HIC-HLRN Achievements 2012

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 2012 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 thirteenth in HLRN’s programming and service delivery to specialized civil society organizations that promote human rights toward problem solving in the field of habitat and human settlements in Middle East/North Africa.

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

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

HIC-HLRN’s Middle East/North Africa (MENA) Program has developed a strategic approach to what has been called the “Arab Spring” of popular uprisings across the region, to be focusing more on the ESC rights conditions that, unfortunately, deteriorated in the two years since the so-called “Arab Spring.”

HIC-MENA also has evolved during 2012 to link local struggles with the technical input of architects and planners who are seeking ways to uphold human rights in professional their work. Some of these new partners have been trained with HLRN to focus their designs on the people’s right to adequate housing. Meanwhile, new conditions and social formations, including local popular committees, have created opportunities for HIC-HLRN to innovate techniques of converging inhabitants, technicians and local administration toward self-determined development.

The year 2012 has witnessed a boom of activities and agency directly with people claiming and achieving their human right to adequate housing (HRAH). HIC-MENA also has focused more on the process of constitutional reform compatible with the human rights of impoverished, deprived and disempowered groups in the society both in Egypt and Tunisia, in particular, but also throughout the region, through research, analysis, public information and activities such as the regional Land Forum.

The goal is to assure the people’s right to self-determination and empowerment, so that they can claim their rights and achieve them through exercising the people’s sovereignty within the state. HLRN, with the partners, Members and constituents in MENA, has played a prominent role in
shedding practical light on “operationalizing” human rights amid the different currents that now aim to redefine authority and power. The path to transitional justice also has formed one of the underlying themes that HIC-MENA has emphasized in activities and interventions for asserting the gains people made through the continuous uprising that is still inspiring the peoples of the region.

This situation and developments on the ground have increased the need—and opportunity—for civil agency in the form of HRLN’s capacity-building and advocacy. HLRN unique relates its program to peoples under occupation/alien domination, in particular, Palestine and Western Sahara. In those countries, conditions have not changed for the better in 2012, particularly in the sphere of housing and land rights. However, the networking, capacity-building/knowledge creation and advocacy work of HLRN, in cooperation with its Members, has improved awareness and contributed indispensible legal arguments to the international jurisprudence on institutional discrimination affecting housing and land rights of peoples under occupation. Over the past year, efforts have converged also to develop arguments and related monitoring-and-documentation techniques that support eventual prosecution of gross violations that constitute criminal offenses.

In 2012, the official count of HIC-HLRN Member organizations and Friends of HIC in the MENA region has reached 138. The 20 new recruits in 2012 include four organizations from Egypt, two from Morocco, and one each from Iraq, Jordan, Sudan, Tunisia and. Three individual Friends of HIC applied in 2012 from Egypt, along with one each from Jordan, Morocco and Algeria.

Among the networking and collaboration with regional and international organizations, HLRN’s MENA Program achieved new development of some central organizations in the region, such as the Arab Organization for Human Rights to include a more focus on ESC rights, particularly HRAH and the right to water. Also with FIAN, HLRN continued cooperation and advice on MENA regional aspects of the development and monitoring of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forests and Fisheries. A manual for monitoring these guidelines will emerge in 2013, along with an Arabic version including the contributions of HIC Members and constituents, as well as with input based on HLRN research and advocacy efforts over the last two years on the subject.

HLRN contributions are prominent also in cooperation with other regional and external partners, such as the Extraterritorial Obligations (ETO) Consortium, especially in developing legal arguments related to extraterritorial human rights and “international cooperation” obligations of states to respect, protect and fulfill economic, social and cultural rights. HIC’s contributions to the Extraterritorial Obligations (ETO) Consortium have been based on HLRN studies of five cases in MENA. HIC-HLRN’s contribution on ETOs expanded in 2012 to encompass ETOs in the context of conflict, occupation and war, as well as cases emerging from corruption and cross-border asset recovery, derived from its work in MENA.

**Knowledge creation, empowerment and capacity building**

HLRN officers frequently have been called upon to contribute to conferences and seminars throughout the year, each with a networking and alliance-building objective. The MENA Program of HLRN also continued to advise and provide technical support to NGOs, especially to nascent
groups and organizations facing HRAH and land rights violations. This is in addition to formal training events that have benefitted 131 trainees over 95 hours in 2012, including new horizons of struggling based on collection actions through people initiatives in the slums and impoverished areas as well as using new techniques and video-advocacy skills.

The fourth round of HLRN’s emblematic Land Forum, planned throughout 2012, actually took place in March 2013 because of delays caused by unrest in Egypt and also the holding of WSF in Tunisia, which made HLRN choosing to organize it there amid the big audience of the WSF. HIC-MENA networked, conducted research, prepared extensive documentation and managed logistics to bring Members and others together for the Forum from 15 countries and territories. As usual, the agenda of the Forum was driven by participant contributions and priority recommendations. This fourth round of the event was convened under the theme “From Broken Promises to People’s Solutions.” and gathered an unprecedented variety of participants across MENA, from Ahwaz, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Western Sahara, as well as the land struggles of the Amazigh, Kurdish and Nubian peoples.

The monitoring work of the Network, made possible by the efforts of HLRN staff, has maintained a constant flow of current information in English and Arabic about housing and land rights issues to Members and the general public in the MENA region. That also has made possible the maintenance of the unique Violation Database (VDB), which registered 32 cases from the MENA region in 2012.

This monitoring function also has led to a series of activities such as training and also products, papers and articles in 2012, including this year’s World Habitat Day report from the VDB, focusing on land fraud and land grabbing in the MENA region as the central theme of that global HLRN publication. Also some training events that focused on the tools and how to translate the data monitored through the VDB into research subjects and projects to be proactive in struggling and activism works not to be only confined to react.

**Advocacy**

The foregoing activities also served the advocacy efforts of HLRN and its Members (and vice versa). Advocacy at the international level saw the MENA Program engage with two treaty bodies: the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, reviewing treaty compliance of Egypt, and the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination, reviewing the state party Israel. HLRN also contributed to the UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review mechanism in preparation for its upcoming review of Yemen and Sudan.

The HLRN Urgent Action system contained 101 cases by the end of 2012. Of those, 29 were in MENA: 19 in Israel/Palestine, six in Egypt, one in Iraq, one in Sudan, one in Turkey and one directed at Kuwait (Kuwait Development Fund).

**General and administration**

In 2012, all HIC structures underwent an external, participatory evaluation. It yielded useful findings and a positive context for consolidating messages, services, tools, websites and structures across the Coalition. The adaptations that will derive from that process promises to keep HIC-HLRN apace of the dynamic challenges of the age, while serving constituent Members.
in new and innovative ways. Although the evaluation did not make recommendations for MENA programming specifically, it did help to address the MENA program in the context of proposed improvements to communications and a more project-oriented future operations that applies and promotes the wealth of tools and methods already developed for monitoring and advocating the human rights to adequate housing and equitable access to land.

