



**Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights**



**Annual Narrative Report 2010**

**Core Program: Promotion and Protection of Human Rights**

**1 January – 31 December 2010**

**Gaza – 8 February 2011**



### **General and Contact Information**

#### **Contact details:**

**Main Office Address:** 5/102-1, Habosh Road, Omar El-Mukhtar Street, Western Rimal Gaza City, the Gaza Strip.

**Telephone:** +972 (0)8 245-3555

**Fax:** +972 (0)8 245-3554

**Jabalia Office:** Main St., Jabalia Camp, the Gaza Strip; P.O. Box 2714,

**Telephone:** +972 (0)8 282-0447

**Fax:** +972 (0)8 282-0442

**Email:** [info@mezan.org](mailto:info@mezan.org)

### **Board Members**

**Dr. Kamal Al Sharafi** (Chairperson), Former head of PLC oversight committee for human rights

**Mr. Talal Aukal** (Vice Chairperson), Journalist and political analyst

**Mr. Jamil Serehan** (Treasurer) lawyer and Director of ICHR Office in Gaza

**Mrs. Andaleeb Shehadeh** (Member), Women rights activist

**Mr. Nafez Al Madhoun** (Member) Lawyer

**Dr. Ali Abu Zuhri** (Member), President of the Al Aqsa University

**Dr. Azmi Shuaibi** (Member) General Coordinator of **AMAN** Coalition.

### **Al Mezan Donor Partners in 2010**

#### **Core Programme Donors:**

The NGO Development Centre (NDC) – representing 4 donors

The Representative Office of Norway to the Palestinian Authority

Open Society Institute (OSI)

Medico International

CAIPIRINHA Foundation; CULTURES OF RESISTANCE Network

The Carol Chomsky Memorial Fund

#### **Projects Donors:\***

Diakonia: Promotion of IHL in Gaza by Education/Information

Trocaire: Supporting Documentation of Human Rights Violations in Gaza

The European Commission: "Combating and Preventing Torture and Ill-Treatment of Palestinian Prisoners held in Israel Prisons and Palestinian Civilians in the OPT

UNICEF: Child Rights Awareness for Religious Leaders in Gaza.

Save the Children – UK: Strengthening 1612 Mechanism in Gaza

### **Membership\***

- [Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network \(EMHRN\)](#)
- [EcoNOmic, Social and Cultural Rights Network \(ESCR Network\)](#)
- [Habitat International Coalition - Housing and Land Rights Network](#)
- [Coalition for Accountability and Integrity](#)
- [Middle East and North Africa Network to Stop the Use of Children as soldiers](#)
- [MENA Network to Stop the Proliferation and Misuse of Small Arms & Light Weapons](#)
- [The World Organisation Against Torture \(OMCT\)](#)
- [The Working Group on SC Res. 1612 in the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#)
- [United Against Torture Coalition \(UAT\)](#)
- [The Protection Sector Working Group \(Chaired by OHCHR\)](#)
- \* [The Council of Palestinian Human Rights NGOs.](#)

\* Al Mezan holds the consultative status with ECOSOC.



### Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.1 Context: Human Rights conditions in Gaza in 2010 .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.1.1 Violations of human rights by Israel .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.1.2 <i>Violations of human rights by Palestinian non-state actors</i> .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2. Organizational Profile .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3. Progress of the program 1 January – 31 December 2010 .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.1 Activities .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.2 Outcomes/Results.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>3.3 Obstacles and difficulties .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Projects 2010 .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Financial reports/issues .....</b>	<b>33</b>



Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights (Al Mezan) presents its annual narrative report for the period 1 January to 31 December 2010; the second year of the Centre's 3-year program strategy 2009-2011. The report briefly provides developments related to the human rights and living conditions in the Gaza Strip, and generally the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), in 2010. It then describes the progress in the outcomes and activities as per the Annual Plan of Action for the year 2010.

The presents separate sections on the results, activities, and challenges. In order to maximize transparency, the report also provides brief descriptions of the projects that were partly or completely implemented in 2010 for the attention of the partners who support the core program. The report ends with financial notes. Financial statements for 2010 are annexed to the report.

### **1.1. Context: Human Rights conditions in Gaza in 2010**

In 2010, the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt); including the Gaza Strip, continued to be affected by a number of main factors that produced serious violations of international human rights law (IHRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL), but also – where relevant - Palestinian law and Israeli law, by all the concerned duty-bearers. These factors are:

- Israel's continued effective control of oPt; including the Gaza Strip, which represented the main source of human rights and IHL violations in Gaza. Israel continued to impose a tight blockade that caused severe deterioration of the socio-economic conditions and restricts access to vital services. In addition, the Israeli army continued to carry out military operations that systematically violate IHRL and IHL. The illegal settlement activities and imposing Access Restricted Areas (ARA, which includes a buffer zone on the land and a fishing zone in the sea) continued to cause forced displacement of the Palestinian population.
- These acts have created a negative atmosphere that made the prospects for a just peace more distant. This reflects continued denial of the right to self-determination for the Palestinian people. In itself a human rights, self-determination represents the only possible path for Palestinians to create a sustainable environment conducive and protective of human rights and development.
- As the efforts to renew the negotiations between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel continue, international community continues to lean towards favoring re-launching of the 'peace process' over ensuring respect of international law.
- In 2010, Israel and the Palestinian authorities reported to the UN Secretary General on the progress of their investigations into the suspected commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity during and around Operation Cast Lead. However, as indicated in the report of the UN Human Rights Council's Committee of Experts concluded that the Israeli authorities, while capable to, are 'unwilling' to enforce the



available domestic justice and accountability mechanisms.<sup>1</sup> While the Committee praised the genuine progress of the investigations by the PA, it was critical to the Gaza authorities for failing to comply with the relevant international standards. It is therefore essential to increase the efforts to strengthen international mechanisms of justice and, at the same time, push for accountability measures to be put to effect domestically. Without enforcement of domestic and international accountability mechanisms with regard to violations of international law by bringing justice to victims and prevent future violations, it is only expected to see similar patterns of violations as the situation of conflict continues.<sup>2</sup>

Anas Saleh, a 20-year old Gaza resident, died on 1 January 2011 from a liver disease in Shifa Hospital in Gaza. Although the patient was in a critical medical condition, which was known to the Israeli authorities, Israel prevented his exit from Gaza for lifesaving medical

- The internal political split, with two Palestinian governments in Gaza and the West Bank, was a main source of human rights violations during 2010, and seems to continue in the soon future. A set of human rights violations that are intrinsically motivated by this split do not seem to end without ending the split itself. Those include, among other patterns of violations, arbitrary detentions and disrespect of the process of law as prescribed in Palestinian law, application of abuse and torture by the security

forces, defiance of court rulings, interference with the standards of fair trial, interference with free movement (by banning passports in Ramallah and confiscating passports in Gaza), repression of free expression, and violent interference in association and peaceful assembly. Al Mezan believes that a great deal of human rights violations committed by Palestinian actors is expected to disappear if the political split is over. Therefore, efforts must be directed at ending it.

The following two sections provide more details and cases about the main human rights violations in Gaza during 2007.

#### **1.1.1. Violations of human rights by Israel:**

##### **The right to life and integrity of the body:**

- *Killing and injuries:* 72 Palestinians were killed by the IOF in 2010. Of those, 22 were civilians; including one woman and five children. At least, 255 others were injured from IOF fire; including 47 children. Three of the victims were farmers who own land

<sup>1</sup> See **Report of the Committee of independent experts in international humanitarian and human rights laws to monitor and assess any domestic, legal or other proceedings undertaken by both the Government of Israel and the Palestinian side**, available online at [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/15session/A.HRC.15.50\\_AEV.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/15session/A.HRC.15.50_AEV.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Please note that this point is a concern both with relation to Israel, the Occupying Power, and internally, with relation to the Palestinian authorities in Gaza and the West Bank. Please see [letter to Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh: Calling for immediate commencement of internal investigations in compliance with UN GA Resolution A/RES/64/10](#) for a picture about Al Mezan's position on this regard.



in the ARA. One was a fisherman who died when IOF opened fire at him when he was on a small fishing boat in the sea, where Al Mezan monitored 49 IOF attacks on fishermen, resulting with the above-mentioned killing and injury of three fishermen in 2010. Opening fire inside Gaza by IOF was particularly observed in the areas close to the border between Gaza and Israel. In 2010, Al Mezan documented at least 140 incidents of firing, resulting with six civilian casualties; including two children and one woman. Another 94 civilians were injured; including 22 children, four women and five elderly men.

- *Death due to preventing access to medical care outside Gaza:* Four Palestinians died in 2010 because of delaying of rejecting their permits by the Israeli authorities. Of them two were girls and one woman.

On Wednesday 30 June 2010, the IOF arrested Usama Anwar Ismail Subuh, 23 and from Rafah town, and transferred him a prison in Israel. He went to Erez on his way to the Musallam Ophthalmic Specialist Center in Ramallah, the West Bank, to have a cornea transplant. At approximately 8:15am on Wednesday 30 June 2010, he and his father arrived Erez crossing. The IOF separated him from his father. Four hours later, the IOF informed the father that his son had been arrested and transferred to another place.

- *Rubble and scrap collectors:* during 2010, the IOF fired at civilians collecting rubble and scrap 107 times, killing one child, 16, and injuring over 100; including 22 children. Another 43 rubble and scrap collectors were arrested by the IOF; including eight children.<sup>3</sup>

**Forced displacement: property demolitions:** 53 homes were demolished by IOF in 2010. In addition, an area of 32,850 dunams of agricultural land was razed.

- a. *Demolitions in the ARA:* Eight homes were destroyed in the ARA during 2010. 102 people were affected by these demolitions; including 30 children and 32 women.
- b. *Aerial attacks:* All of the 53 homes were destroyed or damaged due to Israeli aerial attacks in Gaza, affecting 647 people.
- c. *Reconstruction of homes in Gaza:* Little progress was achieved in 2010 in re-building the houses and public facilities that were destroyed by IOF during the past few years; especially during Operation Cast Lead.<sup>4</sup>

**Detention, abuse and torture:** the IOF arrested dozens of civilians from Gaza during 2010. Arrests took place during IOF incursions into Gaza; including rubble collectors as mentioned above, in the sea (fishermen) or as people were at Erez Crossing for interviews or to cross

<sup>3</sup> See Fact Sheet: [Rubble and Scrap Collectors: Deliberate Attacks and Lack of Protection](#) for more information on this issue.

