



مكتب المفوض السامي لحقوق الإنسان



ورشة عمل بعنوان :

التوقيع على اتفاقية مناهضة التعذيب : خطوة لكسر دائرة التعذيب والفقير

A workshop :

Towards ratification of the convention against torture
: A step to break the cycle of torture and poverty

Gaza, June 26th , 2011

A Report on the Activities of the workshop “Ratification of convention against torture: A step to break the cycle of torture and poverty”

In partnership with Office of High Commissioner
for Human Rights

Held in Gaza on Sunday June 26th, 2010



دعوة خاصة
بمناسبة اليوم العالمي لمساندة ضحايا التعذيب

يتشرف برنامج غزة للصحة النفسية بالتعاون مع مكتب المفوض السامي لحقوق الإنسان بدعوة سيادتكم للمشاركة في ورشة عمل بعنوان: " التوقيع على اتفاقية مناهضة التعذيب : خطوة لكسر دائرة التعذيب والفقير " وذلك يوم الأحد الموافق 26 يونيو 2011 الساعة العاشرة في مطعم السلام - أبو حسيوة

مشاركتم دعمًا لضحايا التعذيب

Special Invitation

On the occasion of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture Gaza Community Mental Health Programme and the Office of the UN High Commissioner are pleased to invite you to participate in a workshop entitled 'Towards ratification of the convention against torture: a step to break the cycle of torture and poverty' due to be held on Sunday 26th June 2011 at ten o'clock at Al-Salam Restaurant-Abu Haseera

مرفق جدول الورشة

لأكيدة المحضور، يرجى الاتصال على: إيمان الجبسي - العلاقات العامة : 2824073

In a workshop, professionals and human rights activists recommended the necessity of holding intensive workshops about torture and its relationship with poverty. In addition, the attendants emphasized the importance to conduct studies and researches to find out the most efficient methods to prevent torture, and expose the Israeli illegal practices against Palestinians.

On the occasion of the UN International Day in Support of Victims of



Torture, the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, in partnership with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights held a workshop entitled “Towards ratification of the convention against torture: a step to break the cycle of torture and poverty” in Al Salam Restaurant in Gaza. The workshop was well attended by Dr. Ahmed Abu Tawahina, Director General of the GCMHP, Mr. Sol Taka Hashi, the vice president of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Mr. Hassan Zyada, director of the GCMHP’s Gaza Community Center in addition to representatives of law associations and prisoner’s committees, Islamic and National forces, and a number of human rights activists, supporters of the victims of torture and news agencies.

In the beginning of the workshop, Abu Tawahina welcomed the guests, especially Mr. Taka Hashi, hoping that the day will demonstrate cooperation between civil and national organizations promoting human rights and supporting victims of human rights violations. Dr. Abu Tawahina also pointed out the importance to set a national plan and

establish a national committee, in order to overcome the numerous challenges facing human rights enforcement in the Palestinian society.

Moreover, Dr. Abu Tawahina drew attention to GCMHP efforts to break the torture and poverty cycle in previous years. The GCMHP rehabilitation programs successfully provided victims of torture with appropriate training to protect them from poverty. Dr. Abu Tawahina indicated that 75% of Palestinian families rely on foreign aid which he considers an alarming indication to the weak Palestinian economy mainly caused by the current Israeli blockade.



Furthermore, Dr. Abu Tawahina highlighted the significance of Arab spring, where people revolt against injustice and inequality through demonstrations under one common theme “No for injustice. No for torture and yes for civil equality”. Inspired by the revolutions, Dr. Abu Tawahina called the audience to maximize their efforts to integrate the qualities of human rights in the society through demonstrations and through various work within their areas of expertise.

Relating to the international theme of this occasion, Dr. Abu Tawahina added that breaking the torture and poverty cycle should be a priority. Therefore, Dr. Abu Tawahina stressed the importance of creating a national day to raise awareness about that issue, and to find new mechanisms to reduce torture in Israeli prisons as well as in West Bank and Gaza.

