

Iranian Islamic Human Rights Commission

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لجنة حقوق الانسان الاسلامية في ايران

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This Newsletter prepared by National Independent Institution of Iran for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights contains information on the Commission's highlights at the national and international level, as well as its events and initiatives on all human rights related issues.



Highlight Report

The overall atmosphere prevailing the country over the past month (June 15 - July 15) coincided with the aftermath of the 10th presidential election was immensely influenced by the post-election incidents and movements. The Iranian Islamic Human Rights Commission (hereinafter "IHRC") expectedly focused most of its energy on measures to advance and promote the human rights and help eliminate the concerns created following the controversial event.

It should be taken into consideration here that the scale of the recent developments and the recent unrests in Iran in the past few weeks has been so large and extensive that in numerous cases the IHRC failed to play a preventive role or take an instant effective measure. However, the most important point seems to be the fact

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that the body of the IHRC's human rights servants tried their best and made every effort to ensure that the services the Commission renders to the society in such areas as providing legal assistance, training, research, human rights observatory and its other widespread functions remain mainly uninterrupted. It is significant to note that the IHRC took special initiatives and measures regarding the recent developments in Iran which should be elaborated upon later in the present newsletter. However, the highlights of such initiatives and measures include:

Reviewing and recording every and each of the events and reports that in one way or other reflect the status of human rights and keeping constant eyes on performance of different related national and local bodies in observing such rights;

Following - up numerous cases of human rights violations through corresponding with the relevant judiciary and administrative bodies and authorities;

Collecting data and inputs from different provinces (in addition to the Capital wherein the Central Office is located) through the IHRC Regional Offices to ensure respect as much as possible for human rights of individuals who may lack access to the Central Office;

Conducting case studies on different events before, during and after the presidential election to provide answers to certain questions, offering legal aids to families of those arrested in connections with these events and following up their cases through legal channels;

Investigating the legal aspects of the recent events in two separate meetings arranged by the IHRC Research Committee with participation of the country's most outstanding university figures and the officials of the Iran Bar Association;

Conducting interviews with legal experts on different aspects of recent events which are now available for the public on the Commission's website.

To put it sincerely, when considering the efforts and measures taken by the IHRC during the past few weeks, there is no denying the fact that, despite all significant achievements made in the country in different areas of human rights, there are still serious challenges present in the society in terms of observing the citizen's rights specially at times of crises and emergency situations. It is all but evident

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that the relevant bodies, particularly the Judiciary and judicial authorities, law enforcement officials, the police and security forces should make further efforts to ensure observation of the judicial security and justice in the sense entailed in the third article of the IRI's Constitution as a duty of the sovereignty as well as the Rights of the Nation entailed in the articles 19 to 43 of the Constitution, Section Three, which stress such rights as the freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, prohibition of arbitrary detention, freedom of press and other enshrined individual rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Iranian human rights institution, while voicing its deep concerns against many of inappropriate and ill treatments which were clearly against the Constitution and recognized norms, and while expressing sympathy with the families of those killed during the events, did its double best to create and reinforce the sense of sympathy and cooperation between the opposing sides involved in the events. The outcomes of such efforts will determine in the future whether the IHRC has been successful in achieving this goal or not. It is hoped that the critical situation in Iran is over soon and things get back to their regular and legal shapes which ensure people's rights.



Human Rights Monitoring

The Commission's watchdogs conduct both domestic and international human rights monitoring studies, having been quite busy in the past four weeks, examined and prepared hundreds of reports as part of their regular duties which are now available to the users. The interested users can obtain the reports on the domestic surveillance over the observance of human rights, including the 16 specified

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priorities, from the related units of the Commission. As for the international monitoring activities, there are five reports accessible prepared by our observers who monitor constantly all human rights developments across the world through their offices. There are five separate monitoring offices in the International Unit of the Commission which are responsible for developing monthly reports on the main human rights issues.