Resource constraints and overwork of HLRN personnel remain challenges to realizing the full programmatic potential of HLRN in the MENA region. This constant has meant also that HLRN has had to forego several opportunities for monitoring and advocacy, especially at the UN level, without a permanent representation at Geneva or sufficient staff to cover the region. However, in 2012, HLRN has formed a partnership with emergency relief expert Dr. Saad al-Nounou to develop a program of advocacy on human rights in the context of the environmental crisis in Palestine and the region, based in the HLRN office in Geneva.

For a program that seeks to build a reciprocal, problem-solving culture among civil organizations, Members' entrenched practices, their 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. However, HLRN has sought to diversify sources of support in 2012 (for 2012 and subsequent periods) to off-set the reduction in available funding from some traditional funders, and to pursue multiple objectives at the available opportunities to convene Members.

The opportunities arising from developments of the “Arab Spring” and regular 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 housing and land rights objectives.
Introduction

The reporting year 2012 in MENA has witnessed complicated deterioration on several levels of economic/social/cultural rights (ESCR). Although 2012 promised to bring major changes in to political structures, for the majority of people claiming their ESCR, their conditions have not yet improved. The systems that have been the subject of so much umbrage from the street remained deeply entrenched at the end of the calendar.

Despite the many governance deficits and uncertainties in Egypt today, certain indicators have emerged from the 25 January uprisings beyond Tahrir Square and point a way toward the popular demand for social justice. The collapse of some Mubarak-era institutions has given rise to new nonstate actors and rare chances for broad participation in public life. These opportunities and assets remain underestimated amid the priority attention given to the contested central institutions of the state.

Despite regime changes, the inhabitants of MENA slums and rural areas, as well as those living under conflict, occupation and war, continue to face challenges and suffer problems of acute marginalization and deprivation. This manifests in the physical forms of dispossession, demolition, poor infrastructure and insufficient or absent services that would insure a decent life for citizens. Meanwhile, the impoverished and variously repressed populations have been excluded from participation in the decisions and plans that affect them directly, and contribute to their marginalization.

Because of the severity of these problems and other factors, civic institutions have been weak at serving residents, or enabling those citizens to ask for their rights, or even to know their rights and duties as citizens. Moreover, a variety of forces occlude to seek the removal/dispossession of the poorest and weakest inhabitants through processes, including evictions and displacements, that degrade their habitat and deepen their poverty.

Immediate problems arise from violations of the following rights:

- Access to public goods and services, ranging from poor water quality and distribution to urban planning as a public service;
- Habitability of housing in the form of squalid living conditions for millions;
- Secure tenure guaranteed by law, the violation of which often manifests in the denial of property through government-imposed forced evictions, destruction and/or confiscation.

In addition, the mismanagement of state land resources has violated related “process” rights, including rights to:

- Information and education related to equitable access to land necessary for realizing the rights to adequate housing and food;
- Participation and the principle of free, prior and informed consent of the affected populations;
• Access to justice, including judiciability of the concerned economic, social and cultural rights.

Extreme violations across the region are characteristic of the dramatic deprivation resulting from occupation and demographic manipulation of entire regions, as in the occupations of Palestine and Western Sahara. However, similar practices prevail within territorial states, notably involving Sudanese territories (e.g., Darfur and Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan) and Iran’s Persian Gulf coast region of Arab Ahwaz. The composite of these human rights conditions and corresponding state obligations reflect the urgent need to ensure democratic governance within states and across the region.

Related to these specific rights and their violation is the widespread practice of dispossessing urban and rural citizens for local and external investor-driven projects. These include, among others, “urban renewal” in the context of the Cairo 2050 Plan and concentrated farming enabled by anti-land-reform legislation (Law 96). An aspect of this trend is also the accompanying land fraud and real estate corruption that have emerged as a central subject of the Arab awakening affecting each of the concerned countries.

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 the ground through networking and capacity-building activities for the constituents who lack the tools and mechanisms for using the legal system in their parsimonious situation and limited political environment. So, the quantification methods, action research, web-based documentation, database and IT tools development with other methods of problem solving (e.g., strategic planning, social production of habitat, etc.) are always the focus of HLRN services to develop for the constituents. The Program also promotes the state obligations corresponding to the human right to adequate housing (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. New opportunities also arise to develop the concept of a “right to the city,” or the city as a “human rights habitat” in cooperation with social formations such as popular committees emerging from the Arab awakening.

This annual report reflects the implementation of the third year of HLRN’s second three-year strategic plan, developed in consultation with HLRN officers and members, and in coordination with the HIC Secretariat.
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

HLRN’s MENA Program has evolved during 2012 to link local struggles with the technical input of architects and planners who are seeking ways to uphold human rights in professional their work. Some of these new partners have been trained with HLRN to focus their designs on the people’s right to adequate housing. Meanwhile, new conditions and social formations, including local popular committees, have created opportunities for HIC- HL RN to innovate techniques of converging inhabitants, technicians and local administration toward self-determined development.

The goal is to assure the people’s right to self-determination and empowerment, so that they can claim their rights and achieve them through exercising the people’s sovereignty within the state. HLRN, with the partners, Members and constituents in MENA, has played a prominent role in shedding practical light on “operationalizing” human rights amid the different currents that now aim to redefine authority and power formerly organized on ideological or religious bases.

The membership management goal for HLRN’s MENA Program has been “to increase the viability of Members in joint activities.” That coincides with the usual objective of identifying further civil society initiatives and possible synergies in the field of housing and land rights and, thus, building the membership base by five Member organizations each year. The achievements logged under those objectives reflect the opportunities and environmental developments of the first year of the Arab Spring. The year’s activities culminated in the MENA Land Forum and related production that complement the HLRN mission goals of capacity building/knowledge creation and advocacy.

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 (http://www.hic-net.org/membership/). There, MENA Members can search for their HLRN and other HIC Member counterparts to identify counterparts for swapping skills and experiences.
**Member update**

In 2012, the official count of HIC-HLRN Member organizations and Friends of HIC in the MENA region has reached 138. The 20 new recruits in 2012 include four organizations from Egypt, two from Morocco, and one each from Iraq, Jordan, Sudan, Tunisia and. The new Member organizations are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New HIC-RLRN Members from MENA in 2012</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Contact person</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saharawi Association for Victims of Mines</td>
<td>ASAVIM</td>
<td>Haidar Aziz</td>
<td>Tindouf</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian Association for Collective Rights</td>
<td>EACR</td>
<td>Ismail Abdelmawla</td>
<td>Giza</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>el-Hayat Association</td>
<td>H S</td>
<td>Islam Sabbahi</td>
<td>Dumietta</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Development Support Centre for Consultancy and Training</td>
<td>DSC</td>
<td>Manal Abaza</td>
<td>Giza</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The International Permanent Forum for the Nuba Mountains Indigenous Peoples - Sudan</td>
<td>N.I.P</td>
<td>Shimaila Nour Elanbia (Kadia)</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeaican National Organization for Human Rights</td>
<td>INAHR</td>
<td>Deaa Tariq</td>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediterranean Network for Training</td>
<td>MNT</td>
<td>Fityani Rana</td>
<td>Amman</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instance Nationale de Défense des Biens Publics</td>
<td>INDBP</td>
<td>Latrach Aziz</td>
<td>Rabat</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ligue Marocaine pour la Citoyenneté et les Droits Humains</td>
<td>LMCDH</td>
<td>Driss Sedraoui</td>
<td>Qunaytira</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Rights Institute</td>
<td>CRI</td>
<td>Mohamed Anwar Bashier</td>
<td>Khartoum</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisian Observatory for Union Rights and Freedoms</td>
<td>OTDLS</td>
<td>Mohamed Ayadi</td>
<td>Gabes</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center of International Humanitarian Law &amp; Human Rights</td>
<td>CIHLHR</td>
<td>Al-Maqrami Aref</td>
<td>Taiz</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Youth Network for Society Development</td>
<td>AYN</td>
<td>Al-Naggar Sami</td>
<td>Taiz’z</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four individual Friends of HIC applied and were approved in 2012, including two from Egypt, along with one each from Jordan and Morocco.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Friends of HIC from MENA in 2012</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abdalla Okasha</td>
<td>Helwan</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahmoud Aladawy</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rjoub Abdelmajeed</td>
<td>Mafraq</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yassine Abdessamad</td>
<td>Rabat</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
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</table>

