HIC-HLRN Achievements 2009

Middle East/North Africa Program
Executive summary

The accompanying report presents the progress, products, problems, lessons learned, adjustments made and support received in implementing the 2009 program of Habitat International Coalition’s Housing and Land Rights Network (HIC-HLRN) in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region. The year represented the eighth in HLRN’s programming and service to specialized civil society organizations that promote human rights toward solving problems in the field of human settlements in Middle East/North Africa.

The report, like the HLRN’s MENA Program, is organized on the basis of three inter-related goals with their corresponding activities. These goals include:

1. Network, Coalition, and alliance development and maintenance;
2. Knowledge creation, empowerment and capacity building to ensure HRAH (the human right to adequate housing);
3. Advocacy at all levels (multilateral, regional, national and local).

Network, Coalition, and alliance development and maintenance

The year 2009 was a year of growth for the MENA Program not only in Members, but in alliances with other networks and organizations in the region. The Network Members in MENA reached 105 by the end of 2009, along with 50 “Friends” (individual affiliates). That marks an increase of four Members and nine Friends during the year, exceeding the projected target.

The networking efforts around the right to water—a contiguous right to HRAH—has contributed to supporting the regional and national efforts in this context, which reflected ultimately in the active participation in the Climate Change Forum in Copenhagen. This in turn provided a good opportunity to HLRN members in Morocco and Egypt to focus on a package of rights, mainly included the right to water, the right to food and the right to housing for the most impoverished and marginalized people who become close constituent to these local members and consequently to the HLRN. The MENA Program assisted in mobilizing MENA participants in that networking and capacity-building event. The Africa Human Rights Spaces project, in cooperation with the Arab Institute for Human Rights and constituents across the continent, continued to be one of the main opportunities to support the values of human rights and mobilization towards implementing the ESC rights in Africa, as the through subregional and Africa-wide collaboration among human rights organizations.

The MENA Program continued to advise and provide technical support to several groups and organizations facing HRAH and land rights violations. In addition, MENA officers were frequently called upon to contribute to conferences and seminars throughout the year, each with a networking and alliance-building objective.
Knowledge creation, empowerment and capacity building

The period 2009 also coincided with dramatic developments in the MENA region, not least involving the further displacements and dispossession of Palestinians in the West Bank due to the Israeli Wall, and Israel’s serial military operations and blockade of the Gaza Strip, the dispossession and forced evictions of farmers in Egypt and Ahwazi Arabs in Iran, and the continued deprivation of Palestinian and Sahrawi refugee rights. These issues saw HLRN investigating and reporting on the consequent violations and potential remedies of housing and land rights, including the addition of Western Sahara to its comparative analysis and website section under HLRN’s Solidarity Network.

Major publications in 2009 included a report on the Land Forum, the inspiring and encompassing scheme that the HLRN has pursued over the last few years to organize and maintain a body of civil society experts and activists concerned with social justice related to various aspects of land tenure, policy and administration in MENA.

The on-line HLRN Violation Database contained cases of eviction, dispossession, demolition and violations arising from privatization of public housing and services. The VDB has recorded such violations in the MENA region affecting over 4.590.340.8 persons over 2000–08 alone.

As part of its capacity-building Mission Goal, HLRN conducted a series of training activities in MENA for Members and their communities in 2009. These also included training events in preparation for self-representation and parallel reporting before the UN Human Rights Council, refugee rights and strategic planning. MENA Program training benefited 150 participants, including 100 men and 50 women, with a total training time of 120 hours

Advocacy

The foregoing activities also served the advocacy efforts of HLRN and its members (and vice versa). Advocacy at the international level had the MENA Program shifting its focus from the treaty bodies (not reviewing MENA countries in 2009) to the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review mechanism, jointly preparing a civil society participation for Egypt. Other efforts were dedicate to the Durban Review Process and developing the legal arguments for country reviews in light of their extraterritorial obligations and “international cooperation,” with particular reference to four cases in MENA.

The HLRN Urgent Action system contained 83 unresolved cases in 2009. Of those, 22 were in MENA (6 in Egypt, 16 in Israel/Palestine). Several cases saw developments, however, including response such as boycott, divestment and sanction actions by other parties (e.g, Caterpillar Corporation) and UN actions through Special Rapporteurs and decision-making bodies.

General and administration

Resource constraints and overwork of personnel remain the constant challenges to realizing the full programmatic potential of HLRN in the MENA region. For a program that seeks to build a reciprocal, problem-solving culture among civil organizations, entrenched practices, threatening
political environments, the immediacy of local agendas, lack of specialization, and individual organizations’ own resource constraints impede desired progress. In particular, these factors conspire to complicate joint actions and the formation of collective agendas and campaigns with specific, sustained activities.

As pointed out in previous reports and the 2007–08 HIC and HLRN evaluation, the MENA Program demands are expanding faster than resources and capacities. This has necessitated adjustments for the future, including a focus on selective and more intensive training activities, recruiting assistance for fundraising needs, and more-selective engagement of Members with proven capacity to advance the common regional HRH agenda.

Through all of these achievements and challenges, the support of long-standing sponsors such as Ford Foundation, ICCO and MISEREOR has been essential to the Program’s operation and achievements. Moreover, occasional and project-specific funders in the UN system and elsewhere have contributed valuable material and moral support. Not least are the cumulative efforts of Members and civil society at large in the MENA region.
Introduction

Working on ESC rights in the world is complicated for different reasons, and in MENA it becomes more complicated for the cultural specificity imposes extra obstacles, mainly because the absence of real democracy that hinders the NGOs from access to their constituency who need support and change, and also because this reality reprioritize the CSOs’ agenda to be more focused on civic and political rights.

