

Newsletter

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Monthly newsletter by:



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1. Editorial

Today is the 61st Anniversary of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, 10th of December. We will begin our editorial with the first article of the same declaration; "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights".

Accordingly, Al-Maqdese for Society Development (MSD) publishes its first newsletter on the same day of the universal declaration to highlight the Israelis' gross and systematic violations of clear human rights (HR) articles toward Jerusalemites. For example, violation of Palestinians right of development, right of freedom to choose her/his residence, right to housing, right to liberty of movement, right to protection of law and so on. Also, to continue the use of peaceful means to put pressure and thereby oblige Israel to stop its actions that directly and indirectly violate Palestinians HR and secondly, to abide to the basic principles of the HR Declaration.

MSD which is a social-civic non-profit non-governmental organization was formed in Jerusalem early 2007 as a reaction to some academics, doctors, lawyers and many other individuals who were working to defend Palestinians social, legal, economic, civic, political and cultural rights de jure.

Also, the organization aims to reinforce the steadfastness of Jerusalemites in the City by objective methods depending in basic principle of The International Law and HR Conventions.

MSD is aware that joining both the work for HR plus Jerusalem denotes a heavy task. We however believe that coalition with other organizations is the most influential approach to work for HR in Jerusalem. MSD accordingly wishes to network, cooperate and partner with international and national organizations that work in the same field. This will contribute to raising awareness of Jerusalemites regarding their rights. Moreover, to contribute to reducing the main problems they face as a result of the Israelis' violations against their fundamental rights. In addition, to convert efforts so as to stop the Israeli policy of ethnic cleansing against Palestinians, e.g. through IDs withdrawal and thereby deprive them of their given right to live in the City.

Hence, MSD developed its 3-year strategic plan to meet Jerusalemites' needs by implementing demand-driven programs in diversified, but specialized and relevant, fields. The priority work fields include, but not limited to: youth development, combat the scourge of drugs, empowerment of women, providing legal counseling, legal defense and defending Jerusalem workers' rights.

2. MSD: the organization and its activities

MSD vision and mission

Vision

To maintain the Palestinian existence in Jerusalem and protect the Palestinians rights through advocacy, lobbying and mobilizing energy, resources and human efforts to protect their rights based on International Law, and International Bill of Human Rights.

In order to achieve collective and individual advocacy, and to increase the Jerusalemites awareness level about their rights, MSD aims to create coordination and networking with international and local civil society organizations (CSO) who are interested and work for HR, HR protection, youth, anti-drugs interventions and socio-economic development.

Mission:

Empowering the Palestinians in Jerusalem to demand, achieve and get their rights in all possible legal ways.

MSD: active and well recognized at the grass roots and international organizations levels

MSD has proved itself as being a great recourse for its beneficiaries, serving a great number of residents in East Jerusalem. MSD has worked hard to achieve its good reputation on the grass root level and highly appreciates the trust we are given. Being recognized by the grass root is a major goal, though also we appreciate being renowned by national and international NGOs, institutions and UN agencies.

We look forward to continue being active and highly visible in the local community in the years to come.

MSD long term vision: strategic plan 2010-2012

Through a technical assistance from NDC (NGOs Development Center), MSD strategic plan (SP) document was prepared through a participatory process involving all staff levels. This approach, which allowed the formation of a diversified planning team, was adopted from the onset. It spans the period 2010-2012, and indicates what MSD work and work sector should look like in 3 years time. It also indicates what needs to be done and the resources needed to realize the interventions that should be undertaken in the SP implementation. Its main focus is the improvement of its work quality, and having a wide diversity of activities, partners and target groups. It has a good linkage with national priorities and trends in the sector. In specific,

the "Ending Occupation and State Building Document"/ PRDP (Palestinian Reform and Development Plan).

In the strategic vision, MSD was responsive and already targeted and will target different issues of concern and interest. MSD's SP considered HR as one of the major challenges to be met with serious interventions as soon as possible, even gradually. The SP stated that design and implementation of interventions for to meet the pressuring challenges is really indispensable in the short and long runs. Specifically, under the 3rd strategic goal (To contribute to the protection of HR in Jerusalem), and specific objective 3-3 (To contribute to the creation of a HR legal supportive environment), MSD has designed specific activities. It is however a priority identified in the SP and booked to the 2010 agenda which is, practically, the 1st implementation year of the SP.

MSD participation: DWG, PCWG, CAP, OCHA...