Public Meetings Coordinator at Al – Mezan Centre for Human Rights, Mrs. Shereen Al – shobaki, presented recently conducted statistics by Mr. Abdel Nasser Ferwana, researcher in prisoners’ affairs. The statistics showed that since 1967, Israel had captured 750, 000 Palestinian, including 12,000 woman, and tens of thousands of children, who were

exposed to different kinds of torture. Till now, 6, 000 prisoners are held in Israeli prisons, 300 before Oslo Agreement, and 41 are prisoners for over 25 years.

Further, Mrs. Al Shobaki added that Israel is the only country that legitimized different internationally prohibited torture methods, which

were integrated in their legal, civil and judiciary system against

Palestinian prisoners.

Mrs. Al Shobaki also

pointed out that Israel

had practiced more than

70 of physical and

mental torture methods

against Palestinian

prisoners. Statistics show

that torture is a common practice in Israeli prisons. Prisoners' families

are also exposed to forms of torture such as naked search, sexual

harassment, and humiliation on their way to visit their family member in

prison.



“Torturers will be brought to justice sooner or later” – UN human rights chief

Mr. Taka Hashi talked about the importance to integrate international laws and criteria that condemns torture in the Palestinian law and in Gaza. He illustrated the definition of torture according to the UN convention which is aimed at isolating the victim, destroying his personality, and exposing them to humiliation. Torture does not only affect the victim, but it also has an impact on the society as a whole. He demonstrated the International position against torture starting from

the International Convention against Torture, and ending with the convention to stop torture hoping that Palestine will become the 148th country to sign the document.



In his part, Mr. Taka Hashi emphasized the individual right not be subjected to torture by any means. Mr. Taka Hashi added that torture is vehemently prohibited in the international community; under no circumstances torture is justified. Mr. Taka Hashi stressed that the international convention

against torture is an important document in the International law that had been ratified by most nations; however, torture still takes place in different countries in various shapes and forms. According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, individuals in some countries are tortured in detention simply for their political views.

In his speech, Mr. Hassan Ziada, head of Gaza Community Center,

underlined that torture is one of the most physically and mentally painful experiences that someone can go through. Mr. Ziada added that most victims of torture suffer from severe physical pain which can later cause mental



illnesses making them incapable of being a vital part of the society. In addition, Mr. Ziada refers to the fact that mental impairment usually makes victims of torture economically inefficient and fully reliant on others for support. Mr. Ziada presented some relevant statistics

revealing that 30% of Palestinians in Israeli prisons suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD), 32.5% suffer from lifetime physical diseases, 75.5% have financial problems and 20% suffer from marriage problems.

In the same context, Mr. Ziada highlighted that poverty is a form of torture, and that blockade affected Palestinians in all aspects of their life. Also, Mr. Ziada also pointed out that torture practiced domestically in Gaza was more painful and it resulted in numerous physical and mental illnesses. In the end of his speech, Mr. Ziada called the different organizations to work on preventing torture practiced by Palestinians.



At the end of the workshop, discussion took place and the speakers responded to the questions of the audience. The workshop was concluded with a number of recommendations including:

- The importance of holding intensive workshops that discuss torture,
- The importance to conduct researches and studies to find out the most efficient methods to prevent torture, and expose the Israeli illegal practices against Palestinians.
- Pressuring both parties to complete the Palestinian reconciliation.

- The importance of supporting victims of the internal fighting in Gaza.
- Working further to support victims of torture and their rehabilitation.
- Calling the international community to pressure Israel to stop its illegal activities against Palestinian prisoners, and criminalize political arrest.

For more information, you can visit the following links:

- <http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=400166>
- <http://www.safa.ps/ara/index.php?action=showdetail&seid=53138>
- <http://www.prealmedia.com/ar/index.php?news=29723>
- http://qudsnet.com/arabic/new/index.php?page=view_news&Id=192070

Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, Public Relations Department