and in some instances even the right to life), are illegal.

Even the authority that are accorded by Article 8 of the UN Charter, does not give the Security Council the right to take such measures. People have fundamental human rights which states and international organizations have officially recognised and are committed to observe them. This is while some these rights are ignorable in specific conditions such as emergency conditions. But some of the other right from universal aspects are inviolable, and must be observed under all circumstances. The effects of economic sanctions can be reviewed in the individual legal and natural human rights reflection that include: the right to life, torture and other cruel behaviour and treatment ban, the right to the provision of basic needs (food, shelter, clothes, hygiene, needed social services and provision of social security, the right to family life, employment, health, education, free participation in cultural life of society, enjoyment of the arts and participation in scientific advancements, right to receive information, the right to free participation in determination of the political fate of one's government.

The hurting of the economy of a country from outside with the dissatisfaction of the people of the country is also violator of a number of collective rights that include the right to self determination, the right to free access to economic, social and cultural development, and collective right to development. The prohibition on the export of goods can be a serious obstacle in the exploitation of human rights where it is done by depriving people from importing their fundamental goods.

The majority of United Nations declarations and resolutions stress on the point that the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights is an inalienable part of human dignity. The Vienna Declaration

and Programme of Actions (25 June 1994) reaffirms that the right to development is “a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights.”

Also Article 1(a) of the Declaration on the Right to Development states: “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 realized.” Under the heading of “Human Rights and Coercive Unilateral Measures” clearly “Considers that the adoption or intensification of unilateral coercive measures constitutes a violation of the human rights of peoples;”.

Today, with an increase in mutual economic dependency of states, the strengthening and expansion of international trade, is not only an economic necessity, but also its political importance is not doubtable, and right now it is accepted as one of the international law objectives. In today's world no country can reach a total economic self sufficiency level, and the dependency of countries to each other is unavoidable. Under these circumstances, international trade relations are accepted by all as one of the essentials of the international community. For the first time in the framework of the Havana Charter (1947) which was ratified by participating states in the United Nations International Trade Conference, principles such as the reduction of tariffs were recommended for the purpose of the further expansion of international trade between states.

Following the adoption of the Charter and according to it, talks were held on the reduction of existing obstacles in trade between countries, all of which were indicative of the fact that states particular attention was towards international trade and the necessity of its provision. The aim and objective of international trade was not solely for the fulfilment of the parties' trade



With regards to the costs of sanctions it must be said that the first toll is time and energy spent for changing trade and financial equations. This cost is imposed on both sides. The changes in the markets have time and financial costs. While this change has to bear the price costs too. Similar goods are purchased with higher prices due to sanctions. Therefore the purchase power of money is reduced too.

needs, but the aim was for if in cases one of the parties was a developing country, for trade not to be used as economic development tool. There is no doubt that trade will be effective in the event that the governing trade system to consider the existing inequalities between industrially developed countries and developing countries.

The Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States which was adopted in 1974 by the UN General Assembly, and contains governing principles on economic new order. “International cooperation for development in the shared goal and common duty of all States. Every State should co-operate with the efforts of developing countries to accelerate their economic and social development by providing favourable external conditions and by extending active assistance to them, consistent with their development needs and objectives, with strict respect for the sovereign equality of States and free of any conditions derogating from their sovereignty.”

Under these circumstances the severing and reestablishment of trade relations cannot remain in the competence of states, and in practice development and advancement of international law with regards to economy

for the purpose of the recognition of “trade rights” is in the interests of every member of the international community and the aforementioned Charter stresses this point.

In the final analysis with consideration of the recent developments in international law which is based on the necessity for further expansion of international cooperation in all fields, particularly trade, in fair and just conditions, states are duty bound to refrain from resorting to any measures which are contradictory to international cooperation. Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations fleetingly reaffirms this necessity, and states: “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.”

There is no doubt that international cooperation is one of the main objectives of the United Nations and economic sanctions seriously undermine international cooperation, and are contrary to the spirit of the new economic order at the international level.

With regards to the costs of sanctions it must be said that the first toll is time and energy spent for changing trade and financial equations. This cost is imposed on both sides. The changes in the markets have time and financial costs. While this change has to bear the price costs too. Similar goods are purchased with higher prices due to sanctions. Therefore the purchase power of money is reduced too. For the country that imposes the sanction, the loss of the sales market and provision of financial services, is the cost of imposing the sanctions. In any event, for numerous reasons such as the noninterference principle, free trade principle, various international commitments, international responsibility order, human rights and right to development, international sanctions are illegal and illegitimate.

# Violation of Myanmar's Muslims' Human Rights



By:  
Mahmoodreza  
Golshanpazhooh

The human rights violations of the Muslim minority in Myanmar was one of the issues that stirred up the emotions of the world Muslim community, particularly from June this year. The publication of news, images and statistics of these acts of violence committed against the Muslims of Myanmar, resulted in the drawing of the attention of a part of the Muslim community towards the problems and issues of this forgotten minority group. This article tries to highlight a number of these issues separately.

First: Unfortunately due to diversity and at times conflicting reports regarding how the violence in the Muslim populated region began, the writer's efforts to finding the truth of the story within the published and very diverse documents and news, were futile. In one story, which has been brought up by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, claims began with the rape and murder of a Buddhist woman on 28 May, resulting in the arrest of 3 Muslims and charged with the crime by the police. In retaliation, 10 Muslims were killed on 3 June and sparks of violence ignited. Another version which has been proposed by the Muslims of Myanmar is that the rape incident is made up by Buddhist zealots to justify the violence and massacre that's been committed against the Rohingya Muslim minorities leaving at least 80 people dead. In this version, Buddhists are guilty of the rape of Muslim women and arrest of educated youths and their transference to undisclosed locations.

In any event, aside from how the violence started, what is certain is the age old discrimination against the Rohingya Muslims for almost a century, has resulted in the terrible living conditions of approximately 1 million minorities that are stateless between the two Myanmar and Bangladesh



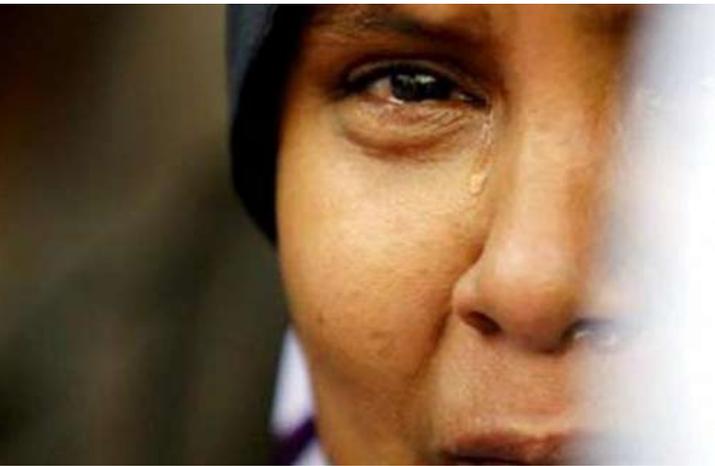
neighbouring countries, alongside the turning of blind eye of the Myanmar security forces against the organized violence committed by the local Buddhists, and the indifference and inaction of the Myanmar government in determination of the fate of this minority, and the indifference of the Bangladeshi government towards the subject.

Second: The figures for those killed and made homeless is also very varied. Until 28 July 2012, the UN put the death figures at 78, and for the homeless at 70 thousand; although the statement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights puts the unofficial figures as much higher. These figures have been put at 160 in the words of the Iranian Foreign Minister. The figures announced by the OIC Secretary General the figure's put at close to 1000, and more than 90 thousand homeless. And independent nongovernmental organizations have said thousands have been killed and hundreds of thousands made homeless.

Third: The subject of the violation of Muslim minorities rights in Myanmar is deeply rooted, apparently, following the independence of Myanmar (then Burma) in



Also the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation of Myanmar made a trip to the region in late July and a fact finding report is to be prepared and submitted to the Human Rights Council.



says: “In 1978, Myanmar forced 300 thousand Muslims into Bangladesh, and in 1982 the government suspended the citizenship of Muslims and declared these people illegal immigrants.” He further adds that in 1992 the government drove approximately 300 thousand Muslims back to Bangladesh. To this aim the Myanmar government is using calculated policies to eradicate Muslims and through family planning programmes, is trying to restrict the remaining population further and further. An important point to note is the recent remarks of the Myanmar president regarding the unrests. He said that there are only two solutions: one to expel all Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar, or their resettlement in a third country by the United Nations, something which was immediately dismissed by the UN. The existence of this attitude among Myanmar high ranking officials can clear the depth and continuation of this tragedy for any observer.