This can be seen clearly in the contradiction between the plenty of resources and the volume of poverty that spreading over the region. The political situation as well as the economic policies made by the governments during the last few years made the situation of most of people in the region worse than before, particularly under the pretext of the World Financial Crisis that lot of employers and duty holders exploit it to continue their violations of ECS rights, specially the right to housing, right to water and right to food.

The MENA Program through the human right to adequate housing (HRAH) criteria developed in international law as an authoritative framework for Program activities, organized under three main mission goals (see below). The Program seeks the realization of this framework on ground through new innovative activities that can be reachable and even perceptible by the constituents who lack the tools and mechanisms of using the elaborate legal system in the parsimonious political and general situation. So, the quantification methods, action research, web-based documentation, database and IT tools development and other methods of problem solving (e.g., strategic planning, social production of habitat, etc.) are always the focus of HLRn interest to develop for the constituents. The Program also promotes the State obligations corresponding to HRAH, including those pertaining to international cooperation—i.e., extraterritorial obligations—as means to address the changing role of the State and the burgeoning ill-housed population.

This annual report reflects the implementation of the second year of HLRN’s second three-year strategic plan, developed in consultation with HLRN officers and members, in coordination with the HIC Secretariat. As reflected in the lessons learned during 2007 and 2008, program implementation over the period has enriched the experience that grounds program designs and programmatic choices for the future. One of the over-riding challenges remains to maintain a balance of efforts on regions and delivering services equitably to a numerous and diverse constituency.
Membership Development: Network & Coalition Building

I.A The Network Level:

1. Manage and develop membership in close communication with constituents
2. Assess needs and assets of members
3. Develop reference points in the regions (especially to integrate housing and land rights)
4. Ensure and enhance the participation of interested HIC members in HLRN
5. Induct members into both HLRN and HIC

The membership management goal for HLRN's 2007–09 MENA Program has been “to increase the viability of members in HLRN by. So, the program could join new members in the spirit of covering qualitative gaps, including forming common cause with NGOs promoting and defending the right to housing, water and food such as the Arab Healthy Water and the Program of Food under the Egyptian Observatory for Human Rights Association, as well as the Development Support Center (Egypt).

Closer and more-regular communications with members has proved fruitful in a number of cases, such as participating in the project of How the People Face the Forced Evection, in cooperation with HIC Members: the Building and Social Housing Fund (England) and the Egyptian Peasants Solidarity Association. HLRN managed a study on urban and rural evictions

Likewise, the close communication with other Members enabled the formation and development of a platform on the right to water in the MENA region, which was reflected in the representatives’ participation in The Climate Change Forum in Copenhagen, December 2009. The constituents now forming the Right to Water Forum in the Arab Region are the Association pour un contract mondial de l’eau/Association for a Global Water Contract (Morocco), the Association for Health and Environmental Development (Egypt), and researchers from Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia and Palestine, as well as current Members in Egypt and Iraq. All of these HIC-MENA Members have been participating also in national and local events in the World Water Day and World Habitat Day with the spirit and method informing and mobilizing their communities and the public about economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR).
HLRN’s hosting of the first MENA Land Forum in 2009 was the event that provided a golden opportunity for Members and other participants in the region to exchange and compare experiences in pursuit of social justice in land tenure, policy and management within the human rights framework and method. With the MENA Land Forum, HLRN coordinated a complement of activities and shared a tools and methods in approaching the most important issues related to land and to housing rights, leading to a regional discourse and identification of common issues involved and values at stake. HLRN supported and supervised seven studies from five countries in the inaugural conference at Cairo, in May 2009, and the resulting deliberation and cross-analysis was a rich opportunity for the Members and other experts to meet and discuss the burning—but often under-reported—issue of land underlying struggles and conflicts in their countries and region. HLRN is currently developing a “Landpedia” to apply appropriate IT technology to enable access to information and exchange views and plans.

The MENA Program has consulted with and joined Members in Egypt on matters related to development, services and housing rights in the slums of Cairo. This has resulted in joint initiatives and supportive actions in response to evictions, natural disasters and emerging master plans.

Sudan has emerged as a focus of membership induction and management. Sudanese Members from Darfur and the Nuba Mountains (South Kordofan) have met and consulted regularly in the development of their programs focusing on land, displacement and population transfer.

The MENA Program maintains especially close communications and joint activities with Member organizations in Palestine/Israel. The year 2009 saw multiple efforts to coordinate and share information around the conflict in Gaza in early 2009, the UN Human Rights Council sessions and the UN Fact-finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict. Early in 2009 also, HLRN joined Members and others in Palestine in joint programming within the context of the ICCO-initiated coresponsibility and decentralization process with its partners.

The HIC-MENA website (www.hic-mena.org) serves as a networking, research, public information and mobilization tool for Members (and the wider public), especially through the Members Database, now consolidated with the HIC General Secretary’s website. There, MENA Members can search for their HLRN Member counterparts to identify counterparts for swapping skills and experiences. Efforts continued throughout 2009 to harmonize and update Member management in both the Cairo coordination office and the HIC Secretariat in Santiago, Chile.