In addition, the MENA region had six new applicant organizations awaiting formal approval. These include two from Egypt, one each from Algeria and one from Yemen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Applicant Friends of HIC from MENA Awaiting Approval in 2012</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Country</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nashwazain AbdElmoty</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeyd Bekakria</td>
<td>Guelma</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagla Morshed</td>
<td>al-Qanater al-Khairia</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalid Khalil</td>
<td>Hudaida</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The new social capital joining the Network and Coalition from the MENA region indicates the growing relationships that result from specific HLRN activities, whether through deliberative forums, or training and capacity-building events, or in the advocacy activities that bring like-minded organizations together.

For example, the Saharawi Association for Victims of Mines (Algeria) joined HIC-HLRN following their participation in HLRN-MENA Land forum 2012 in Cairo. The Egyptian Association for Collective Rights (Egypt) joined HIC-HLRN as a function of joint activities in the rural areas to support small-producer farmers’ participation in decision making about agricultural lands and policy that affect them. Among these activities is advocacy related to the performance and policies of projects that are financed by one, two or several international finance institutions (IFIs). All Youth Network for Society Development (Iraq) has applied for the membership in the context of its cooperation with Cairo office in preparing submission to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Yemen before the UN Human Rights Council, where HLRN has been the major catalyst for a group of Yemeni NGOs providing the appropriate materials in this advocacy process. Tunisian Observatory for Union Rights and Freedoms joined HLRN after a common event focused on the struggle for HRAH in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and creating new people-based solutions for better situation of housing rights in both Tunisia and Egypt.

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. In that objective, 2012 can be considered as a threshold of a new phase. The pursuit of alternative designs and participatory development and claims for rights have been well supported through various events and activities. For instance, on 5 September 2012, within the World Urban Forum (WUF), at Naples, Italy, partners and constituents from MENA participated in a pivotal debate about the formal plans of urbanization and the impacts of top-down management of development that characterizes the Cairo 2050/2052 Plan, supported by UN HABITAT. Also on the level of connecting the activism for right to housing on practical bases, HIC-HLRN has assured the role of MENA Members on related issues on the international level, through swapping the experiences and analysis on the theme of local government and human rights obligations in the Local Authorities Forum within the WSF - Free Palestine, in Brazil, November 2012.

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.

Among the recent changes in the region, 2012 involved civil society pursuing new approaches in dealing with the constitutional crisis, policy reform and the allocation and distribution of natural resources. For instance, in Egypt, much change at the government level has been superficial, not reflecting the spirit of the 25 January uprising that was triggered by the eager claims for justice on the economic and social levels. Here, HLRN found the need to include the transitional justice theme in several activities, notably the Land Forum III and IV. Whereas the impacts of indecisive and twisting policy of the new governments have been disastrous, and where an alternative approach from the civil society is needed to take care of the substantial elements of transitional justice and reclaiming the state with its human rights obligations.

By the end of 2012, HLRN undertook new actions with active social groups in quantifying the consequences of HRAH violations and posing development and planning alternatives to the formal, top-down models of housing and urban planning. This happened in cooperation with several partners and Members, NGOs, popular committees and neighborhood leagues. That was built not only on what may be called revolutionary enthusiasm, but also on careful analysis of the situation of housing and the violations against the HRAH by commission or omission. A diagnosis, for instance of the reasons of the predominant unjust model of allocation of land, resources and housing, has been supported by HLRN active partners in cooperation with international active NGOs abroad, such as Bank Information Center (BiC), on the impact of IFIs’ role in widening the gap between the state and people in Egypt. The debate that has reflected on the horizons of cooperation and collective actions internationally through well-organized events, such as the international workshop on Human Rights and Development-Induced Displacement organized by ESCR-Net, which included many active networks around the world, in which HIC-HLRN’s MENA program participated in order to exchange regional violations and struggles to face them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Title of Meeting</th>
<th>Organizer</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17–15 Jan</td>
<td>Legal Empowerment of the Poor</td>
<td>UNDP, AOHR</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–13 Mar</td>
<td>Arab Spring and ESC rights in MENA</td>
<td>Oxfam</td>
<td>Beirut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Feb</td>
<td>International Study Visit to BLACD’s Local Housing Movement Program in Minia, Egypt</td>
<td>BLACD, BSHF, HIC-HLRN</td>
<td>al-Minia, Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Apr–04 May</td>
<td>Human Right and Development-Induced Displacement</td>
<td>ESCR-Net</td>
<td>Johannesburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28–31 May</td>
<td>Networking and Regional and International Organization in MENA</td>
<td>ANND</td>
<td>Beirut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Jun</td>
<td>The Green Economy: Does it include you?</td>
<td>EQA</td>
<td>Gaza City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–23 Jun</td>
<td>Rio + 20</td>
<td>UN</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Aug–7 Sep</td>
<td>World Urban Forum</td>
<td>UN</td>
<td>Naples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Sep</td>
<td>Egyptian Housing Day (street event)</td>
<td>popular committees</td>
<td>Maspero District, Cairo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–11 Sep</td>
<td>Working Session on Trade and Investment Issues and the Legal and Development Effects</td>
<td>ANND</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–9 Nov</td>
<td>Revolts and Transitions in the Arab World: Towards a New Urban Agenda?</td>
<td>CEDEJ</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Nov – 1 Dec</td>
<td>World Social Forum – Free Palestine</td>
<td>WSF</td>
<td>Porto Alegre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mission Goal 2  
Knowledge creation, empowerment and capacity building to ensure HRAH

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 tools (including arguments, methods, survey criteria, housing rights indicators, analytical approaches, information services, 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 ESCRs; 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.

HIC-MENA Website

The MENA Program’s website has gone through significant changes and improvements in 2011–12, not least the migration of the site to a new server and hosting company, and the conversion to the Linux platform. The design now reflects more clearly HLRN’s three mission goals, but most prominently serves as a tool for information dissemination and knowledge creation. The site is in maintained 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 program presentation and contact pages.
In 2012, the HLRN website for the MENA program reflected a noticeable increase in the MENA News coverage. That resulted from relating the updating task to the legal researcher’s function and a new policy of reporting more of the actual activities of HLRN officers and Members as News items.