<sup>4</sup> See for example [Brief Report on: On-going Displacement: Gaza's Displaced Two Years after the War](#), Gaza December 27th 2010, for information about the reconstruction of houses.



into Israel.<sup>5</sup> Al Mezan received reports from the victims that they were abused and/or tortured. Moreover, Israel continued the application of the Detention of Unlawful Combatants Law, which the Israeli Supreme Court deemed as in conformity with the State's Basic Law, deriving criticism from the Human Rights Committee.<sup>6</sup>

**The blockade of Gaza:** The Israeli blockade on Gaza continued through 2010. While in June Israel, under heavy diplomatic international pressure, agreed to 'liberate' the blockade, the population is still suffering from shortages in basic items; including construction materials and equipment. The restrictions on people movement remained in place, affecting vulnerable groups such as patients and students. Moreover, the blockade had serious implications on the human rights and humanitarian conditions for Gaza's population. This includes:

- *Housing and forced displacement:* The blockade prevented any significant reconstruction of Gaza; especially of homes that sustained total or damage, in the aftermath of years of extensive home demolitions. Moreover, the construction sector has been on full halt in Gaza since before the blockade.<sup>7</sup>
- *Water and sanitation:* The blockade; especially lack and/or long delays of permitting equipment and construction materials into Gaza continued to impact on an already deteriorated water and sanitation situation in Gaza. The denial of Palestinians access to water represents a breach of IHRL, namely obligations under the ICCPR.<sup>8</sup> With 90% to 95% of Gaza's aquifer contaminated<sup>9</sup>, investment in the water and sanitation sector represents an imminent need; especially as the broken sanitation system is the main source of contamination.

---

<sup>5</sup> See for example

[http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10409&ddname=detention\\_patients\\_iof&id\\_dept=9&id2=9&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10409&ddname=detention_patients_iof&id_dept=9&id2=9&p=center).

<sup>6</sup> See Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations CCPR/C/ISR/CO/3, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> For statistics on home demolitions in Gaza, please see

<http://www.mezan.org/en/messege.php?view=homesen>.

<sup>8</sup> See supra, Note 4..

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.ewash.org/en/?view=79YOcy0nNs3D76djujAnkDDT>.



- *Health:* Access to health is seriously hindered by the Israeli blockade of Gaza. In addition to the water/sanitation problems above, which affect the right to health, Israel continued to restrict the entry of medical materials and equipment entry into Gaza. despite an improvement in this area, the prohibition remains in effect on bringing into Gaza certain types of medical equipment; among which X-ray machines/materials, radioactive materials for radiotherapy and PET-CT scans for cancer patients, and equipment with eyepieces for surgery and catheterization. Moreover, most of the 56 medical facilities (15 hospitals and 41 clinics) damaged in the Gaza Strip during Operation Cast Lead have not yet been restored to good working order.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the blockade restricts people's access to healthcare outside Gaza; including to Palestinian hospitals in the West Bank.

- *Fishery:* Restrictions in the sea continue to harm fishing activities in Gaza with the IOF strictly imposing a three-nautical-mile permitted zone, frequently violently. As a result, about

65,000 people whose income depends on fishing activities have been affected.<sup>11</sup>

According to Al Mezan's documentation, the year 2010 saw 49 incidents of violence against fishermen in the sea. Those include 43 cases of IOF opening fire at fishing boats, killing one fisherman and injuring three; and 6 incidents of arrest of fishermen; in which 26 persons were arrested by IOF; including one child.

According to the World Health Organisation - oPt, 11,635 Gazan patients were referred to hospitals for treatment outside Gaza in 2010. Of those, 9,085 were allowed to exit Gaza via Erez and Rafah Crossings. The Israeli authorities rejected 650 applications for permits by patients to cross Erez. Another 1,900 requests for permits were delayed for varying periods; often excessively. The Israeli Security Agency (ISA; also known as the Shabak) – called 413 patients for interviews at Erez Crossing. According to the same source, 3,672 patients traveled to Egypt via Rafah Terminal. Another 4,989 patients traveled to the West Bank (3517 of them to Jerusalem), 135 to Jordan and 2,232 to hospitals in Israel.

Al Mezan Centre documented 165 cases of patients whose requests for permits to cross Erez were rejected or delayed by the Israeli authorities in 2010. Al Mezan cooperated with its partner Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-I) in making interventions on behalf of these patients, and of these 165 patients:

- 52 patients were allowed to cross Erez and reach hospitals in the West Bank, Israel and Jordan. Another 29 had to change their referrals to Egypt and crossed through Rafah crossing. Another 84 of them were unable to travel (42 requests for permits to cross Erez were rejected while 33 are still being followed by the two organizations. Four patients were improperly treated in Gaza.
- 36 patients of the 165 were interviewed and interrogated by the ISA.
- 42 patients have still been waiting for a response to their requests from the Israeli authorities.
- The ISA arrested three patients while they were on their way to receive medical treatment or to be interviewed by the ISA upon its request.
- Four patients died due to the Israeli delay to their applications.
- The ISA coerced many patients during the interviews with the ISA, by preconditioning entry for medical treatment on providing information about their relatives, neighbors, or friends to the ISA.

<sup>10</sup> See Physicians for Human Rights-Israel's Reply to the Turkel Commission on the Flotilla Raid, October 2010, available online at <http://www.phr.org.il/default.asp?PageID=190&ItemID=873>.

<sup>11</sup> For details, please see Fact Sheet: [Gaza Fishermen: Life with Poverty, Harassment and Suffering](#).





- *Economic activities:* The main economic activities continued to be hindered by the blockade, with agriculture affected by banning various materials such as pesticides, seeds, plastics and equipment. While there was an improvement on exports, only limited amounts of strawberries and cut flowers were allowed to leave Gaza for external markets. With the full closing of the Karni crossing, which has the capacity to process exports adequately; this situation is expected to continue. The commercial sector also continued to suffer from the bans on a variety of items entry to Gaza as well as the low capacity of the one crossing point through which commodities are allowed into Gaza.
- *Poverty and unemployment:* According to the most recent UNSCO report, the unemployment rate also increased in Gaza Strip, from 39.3% in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2010 to 40.5% in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2010.<sup>12</sup> The poverty level has also remained one of the highest in the world, particularly among refugees, who make up about 75% of Gaza's population. According to the same source, more families (7.5%) fell under the extreme poverty line by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2010.
- *Living conditions:* The blockade also continued to affect Palestinians daily life in Gaza. Shortages in cooking gas, drinking water and electricity continued throughout 2010, with serious shortages in electricity supply due to the multiplied effect of the blockade and Palestinian-Palestinian differences.<sup>13</sup>
- *Underground tunnels harvesting lives:* In 2010, 33 Palestinians died due to tunnels-related incidents. Most of those died when tunnels collapsed or witnessed work incidents; however, eight died due to air attacks by IOF on the tunnels. Tunnels continue to bring into Gaza commodities that are banned or restricted from Israeli-controlled crossings; especially agriculture materials, fuel, gas canisters, electricity generators and construction materials. Having allowed for larger amounts and more items of consumer goods into Gaza through Israel, the tunnels decreased in number as well as in capacity, which indicates that this enterprise could end if the blockade is lifted fully.
- *Education:* Education is influenced by the blockade in various ways. The quality of education is affected by the prevalent poverty in Gaza. Electricity cuts also affect children at schools and homes. Many much-needed schools cannot be built due to the lack in construction materials. Moreover, Palestinian students from Gaza, as a category, are not allowed to study in the Palestinian universities in the West Bank; i.e. in their own country.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> See UNSCO, Socioeconomic Report, December 2010, page 4, available online at <http://www.unsco.org/sr.asp>.

<sup>13</sup> See for example [http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10600&ddname=&id\\_dept=9&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10600&ddname=&id_dept=9&p=center).

<sup>14</sup> See 'Students from Gaza: Disregarded Victims of Israel's Siege of the Gaza Strip, A Report on Israel's Prevention of Gazan Students from Studying at the West Bank Universities'.



**1.1.2. Violations of human rights by Palestinian non-state actors:** This includes the Palestinian Authority's Ramallah Government and the Gaza Government

On Wednesday 29 December 2010, the Gaza Government's internal security apparatus summoned seven Fatah activists to its office in Deir Al Balah town, in Middle Gaza district. They were kept for hours and then instructed to appear at the apparatus's office on 30 and 31 December 2010 and 1 January 2011. On 26 December 2010, the same apparatus summoned twenty Fatah activists and members in Rafah town, south of the Gaza Strip. Some of the summoned persons were released in the evening on the same day and others were released on the next day, while four remained in detention for days. On Wednesday 1 December 2010, the same apparatus summoned 17 Fatah activists in North Gaza district. They were blindfolded and some were interrogated. They were released

- *Political/arbitrary detention:* Politically-motivated detentions increased in Gaza and the West Bank in 2010. These detentions do not follow the due process instituted in Palestinian law and violate the relevant human rights standards. During 2010, Al Mezan followed 102 cases of arbitrary detention in Gaza; however, the number of this kind of cases is much higher. In one case, a brother was arrested and kept in detention for several days until his brother surrendered himself to the police. In another case, a son was detained and his family was informed that his father had to surrender himself to the police. Seven complaints involved arrests of persons because of their participation in demonstrations. Moreover, the Internal Security Apparatus in Gaza summoned hundreds of persons in Gaza, mostly because of suspicions that they were involved in political activism. One of those was a woman and one person was summoned because his brother was wanted.

- *Torture and other forms of cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment* of Palestinian citizens by Palestinian police and other security forces. During 2010, Al Mezan followed received complaints against alleged torture and ill treatment. Moreover, Al Mezan received complaints 49 complaints from families whose members were arrested but they were not able to communicate with them, know where they were detained or could secure lawyer representation or visits to them. Al Mezan also received complaints about detaining persons beyond the limits determined by the law; including persons whose remand was not

extended duly and others who courts ruled that they be released.

- *Juvenile justice:* Juvenile justice suffers from built-in problems in the Palestinian law in force as well as in its implementation. Many juveniles do not benefit from the safeguards introduced by the law; e.g. not to be mixed with adults, not to be abused or ill treated, and to be transferred from police stations to specialized facilities within 24 hours. During 2010, Al Mezan received complaints from the six families of juveniles or juveniles in detention concerning children detention with adults or delays in transferring them to the designated institution.