**Member update**

The official count of HIC-HLRN Member organizations in the MENA region is 105. The new recruits in 2009 include two from Egypt, and one each from Sudan, Palestine and Morocco. The new organizations are as follows:
B. At the Coalition level: Maintain the Structures and Relationships within HIC

1. Serve constructively on HIC Board and contribute to HIC’s reconstruction
2. Integrate the HLR framework across HIC
3. Interact effectively with all HIC structures

Integrating the MENA membership and regional experiences into the HIC general Coalition has been a part of the MENA Program’s goals since its inception. This has been supported throughout the period by the Cairo coordination office hosting the HIC General Assembly and Africa Networking Project meetings, as well as by way of the MENA Program Officer’s participation in the HIC Africa Networking Meeting on “CSOs’ National Strategies in Water Supply, Sanitation and Housing,” in Senegal, August 2009.

Importantly, HIC Members from 23 countries joined the Egyptian Center for Housing Rights in a field visit to Gazirat al-Dahab (Cairo) and issued an inquiring open letter on the housing rights issues there and across the city in light of the emerging Cairo 2050 master plan.

Also in the Civil Society Organizations Parallel Forum to the World Summit on Food Security, in Rome, November 2009, the MENA Program coordinated Member participation with HIC Members from Kenya, Palestine, Egypt, Mali, Chile and Senegal in the developing the common platform and outcome documents. This effort convened HIC Members and others in deliberations and producing the concluding document of Working Group 4: Who Has and Needs Access to Food? The Members emphasized land rights related to “food security, urbanization and the right to the city,” as well as “food security and war-torn and conflict zones and occupied territories.”
I.C Alliance-building: Maintaining Relationships with Other Networks and Partners

The objectives of maintaining formal and informal relationships with alliances beyond HIC members are twofold, namely to:

1. Promote application of the HRAH framework through strategic civic alliances;
2. Collaborate in activities, collective actions and solidarity with alliances toward common ends.

The MENA program was the main coordinator of the Water Day event that was held in Morocco, in January 2009, to support the program and activities of the Right to Water Forum in the Arab Region (RWFAR). This effort brought together HIC-HLRN Members and other organizations and networks working on rights and issues complementary to housing and land struggles. A common issue that bound the various organizations’ interest was the negative experience with the privatization of public goods and services across the MENA region.

The MENA Land Forum that HLRN organized in Cairo, May 2009, also supported the alliance relationships. There HLRN brought together some 50 members from around the world, as well as other international networks such as FIAN and Via Campesina, among other newcomers to HIC-HLRN in the regions and beyond. (The Land Forum also overlapped with meetings of the ACCD-sponsored HIC Africa Networking Project, linking Members in all African subregions.)

The MENA Program’s participation in the Climate Change Forum, Copenhagen, December 2009, seized an opportunity to support the alliance-building goal, as it made possible links with several international networks such as the Movement of People’s Protocol for Climate Change, Asia Pacific Research Network, Roots for Equity. This activity also involved partnership with IBON Foundation (Philippines).

In an important alliance within the MENA, HLRN has cooperated with the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) in sharing common interests and objectives. In 2009, this involved also supporting the ANND’s evaluation with a survey of ANND members and partners, and an analysis of program progress 2005–2009.

Also valuable are the collaborative relations with UN bodies and agencies, including the Economic and Social Council of Western Asia (ESCWA), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights-Beirut and the International Labour Organisation—Regional Office for Arab States. In 2009, HLRN has worked with OHCHR-Beirut on a survey of MENA civil society’s use of human rights mechanisms of the UN system. HLRN’s MENA Program maintains regular consultation with ESCWA, especially its Social Development Division and its Economic Development and Globalization Division, Economic Analysis Section.

One of the important external alliances maintained through the MENA Program is in the form of the Human Dignity and Human Rights Caucus within the World Social Forum. The continuous efforts of the HDHRC through 2009 sought to maintain and develop human rights approaches as a regular subject of the pedagogical work, capacity building and strategy exchange within WSF. Allies in the HDHRC include FIDH, ICCO, Lutheran World Federation, FIAN and Equal-in-Rights, among others.
A. Create and disseminate knowledge through people’s processes for a critical and effective application of the HRAH framework (“Tools & Techniques”)

B. Develop HRAH monitoring indicators through those social processes such that HLRN members (and others) can apply at all levels

C. Build practical skills for HRAH and land right defense via training, development of training materials and methods

The guiding principal behind this goal is to respond to the members’ assessed needs by developing and imparting the tools (including arguments, methods, survey criteria, housing rights indicators, analytical approaches, information, expertise exchange, etc.) effectively to claim the human right to adequate housing individually and in association with others.

Processes and products

II.A. Create and disseminate knowledge of people’s processes toward a critical and constructive application of the HRAH framework

HLRN-MENA generates knowledge in a variety of ways: publishing and distributing factual information about events and developments in applying the human right to adequate housing and other economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR); supporting new action-oriented research of both a theoretical/comparative nature and practical/case-based studies (including fact-finding mission reports and country assessments); and regular provision of resources in a variety of forms, from the Coordination Office and the regional in-house resource library. These include UN documentation (in Arabic) and popular sources on the human right to adequate housing. The HLRN Coordination/MENA Program Office distributes indices and select documents electronically (in Arabic and English), and mounts them on the HLRN MENA Program website (www.hic-mena.org) for HIC-HLRN Members and the public.

HLRN’s HIC-MENA website, an essential reference and tool for dissemination of knowledge, is designed as a unique source of information, tools, strategies, Urgent Actions and databases of member information, as an interactive record of their strategies and experiences.

