
INTRODUCTION

In The Name of God the Merciful, The Compassionate

The human being has been and continues to be the main pillar of every vital and creative deed in our whole economic, political, social and cultural life; and will always stay the pivot of this world and its interactions - the negative and the positive. The human being remains alone the means of every development and the aim of any advancement aspired by societies. It is not possible to achieve anything of substance and value without the human being.

The subject of human rights has become one of the most sensitive issues and one the most important causes in our contemporary world.

The need to respect these rights is not a national, internal concern anymore. It is a global issue attracting the attention of the world community and all societies seeking comprehensive development for country and people alike. It has become a common practice to judge the conduct of governments by the degree to which they respect human rights, internally and externally.

Since the reunification of its land and people in 1990, Yemen has been one of the countries that took upon themselves the responsibility to make a reality of the rights of their citizens. Yemen has taken upon itself to honor in its constitution and laws the values and principles to which it is committed. It is committed to promulgate an environment of human rights and to raise public awareness in them, in conformity with the democratic choice it has formulated as an ideal and principle fifteen years ago; and vowed in its context nationally, regionally and internationally to safeguard people's rights and protect them from any trespassing or violation.

The Ministry of Human rights is pleased to present this national report, which is renewed every year, to inform of the efforts being exerted by the Republic of Yemen in the field of human rights and the level of implementation of pertinent national laws and interna-

tional agreements and conventions ratified by Yemen. The report has also the purpose of rectifying the process, reinvigorating energies, correcting deficiencies and heading toward the set objective. The Ministry hopes that this modest effort will help clarify the situation of our Yemeni citizens and their basic rights and to be a station to review and evaluate the status of these rights. It should also be a pause to conclude the appropriate lessons as guidelines for the future and to mobilize the energies of society for the achievement of humanitarian objectives which our political leadership is attempting to realize in thought and practice.

This report for the year 2004 comes as a reinforcement of the Ministry's determination to establish an institutional mechanism capable of delivering quantitative and descriptive indicators periodically on the progress achieved in the areas of human rights, on violations that have marred these rights; and related obstacles impeding the accomplishment of targets. This mechanism will also develop practical suggestions to correct mistakes and overcome pitfalls and failures that have occurred along the path of implementation.

We have been careful since the beginnings of writing the report to ensure a convenient atmosphere to put its contents in a form that reflects the actual reality without coloring, exaggerating or minimizing what has been achieved.

This is substantiated by the participation of official authorities and organizations of civic society in its preparation, step after step; as well as by the contribution of national experts known for their proficiency and impartiality who wrote some of its parts. Another contribution came from a regional expert with long experience in writing human rights reports issued by non-governmental organizations to ensure that the contents of the report conform to the international norms according to which general human rights reports are written.

The Ministry did not neglect to show the preliminary version of the report to many specialized institutions and the leaderships of a number of orga-

nizations of civic society active in our country. It also sought guidance from opinions expressed by members of the Consultative Panel, which is composed of twenty seven personalities, representatives of organizations of civic society and presidents of associations, unions and syndicates. Their valuable observations and enlightened comments contributed positively to the re-writing of some chapters of the report.

Since the aim of the report is to analyze the interaction of theory, application and acceptable participation in improving practices in the hope of laying the foundation we hope to accomplish in the future, the team charged with preparing the report adopted the categorization methods used in a number of international charters and conventions related to human rights and the measurement of the degree of their application. The team was also careful to reflect the contributions of the governmental sector and the national organizations concerned with human rights, including non-governmental associations and international organizations working in our country.

The common denominator linking the chapters of this report is that they all make up an attempt to present an objective image of the situation of human rights in Yemen, legally and legislatively, with the purpose of spreading awareness in them on one hand, and putting them into effect, on the other.

Since the experiment of human rights is still new in our country and their violation is possible, the report has avoided monitoring individual incidents or specific cases. It focuses rather on common trends and phenomena because this is still an experience in need of attention, continuous care and more awareness in its values and principles, that it may strike roots as an attitude and practice in the public and private lives of people.

The content of this report, try as it may, will remain a general image of the reality of human rights in our country that needs a lot of follow up and rectification in view of the existing difficulties and obstacles, particularly the absence of an accurate and adequate data base and the obsolescence of available information that has not been brought up to date since the implementation of surveys and studies several years ago. It is difficult to use this data base to measure aspects and trends of current developments and degrees of fallback and regression in the field of human rights. Furthermore, some institutions have been reluctant to furnish information and data needed for the preparation of the report. And if such information is made available, there is the possibility that it contradicts other data and information used by other parties.

The Ministry welcomes any constructive criticism or observations on shortcomings that are surely to be found in the contents of this report, that we may take these into consideration when preparing the national report for the year 2005.

What remains to be said is to express our belief in the need to pay great and special attention to the principles of human rights, to consolidate them and surround them with the respect they deserve, to make them an ideal road to the flourishing of the democratic experiment and the accomplishment of comprehensive development.

Finally, we express our deep gratitude to the people to whose credit goes the preparation of this report: researchers, specialists, and employees of the Ministry's administration. In the forefront we thank the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Office in Yemen. The production of this report is one of the fruits of continuing cooperation between UNDP and the Ministry within the programme of supporting the capacities of national institutions working in the field of human rights, whose implementation began around the end of 2003.

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