- *Free expression and peaceful assembly* are major area of concern in Gaza, where political groups and civil society organizations continue to be unlawfully interfered with by the authorities<sup>15</sup>. Public protests were faced with police violence on various occasions and participants were beaten and/or arrested. Al Mezan received complaints from ten civil society organizations concerning illegal interference with them.
- *Freedom of movement*: Ironically, free movement is problematic in Gaza due to differential treatment of people by the two Palestinian governments in Gaza and Ramallah. Persons from Gaza who apply for new passports frequently get rejected; including patients who need access to healthcare outside Gaza. In 2010, Al Mezan received eight complaints from persons whose movement was restricted; six of them were denied passports from Ramallah and two were not allowed to travel by the Gaza authorities. According to Al Mezan's information, dozens of people were not given passports by the Ramallah Government, and hundreds had their passports confiscated by the security forces of the Gaza Government during 2010.
- *Death sentence*: The Gaza Government executed five death sentences during 2010, despite the lack of presidential approval of the sentences, as stated by Palestinian law. The Ministry of Interior in Gaza announced that executions could be carried out legally according to their interpretation of the law, which suggests that more executions could occur in the future; especially as courts in Gaza sentenced persons to death on several occasions in 2010.

On Tuesday 30 November 2010, a force of the police, the Department of Societies Security and the Ministry of Interior closed the main office of Sharek Youth Forum office in Gaza city. The director of the Department of Societies security, which is part of the Police Investigations Unit, informed the persons who were present at Sharek office of the order closing Sharek. The order was issued by the Public Prosecutor's Office in Gaza.

---

<sup>15</sup> See for example

[http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10260&ddname=&id\\_dept=9&id2=9&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10260&ddname=&id_dept=9&id2=9&p=center).



## 2. Organizational Profile:

### Mission

Al Mezan's mission statement remains valid. Changes to the mission, as made in the 3-year Program Strategy 2009-2011, are concerned with its wording and expanding the scope to include gender perspective. Al Mezan has declared its mission to be: *"to promote respect and protection for all human rights; particularly ESCR, in the Gaza Strip as part of OPT throughout research, legal intervention, advocacy and awareness with a sound combination of professionalism and community participation. Our guiding principles include equal human worth, equal respect of all human rights, individual and collective, as enshrined in international law and jurisprudence"*.

### Vision

Al Mezan has declared its vision as:

*We envision a Palestinian free, sovereign society where all women, men and children enjoy the benefits of social justice, human rights, the merit of the rule of law and good governance fully and equally.*

### Goals and Objectives:

The Center's goals can be stated as follows:

- To promote and protect human rights in the OPT and especially in the Gaza Strip with a focus on ESCR.
- To work towards the realization of Palestinians' individual and collective human rights, including the right to self-determination through the channels of international law.
- To enhance democracy and citizen participation in the OPT and press towards good governance that respects human rights.

The organization's general structure will remain as it is in 2008. The Center will work throughout its five units, which are:

1. Administrative Unit (Admin Unit)
2. Field Work Unit (FWU)
3. Legal Aid Unit (LAU)
4. Training and Mass Communication Unit (TMCU)
5. Technical Assistance and Advocacy Unit (TAAU)



### 3. Progress of the program 1 January – 31 December 2010

#### 3.1. Activities:

This section provides information on the progress of the activities conducted by Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights (Al Mezan) during 2010 as per the Annual Plan of Action 2010.

#### **Activity 1: Adequate resource management, internal communication and monitoring, and sustained capability to pursue its mission; and goals**

- During the reporting period, the Administrative Unit organized three meetings for the Centre's Board of Director and two for the General Assembly. Thirty-three meetings for the Planning and Follow-up Committee (PFC) and 8 all-staff meetings were also conducted. The PFC's meetings considered the units' reports and plans as well as compliance with the administrative and financial regulations. It also considered obstacles and challenges and proposed solutions.
- Al Mezan reviewed its Plan of Actions 2010, originally drafted in November 2009, in light of the developments and constraints; including the financial difficulties. It also drafted proposals for 5 projects. Overall, the Centre recruited USD 559,637 in 2010 during the reported period. Another 167,098 were received during 2010; however, those were pledges by donors from 2009. Of the former amount, USD 442,928 for the core program, USD 116,709 for projects, and USD 1,976 was a private donation.
- With regard to recruitment of staff, the reporting period saw a decrease in the number of staff members. Three staff members who were on non-pay leaves for the purpose of higher education outside Gaza ended their leaves and returned to their posts in the second half of 2010. One of those left the Centre in November. They were not replaced when they were on leave during 2010. Another five staff members who had resigned were not replaced during the reported period; including one unit coordinator. One expat project coordinator was recruited; however, she left Gaza within one month due to problems she faced in Gaza. The Administrative Unit assigned extra tasks to existing staff members to carry out the follow-up and/or activities normally carried out by these staff members. This measure was decided in light of the challenges that hampered the recruitment of all the needed funds for the full implementation of the Plan of Action. Activities were prioritized over the recruitment of staff. Another review will take place in the second half of the year in order to determine whether or not to recruit the needed staff.<sup>16</sup> More measures were also decided with regard to the 2011 budget and Plan of Action, as indicated in these two documents that Al Mezan sent to all the donors in December 2010.
- The activities were therefore affected; however, to a degree that did not affect the centre's overall ability to pursue its mission and goals; especially as the basic activities of documentation and legal intervention were not affected.
- Al Mezan still suffered a deficit of USD 87,780 for 2010. Al Mezan will seek ways to cover this deficit using available accumulated unrestricted funds,<sup>17</sup> as indicated in the audit reports between 2001 and 2009, which is expected to cover approximately USD 50,000. Al Mezan intends to cover the rest of the deficit from other sources; including requesting donors to provide funding to bridge the deficit.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Al Mezan wishes to take this opportunity to express its pride with its staff, who accepted, or even volunteered sometimes, to shoulder further tasks to implement the activities. This only reflects their dedication to act on defending human rights in their community.

<sup>17</sup> This amount is available from returned legal fees.

<sup>18</sup> For more information about this issue, please consult the Financial Reports/Note section in the end of this report.



**Activity 2: Strengthen liaising, networking and HR advocacy domestically and internationally**

- Al Mezan was granted the Consultative Status with ECOSOC, with better prospects to engage with the United Nations and its human rights mechanisms.
- Al Mezan's Director had 95 meetings in which he met with 192 representatives of intergovernmental organizations; including the UN and EU, international organizations and diplomatic missions of courtiers concerned with the human rights situation in oPt. This includes the UN Secretary General, UN Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, the Aide of the Arab League Secretary General, Foreign Ministers, and UNRWA Director of Operations in Gaza. Diplomatic missions included the consulates and/or embassies of the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, Norway, Austria, Switzerland, and Ireland.
- The Director also had 43 meetings with representatives of the local authorities and civil society in the Gaza Strip.
- The Coordinator of Communications and International Relations met with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chairman of the Human Rights Committee in the Bundstag and representatives of various political parties in Berlin. He also met with the EU Spanish Presidency and the relevant EU Commission's Human Rights Desks in Brussels. He also met with the Swedish MFA, the parliament and various political parties and parliamentary groups in Stockholm. He also met with the cabinet of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security, Katherine Ashton, twice, and with the EU PSC Ambassadors.
- In March 2010, the Coordinator of Communications and International Relations addressed a conference on accountability in Stockholm (organized by Diakonia, Al - Sweden, and Palma Centre), in which also spoke Hina Jelani, the member of the Goldstone Mission, and Mr. Hans Korrel, former UN Legal Advisor.
- In June 2010, the Coordinator of Communications and International Relations took part in an advocacy mission in Brussels. The mission focused on the blockade of Gaza and was organized by EMHRN, with participation from EMHRN member BTselem and Gisha and other development and humanitarian INGOs. During this mission, sixteen meetings with EU officials were conducted.
- On 30 June 2010, the Coordinator of Communications and International Relations participated in a coordination meeting organized by Crisis Aid in Brussels. 35 NGOs discussed the problems, interventions, strategy and cooperation with regard to the situation in Gaza.
- On 3 July 2010, the Coordinator of Communications and International Relations met with another seven organizations with the Human Rights Council appointed Committee of Experts.
- Al Mezan's Director met with representatives of the Gaza Government nine times; including with the Minister of Justice and representatives of the Ministry of Interior. The meetings focused on the human rights violations in Gaza as well as the obligation to investigate and punish violations of human rights and IHL, both internally and in the context of the conflict with Israel.
- During the reported period, the Legal Assistance Unit met with officials in the Gaza authorities 56 times; including officials in the police, internal security apparatus, ministry legal advisors and prison administrations. The meetings aimed to follow on complaints brought by victims against the authorities and ensure that the complaints are dealt with properly and investigated. Some of the meetings focused on policies or patterns of violations, such as the arbitrary detention, poor detention conditions, the practice of ill treatment and investigating allegations of torture. In several meetings, Al Mezan's lawyers handed complaints concerning human rights violations to these officials.
- Al Mezan increased its work with the UN mechanisms; communicating approximately 56 complaints and/or urgent appeals on behalf of victims.
- In cooperation with human rights organizations, Al Mezan was part of eight joint letters to the EU and to the Palestinian authorities, and of 24 joint statements to Palestinian,



- Israeli and international actors; including the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, the the EU High Representative and Foreign Affairs Ministers. Al Mezan also led two joint letters requesting the Palestinian authorities in Gaza and the West bank to comply with the obligation to investigate and punish such violations. Al Mezan also joined and led 25 joint press releases and statements on human rights and IHL violations and promoting accountability for violations by all the parties. Al Mezan was also part in one joint campaign with the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT).
- During the reported period, Al Mezan took part in two advocacy missions in cooperation with thirteen human rights and development organizations from oPt, Israel and Europe. These missions targeted the EU and Member States.
  - Al Mezan continued its work as an active member of the Palestinian Human Rights Organizations Council, which brings together eleven human rights NGOs from oPt. The Council met seven times and conducted one strategic planning workshop, in which it coordinated responses to issues related to accountability for violations, restrictions on free expression and media in oPt, death penalty in Gaza, protection of human rights defenders, and challenges human rights NGOs are facing with regard to funding.
  - Al Mezan, jointly with Adalah and PHR-I, issued two joint position papers. The first paper urges Israel to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture.<sup>19</sup> The second paper addresses the discrimination by Israel between Palestinian patients who wish to exit Gaza and access hospitals. The discrimination, the paper highlight, is drawn between two categories: 1) patients who need life-saving treatment, and 2) patients who require what can be described as quality-of-life treatment. Most of the patients in the second category are routinely denied permits to exit Gaza in violation of international and Israeli law, but also medical ethics.<sup>20</sup> These two papers are part of the joint actions by the three partners, who have started an EU supported project on preventing and combating torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment by Israel in oPt.<sup>21</sup>
  - Al Mezan continued to be active with the UN agencies in terms of coordination and support. Al Mezan is a main provider of reliable information for the 1612 Working Group, which is concerned with children and armed conflict. It provided information for the WG for its Global Horizontal Notes, which are sent every two months to the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and the Secretary General Special Representative. During the reported period, the 1612 WG also started to issue a bulletin on children and armed conflict every two months. Al Mezan is also engaged with the OHCHR in the Protection Cluster.
  - Al Mezan issued 95 press releases and ten press statements, which addressed human rights violations in Gaza and oPt in general. 52 of the 95 press releases addressed Israeli violations and 43 addressed violations perpetrated by the Palestinian authorities, mainly in the Gaza Strip.
  - On the first anniversary of OCL, Al Mezan released 23 updates with stories of families in Gaza who lost their members or property. Those aimed to shed light on what people's life looked like a year after the war; especially under the failure of the efforts to ensure accountability, redress or reconstruction in Gaza.<sup>22</sup>
  - Also on the same occasion, the Centre issued a photo report (in English and Arabic) about the 355 children who lost their lives during the same operation.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> See [http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10035&ddname=torture&id\\_dept=31&id2=9&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10035&ddname=torture&id_dept=31&id2=9&p=center).