On Housing and Land Rights Day (World Habitat Day) 4 October 2009, HLRN presented to Members and the general public the Dynamic Map of Violations that reflect findings of its in-house
monitoring through its “Violation Database” (VDB), which applies the HRAH framework and monitoring methods promoted through HLRN training and advocacy. Thus, the HLRN Cairo office in produced a four-color world map of the global housing crisis based on the VDB data, on World Habitat Day, in addition to a report incorporated the findings on violations for the period in MENA in Arabic and English. For more details information, click the map.

**Tool and Techniques Series**

Under this series this period the program issued assessment sheet to the members and friends to help monitoring the implementation of the MDGs, and how to analyze the progress on each goal through the last decade. This period say more applications of the “Loss Matrix” quantification method (in cases of violation) fund in the HLRN Toolkit. In MENA, the particular application of the “Loss Matrix” has been in the developments in and around the UN Register of Damage arising from the Wall in the West Bank of the occupied Palestinian territory.

**Thematic Publications**

As part of the effort to promote well-developed and locally articulated ESC rights in the region, the MENA Program also offers guides for applying the housing rights framework to certain situations or particular segments of society. These publications also draw on the expertise and practices of other regions as a basis for comparison and adaptation of new strategies. The MENA Program continued to distribute its thematic publications at public forums throughout 2009. (A full list of HLRN and MENA Program publications in Annex I to this report.)

**HIC-MENA Website**

The MENA Program’s website is used for all three mission goals, but most prominently serves as a tool for information dissemination and knowledge creation. The site is in both Arabic and English versions, and its features include News, Documents, Solutions & Tools (with links to the HLRN Global site), Publications, and Social Production, in addition to the customary HIC-MENA background and contact pages.

**II.B Develop HRAH monitoring indicators through those social processes such that HLRN members (and others) can apply at all levels**

Consistent with the accumulation of experience and events in and around HLRN, the HLRN Operation Plan, 2007–09 called for the development of methods and guides for treatment of gross violations of housing and land rights as crimes, particularly as war crimes and crimes against humanity. The experiences of Operations against Gaza (Israel/Palestine) and other violations in the region made HLRN to allocate a lot of time and efforts to participate the violations created by the Israeli forces against the civilians in Gaza, it also resulted in some guidelines from the perspective of housing rights to monitor the methodological violations of housing and civilians locations during the assault, and this of course was useful in the
Goldstone FFM on which a report has been published in 2009 including citations of HIC contribution and perspectives.

II.C Build practical skills for HRAH/HLR defense via training, development of training materials and methods

HLRN assists its Members and their partners to build capacity for monitoring and defending their human rights to adequate housing and land as a matter of theory and local application. In MENA, the predominant service involves the development of materials for training, and delivering the curricula in training modules, as well as in published form for HIC-HLRN Members.

Since 1999, HLRN has developed training modules in English and Arabic that HLRN regional programs and members translate and adapt locally. The subjects and materials have been developed in response to the expressed needs and strategic opportunities to build the Network and Coalition, and to develop the economic, social and cultural rights culture.

HLRN training in MENA benefited 79 participants, including 49 men and 30 women, with a total training time of 54 hours (up from 54 hours in 2007 and 50 hours in 2006). Thus, HLRN training in MENA remained stable in 2009, but was more concentrated in the time spent with beneficiaries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Host/ Locale</th>
<th>General Subject</th>
<th>Modules</th>
<th># parts.</th>
<th>♂</th>
<th>♀</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07-08 June</td>
<td>Beirut</td>
<td>UPR</td>
<td>Methodology for monitoring the human right to adequate housing</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 March</td>
<td>Cairo University</td>
<td>Monitoring HRAH</td>
<td>HRAH and land re: autonomy and self-determination</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02-04 Aug</td>
<td>HIC-HLRN Cairo office</td>
<td>Monitoring HRAH</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Nov</td>
<td>HIC-HLRN Cairo office</td>
<td>Strategic planning for managing the land situation in Darfur</td>
<td>Methodology for monitoring the human right to adequate housing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total 2009**

|                                                                 | 79 | 49 | 30 | 54 |

The training demand and activities in 2008 converged with the strategic planning made for the HLRN coordinating office, thus, the HLRN begun a new wave of training courses as packages include many rights and assets of freedom, such the self determination, land tenure, refugees, autonomous approaches to access and benefit from land. For instance the training of Sudanese
activists in from Nuba Mountains was a good example of the package. The training raised the interest of other people who approached the HLRN to get training and knowledge with in this idea of the Capacity Building Package. The Social Peace Initiative for Darfur (SPID) is a new promising association includes a group of distinguished activists who have been approaching the issues in Darfur through the ESC rights in order to empower the people to understand the roots of conflict and how to deal with it. A training course included 25 persons conducted with and for the SPID, September 2009.