HLRN’s websites, an essential reference and tool for dissemination of knowledge, underwent an internal review and evaluation, in cooperation with HIC General Secretariat and HIC América Latina. This was a function of the 2012 HIC evaluation process, which prompted HIC structures to consolidate their efforts and harmonize the way in which they impart public information. One of the means toward greater synergy has been the collective design of a common HIC on-line gateway through which users access thematic and regional HIC sites. The current design seeks to revamp the sites to ensure common terminology and features that reflect unanimity of thinking and approach. This has involved the development of a common administrative interface that will eliminate duplication of efforts and other inefficiencies of the former designs and structures.

Violation Database

On Housing and Land Rights Day (World Habitat Day) 1 October 2012, HLRN presented to Members and the general public the Dynamic Map of Violations that reflects findings of its in-house monitoring through the HLRN “Violation Database” (VDB), which applies the HRAH framework and monitoring methods promoted through HLRN training and advocacy. The HLRN report based on VDB data on World Habitat Day 2012 had a special focus on the lack of enforcement of housing rights and prohibitions against forced eviction: HLRN’s 2012 Report on Global Housing and Land Rights Violations: “Struggling against Impunity” in English. (For details information, click on the VDB map.)

The data gathered and entered in the VDB, which made the 2011 Habitat Day report possible with its focus on the MENA region, was the result of a more systematic effort made possible by linking that function to that of the coordination office’s legal researcher. In 2012, the VDB included 31 violations across the region. These included 20 entries for Palestine/Israel, 2 in Egypt, three in Syria (including one composite entry updated to reflect developments of the war), two (including one multi-incident) for Libya, one each in Iraq, Morocco and Sudan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Type of violation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settler Land Grab in Durah Village</td>
<td>28 December 2012</td>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Dispossession/confiscation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlers Uproot Olive Trees</td>
<td>26 December 2012</td>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Demolition/destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOF Force Self-demolition</td>
<td>24 December 2012</td>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Demolition/destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulldozers Assault West Bank Villages</td>
<td>04 December 2012</td>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Demolition/destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>إنشاء ثلاثة آلاف وحدة استيطانية</td>
<td>02 December 2012</td>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Dispossession/confiscation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تجريف 70 دونما وضع وغرفة</td>
<td>02 December 2012</td>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Forced eviction Demolition/destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>إخلاء &quot;القرصاية&quot; بلغة</td>
<td>18 November 2012</td>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Forced eviction Dispossession/confiscation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes Targeted</td>
<td>18 November 2012</td>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Demolition/destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Eviction, Home Demolished</td>
<td>13 November 2012</td>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Forced eviction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HLRN research efforts have related to the urgencies of transitional justice (especially, asset recovery) globally, but especially in the context of the “Arab Spring.” HLRN has been introducing and focusing on the habitat issues in connection with eventual “reparations” processes, developing the forthcoming HLRN handbook on prosecution of gross violations of housing and land rights, consulting other experts in the field, developing a critical framework for housing and land rights in decentralization processes. This experience also helped achieve wider recognition of HIC-HLRN and its relevance to these current issues in the MENA region.

The number of VDB entries does not necessarily correspond with the number of victims. Syria, with three entries in 2012, reflects updating of large-scale ongoing displacement begun in 2011. The following charts indicate the distribution of cases entered in 2012 and known numbers of affected persons by region.
These 2012 numbers of victims reflect only a snapshot of those persons known to be affected by new violations recorded for that year. The chart does not reflect continuing violations and their victims. However, a VDB search specifically to include those ongoing violations would deliver a different picture. For example, they numbers would reflect those persons continuously displaced from previous conflict in Algeria, refugees without remedy from Western Sahara, Palestine and Tibet, as well as those persons remaining homeless from the 2007–08 mortgage-crisis foreclosures in the United States, which number is estimated at 11,120,000 as of January 2013.

The bulk of the new victims of new housing and land rights violations in MENA are Syrians displaced by the war in their country and violations carried by Israel’s military occupation of Palestine.
Tool and Techniques Series

Under HLRN’s *Tools and Techniques* publication series this period, the MENA program sought greater opportunities to use the tools already developed. Aided by the UN *Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-induced Eviction and Displacement*, HLRN had revised its previously published “Loss Matrix” quantification method (in cases of violation) found in the HLRN Toolkit. In MENA, HLRN translated this eviction impact assessment (EvIA) tool into Arabic and introduced it to Members in the region for local adaptation.


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 2011.

With the regular (annual) Land Forum in MENA becoming a central feature of HLRN networking and knowledge creation, it has been a major focus and source of HLRN publishing efforts as well. Participants in the first Land Forum (2009) called for the establishment of a common source of information to inform about land issues and struggles in the MENA region. That led to the HLRN coordination office creating the *Landpedia*, which was fully developed and populated through 2011.

This on-line publication contains papers and presentations from the successive *Land Forums*, a Library of Legal Materials, Popular Source, Reports, Analytical Materials and Other Documentation (including videos and other media). The Legal Materials section of the Library hosts important, useful and some historic references related to Customary Law, Treaty Law, Soft Law, legislation, jurisprudence and legal commentary.

Another promise to HIC Members was fulfilled this year with HIC-HLRN developing and publishing the first issue of *Land Times* (أحوال الأرض) [Ahwāl al-Ardh], in Arabic). This quarterly bulletin was planned to appear at the same time as the Land Forum III, originally scheduled for 2011. However, due to disruptions arising from the street violence and the government assault on civil society organizations in Egypt, that event in Cairo was postponed, as was the first issue of *Land Times*, until January 2012.
“Land Times,” the only bilingual (Arabic/English) publication of its kind, contains regular features, reflecting the current developments related to land and its human rights dimensions. HIC-HLRN produces “Land Times” electronically in the form of brief, readable articles and analysis. Each issue features a theme-setting editorial introduction, MENA Regional Developments, International Developments and a “Terminology Corner.” That last didactic feature provides explanations and definitions, especially legal definitions, of habitat-related terms of art, with references to their sources and origins, to help readers follow the new subjects and themes carried in each issue.

In 2012, HLRN produced four quarterly issues of “Land Times,” each with a timely focus. Issue No. 1 introduced the series, establishing the gamut of issues and format for the subsequent issues. Issue No. 2 coincided in time and content with the commemoration of Palestinian Land Day (30 March). Issue No. 3 focused on the phenomenon of wall and barriers dividing lands and afflicting the region, with reference to the anniversary of ICJ opinion on the separation wall across the West Bank. Issue No. 4 carried the theme of impunity for violations of land rights, despite the abundance of prohibitive norms and rights to reparations. That most-recent 2012 issue also coincided with World Habitat Day (International Housing and Land Rights Day) and the annual HIC-HLRN report on trends arising from the Violation Database.