<sup>20</sup> See [http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10398&ddname=torture&id\\_dept=31&id2=9&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10398&ddname=torture&id_dept=31&id2=9&p=center).

<sup>21</sup> See the special page of this project on Al Mezan's web site at

[http://www.mezan.org/en/dis\\_dep.php?id\\_dept=73&dname=torture&view=tortureen](http://www.mezan.org/en/dis_dep.php?id_dept=73&dname=torture&view=tortureen).

<sup>22</sup> The documents can be accessed online at

[http://www.mezan.org/en/centercastlead.php?id\\_dept=70&view=storyen](http://www.mezan.org/en/centercastlead.php?id_dept=70&view=storyen).

<sup>23</sup> The report can be accessed online at

[http://www.mezan.org/ar/details.php?id=9723&ddname=Anniversary1st&id\\_dept=22&id2=9&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/ar/details.php?id=9723&ddname=Anniversary1st&id_dept=22&id2=9&p=center).





- On the second anniversary of OCL, on 27 December 2010, Al Mezan published a report on the situation of displaced people in Gaza, three factsheets and two case studies about families who fell victims during this operation.<sup>24</sup>
- Al Mezan's appearances in the media occurred 314 times during the reported period. Its work and statement were widely covered by major media lets, such as the Guardian, BBC, CNN, Haaretz and the Independent. The coverage of the local media of Al Mezan's work and advocacy statement also increased during the reported period; especially by two of the highly ranked lets, MAANNews and SamaNews.
- Al Mezan assisted 117 international delegations visiting Gaza in touring Gaza and having a close look at the human rights and humanitarian conditions.

**Activity 3: Effective monitoring and documentation of HR violations, referral, and databases**

- The monitoring and advocacy activities were strengthened in terms of technology and quality during the second half of 2009 and the reported period. The upgraded databases and the verification methods were put to the use of the staff, which rendered the documentation by Al Mezan even more reliable.
- The following chart provides the key figures regarding the monitoring and documentation and referral activities during the reported period:

Activity	Number of times	Notes
Documenting incidents involving violations	2,358	One incident could contain more than one violation and multiple victims
Number of questionnaire forms filled in and supported with documents	3,367 <sup>25</sup>	Questionnaire forms are filled for individuals
Number of cases inputted in the database	4,468	This includes the questionnaires above and brief documentation of incidents not covered by questionnaires
Field visits	1439	Visiting locations of violations and interviewing victims and witnesses
Documentation of detention cases	772	Including 62 detained by the Israeli forces and 710 by the Palestinian authorities in Gaza
Referrals to Al Mezan Legal Assistance Unit	152	
Referrals externally	219	Including patients to PHR-I
Written affidavits/witness testimonies	206	
Provision of information	Over 1,200 cases	
Meetings with victims/people at risk in the field	9	Aim to collect extensive information about a violation of a risk and discuss interventions with the people interactively.
Design new questionnaire forms	2	1 questionnaire on torture was finalized and 1 questionnaire about patients access was designed, together with their databases

<sup>24</sup> These documents can be accessed online at <http://www.mezan.org/en/castlead2nd.php>.

<sup>25</sup> Including 27 for persons killed by IOF, 45 demolished or damaged homes by IOF, 16 cases of demolition of land by IOF, destruction of 5 public facilities by IOF, destruction of 3 vehicles, 1 industrial plant and 36 commerce stores by IOF, 356 cases of internal violence and daily questionnaires for the opening or closing of crossing points.





- The above mentioned nine meetings with victims included the following:
  - 1) On 10 January, the North Gaza district field worker met with a group of 20 persons who had been arrested by the Police Investigations Unit. They claimed they were victims of abuse and ill treatment. The meeting aimed at collecting extensive information about the case and discuss Al Mezan's intervention to help protect them and ensure redress for them; especially through pressuring the authorities to investigate the violations.
  - 2) On 19 January, the Gaza City district field Worker met with 15 persons from Az-Zeitoun neighbourhood, east of the town, they discussed Al Mezan's role in following up the environmental and health problems caused by the Gaza City Sewage Treatment Plant; an issue Al Mezan had started to follow with the same community in 2009. The field worker and the community members exchanged information; including photographs and footage, and agreed on steps to be taken to act on the problem and ensure that the population is not exposed to harms and violations of their human rights.<sup>26</sup>
  - 3) On 20 March, the North Gaza district field worker met with a group of 15 residents of Abdel-Hameed Street in the town of Beit Hanoun. The community members conveyed their complaint to Al Mezan concerning a problem that is similar to the problem in meeting number 2) above. The meeting discussed the ways to ensure active intervention by Al Mezan and the community to follow this case and ensure preventing the human rights violations it could entail for the community.
  - 4) On 21 March, the North Gaza district field worker met with a group of persons who work in collecting the rubble of destroyed structures, mostly near the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel. This group had been, and continues to be, subject to continued violations and attacks by IOF. Some of the participants in the meeting had been arrested by the IOF while working. The meeting aimed at discussing ways to ensure protection and redress for the group; especially those who had been injured or arrested and abused by the IOF.
  - 5) On 2 June, the Middle Gaza district field worker met with a group of people from the Wadi As-Salqa village in the district. The meeting aimed to gather information about complaints conveyed to Al Meza by the village community concerning the lack of basic services to an extent that renders enjoyment of economic and social rights considerably unattainable. The field worker met with eight residents, the village mayor and a CBO, who described some of the problems affecting the human rights situation in the village; especially the lack of potable water and a clinic, which forces the residents to walk for about seven kilometres to receive primary care at the nearest UNRWA clinic. Transportation is rather difficult due to the lack of suitable roads. They also complained about the heavy smoke produced by the main solid waste dump near the village. They also complained about the impacts of continuous IOF incursions in, and attacks on, the village, which is located at the border between Gaza and Israel. The village farmers who own land within approximately 500 meters reported that they could not access their land; therefore stripping the community of about 1,000 dunams<sup>27</sup> of its land. The meetings discussed Al Mezan's work on these issues and the possible cooperation between the community and the centre to act on them.
  - 6) On 16 June, the Gaza City district field worker met with a group of people who reside in the vicinity of the Ash-Sheikh Radwan sewage basin in Gaza City. The participants had complained to Al Mezan about the health problems caused by the inadequate care of the basin by the local authorities. Al Mezan initiated contacts with the Gaza City Municipality in order to address the problem with them.
  - 7) A meeting with a group of civilians who were used as human shields by the IOF during OCL took place in Al-Atatra neighborhood in north Gaza to follow on the progress of

---

<sup>26</sup> For information about the results of the intervention in this case, please consult the section on outcomes in this report below.

<sup>27</sup> A dunam is 1,000 square meters.



their cases in light of Israel's decisions to close the investigations into most of these cases without holding any persons accountable to the well-documented cases.

- 8) A meeting with a group of deaf children to discuss human rights problems and ways in which Al Mezan can act on these problems.
- 9) A meeting with residents of the village of Al-Qar'aan in Deir Al-Balah town. The meeting aimed to identify the human rights problems in the village. During the meeting, the residents raised many problems, including water and sanitation, employment and poverty, which were raised later by Al Mezan with the municipal authorities in the town.

**Activity 4: Maintained research & reporting on HR violations with focus on ESCR for use in information and advocacy**

- Al Mezan drafted and published 44 reports during the reported period. Those are:
  - 1) Documentation reports (37 reports):
    - One yearly documentation report about the losses in human life property during the year 2009. The report presents the results of Al Mezan's documentation of human rights violations as a result of the activities of the IOF in the Gaza Strip. The report highlights the increase of attacks and violations within the so-called security buffer zone, which, according to the report, extends to approximately a kilometre inside the Gaza Strip, as the IOF routinely target civilians inside this zone. A yearly report on IOF violations of human rights and IHL was being drafted in December 2010. It will be published in January 2011.
    - 12 monthly documentation reports on the IOF violations between January and May 2010.<sup>28</sup>
    - 4 quarterly reports on the IOF violations in the Gaza Strip, two covering the period 1 January to 31 March 2010 and two covering the period 1 July to 30 September 2010.
    - 2 semiannual documentation reports; one on violations of human rights by IOF and one by Palestinian non-state actors.
    - 12 monthly reports on the violations of human rights perpetrated by Palestinian actors in the Gaza Strip.
    - One photo report on the child victims of OCL.
    - Five field reports investigating five different IOF attacks during OCL. These reports were conducted in the context of Al Mezan's investigations into attacks that might involve grave breaches and/or gross human rights violations during the Operation, which took place between 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009.<sup>29</sup>
  - 2) Economic and Social Rights Reports (seven reports): These reports are produced by the Centre's Research and Technical Assistance Unit, which issued the following reports during the reported period:
    - The Right to Food: the Reality of the Safety of Food under the Siege: this report is concerned with the availability as well as the quality of the food available in the Gaza Strip. Under the Israeli siege of Gaza, much of the food items come from underground tunnels, but it had not been clear if the safety and quality of these items criteria were checked or adequately monitored by the authorities. The report shows serious problems as a result of the lack of checks and safeguards by the Gaza authorities, who do not monitor the quality and adequacy of food items that enter Gaza properly. It links this reality with a number of incidents where food represented risks to people's life and health throughout the past three years.