The MENA program officer had also participated in a training course on the Universal Periodical Review (UPR) before the UN- Human Rights Council. The training took place in Beirut June 2009 and was good opportunity to know about the experience of different participants who some of them have joint or already were members in HLRN.
Advocacy at all levels

A.1. United Nations: Political Bodies
- Promote and support political will to uphold the human rights legal regime
- Develop legal specificity of HRAH standards, including the right to land
- Influence multilateral decisions and commitment accordingly

A.2. United Nations: Legal Bodies
- Uphold and further develop international minimum standards on HRAH
- Develop soft law and jurisprudence to advance and specify HRAH
- Improve State duty holders’ performance to respect, protect, promote and fulfill HRAH

- Cooperate with urgent actions/complaint mechanisms
- Contribute to country-specific assessments of HRAH
- Cooperation with thematic ESC rights and country-specific Special Rapporteurs, especially the SR on adequate housing
- Monitor multilateral agreements on specific groups (e.g., indigenous peoples, refugees)

A.4 United Nations: Implementation Bodies
- Promote integration of the human rights framework in development projects in the field
- Monitor programs and projects with HRAH methodology and criteria
- Cooperate in activities and campaigns conditionally within HRAH principles

A.5 Multilateral Financial Institutions
- Establish the primacy of HR regime
- Monitor policies/agreements affecting HRAH (land, water, energy, privatization of goods and services, sanitation, resettlement, population transfer, migration, etc.)
- Support preventive and remedial struggles.
Processes and products

HLRN and the MENA Program develop the housing rights framework’s arguments, monitoring tools, methodologies and legal authority as a standard for advocacy in forums where HIC Members engage with governments and State power to contribute to policy-related decisions. The training, information, strategy exchanges and monitoring tools are all intended to assist the Members to ensure their more-effective self-representation. Thus, the outcomes of Mission Goals I and II contribute to advocacy, self-expression, participation and political transformation at various levels. Each level has specific objectives, desired outcomes and tasks.

Political mechanisms:

Much of the human rights policy making at the international level has been focused on the transitional UN Human Rights Council (HRC). Meeting more frequently than the predecessor Commission on Human Rights, the HRC spent much of 2007 developing its procedures and making preparations for its new Universal Periodical Review (UPR). However, most HIC–HLRN Members in MENA remained variously isolated from those developments. In the absence of a full-time representation at Geneva, HLRN has had to manage the engagement of MENA Members in the HRC processes from afar. In 2008, HLRN promoted the developments with schedules, reports from the International Service for Human Rights and OHCHR, and distributing outcome documents (e.g., from the reviews of Algeria and Bahrain). The MENA Program collaborated with a group of Palestinian civil society organizations to develop a collective submission to the UPR process on Israel. The content of that submission was faithfully summarized in the OHCHR submission for the process, and reflected in the outcome document with several States posing questions and recommendations related to Palestinian housing and land rights deprivation. However, only France, Greece and Austria questioned the State on its institutionalized discrimination between citizens and “Jewish nationals.”

Durban Review

The start of the MENA Program coincided with the preparations for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance at Durban (2001). The current review period coincides with the UN Durban Review Process, in which states and civil society take stock of efforts and developments to combat racism and its consequences. Discrimination in the Middle East/North Africa was a focus of HIC and HIC-MENA alliances at Durban, including but limited to the case of Israel/Palestine. Efforts then and now seek to address the multiple forms of discrimination in every region that affect housing and land rights. Like other regions, the notorious cases of discrimination in the MENA region also manifest in housing and land rights deprivation in the colonization, occupation and alien domination cases of Israel/Palestine, Cyprus, Western Sahara, Ahwaz, Darfur, Nuba Mountains (Sudan) and Kurdistan.

In 2008, HLRN participated in the Durban Review prepcom, mostly networking and lobbying on the case of Palestine. HIC-HLRN also contributed to and endorsed the Palestinian civil society submission to the Durban Review Process. However, other efforts focused more broadly on forms of discrimination affecting housing and land rights globally. The 2009 HIC submission to the Durban Review Process uniquely reviews and analyze that phenomenon. In addition, HIC-
has participated in the planning of a forum on the Palestine question just in advance of the Durban Review conference in April 2009.

**Legal Mechanisms**

Although the MENA Program did not intervene in treaty-body sessions in the 2008 calendar, its contributions have been consistent with the long-term objective of clarifying the normative content of the “international cooperation” obligation of states under human rights treaties and other normative instruments. The MENA Program participation in the ETO Consortium, mentioned above under Mission Goals 1 and 2, contributed to the development of the norms as they relate to four cases in the MENA region. The cumulative efforts of the ETO Consortium seek a result in the legal mechanisms of the UN Human Rights System: the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’ adoption of a General Comment on extraterritorial obligations and international cooperation.

**Factual Mechanisms:**

*The Special Rapporteur on adequate housing*

HLRN and its MENA Program consider advocacy through the factual UN mechanism of the Human Rights Council Special Rapporteurs to be an important partnership for civil society monitoring and problem solving. HLRN has enjoyed a close working relationship with the UN Special Rapporteur (SR) on adequate housing throughout 2008. The following case involved HLRN office support and collaboration with the Special Rapporteur in MENA.

The year 2008 was one of change, in that the SRs on adequate housing, the right to food, the rights of indigenous peoples and on human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories changed. The new term for the SR on adequate housing saw three finalist candidates, two of whom arose from civil society. The good outcome in 2008 was the appointment of Raquel Rolnik (Brazil). The other positive development is that the MENA Programs cooperation with its Member, the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages in the Naqab (RCUV), has resulted in the plans for a fact-finding mission in Israel (planned for March 2009), including it the international team two of the emeritus SRs from 2008: Rodolfo Stavenhagen, former SR on the rights of indigenous peoples, and Miloon Kothari, former SR on adequate housing. The occasion of that mission is to provide an alternative to the recommendations of the official Goldberg Commission for the “regulation” of the Bedouin communities in the Naqab. Part of the related MENA Program advocacy effort involved an HLRN submission to the Commission during its consultations with all interested and cooperative parties during 2008. This relates also to the

---

**MENA Advocacy Events, 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Title of Meeting</th>
<th>Organizer</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Durban Review Conference</td>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Geneva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun–Jul</td>
<td>UN Fact-finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict</td>
<td>Human Rights Council</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>Universal Periodic Review</td>
<td>Human Rights Council</td>
<td>Geneva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>Session on Gaza Conflict</td>
<td>Human Rights Council</td>
<td>Geneva</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cooperation with the SRs on adequate housing and indigenous peoples on the demolition of Naqab villages through 2006–07, resulting in his intervention and communications with the Israeli government.