Country Assessments and Fact-finding Mission Reports

The research on land and housing rights affected by corruption and real-estate fraud characterizing the embattled MENA regimes has made possible the entries in the VDB, the Habitat Day analytical report of trends in MENA and the parallel reporting to the UN Human Rights System (treaty bodies, Special Procedures and Universal Periodic Review mechanism), as detailed below.

The 2010-published fact-finding mission (FFM) report1 by HLRN on the unrecognized villages in the Naqab (southern Israel) retained its long-term value throughout 2011. Besides distributing this publication with its fundamental treatment of institutionalized discrimination and its rights-based recommendations to the Israeli government, HLRN also provided copies to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reviewing that country in 2012.

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

Based on the experience with the HLRN Toolkit and its “Loss Matrix” within the reparations framework applied in developing a methodology for the UN Register of Damage (UNRoD) resulting from the Hafrada/Apartheid Wall (גדר ההפרדה) in Palestine, HLRN has promoted the quantification method with Members and partners at every opportunity. The need for this eviction impact assessment (EvIA) skill and related monitoring tools in the region is manifest in the HLRN monitoring process, including that results that are mounted in the HIC-MENA News and recorded in the HLRN Violation Database (VDB). Very few of the cases covered in the press or

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CSO reports include data about the various material losses of victims, or the other aspects of violations needed to serve the purpose of reparations.

**Prosecution Handbook**

In 2012, work continued on the draft HLRN Handbook on Criminal Prosecution of Gross Violations of Housing and Land Rights. That forthcoming publication with global application has its inspiration in the recent cases of attacks on habitat in Lebanon (2006) and Gaza Strip (2008–09), as well as the “Operation Murambatsvina” in Zimbabwe (2005). The draft has served a source of HLRN training and presentation material on the right to remedy and reparations for forced eviction as a gross violation of human rights. In 2012, it also served as a basis for the concept papers and proposals for quantifying reparations liabilities for extraction of natural resources and other illicit gains from occupied territories. HLRN is currently seeking partners for an expert review of the draft Handbook and its publication in hard-copy and digital formats.

**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 legal theory and practical application locally. 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 ESCR culture. Modules developed and delivered in 2012 included a curriculum on extraterritorial obligations of states, land rights of indigenous peoples and national reporting under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The last of these was delivered as a four-day intensive course for 15 Tunisian ministries, the Presidency and the National Statistical Bureau under consultancy with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Tunisia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Host/Local</th>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>♂</th>
<th>♀</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Feb</td>
<td>HLRN/A. Ruzza Development Assoc. (Cairo)</td>
<td>Monitoring HRAH; alternative development solutions</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Apr</td>
<td>Maspero Popular Committee (Cairo)</td>
<td>Planning for alternative development and claiming rights</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–9 Jun</td>
<td>Al-Shihab Center (Cairo)</td>
<td>HRAH monitoring &amp; Women</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–10 Feb</td>
<td>BSHF (Cairo)</td>
<td>Urban Governance vs. Citizenship</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10 Aug</td>
<td>OHCHR-Tunisia</td>
<td>ICESCR reporting</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–Aug</td>
<td>HIC-HLRN/ Imbaba community (Cairo)</td>
<td>Alternative development and claiming rights</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–Oct</td>
<td>HIC-HLRN /al-Hayat Assoc. (Cairo)</td>
<td>Alternative development and claiming rights</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–Nov</td>
<td>Nama’ Cairo University</td>
<td>Collective Action and HRAH; Mobilizing to claim rights</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19–Dec</td>
<td>ECCLR/HLRN @ Nadi al-Sa’id (Cairo)</td>
<td>Self-determination; Right to housing; Right to land</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>131</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>95</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HLRN’s program in the Middle East/North Africa conducted nine training events in 2012 for 131 participants, including 87 men and 44 women, with total training time 95 hours. Much of the
demand for training and other technical assistance comes from local organizations. HLRN modules and techniques have been useful in helping those organizations develop strategic plans and crystallizing and developing programs. Other interventions have been more specific skill training, such as on using the cost-counting tools developed from the HLRN Loss Matrix by the local organizations to apply in three violation cases in Egypt (1) Maspero, (2) Batan al-Baqara and (3) al-Nahdha slums of Cairo.

In 2012, HLRN cooperated with fellow network ANND (Arab NGO Network for Development) in the development of their ESCR rights training curriculum and manual, which culminated in a curriculum evaluation and development conference in November. HLRN also participated as an evaluator in training conducted by Amnesty International in Cairo, in July 2011.

**Networking with Knowledge Creation: HLRN Land Forum in MENA**

As knowledge creation is achieved through various methods, HLRN, as a network, considers the collective process most effective. This “social production” of knowledge is epitomized in the periodic Land Forum, which HLRN organizes each year. In 2012, principal support was provided by Brot für die Welt.

While the Land Forum in Cairo was delayed twice, due to unrest, violence and an Egyptian government assault on civil society organizations late in 2011, HLRN actually held the Land Forum in January 2012. HLRN convened this third round of the event under the theme: “Land, People’s Sovereignty and Self-determination.” That outcome is a subject also of a separate report currently available in English and Arabic.

The content and participation of the 2012 Land Forum were unprecedented in the region. Besides its specialized focus on the human rights dimensions of land and natural resources, the MENA Land Forum III convened participants representing Algeria, Arab Ahwaz (southern Iran), Bahrain, Egypt (rural, urban and Nubian land), Iraq (water rights and transboundary water courses), Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan (Darfur and Nuba Mountains), Syria (Kurdish lands), Tunisia (land fraud and official corruption) and Western Sahara.

The fourth round was planned and prepared in latter 2012 with a view to convening it in the context of the next World Social Forum (2013). By doing so, HLRN sought to engage a broader audience for the Land Forum, as well as to involve the participation of cases and experiences beyond the MENA region, comparatively including struggles and experiences from Mali, Ivory Coast, Chile, Mexico and Brazil.

This HLRN signature activity promises to give rise to new methodologies of inquiry and reporting on the administration of land and natural resources, especially across the countries of the “Arab Spring.” This is foreseen to take the form of a regional Social Land Watch as a natural outcome of the Land Forum in its more-mature and problem-solving form.
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 its 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 corresponding tasks.

Political Bodies

Much of the human rights policy making at the international level has been focused on the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), the UN’s highest human rights policy-making body. Meeting more frequently than its predecessor Commission on Human Rights, HRC spent much of 2011 focused on MENA country situations and state before the Universal Periodical Review (UPR) mechanism. 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.

Constant resource constraints and overwork of HLRN personnel remain have meant that HLRN has had to forego several opportunities for monitoring and advocacy, especially at the level of UN political bodies such as the Human Rights Council (HRC), without a permanent representation at Geneva or sufficient staff to cover the region. However, in 2012, HLRN has formed a partnership with Dr. Saad al-Nounou, emergency relief expert, to being and build a program of advocacy on human rights and the environmental crisis in Palestine and the region, based in the HLRN office in Geneva. The current work plan for this HLRN advocacy project focuses on the HRC agenda, in particular, Item 7. Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories.

In 2012, this engagement evolved also to include the HRC’s Advisory Committee, with its new initiative to study the human rights dimensions of local government. The HLRN experience in MENA will instruct future HLRN interventions in that study, as local communities in MENA begin to redefine the local human rights functions and duties of their local authorities.

