



ARAB-EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE NEWSLETTER

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Update from the AEHRD Quartet

ARAB-EUROPEAN
HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE
برنامج حوار حقوق الإنسان
العربي - الأوروبي

AEHRD

The Arab-European Human Rights Dialogue is a process that is designed to promote the understanding, functionality and capacity of Arab and European National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) vis-a-vis their mandate in accordance with the UN Paris Principles.

The key event of the AEHRD Network is a yearly dialogue focusing on key themes of common concern amongst member NHRIs:

1. Migrant Workers' Human Rights
2. Torture and Rule of Law
3. Women's Rights and Gender Equality
4. Public Participation and Access to Information
5. Non-Discrimination
6. Counterterrorism and Human Rights
7. The role of NHRIs in countries in transition

Input

Send news or events related to the AEHRD and we will distribute it on our website and in our newsletter.

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The Eighth Arab European Human Rights Dialogue Meeting

The upcoming eighth AEHRD Meeting will be on NHRIs' Independence and Accountability. The host and venue for the meeting will be determined at the upcoming AEHRD's Steering Committee's meeting in May 2013.

AEHRD Communications Plan Workshop

A Communications plan workshop took place on the margins of the seventh AEHRD meeting. The aim is to develop a communications plan for the AEHRD to help ensure that AEHRD target audiences receive, understand and act on AEHRD messages at the right time. The AEHRD Quartet believes that spending time planning AEHRD approach will improve AEHRD ability to achieve its desired outcomes.

Book on NHRIs in countries in transition in the Arab world

AEHRD's Project Group completed its study on the role of NHRIs in countries in transition in the Arab world and published the "seven-chapters" book in both Arabic and English in October 2013. A PDF version of the book was uploaded on, inter alia, DIHR website, AEHRD website, OHCHR website and ICC of NHRIs website. The book can be downloaded for free on DIHR and AEHRD websites.

Code of Conduct for the AEHRD

The AEHRD Secretariat has drafted a Code of Conduct that was initially discussed at the AEHRD meeting in Algeria, October 2012. Members and participants at the meeting in Algeria agreed to finalise it at the upcoming Eighth AEHRD meeting.

News about the ICC of NHRIs

The ICC is increasingly recognized as a relevant player on the global human rights scene as it is seen as a credible representative of NHRIs that are first eye witnesses to human rights issues on the ground. During 2012, the ICC/NHRIs have advanced in e.g. the following areas:

- The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution recognizing the importance of NHRIs and is further discussing the role of NHRIs vis-à-vis the General Assembly. Some states are of course hesitant towards NHRIs as part of a general reluctance to respect and advance human rights, but the battle for human rights needs to be fought at all levels.
- The Human Rights Council adopted a resolution of 29 June 2012 further substantiating its recognition of the role of NHRIs, compared to previous resolutions. Two developments are significant. First, the NHRIs will have a stronger role in the UPR process; secondly NHRIs will be able to address the Human Rights Council via video messages thus cutting back the costs of addressing the HRC.
- The UN Human Rights Committee adopted a statement in November 2012 on the cooperation between HRC. and NHRIs. The Committee will actively include NHRIs in its work.
- The UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances has requested a dialogue with the ICC with a view to follow the path of the Human Rights Committee.
- The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has the longest tradition of engaging with NHRIs and will in the future ask the ICC to notify NHRIs of the possibility of NHRIs reporting on state implementation of recommendations.

Updates from member organisations

The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR)

DIHR nationally

DIHR supports review of the Police Intelligence Services

Danish Parliament is currently in the process of modernizing the review mechanisms for the Police Intelligence Service (PET). The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) has been very engaged in this process, pushing for more democratic control of PET. A new law will be passed this spring.

DIHR finalised project on children of imprisoned parents

2012 saw a long time project of the DIHR come to fruition, dealing with children of imprisoned parents. Children of imprisoned parents constitute a very vulnerable group, not least because they often suffer from poor contact with their imprisoned parent. In 2006, the DIHR initiated a test project, in which participating prisons appointed an employee tasked with providing good conditions for children to visit their inmate parents. In the fall of 2012, Parliament decided to roll out the initiative to include all prisons in Denmark.