Fourth: A look at the volume and diversity of reactions in this regard, clears several points. The most important reaction from international organizations was from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pella’s which with condemnation of the massacres, received reports from independent sources which were indicative of the discriminatory actions taken by the Myanmar security forces, and even their participation in the riots. According to Ms. Pella the reports show that the reaction Myanmar officials towards the clashes of the clashes initially was with the aim of suppression of Muslims. Also the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation of Myanmar made a trip to the region in late July and a fact finding report is to be prepared and submitted to the Human Rights Council. At official levels, the majority and most resolute condemnations have been done by Iranian officials. In the most important reactions, the Supreme Leader in parts of his speech during his visit with the country’s Koranic society on the first day of the holy month of Ramadan said: “Today thousands of human beings are killed in Myanmar due to prejudice and ignorance, while those that claim to human rights do not utter a word, and the same

1948, the Constitution that was written, makes it impossible for the Rohingya Muslims to become Myanmar citizens. Apparently the excuse behind this is that the ancestors of these minorities have not lived in the country prior to the 19th Century (although according to existing evidence, Muslims believe their presence in Burma (now Myanmar) dates back to the 9th Century). This argument has resulted in their being considered “stateless”, and the atmosphere for their exploitation by extremist elements from this situation and also the indifference and inaction of Myanmar security forces and even Bangladesh, has come about. Presently one of the reasons in the rise in the number of deaths, the prevention of Bangladeshi border guards from allowing these Muslims into the country as refugees. It is on this basis that people who speak in support of the Rohingya Muslims have repeatedly said that for years discrimination, oppression and violence have been committed against them by Buddhist extremists and the Myanmar military government. For example the director of one of Rohingya organizations

people who are compassionate about animals well being, here they stay silent against the killing of innocent people and justify it.” The interesting point that the Supreme leader 21 years ago in the first few days of Ramadan coinciding with the first round of pressures against the Muslims of Myanmar in his 1991 speech had said: “This condition of the poor oppressed Muslims of Myanmar where tens of thousands of people today live in terrible conditions in Bangladesh, our representatives went there and came back and gave us some reports which makes sleep go away. How much today the world is ignorant to human rights in its true meaning? Doesn’t anyone speak up in the world? A bunch of marching boots have driven thousands of Myanmar Muslims out of their homes in the most terrible ways; killing women children and men; plundering their properties; anyone who’s been able to, has fled. The world is ignorant. Neither the United Nations nor the Human Rights Committee do not speak up, neither the ICRC feels responsible, nor the deceptive human rights conferences and institutions and defenders of peace and so forth, speak up. Aren’t these people human beings? This animosity against Islam and Islamic concepts and values shows that how ignorant they are towards human beings. And what is said about human rights and these forms of measures is nothing but politically motivated, only to beat someone down somewhere, make someone big, weaken a state, and remove a people from the scene.”

Some of the reactions made on the latest Myanmar developments came from figures such as Davoud Oghlu the Turkish Foreign Minister with his Bangladeshi counterpart, the remarks and letters sent by Islamic Cooperation Organization Secretary General, Ehsan Oghlu to Myanmar officials and Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung Sun Suchi, and the stance of the Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesperson, and a number of religious leaders from Islamic countries, are some of the limited reactions taken on this issue. Against this there the popular protests in Pakistan, Turkey, Iran and some other Islamic and European countries

have been more highlighted.

Fifth: The double standards debate in human rights debates is one of the subjects that has always existed and in view of the current situation of international dynamics, it doesn’t seem that this problem is going away soon. The point that the West has remained silent on the situation in Myanmar and preferred to preserve its newly reestablished relations with Myanmar to the human rights violations of the Ruingian Muslims, is not a subject that can be denied. It seems the United States is apprehensive of any action that might drives this country towards its next door neighbour China, and feels that a move that began a year ago towards the improvement of relations with Myanmar and the moves that the rulers of the country have made towards western democracy must under no circumstances be stalled. However it seems that a number of measures must be taken on this:

a) If the movements of Islamic countries can take place in the framework of the Islamic Cooperation Organization, they will be more effective. Alongside the recent actions of the Secretary General a conference held by Islamic countries, and condemnation of the acts in Myanmar and calling upon the authorities to accept a fact finding group from the Islamic Cooperation Organization to investigate the incidents, would be suitable movements.

b) In the event of the continuation of this situation and following the publication of the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, Islamic countries can request the UN Security Council to hold an emergency session. These types of sessions can be held with the request of 16 members of the Council, and in the event of the holding of the session, it can be deemed an effective tool to raise attention of the international community towards these killings, and the further action by international organizations. This matter in particularly can have significant importance when based on the report of the Special Rapporteur, through existing evidence and documentation, “ethnic cleansing” and “genocide” can be associated to acts committed by the Myanmar security forces.

Following the formation and expansion of change and democracy seeking movements across the Arab world, a wave of crackdowns and pressure targeted human rights. Many people were deprived of their rightful rights during these crack downs. One of these countries is Bahrian, which we will discuss further case by case of human rights and international norms violations.

A row of black silhouettes of people's heads and shoulders with their hands raised in the air, set against a white background. This graphic is positioned above the main title.

Human Rights Violations in

# Bahrain

A photograph of a group of people, mostly men, looking towards the camera. The image is heavily stylized with a red and orange color palette and a high-contrast, almost posterized effect. It occupies the bottom half of the page.

**DEFENDERS** 16

Spring  
Summer 2012

### **Freedom of expression and belief**

In its 2011 annual report on human rights situations around the world, the US Department of State, mentions the critical conditions of human rights in Bahrain that include murder and imprisonment of intellectuals and critics, obstacles in the way of civil liberties that include freedom of expression, press, association, establishment of unions, and holding of religious services. Also there are many other instances which all question the limit of freedom of expression and belief of the people of Bahrain.

### **Freedom of association and demonstration**

According to the BBC the anti-government protests in Bahrain started in February 2011 with the assembly of protesters in the squares of the capital Manama. These protests were cracked down with the assistance of Saudi and other Persian Gulf regional countries' military.

The number of those killed by the police from the beginning of the protests till March 2011 was reported at 24. Also according to Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) report states 114 cases of tear gas inhalation complaints at medical centres, and stresses: the excessive use of force and violence, as well as leaving numerous deaths and injuries among the Bahraini people, have also caused disabilities and irreversible damages to pregnant women.

Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and articles 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 24(6) of the Arabic Human Rights Charter speak clearly in this regard.

#### **Right to life and personal safety**

According to the report of the BCHR the use of excessive force by the security forces to disperse protests in the country has left 44 dead and injured. Amnesty International report confirms this fact.

The BICI report which was reviewed and pub-



**According to BCHR report published on 26 March 2012, it mentions 31 deaths that took place after the BICI report, 20 of which were as a result of suffixation from inhaling tear gas. There are no independent courts to conduct autopsies and doctors falsify cause of deaths. The number of people killed in Bahrain in comparison to other Arab Awakening countries might be as high, but what is important is the hundreds of killed an injured (some of these injuries being very serious) is high in proportion to the population of the country.**

lished until 10 December 2011, states an accurate statistic of the deaths in Bahrain:

13 deaths linked to security forces; 8 deaths that have not been associated to specific criminals; 5 deaths as a result of torture; 4 foreign worker deaths; 11 extrajudicial deaths.

According to BCHR report published on 26 March 2012, it mentions 31 deaths that took place after the BICI report, 20 of which were as a result of suffixation from inhaling tear gas. There are no independent courts to conduct autopsies and doctors falsify cause of deaths. The number of people killed in Bahrain in comparison to other Arab Awakening countries might be as high, but what is important is the hundreds of killed an injured (some of these injuries being very serious) is high in proportion to the population of the country. Also the BCHR has declared that in the recent months there have been lots of reports of miscarriages in restful regions where they received tear

gas. According to this centre's records, 21 miscarriages have been reported to the centre over the last 8 months.