Legal Mechanisms

HIC-HLRN’s intervention with the legal bodies, including treaty-monitoring bodies, of the UN Human Rights System corresponds to the cycle of reviews carried out for countries in which HIC and HLRN have active Members. In 2012, the HIC-HLRN Middle East/North Africa program worked with local Members and affiliates to prepare for the combined second, third and fourth periodic report of Egypt (E/C.12/EGY/2-4) review of Egypt before the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) that was scheduled for 2013. The preparations bore fruit in 2013 with a joint submission to CESCR’s pre-sessional working group.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) concluded its year-long review of Israel’s periodic report in November 2011. HLRN collaborated with two local Members in Palestine to present a joint parallel report, which followed its previous submission to the CESCR
pre sessional working group in 2010. That earlier submission sought to highlight questions needed for the Committee’s “constructive dialog” with the state party.

In this round, CESCR’s review of Israel noted positively that state’s government October 2011 adoption of the Trajtenberg report recommendations to lower the cost of living, ease the financial burden of poorer and middle-class families and increase the supply of affordable housing. However, the Committee noted with concern that most of the issues raised with the State of Israel in 2003—which included gross violations of housing and land rights—remain unaddressed. That previous review concluded with regret that issues raised already in CESCR’s Concluding Observations of 1998 and 2001 also remained outstanding matters of concern, including breaches of the treaty. The recent review—as before—focuses heavily on continuing violations of housing and land rights.

In this round, CESCR addressed the consequences of Israel’s Hafrada (apartheid) Wall on Palestinian farmers who are prevented from accessing their lands, as well as the deprivation of Gazan fisherfolk whom Israel prevents from accessing their territorial waters as guaranteed under international law. In this case, the denial of equitable access to land and natural resources has affected the right to work (ICESCR, art. 6). CESCR then urged Israel “to ensure that Palestinians enjoy unimpeded access to their agricultural lands in all their territories” and “to recognize and respect the right of the Palestinian people to the marine resources, including the right to fish in the territorial sea and Exclusive Economic Zone of the Gaza Strip.”

As reported in the HLRN parallel report, the Committee noted also the high incidence of poverty in highly developed Israel, particular among Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, as well as in the oPt. These findings are expressed with a context of the high rate of privatization of social services, affecting the right to an adequate standard of living (art.11). Thus, CESCR called on Israel to “establish a comprehensive policy to address the problem of poverty and social exclusion, accompanied by adequate budget allocations and a scaling down of the privatization of social services.” In so doing, the Committee recommended that the State focus its efforts, in particular, on the Arab Israeli population, Ultra-Orthodox Jewish families, and disadvantaged and marginalized groups such as older persons, persons with disabilities and asylum seekers.

The Committee found the lack of social housing units, the limited availability of affordable housing and the lack of regulation of the private rental market in Israel are obstacles to the enjoyment of the right to housing (art.11). The 18 independent Committee members
recommended that Israel “take immediate steps to ensure the availability of affordable housing, by adopting a national strategy and a plan of action on adequate housing, by increasing the number of social housing units, and by offering increased rental assistance.” CESCR called on the State also to ensure a proper regulation of the private rental market, and urged Israel “to expeditiously implement the Planning and Construction Procedures for the Acceleration of Construction for Housing Purposes Law 5771–2011.”

More generally, CESCR recommended that Israel “review and reform its housing policy and the issuance of construction permits in East Jerusalem, in order to prevent demolitions and forced evictions and ensure the legality of construction in those areas.” The Committee went on to call upon Israel to “intensify efforts to prevent attacks by settlers against Palestinians and Palestinian property in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and investigate and prosecute criminal acts committed by settlers.”

The CESCR review gave particular attention to the Plan for the Regularization of Bedouin Housing and for the Economic Development of the Bedouin Population in the Negev—a.k.a. the Prawer Plan—which is ostensibly based upon the recommendations of the 2008 Goldberg Committee that the HLRN parallel reports analyzed. The Committee gave notice to Israel that implementing the Plan should not result in forceful eviction. Instead, the Committee advised Israel that, to adhere to its legal obligations, the State would have to ensure that any eviction be based on free, prior and informed consent, and that persons relocated be offered adequate levels of compensation. However, in contradiction to the Prawer Plan evicting over 30,000 Arab citizens and current incremental practice, CESCR advised the State party “to officially regulate the unrecognized villages, cease the demolition of buildings in those villages, and ensure the enjoyment of the right to adequate housing” (art. 11).

As informed by HLRN’s and other parallel reports submitted by specialized agencies and human rights NGOs, CESCR observed that Palestinians in the oPt lack access to sufficient and safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, thus violating their right to water (art. 11 and General Comment No. 15). Concerned also about “the continuing destruction of the water infrastructure in Gaza and in the West Bank, including in the Jordan Valley, under military and settler operations since 1967,” the Committee urged Israel “to ensure the availability of sufficient and safe drinking water and adequate sanitation,...including through the facilitation of the entry of necessary materials to rebuild the water and sanitation systems in Gaza. They called on Israel urgently “to facilitate the restoration of the water infrastructure of the West Bank, including in the Jordan Valley, affected by the destruction of the local civilians’ wells, roof water tanks, and other water and irrigation facilities under military and settler operations since 1967.”

Finally, the Committee also demonstrated the interdependence of rights, as evident in the violation of cultural rights by Israeli measures to delink Bedouin Arab citizens from their villages and relocating them to planned townships. In light of the State of Israel’s treaty obligations to respect the right to culture (art. 15), CESCR noted in a recommendation “that the State party fully respect the rights of the Arab-Bedouin people to their traditional and ancestral lands.”

The treaty body’s observations in this third periodic review of Israel updated the record on breaches of housing and land rights. They also evidenced, once again, the link between and
among the various categories of human rights. As noted from the CESCR’s chair in both the opening and closure of the dialog, Israel has remained silent on a range of questions put to the State since its first review in 1998.

Those lingering questions address the mechanisms of institutional discrimination planned and practiced by the State of Israel, while CESCR’s 2011 Concluding Observations\(^2\) read as a current catalog of symptoms of deeper problems of governance in the state. Following the publication of the CESCR Concluding Observations, HLRN published also an annex to its reports, identifying the “CESCR questions unanswered and recommendations unapplied by the State Party.”

HIC-HLRN’s 2012 submissions to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) became the subject of a March 2012 final review and Concluding Observations. For a preview of the outcomes of 2012 interventions, please see the CERD Concluding Observations and HLRN’s analysis.

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**CERD Issues Observations on Israel**

By: HLRN

13 March 2012

“The UN’s independent body monitoring implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination has concluded its review of Israel and concluded that the State party must reform its laws and policies to be compliant with the global standard of combating racism and racial discrimination.

More...**

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**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 Procedures, including Special Rapporteurs (SRs), to be an important partnership for civil society monitoring and problem solving. The HLRN office continued to support, and collaborate with the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing in MENA.

