

2010



Geneva Institute for Human Rights

GIHR Annual Report

Promoting Human Rights to Effect Social Change

القانون فوق الجميع



سيادة القانون

مبدأ أساسي في المجتمع والدولة



Geneva Institute for Human Rights
معهد جنيف لحقوق الإنسان



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Message from the Executive Director

It is with great pleasure that I share with you our annual report for 2010. As financial unsettlement still continues worldwide, GIHR has still continued its endeavours in the promotion of human rights. Despite the many activities and accomplishments, 2010 has been challenging as well as demanding for our staff members. It is with pride that I acknowledge that GIHR team members have been able to overcome the year resulting in successful outcomes, but I do so with caution, as raising awareness on human rights and its promotion is only the start of the road to social change and democracy within the Arab region.

All together, GIHR has worked in 7 countries, including Switzerland, Syria, Sudan, Jordan, Oman, Dubai and Egypt. All together we have provided 20 trainings for 441 participants representing governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations and members of National Human Rights Institutions from 15 countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. The work has been both inspiring and encouraging, as most organizations have commended our work and have provided the institute with the moral support and encouragement that we are providing them with technical information which has kept them updated with most International human rights principals and mechanisms including the Universal periodic Review and the work of the Human Rights Council.

For the first time, GIHR has conducted work in the Sultanate of Oman, thus expanding our outreach to further countries in the Middle East. The Institute has also concentrated on provision of technical assistance for reporting and monitoring the Universal Periodic Review, playing a pivotal role in the preparation of the UPR reports for governmental and non- governmental organizations.

The establishment of an effective human rights mechanism is an integral element of good governance, but for some emerging States it is not an easy task to accomplish. Our role in GIHR has become pivotal in translating the meanings and principals of human rights mechanisms and standards to civil society organizations and governmental and non governmental institutions at the grassroots.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team for their dedication to the work of the institute and to also welcome all newly appointed staff members. I also say goodbye and thank you to Dr. Eiman Hussein the Head of the Women's Rights Unit, who has left us this year; we wish her all the best in her new life. Thank you also to all our resource persons and friends who have provided us with their support and commitment to our cause.

We are also gratified and encouraged by the support provided by the Swiss and the Norwegian government and the our other donors, including a new partnership with the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The support provided has been vital to GIHR's success. Our work could not have been achieved without the financial assistance provided.

Yours Truly

Nazar Abdelgadir
Executive Director

Who We Are

The Geneva Institute for Human Rights is a non-governmental, non – profit organization governed by the present Articles of Association and all subsequent Articles of the Swiss Civil Code. The Institute is an academic study and research institution that is independent from all governments, political parties, organizations and philosophical or religious groups.

Since its establishment in 2004, the Institute has provided Human Rights trainings in North Africa and the Middle East to human rights defenders and public institutions, empowering them to access and use International Human Rights procedures, standards and mechanisms. GIHR has also delivered capacity building and advocacy services to different governmental and non-governmental organizations that protect the rights of individuals with a special focus on women and children in the African and Arab Region.

A strong need has been expressed for a better understanding of International Human Rights instruments by different governmental and non governmental institutions and civil society organizations within the Arab region. The knowledge gained can be effectively used in their advocacy and implementation at the national and grassroots level. Filling in the knowledge gap forms the crux of the work of GIHR, as through promoting knowledge and information exchange on human rights, social change will be achieved.

GIHR has strived to demonstrate its commitment towards the promotion and the dissemination of international human rights, acquainting concerned institutions with these principals.

Our Objectives

1. Promotion and dissemination of the principles of international human rights as expressed in international declaration on human rights and others human rights related covenants, and acquainting concerned civil society and governmental institutions with those principles.
2. Contributing to the process of reviewing legislations and laws, and presentation of practical proposals to keep them in conformity with the International Bill of Human Rights and related international declarations and conventions.

3. Creating a statistical and informational database on human rights related international and regional declarations, conventions and covenants.
4. Serving as a democratic forum for dialogue, orchestration and integration of efforts exerted by human rights related NGOs and governmental organizations, in order to establish the rule of law and institutions and a democratic human society.
5. Assisting NGOs and governmental organizations to practically monitor and document the status of human rights, in addition to promoting and developing these rights at all legislative and practical levels.
6. Providing advisory services to human rights related governmental and non-governmental bodies, as well as to whoever requires such services.
7. Paying specific attention to women, children and variable groups to enable their active contribution to professional life and decision-making process.

Our Mission and Values

GIHR Mission

Geneva Institute for Human Rights (GIHR) is dedicated to the promotion and dissemination of the principals of international human rights to all, through the provision of training, consultation and research services to civil society, governmental and non-governmental organizations and other actors in the public and private sphere. The work of GIHR seeks to ensure that the principles of *equality*, *dignity* and *respect* are incorporated into practice and policy at all levels of public service.

Our Values

Dignity and Respect- Every human being is entitled to have their dignity and human rights respected equally whatever their gender, age, religion or disability

Knowledge – knowledge is an asset, through promotion of human rights principals effective social change can occur.