The Legal Affairs of the Commission, being responsible for following up the cases reported to the IHRC by the people, has been receiving numerous complaint regarding the post-election events, any of which has been carefully examined and necessary correspondence with relevant authorities have been made. Just in one case, a letter sent to Head of Tehran Justice Administration three days after the election in 17 June 2009 with the aim of expressing concerns over the recent events and asking certain questions. Although the communication is already available in the IHRC website for public information, some of its extracts read as follows:

1. " . . . in recent days, accompanying the law enforcement forces and sometimes replacing them, there have been a large number of non-uniformed militia carrying clubs or sticks, some of them two meters long, standing in different parts of the city or riding motorcycles who have been giving orders to citizens and in many cases dealing with people physically. These militia forces sometimes even acted independently from the police and they controlled the people in the streets. This is undoubtedly in sharp contrast with the lawful system to guarantee order in the society. However, people do not know where these forces come from and they act under what authority and also the citizens do not know where they should take their complaints if they suffer any damages by the said forces and they question whether these people are acting under the supervision and guidance of the Judiciary or whether they have any legal authority or permit for their actions and based on what?

2. During the past days, there has been news about numerous cases of violent beating of citizens, damaging the doors of houses, violent bursting into houses without legal permission and inflicting serious damages, extensive wave of blind

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arrests, and even death of people including both ordinary people and the police forces, destroying public properties and . . . which has received wide coverage both at home and abroad. Rumors continue to spread concerning these events while the Judiciary is naturally expected to provide public information on them at the first place, explaining the duties and responsibilities of its forces to the public and guiding people where to take their complaints and telling them who is to provide information to the families of those who have been arrested. One thing to notice here is that in the past two days, many family members have been coming to the IHRC wanting to know what authority is responsible for the arbitrary detention of their sons, daughters or relatives and in what conditions they are being kept and where they have to go to get an answer . . ."

In further communications following the above-mentioned one, many other issues pertaining to the human rights were also raised and reviewed - the details of which are available in the IHRC Legal Unit.

As for the foreign monitoring activities, during the same period, the IHRC monitored the issue of Xingjian Crisis (Uighur Muslims in China) and the killing of a veiled Muslim woman in German court. The IHRC made the necessary correspondence with the competent authorities of the respective countries. Chinese officials in person answered to the IHRC correspondence during a meeting held at the Central Office and its details covered by the media in Iran.



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Events

In the past few weeks, there have been a few cases of educational and promotional programmes by the IHRC Central & Regional Office, some of which include:

♣ **Special Workshop on Mothers' Rights (17 June, Central Office):** The workshop, which was also attended by two of well-known activists and experts on women rights and a group of the IHRC researchers, examined the different categories mothers fall into, the situation of mothers in legal system of Iran (while comparing it with the international norms and standards), and the role of non-governmental organizations in advancing the rights of mothers. Based on the news of this workshop, which was covered by a major news agency in Iran, namely ISNA, a major Iranian weekly which mainly focuses on women issues (IRANDOKHT) published a detailed report of the gathering.

♣ **Two Meetings on the Rights of Women from an Islamic Perspective and a Comparative Analysis on its Conformity with International Standards** were also held in the IHRC Regional Office No. 5 in the province of Qom (18 June – 25 June) in which religious scholars and legal experts examined different aspects and forms of support for women in basic Islamic jurisprudence and rules, special forms of support to women in Islamic teachings and legal system and their conformity with the international norms, the most urgent challenges before women's human rights both in Iran and the world and the most outstanding methods to advance and promote women's rights.

♣ **Two Expert Gatherings on the Rights of Women and the Legal Status of Ethics and Chastity in Consolidating the Family Institution** by the IHRC Regional Office No. 7 in Ardebil (respectively in 16 June – 12 July): In the former event, which co-sponsored by the Provincial Red Crescent Society, in addition to local speakers, Dr, Roshan, head of the Shahid Beheshti



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Research Center for Women and Family Issues also delivered a speech. In the latter case, Dr. Ahmad Hossein Anzabi who is a faculty member, advisor to Ardebil Governor and Secretary of the Province's Women Affairs Committee were also present as speakers. Ardebil Governorate Office also contributed in the event. The details of the gathering are available to all in the weblog belonging to the IHRC Ardebil Office. It also received wide local press and media coverage.