The MENA-specific cooperation focused on the two country missions that the SR on adequate housing had planned in 2011 to Algeria and Israel/Palestine. That involved sharing contacts of Members and affiliates in both countries through a special census of local contacts, as well as other useful contacts of various stakeholders. In both cases, the Algeria mission in 2011 and the Israel/Palestine mission (eventually conducted in 2012), the SR consulted with local HLRN Members and produced especially useful mission reports. The final report was the subject of “interactive dialog” and advocacy before the HRC’s 19th session in 2012.

\(^2\)CESCR, “Concluding Observations: Israel, E/C.12/ISR/CO/3, 16 December 2011, at: [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/docs/co/E-C-12-ISR-CO-3_en.doc](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/docs/co/E-C-12-ISR-CO-3_en.doc)
Implementing Bodies

HLRN’s coordinator participated in the High-level Expert Forum of the FAO, Rome, 13–14 September 2012, which brought together the FAO, IFAD and WFP officers, governments, major aid agencies, and civil society organizations (CSOs) to discuss the way forward in addressing “Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises.” This meeting was a key step toward finding operational principles and real policy solutions for those suffering from persistent food insecurity.

As mentioned in mission goal 1, HLRN has also been active in the drafting and promotion of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security, which were finalized in March 2012 and endorsed by the 38th (Special) Session of the CFS on 11 May 2012. These Guidelines set out principles and internationally accepted standards for responsible practices in the administration of land and other resources, and represent an important step to further instating human rights norms into policy and decision-making processes. HLRN continued throughout 2012, and into 2013, to be involved in the promotion of these guidelines. With HIC representing the “urban constituency” on the CFS International Preparatory Committee (IPC), HLRN has continued coordination with the IPC toward the development of a manual for monitoring the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines, with special emphasis on the engagement of HIC-HLRN Members in the MENA region.

International Financial Institutions

A long-standing HLRN regional-advocacy objective 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 UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Displacement. However, HLRN has not had the resources or 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.

Late in 2011, new opportunities emerged for regional advocacy before the World Bank concerning energy-sector projects implemented in violation of housing and land rights. This has become a subject of programming in 2012, and a subject of future reporting. While these prospects are still new, the HLRN framework and methods developed over time in MENA will assist in the design and implementation of these future activities to strengthen capacities and effectiveness of local actors.

The MENA office has focused much of its advocacy efforts in assisting an Egyptian community effected by a natural gas-powered power plant project that is estimated to cost $2.2 billion, with an estimated $840 million in funding from the World Bank, with additional funding comes from the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development. Located in the village of Abu Ghalib and the Qatâ region of Egypt, this project is affecting a large community of rural peoples and farmers, involving the prevention of access to and the destruction of agricultural land and water

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resources. This work seeks a rights-based solution of this case which could set a precedent for social responsibility of both public and foreign investment in Egypt, as well as set precedents for best-practices for future Bank investments. This advocacy effort has continued into 2013, including meetings with the Bank safeguards panel and visits to the plant site in Abu Ghalib.

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

“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, the appeals 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.

Out of a total of 101 open cases in the HLRN Urgent Action System since 2003, the MENA region has 29 open Urgent Action cases through 2012. Of those, 19 related to Israel/Palestine,
six were in Egypt, one in Iraq, one in Sudan, one in Turkey and one directed at Kuwait (Kuwait Development Fund).

The original design of the Urgent Action system was for HLRN to respond to situations affecting HIC Members and their communities. 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.

The one MENA case from December 2011 (Egypt) required follow-up with the local community and its popular committee in 2012. That case is significant in that it relates to deeper challenges of local governance that is so much the subject of other HIC-HLRN activities and interventions in MENA during 2012. In particular, that involves the ambiguous local administration after the central government’s fall in 2011 and the partnership with Members in following up with the local community to pose rights-based solutions.

The MENA cases from the HIC-HLRN Urgent Action System are found here in Annex II. 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 functions

The MENA Program office, in Cairo, continued its role and function through 2012, 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 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, 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 of a customized program as of 2009. The logistics of joint reporting remain complicated by the geographical reach of the Geneva, Cairo and Delhi offices 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 and consulting honoraria, occasional publication sales and other contributions 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 MENA program is Yasser Abdelkader as systems manager. Also supporting MENA regional legal research, translation and publication work is Ahmed Mansour, who joined the office full time in January 2011. Also Imogen Lambert came on the HLRN Cairo team at the end of 2011, especially to assist in the Land Forum and publication activities, as well as support the fundraising and proposal-writing efforts into 2012. When she returned to complete her higher education, Emily Mattheisen joined in mid-year as program assistant, continuing support for the HLRN publication program, fund raising and the MENA Land Forum.

In all aspects of the work, HLRN Coordination Office has been promoting more connections, better communications and enhanced cooperation within and among HIC Members, HIC and HLRN offices and structures, especially the HIC General Secretariat. This has included efforts to create a common administrative access and public gateway among the various HIC websites and internet features, which was the subject of much consultation and design work throughout 2012.
HLRN’s MENA Program has evolved well beyond its modest initial 1991 program engaging partners in historic Palestine in 1991. It has developed as a center of competence within the wider Habitat International Coalition, uniting HIC Members in the region and beyond, and institutionalizing the human rights approach in the work of Habitat International Coalition and the region’s restive civil society by promoting the human right to adequate housing in practical ways. HLRN sees this achievement as a complement to the other competences among HIC Members: in gender, environment and (social) production aspects of habitat.

From Cairo, the HLRN Program delivers services to a growing number of HLRN Members across MENA. The MENA Program has evolved considerably beyond the modest initial program engaging partners in historic Palestine in 1991. While HLRN has developed important networking opportunities and joint activities with other larger networks in the MENA region and beyond, the demands are greatest in providing needed support for small and local organizations to become more specialized in the housing and land rights field in both rural and urban settings.

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The MENA Program and its coordination office operate locally as a hub for exchanges of methodologies, tools, techniques and expertise for defending HRAH in Egypt and across the MENA region, and between MENA and other regions, North and South. The flagship activity is the annual Land Forum, which has completed three rounds and planned the fourth round by end-2012. The evolution of this project in 2012 promises to give rise to new methodologies of inquiry and reporting on the administration of land and natural resources, especially across the countries of the “Arab Spring.” This is foreseen to take the form of a regional Social Land Watch as a natural outcome of the Land Forum in its more-mature and problem-solving form.

The unique HRLN contributions remain its Violation Database (VDB), as well as the development and application of tools and methods such as the “Loss Matrix” for monitoring consequences arising from violations of housing and land rights, and in practically applying the reparations framework as defined in international law. That allows not only demonstrating, where possible, the full costs and losses of violations, but also building the argument for deterrence of such costly and poverty-deepening measures.
With experience, greater outreach and word-of-mouth advertising, the development of HLRN’s role in MENA is engaging more partners, while imposing more demands 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 understand and appreciate the burden of administration pressures. However, the shifting priorities and financial circumstances of partners, as well as their restructuring processes, generates the need for more time and effort in raising resources.

