NEWSLETTER

December 2016

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MUSAWA Publishes Issue (28) of Justice and Law Magazine

In December, MUSAWA published issue no. (28) of Justice and Law magazine. The issue comprises of 358 pages that include the following topics:

Four academically approved legal studies; seven comments on judgments pronounced by the High Administrative Court, including the judgment to cancel conducting local elections in the Gaza Strip; three comments on a ruling by the Court of Cessation in civil cases; a comment on a ruling by the Supreme Court which was assigned to fulfill the duties of the Constitutional Court until established. The last section of the magazine demonstrates a legal article, titled "Iran: A Religious State".

Given its unique nature and the issues it tackles, Justice and Law magazine (28) is only available in Arabic. For a hard copy, please visit MUSAWA's offices in Ramallah and Gaza. For a soft copy, click here.

The Public Prosecution Responds to MUSAWA's Demands

On 15/12/2016, MUSAWA sent a legal memo to Public Prosecutor Dr. Ahmad Barrak concerning an infringement of the right to access to justice and fair trial guarantees.

MUSAWA received a letter from the Public Prosecutor stating that the Public Prosecution has responded to MUSAWA's memo by (1) giving an order to remove the announcement of Jenin's Prosecution regarding the procedures of reviewing release requests,(2) issuing instructions for a quick handling of release-on-bail requests (on the same day), and (3) issuing an order to rehabilitate the glass partition separating the Public Prosecution's employees and its visitors so as to ensure that visitors can communicate with the employee in an appropriate direct manner without prejudice to their dignity.

MUSAWA's Proposal for Overcoming the Deterioration in the Justice Sector

On 22/12/2016, members of the National Team for the Unification of the Judiciary in the West Bank and Gaza held a video conference meeting in Birzeit University and Gaza to discuss MUSAWA's proposal for mechanisms to overcome the crisis in the Justice Sector. The meeting aimed at reaching a joint position that would be announced in a press conference and submitted to duty-bearers.

MUSAWA Issues a Brief of Eye on Justice (19)

Supported by the SAWASIYA Program, MUSAWA prepared and issued a summary of the 19th issue of Eye on Justice both in Arabic and English.

MUSAWA Organizes Regular Meeting for Coordinators of Palestinian Human Rights Defenders Network

In cooperation with the Palestinian Human Right Defenders (hereinafter PHRDs) Network, and in the presence of the Network's coordinators and members, MUSAWA conducted a periodic meeting for the coordinators. The meeting was held at MUSAWA's offices in the West Bank and Gaza throughout December 2016. It was attended by a total of 19 members, 8 of whom were female participants.

Palestinian Human Rights Defenders Network: Monthly Meetings in the West Bank

Throughout December, four meetings in four different areas within the West Bank (Ramallah, Jerusalem and Jericho; Tulqarm and Qalqilya; Jenin and Tubas; Bethlehem and Hebron) were carried-out by MUSAWA, in cooperation with the PHRDs Network. The meetings were attended by a total of 38 members, including 27 female participants. For more details, click here.

#PHRD Ranks Number One on Social Media

On the occasion of the international day of human rights and human rights defenders, which falls on Saturday the 10th of December, MUSAWA and the PHRDs Network launched a campaign on social media channels to "tweet" about human rights and the important role of the PHRDs Network. The all-day-long campaign included a number of PHRDs members in Palestine. In Gaza, the members gathered along with the social media club to jointly launch several "tweets" that promote the culture of human rights. Several times a day each member would use the hashtag **#PHRD** (in English) or **#شبكة_المدافعون** (in Arabic) to promote for human rights. On the first day, the hashtag ranked number one on Palestine's trending-list, and it came in second place on the day following the campaign.

More details can be found here.

Consultation Round to Discuss MUSAWA's Monitory Publications

Given the importance of MUSAWA's publications as tools for monitoring the performance of the justice sector, a special consultation round was organized and conducted on 14/12/2016, connecting the West Bank and Gaza through video conference, to discuss the 19th issue of Eye on Justice magazine and 27th issue (special edition) of Justice and Law magazine.