Integrity - Transparency, democracy and integrity are crucial to enable empowerment of the community.

"Human rights education is much more than a lesson in schools or a theme for a day; it is a process to equip people with the tools they need to live lives of security and dignity. On this International Human Rights Day, let us continue to work together to develop and nurture in future generations a culture of human rights, to promote freedom, security and peace in all nations." **Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General.**

Key Highlights of 2010

Continuation of our pivotal work in Syria:

GIHR has continued its work in Syria in collaboration with the Syrian Ministry of Interior and the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs in providing them with the technical know-how on issues of human rights.

Working on the issue of disabilities

For the first time, GIHR has collaborated with the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities in Jordan on the crucial role of the media and the protection of persons with disabilities.

Expansion of outreach:

GIHR has expanded its outreach to include the Sultanate of Oman.

Use of the media as a medium for knowledge sharing:

As a result of our continued work in Syria, GIHR staff members were invited as guests in the Syrian National television network to talk about women's rights and Violence Against Women in the Arab Region via three television interviews.

Launching of GIHR Arabic website:

2010 witnessed the launch of our Arabic language website, as well as a bilingual face book page for GIHR with 2000 friends of GIHR.

What We Achieved In 2010

Our journey in 2010 has been eventful and challenging as the GIHR team managed to overcome the hurdles of the continuing financial recession and the high demand for provision of technical assistance and trainings from institutes and organizations within the Arab region. But despite the difficulties faced the accomplishments achieved have been surprising as well as encouraging.

GIHR has maintained long term relationships and trust with countries in the Middle East and the African Regions. Our work has become crucial as a non political, human rights organization providing the much needed capacity building on international human rights standards and their principals to civil society organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Drawing on the principals set by International UN instruments and frameworks our number one priority has been to familiarise and empower national governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions in the Arab region on these different UN mechanisms to enable them to use these mechanisms in their future work.

As an example, GIHR's role has been pivotal in working with different organizations on raising awareness on the Universal Periodic Review. The Universal Periodic review has been adopted by the UN General Assembly since March 2006, and since 2008 GIHR has been working with various NGOs on the follow up of the recommendations of the UPR.

We believe that our work with governmental institutions in particular is detrimental to the realisation of human rights in different countries. We were also able to balance our work so as to make sure that members of civil society organizations were also included in our work, in addition to ensuring that the gender balance was kept within our trainings.

We have passed the year through the following crucial steps, **promotion of human rights** and **promotion of knowledge sharing and information exchange...**

Promoting Human Rights

"Commit yourself to the noble struggle for human rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country and a finer world to live in."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

In the Arab region there are several challenges which have limited the progress towards human rights for all citizens. One of the most prominent challenges is the existence of conflict and political instability within countries and across borders, leading to the existence of authoritarian regimes and the infringement of human rights in particular to vulnerable groups such as women, children and people with disabilities. Despite the progress in the human rights situation in most countries in the Arab region, still a lot more effort requires to be done to ensure realisation of human rights for all.

Beyond the legal protection of citizens through International, Regional and State laws, there is a need to promote human rights knowledge and information on human rights to all stakeholders in society. Civil society organizations, governmental and non-governmental institutions are accountable to the promotion of peace and security to protect citizens. Having a law without the understanding of what a human beings right's are, would not achieve the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognized that human rights are, by their nature universal and that every human was entitled to.

Promoting the message of human rights is critical towards realising human rights and ultimately social change in the region. To fulfil our role in promoting human rights during 2010 GIHR delivered consultancy and training services to 441 participants from 15 different countries from the Arab region, with the ratio of male to female being 3:1; these included 230 representatives from governmental institutions, 10 from National Human Rights institutions and 201 participants from NGOs and human rights defenders. We also expanded our outreach to Oman.

GIHR's current rooster of resource persons has increased to 105 experts, representing 19 countries from all over the globe, who have provided their valuable time and expertise to participate in the trainings conducted.

Syria

Our work in Syria has been both groundbreaking and unique. GIHR has been the only international human rights organization that has been able to work with such a crucial body as the Syrian Ministry of Interior. For 2010 we have continued our work with the Syrian Ministry of Interior, providing training to 97 members of the Syrian police force. Since 2007 we have been able to train a

total of 400 members of the police force from different ranks and divisions on international human rights standards. We have also continued our work with a major stakeholder that monitors and reports the status of the rights of women and children: The Syrian Commission for Family Affairs (SCFA), a crucial governmental body in Syria that ensures that CEDAW and the CRC are implemented. For 2010 we have provided training on Women's Rights and International Human Rights Standards for a total of 56 staff members of the SCFA and affiliated governmental bodies..

The main goal of the institute is to work in partnership and collaboration with various stakeholders to achieve human rights for all. As such, it is crucial to our work that the relationships we create in a country are built with trust and transparency. GIHR believes that when able to access a country or group we enter it with commitment and perseverance. As such our trainings are usually not just one - off trainings but a partnership which involves constant follow up that will result in sustainability of our work.