Article 3 of the UDHR and ICCPR and articles 6(1) and 6(5) of the Arabic Human Rights Charter, all stress on aforementioned rights.

### **Right to health and hygiene**

The Bahraini security forces had taken over the control of the Salmanieh Medical Centre, the main hospital of Manama, so that injured protesters would not have access to medical care. The International Committee of the Red Cross had criticised the situation. Also doctors who treated the injured were prosecuted for reporting human rights violations to the international community and refusing not to treat the patients, contrary to the security forces wishes. The patients of Salmanieh Hospital gave reports to the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights that the hospital had been turned into a prison by the security forces and the patients were being tortured.

Médecins Sans Frontières has reported that many of the patients with serious injuries while their lives being in danger refused to go hospital to seek treatment out of fear. Amnesty International report indicates that dozens of doctors and nurses had been arrested in their homes or hospital. Also many of the injured who had gone to hospital for treatment were arrested and did not get their medical treatment. Human Rights Watch reported that due to attacks to medical care unites and medical services centres in April a number of patients died in prison due to neglect.

Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary-general, called King Hamad of the Persian Gulf state to express his "deepest concern" about Bahrain's use of force, which allegedly includes security forces preventing doctors from treating injured protesters.

The secretary-general, who called during a visit to Guatemala, "expressed his deepest concern over reports of excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the security forces and police in Bahrain against unarmed civilians, including, allegedly, against medical personnel," a UN statement said.

He also "noted that such actions could be in breach of international humanitarian and human rights law".

Valerie Amos, the UN's deputy secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, urged security forces "to refrain from excessive use of force, and to respect medical facilities and ensure the treatment of wounded persons".

Navi Pillay, the UN rights chief, said any take-over by the security forces of hospitals and medical facilities was a "blatant violation of international law... This is shocking and illegal conduct".

Article 25(1) of the UDHR, article 12 of the ICESCR, and articles 39 and 40 of the Arabic Human Rights Charter all recognise these rights.

### **Destruction of Cultural Buildings**

According to Al Alam network (Iranian Arab language news network) the National Al-Wafaq Society of Bahrain stressed: 38 mosques had been destroyed illogically on the orders of the authorities. In the Amnesty International report it states that at least 40 mosques and religious buildings had been destroyed by the security forces. The burning of mosques and insulting the Koran – Muslims holy book – are some of the actions of the security forces. Article 18 of the UDHR, article 18 of the ICCPR and article 30 of the Arabic Human Rights Charter stress on these rights.

### **Right to education**

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights does not state the education quality levels from the technological and feedback aspects as even in all Bahrain's regions, and discrimination free education is not presented to all citizens. During the protests in Bahrain over 300 university students, particularly anti-government activists, were arrested and suspended from university, and evening some instances were tried in military tribunals. Universities were closed and because of the disruption in the administrative work of universities the students did not receive their qualifications.

According to Amnesty International report dozens of university students were expelled. The BCHR more than 12 girls' schools have been at-

tacked by the security forces.

Members of the Middle East Studies Centre in America stated that in comparison to other Arab countries which went through protests for democracy, the civil and education rights violations in Bahrain have been more severe and less attention has been given to them.

The right of access to education which is one of the fundamental rights of mankind and which the Bahrain government has international obligations are stated in Article 26 of the UDHR, article 13 of the ICESCR and article 41 of the Arabic Human Rights Charter.

### **Expulsion and mistreatment of civil servants and workers**

In this regard the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights that in the employment sector less attention is given to skills and expertise and more given to religious backgrounds. Men and women get paid different wages, particularly in similar jobs where women only receive 70 percent of what men receive. Bahrain is distanced from ILO standards, and a review of the Labour Law and its improvement is necessary. Amnesty International statement also states that at least 400 workers had either been fired or suspended. These people were arrested for participating in anti-government protests. In the report of the Bahrain Independent Investigation Commission report mentions a number of workers being fired or suspended in various civil and private sectors which are as a result of the events of February and March 2011.

In the Amnesty International submission to the UPR, it states: "Journalists and employees of radio and television were covering the news of the protests through newspapers and satellite TV channels, were harassed and arrested. More than 68 journalists and radio and television employees, 30 of which worked for pro-government newspapers were fired from their jobs, and most are in detention. Almost 4400 people who joined the protesters while in the employment of the government services, civil and private institutions, such as the administrative section of universities, school teachers, doctors and nurses were fired.



The secretary-general, who called during a visit to Guatemala, "expressed his deepest concern over reports of excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the security forces and police in Bahrain against unarmed civilians, including, allegedly, against medical personnel," a UN statement said.



Articles 23 and 24 of the UNHR, articles 6, 7 and 8(3) of the ICCPR, article 1 of Convention 100 and articles 1, 2, 34 and 35 of Convention 111 of ILO are instances that these laws have been violated.

### **Violation of Criminal Justice Laws**

The right to fair trial and citizen's rights in justice and legal areas is one of the most fundamental rights of mankind which have been recognised at the international level. These rights have been recognised in international documents such as the UDHR (1948), ICCPR (1966), and regional documents such as the European Convention on Human Rights (1950), the American Convention on Human Rights (1969), and the African Human Rights Charter have recognised.

Right to fair and open trial

According to Amnesty International report most



The secretary-general, who called during a visit to Guatemala, “expressed his deepest concern over reports of excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the security forces and police in Bahrain against unarmed civilians, including, allegedly, against medical personnel,” a UN statement said.



of the protesters have been detained and or been sentenced without prosecution and or closed and unfair trials. According to Amnesty International UPR submission in February and March 2011 many protesters were tried in national security courts. According to AI, the trial process in these courts were not in accordance with internationally accepted standards for a fair trial. Health workers, teachers, students and human rights activists were summoned to these courts while they had charges such as attempts to topple the regime, spreading hatred towards the regime, occupation of public property by force and other charges in their case files.

Articles 8, 11(1) and 14 of the ICCPR, Article 9(3) and (4) of the ICCPR and also article 13 of the Arabic Human Rights Charter stress on these rights.

### Extrajudicial and arbitrary detention

There have been reports of cases of extrajudicial detentions during the protests where some of the detainees have been patients from hospitals. There have also been reports of physical mistreatment too.

There are over 1500 documented cases of arbitrary detentions. And in a report which was published after the BICI report on 26 March 2012 the number of arbitrarily detained individuals till February 2011 have been reported at over 4000, forty percent of which are under 18.

Article 9 of the UDHR and 14(1) of the Arabic Human Rights Charter are instances that have been violated.

### Extrajudicial and arbitrary executions

In April 2011, four protesters were sentenced to death on charges of killing two police officers, two of which had their sentences commuted to imprisonment. Article 3 of the UDHR and article 6 of the ICCPR, and articles 5 and 6 of the Arabic Human Rights Charter reiterate the aforementioned rights.

### Torture

Although the constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain bans any form of physical and mental torture and articles 208 and 232 of the Bahrain Penal Code (1976) sets punishment for those that commit these acts, but on many occasions acts of torture committed against the protesters have clearly been committed.

In the BICI report, 5 deaths from torture has been reported. According to the BBC torturing of protesters in the regime’s prisons and getting forced confessions from them, and the sentences of Bahraini courts which are based on confessions taken through torture, are some of the important instances of the human rights violations in Bahrain.

Article 5 of the UDHR, Article 10(1) and (3) of the ICCPR, articles 1, 2, 13, and 14 of the Convention Against Torture, and article 8 of the Arabic Human Rights Charter deem the aforementioned acts as torture.

# Human Rights Developments in June / July 2012

31 July

## U.S.A

More than a dozen human rights organizations are calling on the State Department to disclose which military and police units receive U.S. aid in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Colombia, but Washington so far has declined to release the information. The groups highlighted new provisions for transparency in a human rights law, known as the Leahy Amendment, in a letter to Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson. Leaders from Amnesty International, FOR, Center for Constitutional Rights, Washington Office on Latin America, Drug Policy Alliance, National Security Archives, Open Society Foundations, and School of the Americas Watch were among those calling for release of the information. Most human rights news from Washington is discouraging these days. House appropriators strip out human rights conditions from foreign aid, and the White House has weekly assassination sessions, so even modest human rights advances can be surprising.