DIHR Internationally

- DIHR participated in the first national Human Rights Conference that DIHR's partner organisation in Yemen, The Ministry for Human Rights, held on 09-10 December 2012. DIHR contributed a concept paper to the Conference entitled: *Human Rights Infrastructure*. The concept paper highlighted norms, standards and different experiences.



Yemen: First National Human Rights Conference
© Mu'ayyad Mehyar

- The Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) has granted DIHR a tender to undertake a survey mapping the field of business and human rights in relation to African NHRIs. The survey is a key follow-up action of the Yaoundé Declaration adopted by NANHRI members in 2011, and will provide an overview of existing actions, needs, issues and challenges facing African NHRIs in the business and human rights area, and constitutes a sound basis for future strategic actions by NANHRI members.
- DIHR participated in the 11th ICC biannual global meeting of NHRIs. DIHR was represented by a delegation of four, including the Executive Director. DIHR contribution was four fold: 1) Participation in the ICC Bureau Meeting, 2) a presentation on a co-prepared handbook with UNFPA on reproductive rights, where a workshop was organised as a side event to the meeting to launch the handbook. 3) a presentation on the AEHRD project on combating violence against women; and 4) a contribution to the ICC Working Group on Human Rights and Business, held as a side event to the 11th ICC biannual global meeting of NHRIs.



Workshop on Reproductive Rights Handbook
© Mu'ayyad Mehyar

- DIHR organised the Seventh AEHRD on Public Participation and the Role of NHRIs, in collaboration with the Algerian National Consultative Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The meeting was hosted by the Algerian NHRI and concluded a set of recommendations for NHRIs on how they can facilitate greater public participation for human rights reform. More news including accessing the Algeria Declaration on Public Participation on this link [in English and Arabic here](#).
- DIHR organised and facilitated an international seminar on human rights education. Participants included DIHR's

NHRIs' partners and civil society organisations from Asia and Europe. The focus of the seminar was human rights education across both formal and informal settings with an objective to provide an opportunity to share experiences of such work carried out by NHRIs, civil society organisations and public schools.

The Egyptian National Council for Human Rights (ENCHR)

Observing the New Constitution Referendum

ENCHR participated in the observation process of the referendum on the new constitution that took place on 15 and 22 December 2012. ENCHR issued fifty-thousand permits for the representatives of non-governmental organisations all over Egypt. ENCHR received 1137 complaints during both phases of the referendum.

Public Participation and Human Rights

The National Council for Human Rights organized a workshop entitled "Public Participation and Human Rights" in collaboration with the Danish Institute for Human Rights on 17 September, 2012 where it discussed the role of public participation in promoting human rights standards and principles.

The German Institute for Human Rights (GIHR)

Public Participation

The Institute continued its work on public participation, focusing on the rights of persons with social and mental disabilities to participate in elections. It published a position paper and lobbied parliamentarians who debated a review of current legislation.

Economic and social rights

The Institute intensified its work on poverty and its effects on different social groups. In the yearly film festival ONE WORLD BERLIN in November, the Institute screened a production on illiterates in Germany ("Unbelehrbar - Unteachable" by Anke Hentschel). A lively discussion took place on what it means to be illiterate in Germany. In December, the Institute hosted author Stefan Selke. Selke read from his book ("Fast ganz unten – Near the Bottom") in which he describes how persons in poverty are excluded from society if they depend on food aid organized by charity. In a similar vein, the Institute submitted several statements to German courts criticizing that proposed

changes in asylum law do not adequately reflect the right to social security and to food, by restricting asylum applicants' access to the labour market.

Engagement with UN human rights bodies

In October, the Institute submitted its stakeholder report to the Universal Periodic Review. Download Stakeholder Report [in English here](#).

In August, the Institute contributed to a discussion led by CERD on racist hate speech. Download GIHR's contribution to the discussion [in English here](#).