---

<sup>28</sup> The report covering June was issued in July; therefore, it will be reported in the Annual narrative Report 2010.

<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that these reports were drafted by Al Mezan's field workers in close cooperation with the team of the Strengthening Legal Assistance Project, supported by Trocaire. These reports are part of the investigations aimed at ensuring adequate legal intervention, and not for publishing.



- Protecting the Right to Education and Preventing Education Setback: the Reality of Higher Education under the Siege in Gaza. This report looks at the conditions of higher education, which had been going through serious deterioration due to the Israeli siege.
- A report on a workshop on higher education in which all Gaza universities took part was published after the workshop.
- One report on the denial of Gaza students' access to Palestinian universities in the West Bank.
- A report on psychological health services in Gaza under the conditions of blockade, internal violence and poverty.
- A report on a workshop on psychological health services in Gaza under the conditions of blockade, internal violence and poverty.
- A report on tax and customs policy in Gaza and the social and economic contribution of this policy.

### 3) Situation Reports (34 reports):

These reports are drafted by the Field Work Unit. They aim to provide detailed information about specific cases of violations of human rights in the Gaza Strip. Their purpose is therefore twofold: 1) to document the case properly and gather full information about it, and 2) to supply the Centre with the materials needed for informed interventions by the other units. During the reported period, 43 such reports were drafted. One of these reports addressed the problems faced by the Gaza Valley village after Israel suddenly opened dams it had erected in the valley's path on its side of the border. No warnings to the community were given before opening the dams. Therefore, the resulted flood caused extensive damage to the population. Al Mezan documented the case and provided much information to the UN agencies and other humanitarian organizations to help assist the community. Another report detailed a series of human rights violations by the Gaza authorities in the North Gaza district. This report showed an increase in the violations; including arbitrary detentions, claims of ill treatment and abuse, and the freedom of expression during February 2010. It also showed that attacks and violations by persons and groups occurred during the same month, but were not responded to adequately by the authorities. A third report investigated the taxation by local government in North Gaza, and whether or not certain taxes by the local authorities were in line with the Palestinian law.

### Activity 5: Provision of legal assistance, advice and representation for victims

This activity involves multiple activities that fall under the provision of legal aid and advice for people and civil society formations in the Gaza Strip. The following activities were carried out during the reporting period:

- 1) Legal representation of Palestinian prisoners (Planned 50 cases): 27 new cases were received during the reporting period. The Legal Assistance Unit also continued to follow 121 cases of prisoners from the previous years. In all, the lawyer in Israel appeared 291 times in court sessions concerning prisoners.
- 2) Cases in Israel (Planned 50 cases for 2) and 3): Three cases were jointly brought before the Israeli High Court of Justice. The first was lodged in late 2009, but followed during the reported period.<sup>30</sup> This case is about Palestinians with disabilities as a result of their previous work in Israel. These people had not received their monthly allowances from the Israeli insurance institution since the start of the siege due to bank sanctions, which are an integral part of the siege policy. Consequently, the Israeli National Insurance Institute agreed to resume transferring the allowances of hundreds of Gazan disabled persons injured at work in Israel. Israel has agreed with the Palestinian Monetary Fund on a mechanism to solve this problem permanently. The second case was led by the Center for the Defence of the Individual (Hamoked), who served a petition to the Israeli High Court of Justice, along with 15 other Israeli and Palestinian human rights

<sup>30</sup> For detail, please see

[http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10100&ddname=national\\_insurance&id\\_dept=9&id2=9&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10100&ddname=national_insurance&id_dept=9&id2=9&p=center).



organizations, regarding the practice of expulsion of Palestinians from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip solely on the basis of their registered address.<sup>31</sup> The third case was against the prevention by Israel of family unification for spouses from Israel, oPt and other enemy countries.

- 3) Complaints with the Israeli authorities (Planned 50 cases for 2 and 3): Al Mezan received 251 complaints against the Israeli authorities. All the cases were documented by Al Mezan and 41 of them were followed by Al Mezan and the rest were referred to partner organizations in Israel. The following points provide details about these complaints:
- 55 cases of alleged use of torture and ill treatment.
  - 179 cases of denial of access of patients to medical care outside Gaza.
  - 12 complaints from fishermen; including one case of killing, one case of injury and 9 cases of detention by IOF.
  - One case of killing a person during a peaceful demonstration against the ARA in Gaza.
  - 8 cases of confiscation of fishing boats.
  - 9 cases of prisoners' health conditions.
  - 55 cases of access to family in the West Bank.
  - 6 complaints of rubble collectors who were injured from IOF fire.

49% of the patients' cases ended successfully, while 31% cases ended unsuccessfully; including four patients who died waiting for permits. The other cases are still being followed. Only 13 interventions out of 55 concerning access to family in the West Bank ended successfully; i.e. 23%.

- 4) Complaints against Palestinian authorities (Planned 50 cases): During 2010, Al Mezan's Legal Assistance Unit dealt with 201 complaints against the Palestinian authorities as follows:
- 102 cases involving arbitrary detention by the Gaza authorities.
  - 42 complaints involving ill treatment (19) and torture (23).
  - 27 complaints about detention conditions in Gaza; including five cases of detainees who needed medicine, 18 who were eligible to special family visits under Palestinian law, and three cases concerning education in prison. All of the cases who needed medical and education services were resolved following the intervention.
  - 49 complaints from families whose members were arrested but they were not able to communicate with them, know where they were detained or could secure lawyer representation or visits to them. In 19 cases, Al Mezan was able to visit the detainees and provide advice to them. In another four cases, Al Mezan ensured that detainees communicated with their families by telephone.
  - 19 complaints dealt with persons who were detained beyond the limits determined by the law; including persons whose remand was not extended duly and others who courts ruled that they be released.
  - 6 cases involving detention of juveniles contrary to the relevant process of law.
  - 10 complaints about assaults and interference with civil society organizations.
  - 12 complaints about work rights.
  - 8 complaints about arbitrary searches of (7), or assault on, private property (1) by the authorities in Gaza.
  - 9 complaints about denial of access to healthcare by Palestinian actors; including 3 patients whose applications for passports were rejected by Ramallah Government and two patients who were not allow to travel by the security forces of the Gaza Government.

---

<sup>31</sup> See [http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10556&ddname=expel&id\\_dept=31&id2=9&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10556&ddname=expel&id_dept=31&id2=9&p=center).



## Semi-Annual Narrative Report 2010

## Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights

- 7 cases of prevention of travel outside Gaza; 6 of which against refusal by Ramallah Government to issue passports and 1 against the Gaza Government for banning the travel of a member of Fatah.
  - 4 complaints about the right to housing; 3 against UNRWA and 1 against the Gaza authorities.
  - 1 complaint about the access to social security.
  - 3 complaints about medical negligence.
  - 1 case concerning teacher-student violence at school; in which a hospital and the district prosecutor's office refused to issue medical reports or initiate investigation into the case.
- 5) Provision of Legal Advice: during the reported period, the Legal Assistance Unit provided legal advice to victims or people at risk 1,078 times. In addition, under the combating and prevention of torture project, Al Mezan's lawyers provided legal advice 293 times.

### Activity 6: Enhance awareness in HR, IHL and democracy

This activity is a joint task for all of Al Mezan's Units, but is led by the Training and Mass Communications Unit (TMCU). In 2010, awareness and training activities were also implemented under separate projects; also under the supervision of the TMCU. The following activities were implemented during the reported period:

- 1) Training/awareness courses on human rights and IHL (Planned 14): 19 training and awareness trainings were organized during the reported period, as follows:
  - *Eight trainings for community groups and professionals*; including: 1) training on human rights and the right to health for a group of pharmacists. This training was organized in cooperation with the Pharmacists Association in Gaza. 23 pharmacists attended this course; 2) training on human rights and IHL for 21 volunteers with Sharek in North Gaza district; 3) training on human rights and IHL for a group of teachers in cooperation with Al-Aqsa Cultural Society; 4) training on child and women rights for a group of 25 volunteers at the Women Activities Centre in Ash-Shati refugee camp; 5) a training on economic, social and cultural rights for 30 activists in local CBOs in partnership with the OHCHR in Gaza; 6) a training for CBOs on human rights and monitoring their violations; 7) a training on the protection of persons with disability; and 8) a training for teachers on human rights and human rights education.
  - *2 courses for the Pass-the-Word Program*: these courses target students who volunteer in this program. The first course aims to provide them to information on human rights and IHL so that they use it in their voluntary awareness-raising within their campuses. The second course aims to provide them with the medium to pass human rights and IHL knowledge to their peers through open group discussion sessions. 23 volunteer students took part in these trainings.
  - *Lawyer training*: this is a training Al Mezan organizes yearly. It lasts for six months. The training was initiated during the reported period. This year, 60 lawyers applied for the training. 25 were selected and started the training. In the end of the reported period, the group had received 126 training hours.
  - *Capacity-building training for human rights activists, Cairo, Egypt*: This training was organized through months of coordination between Al Mezan and the Cairo based Arab Human Rights Organization. It targeted 20 human rights activists; ten of whom from Al Mezan's staff members and ten from four other organizations active in Gaza. The group was allowed to cross the border from Rafah Crossing and stay in Egypt for eleven days, during which they received advanced training on contemporary developments in the field of human rights and documentation of human rights and IHL violations.
  - *Six trainings on torture*: these courses were organized under the Prevention and Combating Torture of Palestinians by Israel; a project supported by the EU and implemented jointly by Al Mezan, Adalah and PHR-I. Al Mezan's staff assisted the project's team in implementing them. Four courses targeted groups of lawyers; one