Traditional donors of HIC-MENA advocacy, such as Brot für die Welt and ICCO, have remained supportive in material and nonmaterial ways. However, new challenges and opportunities are testing our resolve to derive the positive human rights outcomes from the developments of 2012. These include, but are not limited to the MENA revolutions, but also the challenges of privatization, the financial crisis and climate change that call for more resources, partners and capacities.

HLRN has begun to seek more-diverse support in 2011, in order to eventually break the vicious cycle of a heavy workload that stifles needed initiatives, including fundraising initiatives. That process continued throughout 2012, with the Cairo office producing some 30 proposals and concept papers in the course of the foregoing year.

Responding to new realities, HLRN has formed new relationships with the Fund for Global Human Rights and Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung in 2012, in order to join forces in providing technical and material support for HIC-HLRN Members doing innovative work in the region.

*HLRN Social Capital*

The opportunities arising from developments of the “Arab Spring” and regular 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 HRAH agenda.

This continuity of staffing and improvement of management capacity have been essential values for HLRN. The internal planning process at HLRN has concluded that that future will involve a more-complex patchwork of project-based activities that integrate in a common program, with MENA becoming the most dynamic region. In that process, HLRN commits to continuing the support for civil society and the development of social movements so as to meet the growing demands and challenges of the region’s transition to democracy and the full realization of economic/social/cultural human rights.
ANNEX I

HIC-HLRN Middle East/North Africa Publications

Thematic Publications

- جوزيف شكل، "المدن العربية تحت تأثير الحروب والصراعات والتحديات التي تواجه التماسك الاجتماعي وإعمال حقوق الإنسان" [تنزيل من لجنة الأمم المتحدة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا] (القاهرة: نشرات أوراسيا 2009).
- Joseph Schechla, “Prospects for the Arab City Facing the Multiple Challenge of War, Conflict, Social Cohesion and the Fulfillment of Human Rights” [commissioned by UN Economic and Social Council for Western Asia] (March 2009).
- استعادة الملكية العامة للمياه: إنجازات ونضالات ورؤى من أنحاء العالم (القاهرة: شبكة الحق في السكن، 2008)
- Our Land, Our Homes, Our Culture, Our Human Rights [Proceedings of the Regional Consultation on Women’s Rights to Adequate Housing and Land] (New Delhi: HLRN - South Asia, 2006).
- Anatomies of a Social Movement: Social Production of Habitat in the Middle East/North Africa (Cairo: HLRN, 2005).

Tools and Techniques Series


World Habitat Day Reports from the HLRN Violation Database

- Waves of Resistance and the Call for Fundamental Change: What’s Habitat Got to Do with It? (Cairo: HLRN, 2011).

Fact-finding Mission Reports

Country Assessments

[Housing in Egypt between Slums and Squalid Urbanization: Toward a Guide for Researchers and Jurists to Address Housing and Land Issues in Egypt (Al-Qahera: Network for Human Rights and Land in the Arab World, 2008)]

Home in Iraq [a compilation of issues in the continuous housing and land rights crisis] (Cairo: HLRN - MENA, 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: HLRN - MENA, 2003);

Reports to UN Bodies

Implementation of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Obligations under ICESCR Article 11, affecting the Indigenous Palestinian People under Israel’s State Jurisdiction and Effective Control [parallel report to the UN Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination] (Cairo: HLRN, December 2011);

Implementation of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Obligations under ICESCR Article 11, affecting the Indigenous Palestinian People under Israel’s State Jurisdiction and Effective Control [joint parallel report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights] (Cairo: HLRN, December 2011);

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);

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: 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: HLRN - MENA, 2002);


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4 Defence for Children International (Palestine); LAW Society for the Protection of Human Rights (Jerusalem), Al Mezan Center for Human Rights.
5 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).
### Urgent Actions/Open Letters in MENA Cases as of 31 December 2012

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<td>UA: Egypt: 13 Homes Collapse, &gt;30 Families Displaced</td>
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<td>OL: Egypt’s intended 2050 master plan for Cairo threatens habitat and human rights of millions</td>
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<td>26 May 2008</td>
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<td>UA: Israel, Forced Evictions and Displacement of the Jahalin Bedouin</td>
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<td>UA (support): Palestine, Jahalin Bedouin Threatened with Displacement</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>UA: Israel, State to Destroy Entire Bedouin Village in the Naqab</td>
<td>31 October 2006</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>OL (joint): To Louise Arbour on Violence toward Refugees in Egypt</td>
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<td>OL (joint): Palestine, To UN about Illegal Closures in Gaza</td>
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<td>OL: To James W. Owens, CEO, Caterpillar Inc on Use of Bulldozers in Demolitions</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>UA (joint): Egypt, Authorities Evict Families from Relief Tents</td>
<td>15 September 2004</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>OL: Caterpillar Inc. Must Stop Participation in Israeli Evictions</td>
<td>15 July 2004</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>OL: Kuwait Development Fund Must Stop Financing Lyari Project</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>OL: Sudan, President al-Bashir Must Uphold Obligations toward Darfur</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>UA: Palestine, Mass House Demolitions Leaves over 2,000 Homeless in Rafah</td>
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<td>UA (joint): Palestine, the Apartheid Wall</td>
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<td>29</td>
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**HIC-HLRN Middle East/North Africa Program**

The Middle East/North Africa regional program of Habitat International Coalition’s Housing and Land Rights Network meets the need for more-effective civil society participation in public affairs by applying the criteria and methodology of human rights and corresponding state obligations as a defining framework for civil discourse. The ultimate objective of HLRN’s program is to develop civil society actors’ knowledge and capacity to address complex policy issues related to the most-vital public resources with a degree of competence that enables effective and direct engagement with decision makers at all levels.

HLRN’s MENA program supports diverse Member efforts and approaches to uphold housing and land rights, ranging from monitoring treaty compliance, to popular and legal initiatives to posing alternatives to the privatization of public and environmental goods and services, which affects housing and land rights. The program activities promote adequate housing, urban planning, land and water management as public goods; land as related to food sovereignty; as well as all relevant traditional methods, moral principles and other culturally specific devices for guiding equitable the administration of land and natural resources consistent with human rights.

The MENA region is exceptionally suitable as a focus for this approach, with its conspicuous features of foreign occupation, land grabbing and scarcity of water, which affect livelihoods. The region’s need for good governance in the housing sphere and land administration, the lack of local self-government and people’s sovereignty, in general, impede the culture of citizenship as a basis for equal rights and responsibilities.

The MENA Program promotes the development of economic, social and cultural rights culture in the region and builds capacity by providing training, appropriate methodologies for housing rights monitoring and legal defense, access to international forums, and opportunities for cooperation with the UN human rights system. Thus, HLRN’s MENA program contributes to the region’s discourse on ESC-rights and globalization, and organizes regional and inter-regional exchanges of expertise. HLRN seeks to help create the context for MENA communities and housing rights defenders to develop practical skills, to work cooperatively and develop solidarity regionally and with social movements elsewhere. HIC-MENA’s on-line services also provide interactive databases and archives with unique Arabic-language resources on housing and economic/social/cultural rights.

For more information on the MENA Program and HIC-HLRN membership, go to: [www.hic-mena.org](http://www.hic-mena.org).