25 July

Fatal shootings of two Hispanic men by police sets off four days of near-riots in Southern California city of Anaheim. California authorities were on alert after protesters angry over deadly police shootings set fires, smashed windows and threw rocks at officers in a fourth day of violent protests, ending with 24 arrests and several injuries. The latest clashes followed an Anaheim City Council meeting on Tuesday in which city leaders voted to ask the US attorney's office to investigate weekend officer-involved shootings that killed two men and prompted a \$50m civil rights lawsuit. Violence didn't erupt until police detained a demonstrator who reportedly had a gun, he said. It turned out the man did not have a weapon. About five people were hurt in the protests, including a police officer, two members of the media who were

struck by rocks and protesters who may have been injured by police or by fighting, authorities said.

25 June

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

The court's ruling on the law's "reasonable suspicion" provision focuses on a narrow legal issue and does not foreclose other challenges to this provision. But this ruling could have immediate serious implications for immigrant communities and may encourage other states to adopt similar legislation. In a positive move, the court struck three other sections that would have criminalized unlawful presence and unauthorized work. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which the United States ratified in 1994, requires federal, state, and local governments to ensure that their immigration policies do not have the effect of discriminating against people on the basis of race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin. Even in cases in which specific police officers show no intent to discriminate, if their actions have discriminatory effects, the government is in violation of the treaty.

20 July

## Israel

The United Nations Special Committee on Israeli Practices in the Occupied Territories expressed serious concern about the treatment of Palestinian children in detention by Israeli security forces,

and warned that a pattern of detaining and mistreating children “links to broader, longstanding concerns regarding Israel detention of Palestinians generally.” “Witnesses informed the Committee that mistreatment of Palestinian children starts from the moment of detention,” said Ambassador Palitha T.B. Kohona, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York, and Chairperson of the Committee, at the end of a fact-finding visit to Amman, Cairo and the Gaza Strip. Ambassador Kohona explained that parents are not allowed to accompany the detainees, and that family members are insulted, intimidated and at times physically assaulted. According to witnesses, the detention and transfer of children can last for hours, and can often include stops in Israeli settlements, Israeli checkpoints and police or military bases.

20 July

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, Richard Falk, condemned Israel’s use of solitary confinement against Palestinian children, as reported earlier by the United Nations Special Committee on Israeli practices in the Occupied Territories. He urged the Israeli Government to treat Palestinian children detainees in accordance with international human rights laws. “Israel’s use of solitary confinement against children flagrantly violates international human rights standards,” said Mr. Falk, expressing his outrage that Israel even imposes solitary confinement punitively on child hunger strikers. “However, using solitary confinement as a punishment for Palestinian children who wish to peacefully protest their situation, including by commencing a hunger strike against conditions of detention, is an appalling abuse of child prisoners.” “This pattern of abuse by Israel is grave,” the Special Rapporteur stressed. “It is inhumane, cruel, degrading, and unlawful, and, most worryingly, it is likely to adversely affect the mental and physical health of underage detainees.”

25 July

Barely two months after the EU foreign affairs council stated that Israeli activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories were undermining the Two-State Solution, the EU has just offered Israel 60 new activities

of cooperation during the meeting it held with Israel in Brussels on Tuesday, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) noted in a statement. “If the EU is serious about a just peace in Israel and Palestine, it needs to make a stronger link between its relations with Israel and Israel’s respect for human rights and International Humanitarian Law. The EU needs to back up words with actions,” said EMHRN President Michel Tubiana in a statement. Even though EU officials argue that these fields of cooperation are based on the current EU-Israeli Action Plan and do not therefore technically and politically speaking represent an upgrading as such, EMHRN denounced what it perceives as a clear message to Israel that business with the EU still goes as usual. Over the last years, EMHRN noted that despite the freezing of the upgrade of relations between EU and Israel since 2009, deepening of economic and technical co-operation has continued since then. Most recently, during European Commission President Barroso’s visit to Israel in July, an agreement to deepen scientific cooperation in the fields of energy between the EU and Israel is also contemplated. “It is double standards in practice,” added Tubiana. EMHRN is a network of more than 80 human rights organisations, institutions and individuals based in 30 countries in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

28 June

The Italian authorities must immediately stop plans to evict Roma families from a camp on the outskirts of Rome, and should instead improve housing conditions there, Amnesty International said today. The Municipality of Rome plans to close the Tor de’ Cenci camp and resettle inhabitants to a new camp by 10 July. It has failed to set out a clear rationale for closing Tor de’ Cenci, and to comply with relevant safeguards while making its decision and choosing a resettlement site. “The serious deterioration of living conditions in the camp, coupled with the repeated message that Tor de’ Cenci would be closed anyway, has rendered the consultation flawed. The only option offered by authorities was the transfer to yet another camp,” said Amnesty International’s Deputy Director for Europe and Central Asia, Jezerca Tigani. More than 350 people of Roma ethnicity, mostly Bosnian and Macedonian nationals, have been living in Tor de’ Cenci for up to 16 years. “The authorities must

improve housing conditions in Tor de' Cenci. They should ensure that La Barbuta is brought in line with national and international standards and not used as a racially segregated camp," said Tigani.

04 August

## Bahrain

Six human rights organisations have written to French President François Hollande, following his meeting with Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain. Human Rights Watch, International Federation of Human (FIDH), Amnesty international France, Reporters without Borders, Human Rights League and Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT) all expressed their concern over the "quasi-secret character" of Monday's meeting between the two officials. "We are concerned about the quasi-secret character of this meeting and we wonder if it reflects an intent to avoid commenting on the deterioration and the gravity of the human rights situation in Bahrain today." In the letter the six organisations note that no official announcement was made and journalists were also not aware of the meeting. "This visit was not announced on the Ely-sée's website and no official statement was issued by your office after the meeting. Apparently, journalists were also not aware of this meeting," the letter read. The six human rights organisations called on the president's office to issue an official statement "clarifying France's stance in the meeting with King Hamad, and to state clearly that France deplores Bahrain's failure to date to implement the most important recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry" including releasing those jailed for exercising their rights to free expression and peaceful assembly.

04 July

Bahrain authorities should investigate police actions during recent demonstrations that injured one activist and narrowly missed injuring a journalist. On June 27, 2012, after dispersing a demonstration, riot police threw a teargas canister that injured Zainab al-Khawaja, a prominent human rights activist, in the leg, she told Human Rights Watch. In a separate incident, Reem Khalifa, an Associated Press reporter, told Human Rights Watch that a policeman threw a stun grenade at her on June 29 while she and other journalists were

standing a few hundred meters from another demonstration site. Khalifa was not injured. On June 22, riot police also fired tear gas and threw stun bombs at close range to disperse a peaceful demonstration in Manama. The June 27 episode took place after riot police dispersed a demonstration in the village of Buri, near Issa Town. Al-Khawaja said that a policeman fired the tear gas canister directly at her from a distance of "seven to ten meters," hitting her in the right leg. The Associated Press reported that "photos taken shortly after the shooting showed al-Khawaja limping with blood trickling down her right leg." She said that doctors have put a cast on her leg and have recommended long bed rest. As a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Bahrain must protect the right of all to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Bahrain also is obliged to abide by the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms, which require that law enforcement officers use force only to the extent necessary to achieve lawful purposes, and wherever possible, only after issuing warnings that it is about to be used. The principles also require governments to "ensure that arbitrary or abusive use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials is punished as a criminal offense under their law."

17 July

## Saudi Arabia

Saudi authorities should drop charges and release the editor of the Free Saudi Liberals website for violating his right to freedom of expression on matters of religion and religious figures. Prosecutors have charged Ra'if Badawi under the 2007 Anti-Cybercrime law, alleging that his website "infringes on religious values" by providing a platform for open debate of views on religion and religious figures. The prosecution's evidence includes five website postings by Badawi and anonymous website members critical of Saudi religious authorities and two postings regarding theological questions, the charge sheet says. International human rights law protects the right to freedom of expression. International standards only allow content-based restrictions in extremely narrow circumstances, such as cases of slander or libel against private individuals or speech that threatens national security. Restrictions must be clearly defined, specific, necessary, and proportionate to the threat to the interest protected.