At MSD, we believe that through interaction and cooperation with other NGO's and institutions we can achieve our common goals. We have throughout the past years participated in different meetings, workshops, seminars, conferences, planning sessions and symposiums...etc.

To support and share the protection of HR, MSD participates in different working groups: Displacement Work Group (DWG), Protection Cluster Working Group (PCWG), Consolidated Appeal Process/ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (CAP/OCHA).

MSD: member of the Planning team for JDSP (Jerusalem Development Strategic Plan 2010- 2014)

The promising 5-year plan proposed and recommended by the Jerusalem Unit at the Presidency Office who called partners and stakeholders from the various sectors to participate. Both private and civil society sectors in the Jerusalem other institutions were involved. Efforts and kick-off activities were recently undertaken like update of several sectoral analytical studies produced in 2006. A framework for the promising national plan was prepared and then further steps from analysis phase to planning phase will be undertaken. MSD participates in the process from its onset and continues as a member of the planning team. Through its presence in Jerusalem field and its analysis, MSD reflects societal needs and priorities and however feeds the planning process.

3. International HR Day and Palestine: continuous negative developments and violations

In Jerusalem, the heart of the world, where Palestinians are forced to live under hard political, economical, cultural and social conditions, violations are daily reportable. Accordingly, Jerusalemites suffer from blatant discrimination from the Israeli institutions. This comes clear as Jerusalemites are being deprived of political, social, cultural, educational and civic rights. The denial from basic needs and rights is accumulating from one year to the next. This ranges from confiscating the Jerusalem IDs from thousands of people (4,577 IDs in 2008 and 11,000 IDs during 1967-2007), to the demolition of thousands of houses. Consequently, Jerusalemites are unable to enjoy these rights due to many regular and systematic obstacles and discrimination procedures and practices.

As results of the institutionalized racism implemented in the Israeli bureaucracy, a large number of Palestinians have been forced to leave the City of Jerusalem. This, as aforementioned, is due to several illegal Israeli policies and procedures intensively undertaken in the course of past years, such as: repealing IDs, not licensing building construction, difficult land registration procedures, high costs for land registration and construction license, confiscation of land, poor and low quality of education services, poor and limited coverage of medical services and the severe lack of other public services.

4. News and updates

House demolitions: 2009 and affected people in figures

After occupying East Jerusalem in 1967 till today, Israel systematically implements policies to empty the City from Palestinians. One of these harsh polices is the demolition of houses. These demolitions violate Article (147) of the "Fourth Geneva Convention". The article considers this crime as grave breaches as they punish persons or property protected by the present Convention where Palestinians should be protected by the Convention as they live under occupation. In addition, Article (8) of the Statute of the International Criminal Court considers the extensive destruction and appropriation of property is a war crime.

In this regards, MSD figures of demolitions and affected people in 2009 (except December), indicate that 87 housed were demolished. Twenty four of them were demolished by the worst way at all, self demolition. It should be pointed out that 3,500

demolition orders were issued in 2009 indicating that 3,500 houses are threatened and consequently became a subject for demolition at any time.

Anti-drugs interventions: understanding with the Governorate of Jerusalem

The issue of drug abuse is an increasing problem in East Jerusalem. Unfortunately, there is a shortcoming in offers of prevention, cure and treatment. MSD reacted with the pressuring challenge and however designed a demand-driven program to interfere with the problem. We recently succeeded in securing fund to implement the program. We'll, in January 2010, launch the new program (named *Reyadah*). The *Reyadah* 2-year project aims to prevent drug abuse in East Jerusalem through a specialized center, for prevention in this phase. The project will be implemented in coordination with the Governorate of Jerusalem (GJ) as a representative of all Palestinian governmental institutions in relation. The Governorate of Jerusalem authorized MSD to act as GJ recognized MSD as a major and active actor in this field.

In its program design and problem analysis, MSD recognized that this issue is not only affecting the individual, but also a pressing issue for the families involved and for the greater society in large. Therefore, MSD is embarking on this challenge with great enthusiasm hoping to fulfill the gap with the promising "MSD anti-drugs-center".

MSD-ARIJ agreement

On December 8th 2009, an agreement was signed between Mr. Taher An-Namari (Supervisory Committee) and Dr. Jad Ishaq (Director General) from respectively MSD and ARIJ (Applied Research Institute Jerusalem), The MoU will lead to develop joint awareness programs in East Jerusalem.

Through this agreement, the two organizations will conduct joint workshops on awareness rising in East Jerusalem along with exchange of information and technical skills.

In the workshops these among other issues will be discussed; settlement expansion, land expropriated for settlement use, urban planning and het problems regarding house demolitions and confrontation activities.