Goal III: A.6. Transnational Corporations (TNCs):

- Promote human rights guidelines/obligations
- Expose HRAH violations.

Goal III: B. At the regional level:

- Regional Development Banks: Monitoring projects
- Human Rights Commissions: obtain African Union, Inter-American, Arab League, EU status for HIC
- Trade blocs: Monitoring, assessing impacts, and preventing new blocs.

Goal III: C. The “Glocal” Level: Urgent Actions

- Rally practical solidarity and support for victims
- Bond Members into mutual and reciprocal support activities
- Denounce violations
- Proffer alternative solutions
- Institutionalize reciprocal alliances with other supportive networks

Goal III: D. National-level Support

- Law reform/legislation (legislative power)
- Monitoring policies, programs, budgets, projects, and implementation instruments (executives)
- Litigation/case law
- Policy and law reform
- Monitoring international cooperation and country positions at multilateral levels
- Advocacy campaigns

A long-standing HLRN regional-advocacy objectives has been to advocate HRAH, land rights and better solutions for resettlement and rehabilitation under regional development bank-funded projects. Contributing to the normative content of that objective has been the SR’s “Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Displacement.” However, until 2008, HLRN has not had the capacity to support its Members in mounting proper advocacy in the regional development banks. With the MENA Program coordinator’s participation in the Civil Society Seminar on Independent Accountability Mechanisms (Tunisia, June 2008), that objective has become closer. The compilation of guidance on use of the compliance mechanisms with a focus on actual adjudicated cases and future prospects will be the subject of guide for Members in 2009, with the added assistance of the current Rooftops Canada intern.

In addition, three of the cases that the MENA Program has contributed to the ETO study (mentioned above under Mission Goal 2) coincide with various forms of advocacy, calling for
corporate social responsibility of the concerned companies (Alstom, Veolia, JNF, WZO/JA and European enterprises fishing in Western Sahara waters).

“Glocal” mechanisms: Urgent Actions

The Urgent Action system is an activity of the HLRN Global Program, dedicated to catalyzing practical solidarity among HIC Members and allies in defense of housing and land rights. In most cases, these are in response to a potential or actual violation, such as a forced eviction. When these violations form a pattern of long standing or require addressing policy, the response takes the form of an “open letter” to the duty holders, urging implementation of human rights obligations to respect, protect and fulfill the human right to adequate housing.

The MENA region has 22 unremedied and 2 new Urgent Action cases open through 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MENA Urgent Actions/Open Letters New and Unresolved in 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OL:</strong> Egypt's intended 2050 master plan for Cairo threatens habitat and human rights of millions of impoverished citizens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MENA Urgent Actions/Open Letters since 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OL(joint): Palestine, To UN about Illegal Closures in Gaza</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UA:</strong> Palestine, Israel Applies Collective Punishment and Threatens Lives in Gaza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UA (joint): Egypt, Authorities Evict Families from Relief Tents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iraq:</strong> An expected Tsunami under the occupation and corruption (Arabic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Palestine:</strong> occupied Jordan Valley: ethnic cleansing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UA:</strong> Israel, State Continues its “Secret” Policies of House Demolitions against Palestinians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UA:</strong> Israel, Ethnic Cleansing Continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UA:</strong> Israel, Forced Evictions and Displacement of the Jahalin Bedouin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UA:</strong> Egypt, Security Forces Attack and Evict Blaze Victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OL to UN Secretary General on Proposed Registry of Damages</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UA:</strong> Israel, Parastatal Institutions Escalate Dispossession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egypt:</strong> Egyptian security forces brutally attack and forcibly evict residents from blaze site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UA:</strong> Israel, State to Destroy Entire Bedouin Village in the Nagab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OL:</strong> To James W. Owens, CEO, Caterpillar Inc on Use of Bulldozers in Demolitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OL:</strong> Kuwait Development Fund Must Stop Financing Lyari Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OL:</strong> Caterpillar Inc. Must Stop Participation in Israeli Evictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OL:</strong> Sudan, President al-Bashir Must Uphold Obligations Toward Darfur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UA:</strong> Palestine, Mass House Demolitions Leaves over 2,000 Homeless in Rafah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UA (joint): Palestine, the Apartheid Wall</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UA:</strong> Palestine, the Wall in Bethlehem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all cases of urgent actions and open letters, the HLRN officers consult with members and other involved parties to ensure strategic value, relevance and accuracy. All urgent actions and open letters are found on the HLRN website:

http://www.hlrn.org/cases.php.
All Mission Goals

- General and administration

- Effective and efficient communication and information management
- Improved capacity in finance and resource mobilization and management
- Formalized personnel policy and management system, adaptable to HLRN regional operations.