## World Humanitarian Day Continuation of relief work in spite of dangers



The International Humanitarian Day came a few days after the earthquake in East Azerbaijan Province and the commemoration of this date was a lesson from the humanitarian aid for the victims of the quake.

While expressing commiserations for the victims of the earthquake, the ODVV values the humanitarian spirit which took place with the flood of human assistance to the stricken region and hopes that by focusing on sustainable development in construction programmes we witness less suffering and destruction from natural disasters.

In December 2008, the sixty-third session of the UN General Assembly decided to designate 19 August as World Humanitarian Day.

19 August is the date on which a brutal terrorist attack on UN headquarters in Baghdad in 2003 killed 22 people, including UN envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello.

World Humanitarian Day honours those, who have lost their lives in humanitarian service and those, who continue to bring assistance and relief to millions.

The Day also seeks to draw attention to

humanitarian needs worldwide and the importance of international cooperation in meeting these needs.

Every year, disasters cause immense suffering for millions of people – usually the world's poorest, most marginalized and vulnerable individuals.

Humanitarian aid workers strive to provide life-saving assistance and long term rehabilitation to disaster-affected communities, regardless of where they are in the world and without discrimination based on nationality, social group, religion, sex, race or any other factor.

Humanitarian aid is based on a number of founding principles, including humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Humanitarian aid workers should be respected, and be able to access those in need in order to provide vital assistance.

Humanitarian aid workers can be international, but most come from the country in which they work. They reflect all cultures, ideologies and backgrounds and they are united by their commitment to humanitarianism.

Everyone can be a humanitarian. People affected by disasters are often the first to help their own communities following a disaster.

Responding to emergencies is only one aspect of humanitarian work. Humanitarian workers also support communities to rebuild their lives after disasters, to become more resilient to future crises, to advocate for their voices to be heard, and to build lasting and sustainable peace in areas of conflict.

## ODVV Statement Condemning the Killing of Muslims in Burma

In a released statement, the ODVV deemed the killing of Muslims in Burma as an example of human rights violations and condemned it in the strongest terms. According to the ODVV public relations the statement says:

The killing of Muslims of Myanmar at the hands of Buddhists takes place in front of the eyes of the international community and international human rights organizations, killings which are clear examples of genocide and grave violations of human rights.

Some unofficial figures indicate that at least over 50,000 Muslims have been massacred by Buddhist extremists. As a nongovernmental human rights organization that is in Special Consultative Status to ECOSOC, the ODVV condemns the brutal killing of Muslims in the strongest terms, Muslims that even the Myanmar government does not recognise, and are deemed as aliens, and are deprived and denied of their fundamental rights such as conducting religious ceremonies and the use of public places, and for many years they have been subject to abuse by Buddhist extremists in their own country. Currently there are hundreds of Muslims detained in Burmese prisons who are tortured. Attacks, killings and displacing of these people have either been done by the security forces of Myanmar and or with the participation of Buddhist extremists who carry out these violent attacks while the



authorities turn a complete blind eye. Also in the new wave of attacks by the security forces and Buddhists on Rakhin Province an unknown number of Muslims have been tortured, abused, sexually abused and killed. Although independent medias and news agencies have reacted to the subject, but the necessity for international human rights bodies to react surely can prevent the continuation of these inhuman acts. While condemning these heinous crimes against humanity, the ODVV urges the international community and international human rights organizations to unite in an effort to stop the horrific events that are unfolding in Myanmar.

## ODVV's Statement on the Kidnapping of Iranian Red Crescent Delegation in Libya

In a statement the ODVV condemned the kidnapping seven Iranian Red Crescent delegation in Libya. According to ODVV public relations the statement reads:

The kidnapping of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Red Crescent delegation who were on an official visit to Libya to sign cooperation agreement and the expansion of bilateral cooperation on humanitarian activities, has caused deep concern for the ODVV.

This act which is an example of grave violation of human rights shows that even the members of institutions such as the Red Crescent whose humanitarian objectives around the world is no

secret to anyone, can also be subjected to threats and violation of human rights. What is worrying is individuals who possess weapons outside of the law, have created insecurity and violation of human rights in Libya, and the Libyan authorities must take measures against this as swiftly as possible. While condemning this heinous act of Libyan militias, the ODVV calls for the unconditional and immediate release of the Iranian Red Crescent workers in this country, and calls upon international organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to quickly get into action to identify who the abductors are and work for the release of the captives.

# ODVV Statements Submitted to the 20th Session of the HRC

## Item 3: Right to development

Following international actions especially conducted by developing countries, in 1986 the Declaration of Right to Development was ratified by the UN General Assembly. This Declaration deems the right to development as an undeniable human right, according to which every individual of “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 realized.”

Another point that the Declaration states is, “The human person is the central subject of development.” The Declaration’s view is that development is a process through which human rights are realized, and the realization of human rights is the aim of development, and recommends equal opportunities for all human beings to have access to development resources that include: education, health services, food, housing, employment and the suitable distribution of income.

Even though for years now development has been a challenge to mankind, and many international declarations and statements make a reference to it, existing global statistics however indicate that despite extensive international action and improvements, still a major part of the population of the world are deprived of the most basic living opportunities, and international programmes, strategies and documents have not been able to change their living conditions.

International sanctions imposed against Iran over the last few months on the pretext of

nuclear activities and with a concentration on economic and financial aspects, have escalated to unprecedented levels, to such an extent that not only economic activities, but all areas of the social living of people have notably been affected.

From international law’s perspective economic sanctions are: “coordinated sanctions imposed by competent authorities on the basis of legal guidelines on trade and or finance for the purpose of hurting the economic life inside a country.” This definition is proposed regardless of being legal or illegal, moral or immoral, Sanctions that violate the fundamental economic and social lives of people (and in



some cases even the right to life) are unlawful.

Even the authorities that are based on Article 7 of the UN Charter, it does not give the Security Council to take this type of action. People have fundamental human rights, which states and international organizations recognize and are committed to observe them. While some of these rights in particular conditions such as emergencies are justifiable, but some other of these rights, from world's point of view cannot be violated and unjustifiable, and they must be respected in all conditions. The effects of economic sanctions can be reviewed from the individual human rights aspects that include the right to life, torture and inhuman behaviour ban,

the right to fulfillment of basic needs, such as food, clothes, housing, hygiene, needed social services, and social security, the right to family life, right to employment, right to health, right to education, right to free participation in the cultural life of society, enjoyment of the arts, and participation in scientific advances, right of access to information, right to free participation in political determination of government.

The hurting of the economy of a country from outside without the approval of the people, also violate some group or collective rights such as right to self determination, the right to free utilization of economic, social and cultural development and the collective right to development. The banning of goods exports can be a serious obstacle in the way of the enjoyment of human rights, which deprives the people from means of importing goods that they need. Many of the UN declarations and resolutions stress on the point that the realization of the economic, social and cultural rights is an inalienable part of human dignity. In the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (25 June 1993) states: "is a universal and inalienable right and inseparable from fundamental human rights." The Declaration also deems the right to development as "an inalienable human rights as a result of which each and every individual have a right to economic, social, cultural and political development in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully realized, participate and cooperate and enjoy them." The Commission on Human Rights also under the title of "Human Rights and Unilateral Coercive Measures" clearly lists trade embargos, blockade, prohibition of trade, the blocking





Stressing on the right to development being an inalienable right to the right to life, and the right to coexistence, and that these two rights are necessary for each other, the ODVV believes that the right to development just as human rights if proposed properly and restraint from its economic and cultural domination use, can find many supporters on the global level, and the role of the Council in this regard is undeniable.



of assets as measures that are imposing which are crimes according to human rights and the example of which can clearly be seen in the international sanctions imposed against Iran; sanctions that despite the claims, have direct effects on the people's finances. Ultimately the thing that can be defined as the linking line or the relation between human rights and development is that on one hand fundamental human principles such as non-discrimination, equality, fairness, social justice, self sufficiency and solidarity make the basics of development and on the other hand development related view, human rights concepts and literature are

expanded and more clarified.