The Jordanian National Centre for Human Rights (JNCHR)

JNCHR Monitored Parliamentary Elections in Jordan

JNCHR took part in monitoring the National Parliamentary elections in Jordan held in January 2013.

JNCHR hosted the 11th Global ICC conference

JNCHR held the Eleventh International Conference of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC of NHRIs). The Conference took place in Amman, Jordan on 5-7 November 2012. It was hosted by JNCHR and co-organised together with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the ICC of NHRIs. The focus of the Conference was "The human rights of women and girls: Promoting gender equality: The role of national human rights institutions."

Training course on the implementation of international human rights standards in Jordanian Courts

In collaboration with the Jordanian Bar Association, the JNCHR conducted a training course on the implementation of international standards of human rights in the Jordanian courts. The training started in November, 2012 and will continue until July, 2013.

NGO Training Course on Refugees and Human Rights

In December 2012, JNCHR conducted a course on refugees and human rights for non-governmental organisations from Jordan.

The Moroccan Human Rights Council (MHRC)

MHRC's Prison Crisis Report

Within the framework of the Council's mandate under its founding law, mainly article 11 related to the power to visit places of deprivation of liberty, MHRC published its thematic report on the situation of prison and prisoners, entitled: "*Prison Crisis: A Shared Responsibility - 100 recommendations for the protection of prisoners' rights*" (press conference held by MHRC on the 31st of October, 2012). This report is the second thematic report published by MHRC, after its preliminary report on "Mental health and human rights: Urgent need for new policy", which highlighted the situation in psychiatric hospitals in Morocco and called for strong and vigilant intervention and for new comprehensive and integrated policy to improve and promote mental health in Morocco (press conference held by MHRC on the 11th of September, 2012).

Prison Crisis Report [in English here.](#)

Mental Health Report [in English here.](#)

Visit from UN Special Rapporteur on torture

MHRC met on 16 September, 2012 with Mr. Juan Méndez, UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other forms of cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. Mr. Méndez visited Morocco on 15-22 September, 2012. At the conclusion of his visit, Mr. Méndez commended the crucial role of MHRC in advancing human rights in Morocco.

Report from Special rapporteurs visit [in English here.](#)

[The Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights \(PICHR\)](#)

Roundtable Meeting on the Role of NHRIs in Conflict and Transitional Phases

On the 11th of November, 2012, PICHR organised a roundtable meeting on the "Role of NHRIs in Situations of Conflict and Transition", where PICHR hosted delegations representing NHRIs across the world, for four days.

The roundtable was attended by the Geneva Representative of the UN International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions (ICC), and nine other representatives of four national institutions from Northern Ireland, Scotland, Thailand and Ecuador, representative of OHCHR in the occupied Palestinian territory, and representatives of official Palestinian institutions, diplomatic missions, civil society organisations and the media.



PICHR-hosted round-table on NHRIs' Role in Situations of Conflict and Transition

The Qatari National Human Rights Committee (QNHR)

QNHR, which is currently chairing the Arab Network of NHRIs, hosted a regional workshop for member NHRIs of the Arab Network. The Workshop was organised in collaboration with the OHCHR-MENA. The purpose was to strengthen the capacities of Arab NHRIs vis-a-vis their mandates.

About the Newsletter

This is the fourth newsletter, prepared by the AEHRD Secretariat to share AEHRD Network's news and developments. This newsletter is distributed among the member NHRIs of the AEHRD as well as observer member organisations at the UN, EU and Arab League agencies and civil society organisations.

If you have any comments or suggestions on how to improve this newsletter send your feedback to us and we will incorporate them into future editions.

Note: The listing of member NHRIs' news followed the alphabetical order of the countries they belong to.

Contact mme@humanrights.dk if you want the AEHRD platforms (newsletter, website, Facebook and Twitter) to disseminate news about the activities of your institutions.

The next newsletter will be disseminated in August 2013.



Follow AEHRD on our three platforms:

- Website: www.aehrd.info
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/AEHRDialogue
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/#!/AEHRDialogue>