Processes and products The MENA Program office, in Cairo, continued its role and function through 2008, doubling as the general HLRN Coordination Office. That fact has enhanced the general extraregional coordination between MENA and the rest of the Habitat International Coalition. The HLRN MENA Program’s administration, organizational development and management (General and Administration, or G&A), like the substantive programmatic activities, provide the backbone of the operation.

The MENA Program of HLRN operates in Egypt as a regional branch of a nonprofit and charitable association registered as the Housing and Land Rights Network at Geneva (2001). A portion of all MENA Program aspects, including each of the three main programmatic Goals, coincides with those of the other HLRN regional programs and the HLRN presence in Geneva. Located to facilitate HIC-HLRN representation before the UN’s human rights system, among the other Geneva-based international organizations, in 2008, the Geneva office serves also as a means of accommodating Members and officers on their representations to the UN Human Rights System. As a UN liaison facility, the HLRN Geneva office is the site of HLRN’s legal registration as an international charitable association, based in the Canton de Genève.

Resource Management

The HLRN financial year runs from January to December. The MENA Program finalizes its annual budgets by the preceding September each year.

The integration of the financial and accounting systems of HLRN’s regional Programs, including MENA, have been the subject to customized programming in 2008 and piloting in 2009. Since 2008 and throughout 2009, the HLRN IT specialist Yasser Abdelkader was particularly supportive of administration in developing the accounting system. The main achievement is the
development of customized software for financial tracking. The logistics of joint reporting remain complicated by the geographical reach of the Geneva, Cairo and Delhi offices and still-needed capacity building and harmonization of formats and practices.

The MENA Program makes use of a general fund, now made possible by revenues received through the coordinator’s training honoraria, publication sales and consultancy fees received in the course of operation. The general fund will be used in future to support MENA Program rapid-response or programmed activities that are otherwise unfunded. These revenues and expenditures are accounted for in the regular MENA Program financial reports, as well as any interest income.

**Human Resources and Staffing**

The Cairo office of the MENA Program engages the HLRN General Coordinator Joseph Schechla at a half-time effort, while he also serves half time as the MENA Program coordinator. The full-time MENA Program Officer Rabie Wahba maintains communications and relations with the MENA Members and is active in all aspects of the program. Supporting the program is Yasser Abd al-Qader as IT specialist. Administrator Nermeen Sadek and her replacement at end-2008, Leena Essam, served both global and regional aspects of HLRN.

In some of the field work in Israel/Palestine and UN reporting activities, as well as in the Durban Review Process, the contributions of the HLRN Global program officer Angie Balata were particularly important. Legal researcher Ahmed Mansour has supported the MENA Program by conducting the survey data for the diagnostic part of the African Human Rights Spaces project, a survey of MENA civil society’s use of UN human rights mechanisms and the program evaluation with the Arab NGO Network for Development, as well as the internal audit and evaluation of HIC-HLRN public information.

In the first three quarters of 2009, the HLRN team was joined in the Coordination Office by Vani Govindrajan, intern participant in the Government of Canada’s Youth Employment Strategy (YES), funded by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and implemented through HIC-HLRN Member Rooftops Canada/Abri International. Because of delays in the proposal and funding processes with the YES program sponsor, the replacement intern was scheduled to arrive only IN early 2010.

In all aspects of the work, HLRN Coordination Office has been promoting more connections, better communications and enhanced cooperation within and among HLRN offices and members, and especially the HIC General Secretariat.
The MENA Program has endured or overcome difficult management challenges, especially time-management challenges, throughout the year. It has evolved considerably beyond the modest initial program engaging partners in historic Palestine in 1991. From Cairo, the HLRN Program delivers services to a growing number of HLRN Members in MENA, but is reassessing the membership to serve organizations more specialized in the housing and land rights field. The MENA region hosts few specialized organizations advocating ESC rights, and both urban and rural social movements still remain delinked and underdeveloped in comparison to other regions.

The MENA Program is a hub for exchanges of methodologies, tools, techniques and expertise for defending HRAH across the MENA region, and between MENA and other regions, North and South. However, some of those contributions continue to be theoretical assets for HLRN constituents, as many lack the capacity or will to apply advanced methods of operation in their field. That remains a challenge over all and invokes the prospect that, eventually, those tools prove invaluable in time of need. The Members’ experience with the UN Register of Damage in Palestine is one such example, and researchers throughout the region have randomly reported their appreciation and use of such HRLN tools and methods as the “Loss Matrix.” Another indicator of relevance is the use of the HRAH violations-as-war-crimes argument and reparations framework in the case of the Gaza Strip throughout 2009, particularly in cooperation with the UN Fact-finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict.

The MENA Program, since 2000, has acquired a solid reputation as an active representative of HLRN now seeking ways to help the Members to be closer to their constituency on the basis of the legal authority of human rights, and closer to each other. Thus, it remains a challenge to foster productive relationships among Members, and between Members and their constituents, toward respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights, particularly ESC rights and, more specifically, HRAH. The opportunity presented by the Africa Human Rights Spaces project (2008–09) and the ongoing collective efforts of the Human Dignity and Human Rights caucus in the World Social Forum are among the tactical means toward greater cohesion in the future.

With experience, greater outreach and word-of-mouth advertising, the development of HLRN’s role in MENA is engaging more partners, while imposing more burden on the coordination office. However, the MENA Program’s constituency-oriented agenda forms an important factor from its specialization in a regional transformation by diffusing related capacity and fostering collective activities of Members and others in the region’s civil society.