The session included a number of legal figures both from the West Bank and Gaza; members of the Public Prosecution and employees at the High Judicial Council. The overall purpose of the consultation round was to talk about the content of both publications in order to identify points of strength and weakness, and to discuss the means possible for developing the oversight role monitory magazines play in observing the performance of the justice sector.

MUSAWA's Interventions

In December, MUSAWA received two complaints. The first complaint addressed allegations of violations in one of the local councils while the second complaint was about an event of unlawful detention. MUSAWA addressed both complaints by giving the complainants the appropriate legal advice.

Legal Memo

On 01/12/2016, MUSAWA sent a legal memo to the Acting Head of the High Judicial Council/ Acting Head of the High Court of Justice, Judge Imad Saleem, regarding complaints that have to do with the violation of a lawyer's dignity and prejudicing fair trial guarantees in order to take the necessary legal action concerning the matter.

Workshop: "The Reality, Rights and Means to Protect Palestinian Defenders"

On the occasion of the international day of human rights and human rights defenders, MUSAWA organized a workshop on the reality of human rights defenders in Palestine in terms of their rights and the means available to protect them. The workshop was conducted in cooperation with the PHRDs Network, the National Society for Democracy and Law, and the Palestinian Youth Media Rally at the rally's hall in Rafah. The workshop was conducted on 19/12/2016, targeting a number of lawyers, media figures, journalists and others who are interested in the field. A total number of 23 people attended the workshop, including 9 female participants.

On 22/12/2016, a similar workshop was carried-out by MUSAWA at the Palestinian Red Crescent's hall in Gaza. A total of 55 people attended the workshop, 9 of whom were female participants.

MUSAWA's Team External Activities

Participation in a workshop on the Informal Justice System and Gender in the West Bank

Invited by the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development, MUSAWA represented by its Internal Operation Manager, Rana Laila, participated in a workshop conducted by AWRAD on 29/12/2016 for the purpose of launching a study titled "The Informal Justice System and Gender in the West Bank". The workshop included 15 participants from different Civil Society Organizations, in addition to independent lawyers and activists in relevant fields. During the workshop, a summary of the study and recommendations were presented while the attendees discussed the study's methodology and content.

Participation in a conference on pluralism and human rights in Alexandria

On 10-13/12/2016, colleague and Coordinator of MUSAWA's project "Empowering Palestinian Human Rights Defenders", Najwan Berekdar, took part in a conference on pluralism and human rights, carried-out by the Swedish Institute in Alexandria. The conference included a number of academics and human rights activists from various Arab and European countries, where each participant was given the opportunity to present a paper on subjects related to pluralism, women's rights and the rights of minorities in their country. It is worth mentioning that the Yemeni author and Associate Professor at the University of Zurich, Dr. Ilham Manna', and the founder of Libyan Women's Platform for Peace, Dr. Zahrah Langy, participated in the conference as moderators of discussions. Also, the Director of the Swedish Institute Alexandria, Peter Edward, opened the conference and moderated some discussions as well.

On the second day of the conference, Najwan presented her paper, which addressed the issue of pluralism in the Palestinian community in the context of the occupation. In her presentation, Najwan pointed out the occupation's exploitation of the diverse Palestinian identity as an attempt to divide the Palestinian society. Moreover, Najwan spoke about the means by which Palestinians deal with such a geographic, religious and cultural diversity, and how the occupation tries to utilize this for the purpose of fragmenting the Palestinian society. She also mentioned the groups which are most affected by the situation.

At the end of her presentation, Najwan gave a number of recommendations for overcoming the aforementioned challenges, while focusing on the Palestinian youth and how their critical thinking skills and legal knowledge could be developed and improved.

Participation in a consultation round titled "The Independence, Impartiality and Comprehensiveness of the Anti-Corruption Commission"

Invited by AMAN, MUSAWA's Legal and Technical Adviser, Advocate Ibrahim Barghouthi, participated in a consultation session which was conducted on 28/12/2012 at AMAN's headquarters in Ramallah. For more details on the session, click here.

MUSAWA's Partners 2016

The Netherlands Representative Office to the Palestinian Authority

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