The recognition of the fair enjoyment of any human being of moral and material facilities which the international community has at its disposal include food, education and hygiene, housing, arts, communication, freedom, security and all necessities and precursors that result in the continuation of the survival of humanity and his moral and material development. As a nongovernmental organization active in the field of human rights, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence believes that in order to enjoy the right to development, believes that it is necessary for a study to be conducted on the effects of sanctions on the violation of the human rights of the people of Iran and prevention of development and international information dissemination on this matter and the expansion of legal frameworks and improvement of existing universal mechanisms to eliminate problems caused by these sanctions, and find solutions which must be placed in the focal point of Human Rights Council programmes.

Stressing on the right to development being an inalienable right to the right to life, and the right to coexistence, and that these two rights are necessary for each other, the ODVV believes that the right to development just as human rights if proposed properly and restraint from its economic and cultural domination use, can find many supporters on the global level, and the role of the Council in this regard is undeniable.

The ODVV also believes that the ratification of UN declarations and resolutions that are centred on the right to development is a rightful expectation from the United Nations, because there is a problem with the daily deepening of the gap between developed and developing countries in the global peace process.



## Item 7: Human rights situation in the West Bank

In spite of the West Bank being an inseparable part of the Palestinian Occupied Territories is host to 61.8 percent of the Palestinian population of these territories, and more than 76 percent of the domestic gross production of the Occupied Territories of '67 is in the region. But sadly due to geographic characteristics, natural resources and political situation we are witness to the most violations of the human and material rights of the people of the region; to an extent where due to the Israeli policies to create new realities in contrast to international law principles and even agreements signed between Israel and Palestinians, Israel is trying to grab as much land as it can (territories occupied since 1967) on the basis of security and expansionism.

The violation of the fundamental rights of the people of the West Bank has become an ordinary every day occurrence and hardly a day goes by that there is no news reported by the mass media of something happening there. But sadly the responsible international bodies do not show any reaction towards the injustices and the adopted unbalanced treatment of Palestinian citizens.

Right now Palestinians in the West Bank are struggling with several problems which include:

Continuation of the construction of the racist security barrier: the construction process of the barrier which is on the claims of security started in 2002 in the West Bank. Despite the Consultation Vote of the Hague Court which necessitates the removal of the barrier, its construction continued unabated to an extent where East Jerusalem is about to get annexed from the West Bank. 85 percent of the barrier goes through the West Bank, and not the green line, therefore it will have destructive effects in the various aspects of the living of the civilian population. The extensive confiscation of land, denies farmers access to their lands, and the damage to agriculture is part of the problems. By annexing 12 percent of the West Bank, the security barrier has confiscated the most water resources and has destroyed the geographic unity of the region, which are huge obstacles in the way of the formation of an independent state.

Settlements construction: Unfortunately despite the contents of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and also the Fourth Hague Convention (1907), which



**In spite of these problems and the repeated violation of international law, humanitarian law, and international treaties and agreements signed with the Palestinians, what do human rights and fundamental freedoms mean in the West Bank? Shouldn't the international community break its silence towards these violations, and carry out its main duty to apply pressure on Israel as a state that violates international and humanitarian duties, and force Israel to observe these principles?**

prohibits any changes applied to occupied territories, we are witness to the speedy construction in the West Bank, Jerusalem in particular. According to law organizations, in 2011 the construction work was 19 percent more than the previous year and Jerusalem was scene to the biggest construction in the past decade. Furthermore the construction of roads and the winding links that have been erected solely for the settlers, must be said that further land is taken from Palestinians.

Demolition of Palestinian homes: Towards the illegal according to international law constructions, according to a UN report, the demolition operations of Palestinian homes and property in 2011 has increased by 80 percent compared to the previous year, and 90 percent of the demolitions have taken place in Area C which is approximately 60 percent of the West Bank, and 2012 is seen as a catastrophic year due to the huge volume of evictions and demolitions. The inhuman measures and actions of the Israelis in Area C has reached a point where 27 EU foreign ministers strongly and criticized the demolition of approximately 60 European financial projects and refrained from authorizing another 110 future European projects and expressed concern, and asked Israel to remove the restrictions enforced on the Palestinians. Because the Palestinians living in this area are continuously expecting to see their homes

demolished and they are denied from construction. The opening of 13 thousand case files against Palestinians in Area C on the charges of construction work without getting a permit and against the law by the Israeli Civic Bureau is another reason for this.

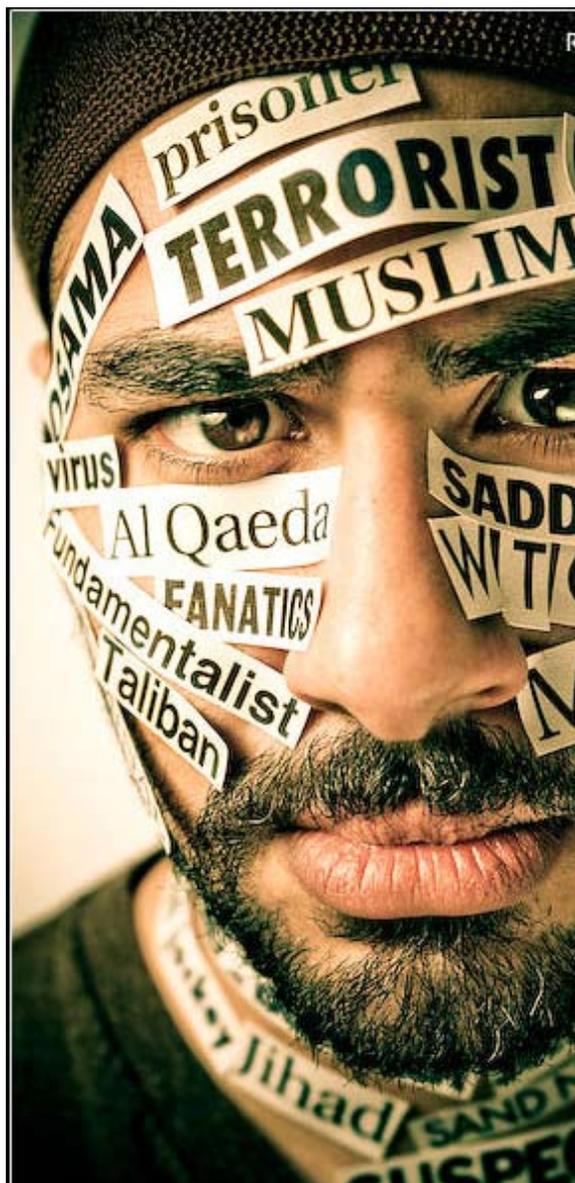
Organized violence problem: At the same time as the construction in the West Bank, Palestinians are faced with daily increasing violence against them, their children and property committed by Jewish settlers. And in the middle of this the Israeli authorities show indifference and neglect despite their commitments particularly in Oslo2 which necessitates the prevention of terror and violent attacks against each side, and thus paved the way for the settlers to be violent. The actions of the terror group called Pay the Price, such as the cutting down of olive trees and destruction of other Palestinian farm produce are just small examples of the aforementioned claim. According to published reports by the Human Affairs Office of the Occupied Palestinian Territories over 80 residential complexes of Palestinians i.e. over 250thousand individuals are threatened by settlers' violence, and the level of the violence in 2011 increased by 40 percent.

Movement restrictions: Palestinians in the West Bank are restricted in their commuting and movement, and through various obstacles (fixed or mobile checkpoints) the IDF disrupt the daily lives. Approximately 400 obstacles, blocked streets, and the existence of the security barrier has taken away the freedom of movement for the Palestinians and have created many problems including access to medical and education centres.

In spite of these problems and the repeated violation of international law, humanitarian law, and international treaties and agreements signed with the Palestinians, what do human rights and fundamental freedoms mean in the West Bank? Shouldn't the international community break its silence towards these violations, and carry out its main duty to apply pressure on Israel as a state that violates international and humanitarian duties, and force Israel to observe these principles?

While expressing sympathy towards the Palestinians of the West Bank, we call for justice and human rights to be realized for the Palestinians, particularly those in the West Bank, so that perhaps in this way the Palestinian nation will have its rights realized.

## Item 9: Racism, Islamophobia



The subject of xenophobia, racism and racial discrimination, ethnic or religious, is a subject that has involved mankind for centuries, and due to its multiple and diverse roots, and also its influence from historical, psychological and even economic complexities, there is no single cure for it. Presently a major part of the international community has deeply rooted problems in the treatment of aliens, racial and religious minorities, and the approach to followers of other religions. Despite the acceptability of a level of the intolerances and the hope for their

improvement, particularly through the raising of societies' awareness and transparency of wrong views and beliefs, nevertheless the observation of strong and rooted racist movements and also Islamophobia in Europe, in spite of the human rights claims of this continent is a deep regret.