Sudan

In Sudan, 2010 was a crucial time as elections were to be held as well as the implementation of the peace referendum. It was due to this political climate that GIHR provided training on the issue of the monitoring of elections, this was held in Cairo with 15 participants. In addition GIHR organized a training with the Darfur Bar Association on International Human Rights Standards.

Egypt

In Egypt we organized three trainings in collaboration with Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the Arab Organization for Human Rights, respectively. Our main focus in Egypt was working with civil society organizations, strengthening their capacity on the Universal Periodic Review and International Human Rights Standards for 52 members of the civil society. We also held a Training of Trainers on Human Rights for 11 participants.

Jordan

In Jordan, the base of our regional office, GIHR organized two trainings during 2010. The first series of training with the Jordanian police force on International Human Rights Standards in collaboration with the Jordanian Public Security. Altogether 22 members of the Jordanian police force were provided with this crucial training. We also held our first training on the subject of the role of the media in protecting persons with disabilities. This was co-organized with the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities, altogether 18 representatives from the media participated in the crucial training.

Oman

For the first time GIHR expanded its geographical outreach to Oman, where in collaboration with the Oman Institute of Diplomacy, a training course on reporting and human rights standards was held for 41 participants.

Dubai

In Dubai, we held a training course on the International Protection Mechanisms on Human Rights for 22 participants. This was held in collaboration with the Arab Institute for Human Rights.

Switzerland

Regional Training Courses in Geneva

Yearly the Institute conducts three trainings in Geneva, where participants from the Middle East and Northern African Region can attend the fourteen days training courses at the heart of the headquarters of some of the most pivotal International organizations working on human rights. In these courses participants are able to realize how the different UN mechanisms work on international human rights, attending crucial meetings of UN Committees. The trainings conducted are in collaboration with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. GIHR has been able throughout the years to distinguish its trainings from other organizations by being in both Arabic and English (thus reaching out to a larger group) and by its commitment to networking and continual partnerships. All participants trained receive regular updates and information on International Human Rights.

In 2010, 6 training courses were held in Geneva. The trainings coincided with

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- The 45th session of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination of Women.
- The 7th Session of the UPR and was on the role of the UN Working Group of the Human Rights Council on the UPR.
- The 8th Session of the UPR and was an advanced training on the role of the UN Working Group of the Human Rights Council on the UPR.
- The 14th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council and was on the International Protection Mechanisms on Human Rights.
- The 9th Session of the UPR and was on the role of the UN Working Group of the Human Rights Council on the UPR in collaboration with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung organization.

Further Outreach

GIHR also participated in two regional events:

1. Symposium: "The Protection of the Economic and Social Rights in the Arabic countries"; organized by the Arab Institute for Human Rights and

supported by Ford Foundation and Foundation for the Future; **Tunis - Tunisia 26 - 27 May 2010**

2. Regional Experts' Workshop on the Future Vision of the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South West Asia and the Arab Region; **Doha, Qatar 29-30 September 2010.**

Promoting Knowledge Sharing and Information Exchange

“Sharing knowledge is not about giving people something, or getting something from them. That is only valid for information sharing. Sharing knowledge occurs when people are genuinely interested in helping one another develop new capacities for action; it is about creating learning processes.” Dr. Peter Senge, American scientist and director of the Center for Organizational Learning at the MIT Sloan School of Management.

Since its establishment in 2004, one of the main objectives of GIHR has been to be able to share its knowledge and expertise to aid different stakeholders in the region. Our being situated in Switzerland is also unique in enabling us to be at the heart of where the main international human rights organizations are.

One of the major contribution to GIHR on knowledge sharing and information exchange for 2010 was our provision of technical assistance and expertise in the Universal Periodic Review. To further promote knowledge sharing on human rights issues it has been crucial for the Institute to be on the top of current and latest issues and events on human rights. As such, we have also participated actively at meetings in the United Nations Human Rights Council and the UN Treaty Monitoring Bodies.

2010 also saw the launch of GIHR’s Arabic website, a much demanded and requested addendum to our existing website. We also increased our existence in the new world of social networks via opening a FaceBook page for GIHR, which currently has 2000 members and friends of the institute. In addition we have developed an email bulletin/newsletter which provides a summary of the main news and updates related to human rights. Through the use of the internet GIHR has been able to outreach all its previous and current contacts and friends, keeping them up to date with our work and sharing of information.

GIHR Team

GIHR Board members

Chairperson:	Mr. Alain Bovard
Vice Chairperson:	Mr. Mohamed Cherif
Treasurer:	Dr. Karl Hanson
Member:	Mr. Paulo David
Executive Director:	Mr. Nazar Abdelgadir

GIHR Advisory Team

Scientific Advisor	Dr. Mohamed Al-Medani
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Intern	
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Administrative Assistant	Ms. Mashair Elfatih
Accountant	Mr. Nasaj Zahira
IT Manager and Webmaster	Mr. Matthias Brost