- targeted health personnel; and one targeted human rights activists. They aimed at providing the groups with information and skills to document and assist victims of torture.
- 2) Lectures and discussion sessions (planned 15): the TMCU organized 21 lectures for groups of teachers and school boys and girls. Those focused on child rights and the right to education and IHL and protection of civilians. Moreover, under the Pass-the-Word Program, volunteer students led 29 group-discussion awareness courses on human rights and IHL with their peers in universities. Each of these awareness courses is composed of five discussion sessions. Under a UNICEF supported project, Al Mezan organized 18 symposia on child rights, child protection, and HIV/AIDS stigma for six groups of Christian and Muslim religious leaders in the Gaza Strip.
  - 3) Workshops (Planned 10): A total of 19 workshops were organized in 2010. Ten of the workshops were training workshops, targeting groups of community activists, teachers, children and CBOs. Those also included three workshops that were organized by a CBO and Al Mezan was invited to speak with 90 policewomen about human rights standards, women's rights and issues related to the administration of justice. Two other workshops were organized by Diakonia in cooperation with Al Mezan on area C in the West Bank and the ARA in the Gaza Strip, focusing on IHL and the law of blockade. Four workshops were also organized by the Research and Technical Assistance Unit at Al Mezan on: 1) the Reality of Higher Education under the Siege in Gaza; 2) the right to food and monitoring food quality in Gaza; 3) the psychological health services in Gaza; and 4) the disaster situation in Gaza Valley. One workshop was organized in partnership with OHCHR on accountability for human rights and IHL violations in the Gaza Strip. Speakers from Israel, Egypt and Jerusalem were invited to speak in this workshop. Two other advocacy workshops were organized under the above-mentioned UNICEF supported project.
  - 4) Human Rights Prize (Planned 2): two human rights prizes were advertized and implemented in 2010. The first prize was for children in UNRWA schools and was for the best child drawing on human rights. Al Mezan implemented this activity with UNRWA, who advertized the prize at their schools and asked arts teachers to follow at schools, with joint supervision from Al Mezan and UNRWA. A committee with representatives from Al Mezan and UNRWA and a local artist selected the best drawing based on agreed criteria. In a ceremony that was organized by UNRWA and Al Mezan, the prizes were handed to ten children. Al Mezan provided a gift with bags, books, puzzles and arts materials and tools to the winners. UNRWA will use nine of the winning drawings as covers on its human rights textbooks. The second prize targeted university students, who were asked to draft an essay on human rights. An independent committee was established to review the essays and the prize was handed to three university students in the same ceremony mentioned above. Students were handed a small stipend to help with their education (\$500 for first place, \$300 for second and \$200 for third place).
  - 5) Library services: Al Mezan's library continued to function in Jabalia Office. 1,982 people benefited from the library during the reported period. Borrowing of books occurred 3,350 times and of children literature sources 443 times. Of the beneficiaries 1,169 were university students and researchers and the rest were children. The total number of sources in the library has increased to become above 9,100 sources in the end of the reported period. 41 new books were purchased during the reported period and dozens others were donated to the library. Moreover, Al Mezan has moved part of its library to the main office in Gaza City; especially the resources and books that are available in more than one copy. This is expected to expand in 2011. It is expected that a much higher number of researchers and university students will benefit from the library in 2011, as most universities and research center are located in the city.
  - 6) The Legal Guide Series (Planned 2 Guides): One Legal Guide was issued by the Legal Assistance Unit during the reported period. It simplifies the Palestinian Public Gathering Law, which has been subject to abject violations during the past few years.



- 7) Other education and awareness activities: Al Mezan's staff took part in 162 events that were organized by other organizations and institutions. In these events, staff members addressed audiences and spoke about human rights standards and the importance of the rule of law, both domestically and internationally, for the respect and protection of human rights.
- 8) Al Mezan's web site ([www.mezan.org](http://www.mezan.org)): the web site was updated on a daily basis with information, press releases and statements, reports, news briefings, and daily news (819) about developments relevant to the human rights situation in Gaza. The number of people who visited the web site during the reported period was 53,671 to be compared with 44,233 during 2009. Al Mezan's web site rank locally is 483, according to Alexa.com.

Overall, about 3,717 individuals benefited directly by the training/awareness activities; including 3,209 from the TMCU activities. Thousands others benefited indirectly but it was not possible to estimate their number with relative accuracy for the purpose of this report.





### 3.2. Outcomes/Results:

#### 1) Monitoring and Documentation:

- Improved capacity: Al Mezan developed its capacity to respond to complex situations of violation and document them adequately. During the reported period, it succeeded in documenting the violations that fall under its mandate. The field workers received training in Cairo, focusing on documentation and forensic investigations, which should help improve the investigations by Al Mezan; especially as Gaza lacks official forensic investigations or labs. They also received support and training on preparing case files for suspected war crimes. Another training was provided to them for documentation aimed at communicating cases for UN Special Procedures.
- Provision of Information: During the reported period, Al Mezan provided information for UN agencies, human rights and humanitarian organizations, the media and researchers dozens of times. The information was extensively used in reports by UN agencies; especially OCHA, and the media. The records show that Al Mezan responded to approximately 1,200 requests for information made by these agencies. This is to be added to the providing information for certain UN agencies, NGOs and diplomatic missions on weekly and daily basis. This information was extensively used in preparing responses to situations, or quoted in organizations and/or media reports. In 120 of these cases, information was requested by the media; including BBC, Reuters and CNN.
- Assisting responses to violations or special situations: Al Mezan's documentation helped the residents of Gaza Valley village who were beleaguered by the sudden floods as a result of opening dams at the Israeli side of the border. The documentation helped international organizations prepare effective responses to the problem, and ensured quick and smooth access to the victims. Al Mezan's quick, detailed documentation of, and releasing information about, this case helped bring it to the attention of the media and the government. Later, Al Mezan organized a workshop in the village and invited officials and humanitarian organizations to meet with the residents. In Khan Younis, the field work unit had started to gather information about a serious environmental problem that affected the underground aquifer, health and agriculture in the south of the Gaza Strip. The unit issued a report about the case and raised it in a conference on the right to water in 2009. It continued to follow this case in 2010, during which the authorities fenced the sewage basins to protect children, increased the treatment of water and insects, organized a number of meetings with participation of the local community to identify solutions, added floor to the basins to prevent sewage water from mixing with the aquifer and reach agricultural land in the vicinity of the basins, dry some of the basins which are close to Al-Amal neighborhood, and prepare a plan to remove the basins and make the area a park and playground, according to an announcement by the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility.
- Referrals: 152 cases were referred to the Legal Assistance Unit at Al Mezan and 219 were to other organizations. The Legal Assistance Unit helped many victims (please see information under Legal Assistance and Advice below). Those resulted with helping 81 patients during the reported period.
- Documentation leading to protection/prevention: Al Mezan's field worker in North Gaza documented an attack on an ambulance during OCL. Following the case of the medic Alaa' Sarhan led to intervention by ICRC, who assisted him to leave Gaza for specialized treatment in India. The same field worker gathered information about the water situation in Al-Amal neighborhood in Beit Hanoun. He took the case to the Municipality, who responded positively and solved the problems of quantity and quality of water supplies to the neighborhood. Also in North Gaza, a baby's life was at risk due to the lack





of special powder milk needed for his health condition. Al Mezan helped bring milk for him from Israel for months; including by contacting donors for him. In Gaza City, the field worker documented a case of harassment of a woman by the Internal Security Apparatus, who summoned the woman frequently. Al Mezan advised her not to comply, as the Apparatus lacks the authority to summon her, and followed the case with the Mol in Gaza, who prevented summoning or harassing her again. Documentation by field workers led to solving two problems related to sanitation, which had affected people's health in Gaza City. Documentation of arbitrary detentions and torture led to interventions that secured protection to some cases through a process of investigation by the authorities in Gaza.

## 2) Information and Advocacy:

- Awareness and triggering responses: Al Mezan contributed to shedding light on serious developments and violations of human rights; including the IOF Military Order 1650 on 'Prevention of Infiltration', which renders tens of thousands of Palestinians at risk of forced transfer or deportation. This led to accelerated diplomatic and legal interventions; including by OHCHR, and by the media. Al Mezan has also raised the case of IOF violations within the ARA and the sea. It assisted UN agencies to visit the areas, collate information and design better responses. OCHA and the WFP have conducted information gathering and reporting activities in the area. The ARA is now among the top agenda items at the UN agencies and humanitarian and human rights organizations. In July, Al Mezan took part in the Consolidated Appeal Process and ensured that the violations in the area would be on the agenda of the UN. Al Mezan has also raised the issue of the so-called 'Shalit Bill', a draft law that, if passed by the Israeli Knesset, would seriously violate the rights and safeguards of Palestinian prisoners in Israel.<sup>32</sup> Al Mezan also raised the issue of attacks on NGOs and peaceful protests by the Gaza authorities, which triggered strong responses in Gaza and internationally.<sup>33</sup> Al Mezan has also jointly raised the issue Palestinian patients, four of whom died due to denying their access to health care outside Gaza and many were coerced and/or arrested as they tried to cross Erez crossing, giving these issues wide media coverage. Communications were made with the Israeli authorities with demands to halt this practice. The dialogue has continued beyond the reporting period. Moreover, legal action was initiated to challenge these practices.
- Through its membership with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, Al Mezan contributed to a significant report on the blockade of Gaza, which was endorsed by 22 international humanitarian and development NGOs. Al Mezan served as spokesperson in Gaza.
- Networking and liaison: Coordination and cooperation with relevant networks and organizations continued during the reported period. In addition to its membership in 13 networks and coalition, Al Mezan was granted ECOSOC status in June 2010. The Centre worked closely with a broad coalition of NGOs on accountability as far as the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council were involved. Al Mezan joined oral and written statements to the two bodies. It also met with the Committee of Experts, appointed by the HR Council to provide information about Al Mezan's work with regard to the investigations by Israeli and Palestinian authorities in context of the Goldstone Report. Al Mezan jointly submitted two alternative reports to UN treaty bodies – the Committee Against Torture, to which a follow-up report was submitted, and the Human Rights Committee, who considered Israel's regular report. The Human Rights Committee's Concluding Observations, released in July 2010, addressed many of the issues raised by

<sup>32</sup> See [http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10170&ddname=detention&id\\_dept=9&id2=9&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10170&ddname=detention&id_dept=9&id2=9&p=center).

<sup>33</sup> See [http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10260&ddname=&id\\_dept=9&id2=9&p=center](http://www.mezan.org/en/details.php?id=10260&ddname=&id_dept=9&id2=9&p=center).