Nowadays, a new wave of anti-Muslim intolerance and antagonism is sweeping Europe. The far right political gains seen in some parts of the continent are alarming. Anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and extreme right parties seem to be cashing in on economic hardship and austerity measures. In a blinkered world of "us and them" they have found in Europe's Muslim citizens the "others".

It is disheartening that a continent that had learnt many lessons in such a hard way, after the devastation of the two World Wars, and which prides itself in equality and human rights, is allowing itself to be influenced by the forces of intolerance and hate. It is now open season to malign Muslims because of their religious and cultural practices. Yet Muslim immigrants arriving after the war joined the effort to rebuild economies of war-torn Europe in the 1950s. In almost every field of life, Muslims have been an integral part of the European tapestry. Muslims are today at home in Europe, have been contributors to its past and are stakeholders in its future.

Yet the language and rhetoric used by the Far Rights and the level of political expediency in mainstream European politics is mind boggling. The hate mongers are apparently succeeding in swapping a racist agenda for an Islamophobic one. The lacklustre response from European leaders has paved the way for anti-Muslim bigotry to move closer to the mainstream.

Sadly it seems that in the recent years views have grown in Europe which previously made their appearance in different clothes on this continent, anti-multiculturalism, anti-immigrant, anti-intellectualism, and even anti-women, with the only difference being anti-Semitism instead of Islamophobia. Over several decades these views have tried to put the blame on "others" whenever a crisis has happened in Europe, "others" who

are not with “us” and their presence is the root cause of the problems. But the fact of the matter is that it’s the presence of the same “others” that has created the “multi-culturalistic” structure of European nations, and is the main cause for the advancement of Europe in this century.

Sadly, observing the developments of the last few months regarding European countries, especially during election campaigns, we can notice the large volume of violation cases and particularly intentional or unintentional enticement by the media to these issues, has caused the deepening of racist and Islamophobic views.

While condemning these types of measures which will achieve nothing but the escalation of pointless religious hatred, the Organization for

Defending Victims of Violence, for the second time calls upon the Human Rights Council to give importance to subjects such as the promotion of dialogue among religions and transparency and remove ambiguities from incorrect interpretations and beliefs of monotheist religions more than before, and to give the two Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Religion and Belief joint mandates to find a practical and lasting solution to fight this problem.

We hope that by accepting and starting this initiative, for followers of monotheist religions have peaceful coexistence everywhere in a good atmosphere that is away from common prejudices and bigotries, in peace and harmony and by respecting the beliefs of each other.

#### Item 4: Syria

Sadly Syria is in a situation now where the boundary between fact and trickery is not distinguishable. Kofi Anan’s peace plan never materialised and the presence of UN observers did not help calm the situation of the country. We believe arming the opposition in Syria by some regional and international governments, inadvertently has placed the Syrian government in a position where it sees its national integrity and governance under threat, and is defending it with all its might. Meanwhile all the reforms

that have taken place by the Syrian government have been ignored and there is an insistence on regime change.

We believe the continuation of this trend will only result in more bloodshed and graver violations of human rights. Our NGO believes that all the initial efforts of governments should be towards a total ceasefire and as sustainable as possible between the two parties at conflict, then all the crucial players of the crisis must open dialogue and concentrate on ways to settle their differences, and prepare the basis for listening and being heard. We believe the capacities of this Council, is much more deeper and more practical than just holding numerous meetings on Syria. If the final conclusions of the reports of the fact fighting group, and also the directions of the issued resolutions notes

the views of the two conflicting sides, notes the particular dynamics and conditions of Middle East, and puts pressure on the regional and international players to play a constructive role and not just have their own interests on mind, then it will be possible to find a lasting and acceptable solution for both parties. Experience has shown that noting the words of just one side has never brought lasting peace with it.



## Item 4: Human Rights Situation in Bahrain

The people's protests in Bahrain were the first and have been the longest in the Arab Spring wave, and even though the revolutionaries in Tunisia and or Egypt are taking democratic steps towards reaching their objectives and demands, in the beginning the people of Bahrain only wanted an improvement of the political and social lives, right now due to the violent approach of the government towards their initial and rightful demands, and also interference of other countries military forces, the people are faced with grave violation of their fundamental political, social, and economic rights. It must be reminded that in 2011 in response to the objections of international organizations and NGOs monitoring the human rights situation of the country, the Bahraini government announced the setting up of an independent fact-finding commission to review the problem from various angles and find solutions to offenses and punish the perpetrators and also reviews the violated rights of the people. although the commission was set up and some of its findings in its report was met by the protestors objection, nevertheless the findings of the report indicate the extensive violation of Bahraini security forces and police, all of which were unfortunately ignored.

Still, Bahraini authorities continue to violate international standards of human rights. Demonstrators continue to be arrested and killed, and there has been little justice for those who were tortured and died in detention last year. Doctors and medics arrested and tortured last year for speaking out about the violence against protestors still face up to 15 years in prison.

We are very concerned that the series of attacks against the human rights



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defenders and web activists represents an ongoing trend of targeting free speech and human rights defenders in Bahrain, where the legal system is used as a tool to silence them, particularly by denying bail while civil cases are ongoing.

We call on the government of Bahrain as it is mentioned during its second UPR consideration to:

- 1 – Hold accountable those responsible for the torture of human rights defenders,
- 2 – Ensure the freedom of the media
- 3 – Conduct new trials for defendants convicted in military courts.

## Interactive Dialogue with UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in Iran

Today we witness the adoption of numerous mechanisms by the United Nations for the improvement of the human rights situation of countries, examples of which are the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, appointment of special rapporteurs and issuing of resolutions. The question which is the real challenge here is: is or is not turning to other human rights mechanisms while the UPR is in progress – even in a short space of time since the country’s acceptance of the recommendations – the undermining or impracticality of the UPR mechanism,

tool were some of the important reasons for the demise of the Commission and its replacement with the Human Rights Council. The thing that worries the ODVV is of the Council falling into the same trap as its predecessor.

As a nongovernmental organization that is the implementer of initiative program of NGOs movements in Iran as part of the recommendations of the UPR on Iran, the ODVV believes that due to particular conditions of the international community at the end of the first round of the UPR, the international system’s adoption of other mechanisms such as issuing of resolutions and allocation of special rapporteurs in places where the UPR mechanism has not had the chance to test its practicality, and the presence of human rights as one of the resolute dialogues in peace and conflict, makes the necessity for its review more than before.

The ODVV also stresses on the point in view of the recommendations given to any country in the UPR which is gathering of the views of international organizations, the international community, NGOs and the state under review is in the improvement of human rights, the strengthening of the UPR mechanism and improvement of its effective implementation guarantee, can make notable gains in the realization of human rights.

In all of this NGOs can fulfill their monitoring roles through the preparation of reports on the recommendations given to countries process, and presentation of these reports to the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In the end the creation of a mechanism which has a logical link between Human Rights Council mechanisms to prevent the wastage of energy while trying to improve human rights, is an apt request from the Human Rights Council.

**In all of this NGOs can fulfill their monitoring roles through the preparation of reports on the recommendations given to countries process, and presentation of these reports to the High Commissioner for Human Rights.**

instead of strengthening of it? And can political stances footprints also be seen in this approach? Where can the position of human rights be seen in these political classifications?

As we know the weakness of the Commission on Human Rights and its political exploitation by nations was one of the important reasons behind its dissolution in the strengthening and encouragement of respect to human rights and the monitoring of human rights situation of countries on one hand and the increasing discredit of the Commission with having members that violated human rights and also the use of this human rights body as a political

# ODVV

## Activities

### Commemoration of Nelson Mandela International Day

On the occasion of the Nelson Mandela International Day on 16 July the ODVV held a commemoration ceremony with the aim of expansion of the culture of peace, with the participation of representatives from a number of governmental and nongovernmental organizations. According to the ODVV public relations in line with the promotion of human rights and establishment of equalities and conciliation between races, and conflict resolutions among races, the UN has named 18 July, the birthday of former South African president and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Nelson Mandela, the Nelson Mandela International Day. The UN Secretary General's Message for the day was read by a representative from UNIC in Iran.