MSD press conference: participation and reactions

On November 4th 2009, MSD held a press conference in the Jerusalem Governorate, entitled *House Demolitions and*

Consequences. MSD presented a list of houses intended for demolitions and houses that already were demolished in East Jerusalem, along with a Position Paper on the issue. The statistic presented by MSD showed the difficult reality of the housing conditions facing Palestinians in East Jerusalem. The figures presented a negative prognosis for the housing situation for Jerusalemites, with 2009 being the peak of Palestinians facing demolition orders/ demolitions in years.

Both local and international media as well as representatives from other relevant institutions attended the press conference. The international media and organizations have in the aftermath of the release asked MSD to provide them with additional information on the matter. MSD is also in dialogue with UN in regards of publishing a more in-depth report on the housing situation facing Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

As the result of the data presented by MSD, Jerusalem Municipality has delayed some of the demolition orders.

MSD Position paper

In the November 4th press conference, MSD distributed a "Position Paper" which is Al-Maqdese position from the increasing of Israelis' violations against Palestinians in East Jerusalem. The paper begins with an introduction about history of displacement and house demolitions in Palestine from the year 1948 till today. After that the paper lists the Israelis' policies which are helping them carry out their racism plans and so impose their control on East Jerusalem. First, the planning policy which imposes building restrictions on Palestinians depending on maps that date back to 50 years which is a violation of Palestinians' right to housing. Second, the demolition policy which is carried out by Jerusalem Municipality against Palestinians properties. These policies tend to empty Jerusalem and lessen the percentage of Palestinians within the City limits to no more than 12% in the year 2020: maintain the Jewish majority (Jerusalem Master Plan 2020). These policies are violating the Article (146) of the 4th Genève Convention of 1949, International Law and the criteria set forth in the HR conventions and charts. According to these conventions demolition of houses is a war crime and a crime against humanity. Because Israel as an occupying power by these policies, deprive hundred thousands of Palestinians from their fundamental right as what set forth in the international conventions such as right to adequate housing, the right to property ownership, the right to choose place

of residence. In addition, the right to survival and meet natural growth needs development and progress. Also, it deprive them security, safety and welfare. Moreover, these policies persecute the Palestinians civilian population without any military necessity. The paper ends with recommendations. It lists what is required from the international community, Israeli occupation authority, Palestinian National Authority and NGOs and local community to end depriving people in East Jerusalem from their rights as what set forth in the international conventions and so ending their suffering. Please click this link to access the position paper.

http://www.al-maqdese.org/english/news/plugins/spaw/uploads/files/position_paper%20al-maqdese1.PDF

New office in Al-Ram

On August 13th 2009, MSD opened its branch in Al-Ram. Al-Ram office has nine fulltime employees, 2 part-time and 3 volunteers (1 international) and is under the umbrella of the main office in Wadi Al-Joz, East Jerusalem. MSD regards the opening of the new office as a great victory and a sign of success after being in service for only three years.

Launch of a new program

The new office in Al-Ram is also the base of the new program launched by MSD entitled "*Promote Peace Opportunities through Improving Palestinian Life Conditions in Jerusalem*". The program aims to create a comprehensive database with data on violations of civic rights and house demolitions in East Jerusalem. This work method provides us with in depth material that enables us conduct evidence-based analysis and issuance of analytical reports on the socio-economic situations of the Palestinians living in East Jerusalem especially for who displaced from demolished houses. Documenting violations of civic rights as a part of evidence collection and documentation bear great importance in the fight for equal rights for all residents of Jerusalem. In addition, through the new office it will be easier to monitor and evaluate the project impact in both a short - and longtime perspective.

5. MSD legal clinic

Success stories: Wadi Al-Jouz flood

More than 19 families were affected by the heavy rain that eventually caused a flood on the eve of May 16th 2007. The flooding occurred in Wadi Al-Joz neighborhood and destroyed 19 homes, displacing 140 people.

The flood came as a great shock to the people in Wadi Al-Joz, and caused great damage to property and furniture. The trauma caused in a miscarriage after the mother tried to help her other children in need. The woman was attended to by medicals and spent a few days in the Intensive Care Unit.

MSD put together a team that worked to document the details of the flood, the aftermath and the overall ripple effect of it. MSD then filed a lawsuit against Jerusalem Municipality and the Hagihon Ltd - Jerusalem Water and Wastewater Works Cooperation, pressuring the Municipality to help the families in question. After the persistence of MSD, the court provided the families with contemporary shelter for two weeks.