♣ **Consultative Meeting on Solidarity Rights (Central Office, June 29)** which was held to provide answers to the Questions put forward by the **UN Independent Expert on Human Rights and International Solidarity**. It should be noted that the Independent Expert has been requested to prepare a draft declaration on the rights of people and individuals to international solidarity. All those who have been teaching academic courses on the issue in Iranian universities or have been doing research on it were invited to the IHRC Central Office to help compile a comprehensive answer text after examining the details of the questionnaire. The International Affairs Unit of the Commission, too, was careful to ensure each participant is providing a written text so that they are compiled in the form of comprehensive text after needed revisions.

♣ **Mountain-Climbing Initiative to Khashchal** arranged for **Human Rights Assistants** working with the Regional Office No. 7 in Qazvin Province (June 26): In this initiative which took place on the occasion of the **World Anti Drugs Day** campaign with the theme of *Health for All in a World Void of Narcotics*, a group of human rights assistants from the city of Tabriz joined their colleagues from Qazvin province in ascending the mountain. They met and hold sessions with a number of Regional officials as well. The event was well-covered by local papers.



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Research

In the past few weeks, just as a part of our routine activities, many research-based studies were done the highlights of which are:

- *Preparing and publishing of News Bulletin No. 3 on the latest international legal developments in the area of women's rights and the rights of child containing all data available during last three months 2009;*
- *New Issue of News Bulletin on the latest events worldwide about Islamophobia during last three months 2009;*
- *Preparing the text material on the three panels previously held on the legal aspects of elections and two other panels on DRC;*
- *Editing numerous articles translated from Arabic to Persian in different human rights areas;*
- *Compiling of a set of technical questions to be presented to the upcoming IHRC Meeting in the city of Qom about the Capacities of Mysticism in Providing Complementary Answers to Legal Human Rights Concerns;*
- *Conducting case studies on the recent presidential elections in Iran and the questions put forward by the human rights activists in this regard details of which are accessible to the public via the IHRC Website;*
- *Holding of two weekly sessions by the IHRC Research Committee dating June 29 and July 23 to explore the legal aspects of recent unrests following elections in Iran, the degree of access to the defense right by those arrested in the unrests and examining the new procedural law endorsed by*

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the Judiciary concerning the Iranian Bar Association which provoked the intense protests on the part of its members;

▣ *Translation of two articles on the solidarity rights to finalize an academic collection of articles to be compiled in a book format and also being used in preparation of our advisory opinion to the relevant UN Rapporteur;*

▣ *Translating and summarizing of an IASC report on the mental health and the ways of offering mental and social supports to victims of crises and emergency situations;*

▣ *Compiling of periodic reports on the body of international adoptions and reports about the human rights situation in Iran;*

▣ *Compiling of a report about the conditions of Islamic associations active in human rights issues in non-Islamic countries.*



IT & Informatics Office

In the past four weeks, the IT Office of the Commission has been quite active in supporting and improving the performance of other IHRC Sections working in legal areas. These activities include:

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- ✦ *Working on artistic designs for the upcoming news bulletins of the IHRC or for special ceremonies on different occasions;*
- ✦ *launching the Arabic version of the IHRC website;*
- ✦ *Regularly updating the Commission's website (only in one area of internal monitoring activities, thousands of pages of reports and news items are currently available to the public);*
- ✦ *Updating the computers and the hardware in the Central Office as well as some of the Provincial Offices and compiling of certain software needed by different Sections of the IHRC;*
- ✦ *Providing regular support to the IHRC website and the computer systems used by legal clinics in Regional Offices;*
- ✦ *Working on new designs for e-newsletters in three languages;*
- ✦ *Preparing a networking system for the IHRC web logs.*



Regional Offices

The details of the numerous activities by the IHRC Regional Offices are available in the website. The highlights of such activities in the past four weeks include:

- ❖ *Compiling of reports for the subsequent follow-ups by the Legal Unit about the post-election events in any of the provinces where the IHRC has an office;*
- ❖ *Postponement of an educational course on fair trial and human rights for the judges and attorneys in the city of Tabriz which was delayed due to post-election unrest and also to meet the demands of the course instructors;*