### Commemoration of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

On the occasion of 26 June, the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture the ODVV held a commemoration ceremony, with the participation of a number of mental health experts. The aim of this workshop was for the generation of technical knowledge among mental health experts which began with the reading of the UN Secretary General's message for the day by the representative from UNIC in Iran. One of the psychological side effects of torture and a review on the treatment approach were some of the subjects of discussion of this workshop.

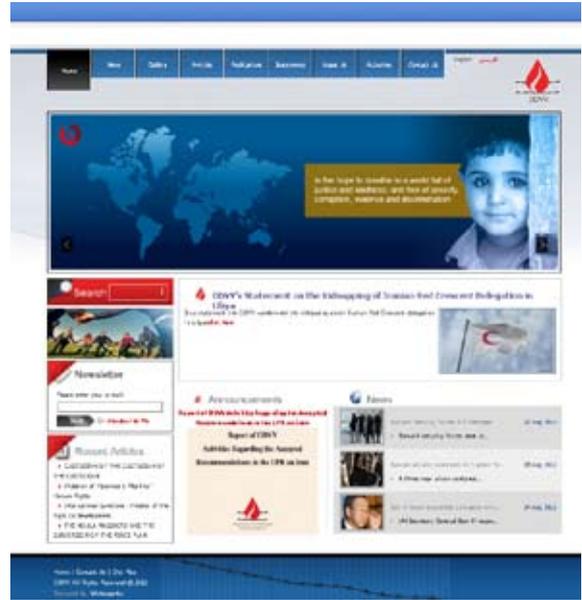


Also in the sidelines of on the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, and on the sidelines of the commemoration ceremony held by the ODVV, the Digital Farsi copy of the Istanbul Protocol was unveiled.

## Digital Farsi Copy of the Istanbul Protocol Unveiled by the ODVV

On the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, and on the sidelines of the commemoration ceremony held by the ODVV, the Digital Farsi copy of the Istanbul Protocol was unveiled.

The Istanbul Protocol is the result of effective research and documentation of torture and other cruel and degrading punishments or behaviours, which has been translated into Farsi by the ODVV, at the same time as the unveiling of the digital copy, its pdf file was also uploaded on the ODVV website. Farsi speaking interested parties can see this document on the ODVV website.



## Exhibition of ODVV's Achievements on Refugees Issues



Since participation and interaction is principle from the moral covenant of the ODVV, we have always tried to have a colourful presence in participatory activities. The holding of and participating in numerous exhibitions, is an opportunity for information dissemination of the ODVV's objectives, activities and programmes. In these situations extensive interaction and links are established with other governmental and nongovernmental organizations. For this purpose through participating in exhibitions is something that the ODVV has in its working agenda. One of these was an exhibition of the aspects of the services the Islamic Republic of Iran has provided for refugees. One of the achievements that the ODVV presented in this exhibition was documentaries on the

Strengthening of the Family Institution and Prevention of Violence (Afghan refugees in Semnan Refugee Camp, Autumn 2011), and Community Based Awareness Raising on Prevention of GBV (Afghan refugees in Shahr-e-Rey, Tehran 2009).

## Election of ODVV Executive Director to the IRCT Central Council

Through the ballots of member of the International Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (IRCT), the ODVV became the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in its Central Council.

The ODVV director Mr. Siavash Rahpeik managed to get 5 out of 7 votes and the representatives from two other regional organizations, Restart and Khaïam from Lebanon are other two members of the region.

It must be said that the IRCT is a health based umbrella organization that supports the rehabilitation of torture victims and the prevention of torture worldwide.

Currently there are 146 member organizations from 76 countries. All the centres are members of the General Assembly and can be candidates to the Central Council and have one vote. The Central Council of the IRCT has 26 members and 3 independent law experts who are elected through members cast votes, and their main objective is the organization and monitoring of the implementation of the policies of the Council for the facilitation of the activities of this global network

## Acquiring Consultative Status from ECOSOC Education workshop

This education workshop was held with the aim of increasing the international credibility and increasing dialogue opportunities at the international level for NGOs, with the participation of 35 NGOs representatives in Fars Province.

In a scientific and practical way the participants were introduced to the ECOSOC NGOs Committee and its duties, NGOs Liaison Office, NGOs Communications Network, concept and method of acquiring consultative status, necessary conditions to be eligible for consultative status, and different types of consultative status. The workshop finished with a Q&A session and the participants received certificates of attendance.



## ODVV Participates in the 20th Session of the HRC

Representatives from the ODVV participated in the 20th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. The Session began on 18 June and shall continue till 6 July.

In continuing their international activities the ODVV representatives read oral statements, met thematic special rapporteurs, distribute magazines, books and multimedia CDs.

The ODVV is also participating in the UNHCR's NGOs Consultation Meeting.

# PUBLICATION

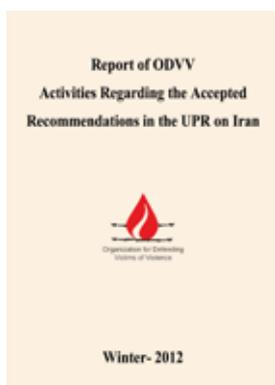
## Publication of digital version of Istanbul Protocol in Farsi

The Istanbul Protocol is the result of effective research and documentation of torture and a very important international document. For the first time in Iran Istanbul protocol has been translated into Farsi and released as a booklet in digital format on the ODVV website.



## Report of ODVV Activities Regarding the Accepted Recommendations in the UPR on Iran

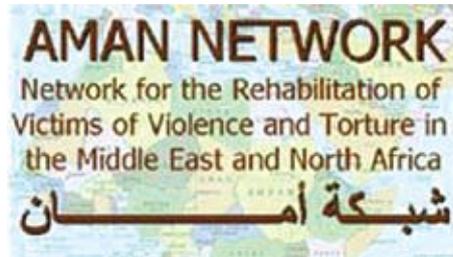
As part of its goals which are the protection promotion of human rights, the ODVV while having active presence in the Human Rights Council sessions, and submitting written and oral statements, holding sidelines panels on various important human rights concerns, the ODVV endeavours to arrange its programmes in line with national and international human rights developments. To this aim, the follow up of the Universal Periodic Review human rights process is of significance importance as one of ODVV's activities. In 2010, the UPR on Iran took place, and out of 188 recommendations, 126 were accepted by Iran. Overall it can be said that the accepted recommendations of the UPR, is a point of consensus between the international community, United Nations, the concerning state, national and international organizations for the promotion of human rights. Understanding the importance of the aforementioned in the promotion of human rights, the ODVV has centred its activities on the accepted recommendations of the UPR, and designed and implemented research, education and promotional projects on this basis. While planning its activities in line with the recommendations, the ODVV has also put at the top of its working agenda interaction with government institutions and holding colloquium sessions. Also playing the role of facilitator to other Iranian NGOs whose activities are like the ODVV's in line with the accepted recommendations of the UPR is also in the working agenda of the ODVV. The categorization of the accepted recommendations is one of the first actions taken towards the conducting of the aforementioned programmes, which upon review the 126 recommendations were categorized on 15 human rights related subjects. What follows is a brief report of the activities of the ODVV as a human rights NGO in line with the accepted recommendations of the UPR on Iran. This report was published in English in 70 pages, and distributed to relevant governmental and nongovernmental organizations.



## Latest ODVV products on multimedia cd released

The contents of the CD include the new Defenders issue, books, picture galleries, annual reports, videos ODVV of projects





**Annual Sitting**  
**On the sidelines of the 21<sup>st</sup> Session**  
**of the Human Rights Council**

**Geneva – 19-21 September 2012**

AMEL (Sudan) , ODVV (Iran) , RESTART (Lebanon) ,  
KRC (Lebanon), CAOVT (Morocco), GCMHP (Palestine),  
TRC (Palestine), NADEEM (Egypt), KARAMA (Bahrain),  
JESOOR (Palestine), AMRVT (Morocco), AIFOUAD (Iraq)

**Panel on Situation of**  
**Human Rights in Bahrain**

**21<sup>st</sup> Session of the**  
**Human Rights Council**

**Geneva**  
**September**  
**2012**



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Organization for Defending  
Victims of Violence