Al Mezan and its partners, Adalah and PHR-I.<sup>34</sup> Cooperation also increased with regard to legal interventions in Israel, where Al Mezan worked closely with the above mentioned partners and Gisha on dozens of cases concerning victims of the Israeli policies in the buffer zone, Gaza sea, movement of patients, students and other categories of people. 94 interventions in restricted access issues were successful, while work on other 46 cases was ongoing by the end of the reported period. Al Mezan's work with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) and other partners; including Diakonia, Medico International-Germany, and APPRODEV also increased during the reported period, during which Al Mezan was part of two advocacy missions that brought together other partners; including Adalah, Al-Haq, B'Tselem and Gisha. In June, Al Mezan took active part in a coordination meeting organized by Christian Aid in Brussels. 35 NGOs took part in this meeting to discuss short and long term strategies, priorities as well as coordination. Al Mezan's work with UN agencies increased during the reported period; with Al Mezan providing information and engages in discussion concerning priorities. UN agencies work on certain priorities has increased; especially with regard to the ARA and protection of civil society in Gaza. Al Mezan also continued to work closely with UNICEF and local NGOs on children and conflict and juvenile justice issues. As a result, information about children rights violations was submitted to the UN Security Council, and to other bodies; including the EU. Al Mezan also cooperated with the UNDP with regard to access to justice and legal assistance. This cooperation has continued and has resulted with partnership between the agency and Al Mezan on a project in the second half of 2010. At the national level, the work with Palestinian NGOs has also increased. Joint actions were taken with regard to the exercise of torture and ill treatment, death penalty, and economic and social rights. These actions were taken mainly by the Human Rights NGOs Council. Al Mezan is a member of the coordination committee of the Council. Al Mezan also recruited strong support among Palestinian human rights NGOs for joint actions against political and arbitrary detentions by the Palestinian authorities. Advocacy activities were widely reported in Palestinian, Israeli and international media.

- The reporting period witnessed slightly better communication between human rights NGOs and the Palestinian Authority with regard to a number of issues; including pursuing accountability in the UN Human Rights Council and the issue of free movement of Gaza residents by means of banning issuance of passports. It is hoped that these issues will be dealt with towards finding solutions in 2011.
- Human rights mechanisms: Al Mezan started to work more closely with the UN Special Procedures during the reported period. It submitted 56 communications to various Special Rapporteurs. The capacity of Al Mezan's staff was built to deliver communications in the future, which is expected to be a key activity after the Centre was granted consultative status with ECOSOC.

### 3) Legal Assistance and Advice:

- Ensuring legal representation: the level of demand on legal assistance remained high. Al Mezan provided assistance to all the victims who sought help or were referred to it, or sought its help. In all, the Centre provided legal assistance and advice in 2,563 cases. In many of these cases multiple victims were represented, e.g. in the people with disability cases 700 victims and their families benefited directly from the intervention. 94 cases were assisted to access healthcare and family life in Israel or the West Bank. Eighteen cases of fishermen are being represented by Al Mezan, who cooperated with partners in submitting pre-petitions and petitions requesting release fishermen and of their boats by IOF. Upon request from the Palestinian NGOs Network (PNGO), Al Mezan drafted a paper on the legal standards related to the interference with NGOs and CBOs work in the Gaza Strip, which PNGO used in its awareness and advocacy activities on this matter.

<sup>34</sup> See <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/CCPR.C.ISR.CO.3.doc>



- **Successful interventions:** Thirty-four individuals who were arbitrarily arrested by the authorities in Gaza were assisted, and many released as a result of the legal intervention by Al Mezan.<sup>35</sup> The efforts to secure opening of NGOs that had been unlawfully assaulted by the Internal Security Apparatus; including the sized youth organization Sharek, did not succeed in re-opening these NGOs during the reported period. Al Mezan's interventions led to formation of six investigative committees by the Ministry of Interior and the General Prosecution in Gaza. Three of the cases addressed alleged torture of individuals during detention. Abusers were indentified and disciplined, according to the Ministry. One case involved the arrest of a civilian without giving any reasons. He was taken to a police station and beaten harshly and, then, released on the same day. Al Mezan conveyed his complaint to the MoI, who investigated the case, identified the police officer who assaulted him. The MoI reported back to Al Mezan that the officer was disciplined. The fourth case involves the arrest of a civilian by persons who identified themselves as members of the Internal Security Apparatus. The person was found dead later. Following Al Mezan's intervention, the General Prosecution initiated an investigation in the case. In another twelve cases investigations were not been initiated. Al Mezan's lawyers visited detention centres in Gaza nine times and met with detainees. They had the chance to listen to complaints and give legal advice to them. They also spoke with the administration and the guards in these centres about the relevant standards in every visit. Lawyers dealt with detainees complaints, enabling 23 of them to communicate with their families and have legal counsel. Regarding the complaints about the lack of medical treatment or medicines or detainees access to education were all resolved. Al Mezan was invited to the opening of new detention centres in Gaza, and to provide its assessment to the overall conditions in them in comparison with the legal safeguards, which Al Mezan did. During the first half of 2010, it was noticed that the overall number of complaints coming from detainees in Gaza to Al Mezan decreased significantly; however, the number rose again in the second half of the year. It was not possible to verify the extent to which Al Mezan's work on this issue was behind this decrease during the reported period. Out of nine cases of individuals who were prevented from travel by the Palestinian authorities in Gaza and Ramallah, Al Mezan's intervention enabled one patient to travel. In tow cases of medical negligence, investigations were initiated by the authorities and led to punishment and promised compensation of the victims. Another significant achievement during the reported period, as mentioned above, is the Israeli government's response to the Israeli high court with regard to the allowances owed to Gaza residents with disabilities they sustained during their previous employment in Israel.

#### 4) Awareness and Training:

- **Information and skills:** 3,717 individuals benefited directly from awareness and training activities on human rights and IHL during the reported period. Of those 991 were women and 1,863 children. For the training courses, pre-tests and post-tests were used to monitor acquired new knowledge precisely. 484 of those received awareness services from volunteer students trained by Al Mezan. The beneficiaries showed very high levels of achievement at the level of new knowledge, as trainees' responses showed high achievement, from an average around 40% - 50% before the trainings to an average of 90% - 99% after it. A group of women's organization representatives were trained on monitoring and documentation and reported to Al Mezan that the acquired skills have started to help the organizations strengthen their monitoring activities. In follow-up phone calls, beneficiaries reported to Al Mezan that many of them used the newly acquired knowledge and awareness; especially lawyers, teachers and students. Two of the main trainers who have worked closely with Al Mezan were recommended for an

<sup>35</sup> Out of 46 interventions of this type. This reflects a law level of success.



important project by the UK Consulate on Palestinian judiciary, and have started working on it. Ten of the female volunteer students who had worked with Al Mezan were recommended for a project on women's rights and started to work on it for one year. One of the Pass-the-Word Program student volunteers made a documentary on the human rights conditions in Gaza. According to her, she used the knowledge she acquired during the trainings with Al Mezan. Teachers reported that the training strengthened their ability to teach UNRWA's human rights curriculum and helped them overcome many difficulties they faced in the past. A member of the Pharmacists Syndicate in Gaza reported that a group of the Syndicate members started to document violations against the members after the skills and information they acquired during the training. One law student implemented online awareness sessions for groups of law students in the Arab world on human rights and IHL. According to him, his initiative made use of the knowledge and training materials that he received at Al Mezan's trainings. The training they had received at Al Mezan was the key factor behind their employment and contribution to promoting women's rights.

### 3.3. Obstacles and difficulties:

The main challenge that faces Al Mezan remains the deteriorated human rights situation in the Gaza Strip, and oPt in general. The Centre has had to work in complex environment, with the following prevalent features:

- A continuous context of conflict and prolonged occupation that is unique in nature, as the occupying power declares that it owes the population only minimal obligations.
- A blockade that has continued for over three-and-a-half years, causing wide-scale human rights violations. During the reported period, following the flotilla incident, Israel vowed to 'ease' the blockade; however, it remained in place and the easing has had very limited impact.
- An internal Palestinian-Palestinian split that is causing widespread human rights violations in oPt by Palestinian actors.
- The prevalence of a culture of impunity that gives perpetrators of violations a feeling that they are shielded and protected; therefore, encouraging them to continue violating human rights.
- An international response to the situation in Gaza that is characterized of being excessively humanitarian in its nature and structure. Human rights are given a low rank on the list of priorities, which affects the effectiveness of the protection and prevention efforts.

This situation has created enormous problems that affect a large number of people; in some way even the entire population. Al Mezan had to respond to this situation and deal with an excessively high number of cases, which must be documented properly in order that effective interventions are possible.

Other obstacles have also occurred during the reported period. As mentioned in the last section, Al Mezan faced financial difficulties during the reported period, with a deficit that makes modifying the core program's budget a must. Please find more details on this problem in the Financial Notes section below.

The above-mentioned problems, coupled with Gaza lawyers inability to access the persons held in Israel they represent, or access the authorities in Israel or the West Bank directly, caused many interventions to be very slow or, at times, ineffective. These authorities responded after very long delays or, at times, did not respond to correspondences. The



same problem is present, albeit to a lesser extent, in Gaza where the lack or delay of responses by the authorities rendered many problems and violations continue. In 2010, Al Mezan's requests to visit prisons and access persons in detention to provide legal counsel and/or protection from ill treatment were met with erratic responses. Sometimes they were allowed access in an efficient fashion. At other times, they were denied access completely. At yet other times, the authorities insisted on a mechanism that involves prior coordination with the Human Rights Unit at the Ministry of Interior. Al Mezan found this condition as incoherent with the law, which establishes a relationship and contacts between the lawyers and the prison administration and prosecutors without middlemen. Yet, Al Mezan tried this new mechanism, which also worked in an very erratic way.