The role of supporters in enabling accomplishments

The MENA Program’s supporters apparently understand and appreciate the burden of administration pressures. That, in itself, is supportive. However, 2008 the MENA Program—
along with HLRN globally—has taken needed steps to improve the administrative capacity of the operation. (The 2007 HIC evaluation did not consider these aspects of HLRN.)

Traditional donors of HIC-MENA advocacy, such as Ford Foundation and ICCO, have remained supportive in material and nonmaterial ways. However, a program is crystallizing, growing and facing new challenges—not least posed by privatization, the financial crisis and climate change—such that calls for more resources, partners and capacities. HLRN looks forward to increased and more-diverse support, in order to break the vicious cycle of a heavy workload that stifles needed initiatives, including fundraising initiatives. In this aspect, Ford Foundation support for HLRN institutional development in MENA that has allowed for the current upgrading of the financial-tracking system, which has operated through 2009.
Annex I

HLRN-MENA Publications

Thematic Publications

Discrimination Everywhere: Housing and Land Rights Violations in 2007–09 (Cairo: HLRN, 2008);

Housing and Land Rights Crisis! 2008: Violations Escalating around The World (Cairo: HLRN, 2008);

Victims of the Violation of Housing and Land Rights [map] (Cairo and Santiago: HIC-GS/HIC-HLRN 6 October 2008);

Housing and Land Rights Crisis! 2007: Violations Escalating around the World (Cairo: HLRN, 2007);

Victims of the Violation of Housing and Land Rights [map] (Cairo and Santiago: HIC-GS/HIC-HLRN 1 October 2007);

A Pattern of Persecution: The Growing Attack against Housing and Land Rights Defenders (Cairo: HLRN, 2007);

A Women’s Right to Adequate Housing and Land: Middle East/North Africa [proceedings of the Alexandria Consultation] (Cairo: HIC-HLRN, 2005);

Anatomies of a Social Movement: Social Production of Habitat in the Middle East/North Africa (Cairo: HLRN, 2005);

Closing the Human Rights Gap in MDG 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability [Tools & Techniques Series, No. 3] (Cairo: HIC-HLRN, 2007);

Urgent Action! HLRN Guide to Practical Solidarity for Defending the Human Right to Adequate Housing Tools and Techniques Series No. 1 [methodology and training manual for the HLRN Urgent Action system] (Cairo: HIC-HLRN, Middle East/North Africa (MENA) Regional Programme, 2003);

Fact-finding Mission Reports

The Unrecognized Villages of the Naqab/Negev (Cairo: HLRN MENA, forthcoming 2010)

The Summer War on Habitat in Lebanon: Addressing Housing Rights Violations as War Crimes, Fact-finding Report No. 11 (Cairo: HIC-HLRN, Middle East/North Africa Program, November 2006)

Country Assessments

Prospects for the Arab City Facing the Multiple Challenge of War, Conflict, Social Cohesion and the Fulfillment of Human Rights, by Joseph Schechla (March 2008);

Home in Iraq [a compilation of issues in the continuous housing and land rights crisis] (Cairo: HLRN Middle East/North Africa, mss. 2006);

Restoring Values: Institutional Challenges to Providing Restitution and Compensation for Iraqi Housing and Land Rights Victims [analysis of the Iraq Property Compensation Commission] (Cairo: HLRN Middle East/North Africa. 2005);

Standing up against the Empire: A Palestine Guide: From Understanding to Action, [report of a seminar organized at the World Social Forum III, Porto Alegre, Brazil] (Cairo: HIC-HLRN, Middle East/North Africa (MENA) Regional Program, 2003);


Reports to UN Bodies

Targeting Homes, Shelters and Shelter Seekers during Operation Cast Lead in the Context of Israeli Military Practice [submission to the UN Fact-finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict] (Cairo: HLRN, July 2009);

Response to the UN Durban Review Process Questionnaire (Cairo: HLRN, December 2008);


The Human Right to Adequate Housing in the Case of al-Akhdam (Yemen) [parallel report on Yemen's implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination] (Cairo: HLRN MENA, 2006);

Israel's Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: Institutional Discrimination affecting Persons without “Jewish Nationality” [joint parallel report with 20 organizations in Israel and Palestine] (Cairo: HIC-HLRN, 2006);

Implementation of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child: Israel Issues affecting the Indigenous Palestinian People under the State of Israel’s Jurisdiction and Control [joint parallel report with three other Palestinian NGOs to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child] (Cairo: HIC-HLRN MENA, 2002);

Endnotes

13 BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, the Arab Human Rights Association (HRA), the Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced (ADRID), the Housing and Land Rights Network-Habitat International Coalition and Zochrot in cooperation with Ittijah – Union of Arab Community-based Associations, “Ongoing Forced Displacement of the Palestinian Population on Both Sides of the “Green Line”: Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory,” submitted July 2008


15 “Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Israel,” A/HRC/10/76, 8 January 2009. The Syrian delegation also raised the issue, but apparently did not address it correctly, losing the opportunity to make the point of institutionalized discrimination. See p. 6, para. 22.


18 Defence for Children International (Palestine); LAW Society for the Protection of Human Rights (Jerusalem), Al Mezan Center for Human Rights.

19 Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel; Association of Forty (Israel); Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residence and Refugee Rights (Bethlehem); Boston University Civil Litigation Program (USA); LAW Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (Jerusalem); Palestinian Center for Human Rights (Gaza); World Organization against Torture (Geneva, Switzerland).