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- ❖ *Lobbying with the authorities of the Qom Islamic School and some of other religious figures in Qom to have their participation in the inauguration of a stamp designed and approved by the IHRC (the ceremony was postponed to autumn due to post-election conditions);*
- ❖ *The IHRC Office in Gilan Province moved to another building the address of which is already put up in the IHRC website;*
- ❖ *Completion of the designing of a homepage for the IHRC Office No. 2 in the city of Shariz following which the Central Office took necessary measures to register the required domain for it;*
- ❖ *A text was prepared by the Central Office for the Governor of Kermanshah city about the scope of the activities of this certain Regional Office;*
- ❖ *Latest published bulletins were sent to responsible relevant authorities and organizations nationwide;*
- ❖ *Holding of a number of technical and expert meetings by Office No. 7 in the city of Tabriz and also Office No. 5 in the city of Qom the news of which was also mentioned in the Section about gatherings in the present newsletter.*

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Other Activities

During the past few weeks, the IHRC has been involved in other activities, some of which are:

- a book under the title of "*A Guide for Policy and Law Reform: Legal Aspects of Aids and Human Rights*" was published as a joint project by the IHRC and the Medical Rights and Ethics Center of Shahid Beheshti University;
- a book titled *Child – Friendly Text UN Disability Convention* was re-printed for a second time as a joint project by the IHRC and the Bavvar Society which is active in defending the rights of the disabled;
- a proposal was offered to a Qom Islamic School to hold special courses for international students residing in Qom to be titled *Empowerment for Promotion of Human Rights*;
- A number of **newsletters** were published during the period by the IHRC the last of which was about the Judiciary's decision about the Iranian Bar Association which was met by its severe objection;
- a project was launched by the IHRC to establish a data bank of human rights films and clips and also a **Working Group on Art and Human Rights** with contribution of an expert in the area;
- In answer to the general request of the Secretariat of HRC regarding nominating candidates as **special procedure mandate holders** for the vacancies in the field of cultural rights and Sudan, the IHRC compiled a list of scholars and legal experts specializing in the area and introduced its eligible representatives.



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Upcoming Works & Events

The IHRC has been planning many programmes for the forthcoming days. Some of the upcoming ones include:

- ✚ Organizing a gathering on Children's Rights in Semnan Province in August;
- ✚ Holding of a workshop in Isfahan on the Rights of Vulnerable Groups in the city of Isfahan in August and taking final decision about the new date for holding of a postponed meeting due in Tabriz on the "Fair Trial and Human Rights";
- ✚ Publication of a number of new bulletins and books;
- ✚ Holding of special ceremonies to celebrate the National Day of Islamic Human Rights and Human Dignity slated for August 3 which is officially designated for the first time in Iranian calendar;
- ✚ Making final decision for the Office No 8 located in the city of Bushehr about whether or not to continue its activities, given the fact that its activities have been halted for the past two months for failure to form its all-inclusive Regional board of directors;
- ✚ Deciding about the overall structure of the IHRC's report to the UPR mechanism of Human Rights Council of the United Nations which is to review Iran in 2010;
- ✚ Submitting advisory opinion to Methodology, education and Training Unit at OHCHR regarding the Second Phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education;
- ✚ Submitting advisory opinion to OHCHR consultation on operationalizing the framework for the business and human rights presented by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational cooperation and other business enterprises;
- ✚ Translating new technical texts and editing the translated texts on different human rights issues.

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Newsletter Survey

1. What is your overall opinion of the format and layout and also the content of the Newsletter?
2. Did you find this Newsletter helpful in keeping you up to date about coming events?
3. Do you have any additional suggestions or comments for being included in the future Issues? What additional feedback or suggestions do you have about the Newsletter?
4. What would you like to see more or less of in future versions of the Newsletter? Which section of the Newsletter did you find to be the most valuable?
5. Would you like to exchange your new publications with the Commission?
6. If you like to receive this Monthly Newsletter regularly, please let us know your preferable email address by subscribing to this Newsletter through ihrc1@ihrc.ir.

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