Jerusalem Municipality showed great ignorance and stalling, resulting in MSD turning to Red Cross for help. After enquiry,

Red Cross provided essential assistance to the families such as medical equipment, kitchen supplies, blankets and mattresses. The Wadi Al-Joz residents later protested the immense unwillingness shown Jerusalem Municipality to help the victims of the flood and to the general treatment of the people living in the area. The area is highly taxed and the residents receive little or no public services.

Other residents living in the neighborhood and in the area of the Abdeen's Mosque participated in helping the families. In addition, Bait Mal Al-Quds provided a US\$ 6,000 emergency grant to the families.

MSD has held a court case against Jerusalem Municipality and Hagihon Ltd for the past two

years, arguing Jerusalem Municipality and Hagihon Ltd to compensate the families. The court case was finally settled June 7th 2009 when the Municipality provided the families with the amount of NIS 750,000.

Legal clinic services in 2009

During the period 01/01/2009-30/11/2009, MSD Legal Clinic (LC) staff has registered 10,216 service enquiries. The team registered the information using an electronic database. The LC provided services to Jerusalemites both in the country and from the Diaspora. Two days a week the LC is open to the public for visit, there they can speak to a lawyer. The other days during the week, the consultants receive phone calls, emails and faxes from the beneficiaries.

Each client has her/his own file that contains all information. The LC admin and field researchers followed up beneficiaries files to obtain missing information by calls or/and field visits. In addition, MSD lawyers held 4 awareness workshops each month at schools, youth clubs in Jerusalem and its neighborhoods or at the LC itself. This was conducted in order to raise their awareness of their civil, economic, social and legal rights.

In addition, the LC has distributed the MSD booklet "*Know Your Rights*". The booklet was prepared by a group of professionals in law, citizen and HR. It contains 5 chapters covering basic rights: (1) Procedures concerning mother and children rights (2) Procedures concerning buildings licenses (3) Procedures concerning residency in Jerusalem right (4) Arnona (tax) and (5) Allocations for disability and disabled. The booklet was influential in informing people who contacted the LC (face-to-face or via phone, fax and email) about their rights.

Table (1) below presents major services provided in the course of 11 months of the LC work in 2009.

Table (1): Number of services and inquiries per month served by the LC in 2009:

No.	Service	No. of services and inquiries per month served by LC in 2009:											
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total
1	Providing information & answering public inquiries:	96	513	438	722	272	465	274	97	198	249	256	3,580
2	Referral to other organizations:	22	12	9	5	14	12	6	22	29	29	2	162
3	Filling formal forms:	29	85	13	22	35	51	34	29	60	45	78	481
4	Translation of documents (Arabic-Hebrew-Arabic):	39	190	165	43	103	194	90	49	99	78	78	1,128
5	Writing formal letters:	9	115	26	10	45	18	10	9	38	34	28	342
6	Accompany beneficiaries through courts procedures:	5	11	5	6	9	7	3	5	15	51	52	169
7	Field visits, multi-purpose:	9	23	19	27	14	9	4	6	13	25	29	178
8	Recording requests for financial support:	6	117	118	61	93	206	114	49	99	78	78	1,019
9	Awareness sessions:	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	44
10	Booklet request:	156	257	133	352	116	236	130	56	100	179	147	1,862
11	Other:	36	252	133	352	30	110	97	33	102	78	28	1,251
Grand total		411	1,579	1,063	1,604	735	1,312	766	359	757	850	780	10,216

2: Specialized orgs for specialized services (i.e. labor organizations).

Brief look and analysis of the table shows that:

- The main and most frequent service provided by the Legal Clinic was: “provision of information and answering inquiries” which reached to 3,580 services during the reporting period (11 months).
- Beneficiaries also asked for the “Know your rights” booklet and so the number of booklets distributed during 11 months was 1,862 copies.
- Maximum number of services that the LC provided was in February and April. That is related to the high number of demolitions in East Jerusalem through both months. Where, in February, the provided services reached 1,579 and in April reached 1,604.
- The main service that the LC provided in February and April was distribution of the booklet where they asked for 257 copies in February and 352 in April. This indicates the related and influential information the booklet gives.
- Providing beneficiaries with information and answering their inquiries was highly provided in February where the number of service reached to 513. This is attributed to the high number of demolitions during that month.

6. Articles from International Human Rights Laws

- All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood (Article 1, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10/12/1948).
 - Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state (Article 13A, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10/12/1948).
 - Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country (Article 13B, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10/12/1948).
- All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (Article 1, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).