In response to this situation, Al Mezan taken various measures; including:

- To deal with the workload pressure and problems that affect the population in oPt; such as the internal split and the blockade, Al Mezan has increased its cooperation with Palestinian human rights organizations; especially through the Palestinian Human Rights NGOs Council. This has helped exchange information and strengthen the impact of interventions.
- To deal with the flawed international response to the situation, Al Mezan has increased its advocacy efforts in cooperation with various partners. It arranged for meetings with high-rank policy makers in the UN and the EU and its Member States. Al Mezan has also increased its work with the UN agencies; however, was loud in its criticism of the predominantly humanitarian response to the situation in Gaza. It advocated for stronger work on human rights protection. Despite the fact that Al Mezan had not applied for funding under CAP, it still took part in its Gaza workshop for the third consecutive year in order to engage with the stakeholders and ensure that the human rights protection is adequately addressed in it.
- In the context of its fight against impunity, Al Mezan has continued to act in Gaza, Israel and internationally. In Gaza, much work has been done with the authorities and with public opinion. The reported period saw limited success, as several investigative committees were formed and came to useful conclusions. More must be done at this level. In Israel, Al Mezan has continued to follow, with its partners in Israel, the complaints submitted on behalf of victims. More complaints were also submitted with requests of investigation. At the international level, Al Mezan continued to work with partners who are concerned with justice and with independent human rights lawyers in order to identify opportunities to maximise access to justice. It has also worked with the Human Rights Council and its Committee of Experts. The logic behind this work is the assumption that perpetrators will less likely violate human rights and international law if they believe that there is a credible chance that they would be brought to justice for their conduct. Under the current circumstances, this represents a long battle, yet is a worthwhile one. Al Mezan has, jointly with Al-Haq and Adalah, planned to recruit funding to organize a consultation and planning workshop for 25 human rights organizations from oPt, Israel and Europe who work on ensuring accountability for human rights violations in oPt. The workshop will be organized in Amman, Jordan and is expected to strengthen the information sharing and strategic thinking among the involved organizations.
- On the same token, Al Mezan has increased its positive dialogue with the Palestinian authorities in oPt. Lawyers visits to detention centres and the meetings with officials who are part of the law enforcement and justice system. They provided advice as well as criticism. Correspondences with the authorities in Gaza and the West Bank to explain violations and solutions also increased. Also, as mentioned above, the dialogue with the Palestinian Authority saw positive developments. It is hoped that



these efforts will help ensure reducing the political detentions and ensure that the PA's performance with regard to promoting the accountability profile within the UN will be based on the human rights approach to the matter.

- With regard to the impacts of the blockade on large portion of Gaza's population, Al Mezan increased its work with partners in Israel; especially Adalah, PHR-I and Gisha, in order to help the siege victims. In 2010, four persons died waiting for permits and hundreds were denied access despite the interventions. While the successes at this level were significant, more work needs to be done with a view to help individual cases and, at the same time, increase the efforts to ensure that the root causes of these access problems; i.e. the blockade, cease to exist.
- With regard to the financial difficulties, Al Mezan took a group of measures; including: 1) consultation with the human rights sector through the Palestinian Human Rights NGOs Council, 2) initiating contacts with new donor-partners, 3) recruiting new project and core funding, and 4) looking at ways to decrease spending by prioritization of the activities and assigning extra tasks to existing staff members.



#### 4. Projects 2010

During the reporting period, the following projects were in progress:

Project Title	Donor	Goals/Objectives	Planned Activities	Implemented Activities
Supporting Documentation and Legal Assistance of Human Rights Violations in Gaza	Trocaire	To strengthen Al Mezan Center's capacity to prepare case files for legal intervention, both in courts and with human rights procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruit and deploy an IHL and an a human rights expert</li> <li>- Work with national staff to investigate HR and IHL violations and build cases</li> <li>- Build the national staff capacity to investigate violations and build cases</li> <li>- Fine and further investigations to build case-files for suspected grave breaches of IHL and gross HR violations</li> <li>- Submit communications and urgent appeals to UN Special procedures</li> <li>- Translation of materials related to the above activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruitment of the two experts;</li> <li>- Investigations and building files for 23 cases; including by visits to the field</li> <li>- Submitting 50 communications to Special procedures</li> <li>- Work was done in close cooperation with the local staff so they acquire relevant skills</li> <li>- Translation of hundreds of pages of materials</li> <li>- Capacity-building workshop for the local staff, focussing on specific lessons learned during the implementation of the project.</li> </ul>
Combating and Preventing Torture and Ill-Treatment of Palestinian Prisoners held in Israel Prisons and Palestinian Civilians in the OPT	The European Union	Combating and Preventing Torture and Ill-Treatment of Palestinian Prisoners held in Israeli Prisons and Palestinian Civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring and documentation of torture and cruel, inhuman treatment.</li> <li>- Legal assistance.</li> <li>- Advocacy: challenging policies and practices in courts; reporting to the UN and EU.</li> <li>- Training and capacity building for lawyers, health personnel and activists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring and documentation started. Cases involving victims of torture and ill treatment, victims of restrictions on movement (esp. patients), victims of the policies in the buffer zone and the Gaza sea, use of human shields and use of prohibited weapons.</li> <li>- Provision of 427 cases of legal advice.</li> <li>- Referral of cases to other organizations and to lawyers for intervention.</li> <li>- Designing two databases for torture and CIDT cases.</li> <li>- Submitting one follow-up alternative report to CAT and one alternative report to the Human Rights Committee.</li> <li>- Organizing six trainings on torture for lawyers, civil society activists and health personnel.</li> <li>- One advocacy mission with the EU, focusing on torture and CIDT; including policies associated with the siege.</li> </ul>
Promotion of IHL by Education in Gaza	Diakonia	Increase respect for and further implementation of IHL in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expansion of 12 training courses to include IHL training/awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 12 courses and Pass-the-Word Program expanded to incorporate significant IHL component</li> </ul>





		Gaza strip through education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One training for lawyers on IHL</li> <li>- One training for women organizations on monitoring and documenting IHL violations</li> <li>- Two workshops on IHL for CBOs</li> <li>- One poster</li> <li>- One leaflet</li> <li>- Supplement Al Mezan's library with IHL resources</li> <li>- Support Al Mezan's training Unit's IHL activities and staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One lawyer training on IHL</li> <li>- Two trainings for women organizations, also in cooperation with OHCHR</li> <li>- Two workshops for CBOs</li> <li>- One leaflet and one poster produced</li> <li>- 41 new books provided to the library</li> <li>- Training unit staff and activities further supported.</li> </ul>
Child Rights Awareness for Religious Leaders in Gaza	UNICEF	Raise awareness on child rights, protection, health awareness, and stigma reduction; including with relation to HIV/AIDS, among 90 religious leaders, Increase participation by religious leaders to make interventions to promote children rights through their work with their community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness symposia for Muslim and Christian religious leaders in Gaza</li> <li>- Produce training/awareness materials</li> <li>- Advocacy workshops</li> <li>- Publication: A compilation on child rights standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 16 symposia for six groups (102 religious leaders); one of which is Christian and five Muslim.</li> <li>- Training materials developed and handed.</li> <li>- Two advocacy workshops on increasing religious Leaders role in child protection in Gaza.</li> <li>- One publication (to be released in February 2011).</li> </ul>
Strengthening 1612 Mechanism in Gaza	Save the Children-UK	Strengthen monitoring and reporting on 1612 MRM <sup>36</sup> in the Gaza Strip by building the capacities of Al Mezan and CBOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish a 1612 MRM within Al Mezan's database</li> <li>- Organize training for 25 CBOs who work on 1612 MRM related issues to secure better input from them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Al Mezan took measures that enable the database to report on 1612 violations more timely and precisely</li> <li>- A training for the CBOs is planned to be conducted in January 2011.</li> </ul>

Al Mezan also started contacts with UNESCO to implement a project on strengthening schools capacity to report on 1612 violations in the ARA. This project involves working with 12 schools and community committees. It started in January 2011.

Al Mezan also started contacts with the Norwegian Refugee Council with the view that the two organizations cooperate on a research and legal assistance project on housing and land rights in Gaza.

Al Mezan is also in contact with UNDP/PAPP, with the view to secure support for major legal assistance work by Al Mezan, within its Legal Assistance Unit. This project will expand the legal assistance work of Al Mezan and also support the Legal Assistance Unit.

<sup>36</sup> The 1612 MRM is a global Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism overseen by UNICEF. It aims to ensure accurate reporting on six violations concerning children and armed conflict. In oPt, there is an 1612 MRM Working Group. Al Mezan is a member in the WG and is a main provider of information to it.





## 5. Financial reports/issues:

The reporting period represents the second year of the new 3-year program strategy 2009-2011. There were changes concerning the Centre's core and project donors during this period.

For example, three of Al Mezan's core donors; SDC, Sida and the Netherlands Representative Office to the PA, joined the new donor secretariat that is run by the NGO Development Center (NDC). The amount of funding that was available to Al Mezan through the NDC is less than 50% of the sum the three donors used to support the centre individually.

Support to Al Mezan from another donor-partner, the Norwegian Representative Office to the PA (NRO), was reduced in 2010. The second installment for 2009, a total of over USD 80,000, from NRO was paid in 2010, but was covered by the 2010 fund. This reduced the funds available from NRO, to be approximately USD 75,000 instead of USD 155,000 in 2010.

Nevertheless, Al Mezan has maintained its relationship with all of its partners (please consult the General Information sheet in the beginning of this report), and two new donor provided small-scale core funding.

With less actual funding available to it to cover the annual budget, Al Mezan took the following internal measures during 2010:

- Staff cost was reduced by 1) avoiding new recruitment of staff members; including to cover for staff members who resigned or were on non-pay leaves during the year. Instead, the existing staff members were assigned tasks to cover for them. Moreover, staff members were asked to carry out extra project activities and their salaries were paid in part or in full by these projects. This helped reduce the staff cost in the general budget.
- Activities; especially documentation and legal assistance, were prioritized over staffing. Available funds were used to cover these activities as much as possible in order not to suffer any interruption. Nevertheless, the activities cost was reduced by increasing the staff delivering of training activities, which means reducing recruitment of paid training services, and providing project funding to activities on IHL education and training. The spending on certain activities was also reduced as much as possible; including the Human Rights Prize activity and the printing of publications.
- Al Mezan consulted with Palestinian human rights organizations, who shared similar problems, in order to discuss possible solutions to this mutual challenge.
- A modified budget was presented to the donor-partners for the year 2011, with a reduced cost; however, without reducing the capacity to deliver the main activities and outcomes. In 2011, Al Mezan will seek to recruit core funding to support the core program for the next three years (2012-2014). The financial difficulties will be tackled and assessed in the comprehensive evaluation and strategic planning, which are planned to start in June 2011.

Despite that, there is a deficit of approximately USD 87,780 in the end of 2010. Al Mezan has started to consider ways to cover this deficit, which could include the following measures:

- Use available accumulated unrestricted funds, which are available from returned legal fees as indicated in the audit reports between 2001 and 2009. This fund is expected to cover approximately USD 50,000.



- Request donor-partners to provide funding to bridge the deficit.
- Seek the NDC approval to use 10% of their 2011 fund to cover for part of the deficit of 2010.

The enclosed financial statements show in detail the amounts of funding for the program as well as projects and the financial statements. Al Mezan takes this opportunity to thank the support of its core and project donors.

**Ends**