

# **Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)**

## **UPR Submission**

### **United Arab Emirates**

**15th session (Jan/Feb, 2013)**



سازمان دفاع از قربانیان خشونت  
Organization for Defending Victims  
of Violence

**[www.odvv.org](http://www.odvv.org)**

## **About ODVV**

1. The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan organization in Special Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). The ODVV was established in 1988 in Tehran and has been active in the field of human rights and humanitarian activities.

2. The ODVV is also associated to the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), a participatory of the NGOs Coalition for an International Court (based in New York), and national coordinator of the Global March Against Child Labour (based in New Delhi) which cooperated in a variety of issues with international organizations and has working relations with many NGOs in Iran and around the globe.

3. The ODVV is also a member of the International Organization against Small and Light Weapons, and the UN Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO), and the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), AMAN Network of Rehabilitation Centres in the Middle East and North Africa, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT).

4. During the last 2 decades, we have done so many activities, mainly informative with regard to human rights and supportive of the victims of violence. Various human rights education courses, workshops, seminars, conferences have been held or co-held by the ODVV for various sectors of society: civil society institutions and governmental organizations.

5. Other Activities:

- Participation in UN Commission on Human Rights annual sessions, and the new Human Rights Council sessions in Geneva. Written and oral statements on various items of the agenda are issued by the ODVV.

- Internship for foreign students

- Publication of different books and booklets on human rights such as Rights of the Child, Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia. Publication of Defenders Newsletter (English), human rights news and developments bulletin (Farsi), Rights of the Child bulletin (Farsi)

- Daily electronic human rights newsletter in English and Farsi.

6. As a nongovernmental organization active in human rights, the ODVV has collected documents and data, and is providing the following report on the human rights situation of the Persian Gulf State of United Arab Emirates, with the aim of the improvement of the human rights situation and the country's commitments to international conventions and institutions.

## **Migrants and Refugees Rights**

7. On 5 April 2006 the Special Rapporteur on Migrants sent a request to the Emirates Government regarding the conditions of migrant workers. According to information received migrant workers in the Emirates are often exploited at work and living conditions such as refusal to pay wages, refusal to prevent medical services etc. These conditions are mostly influenced by the lack of legal protection, lack of enough monitoring of the living and working conditions of migrants, and the ineffectiveness of the existing complaints mechanisms. Overall the conditions of migrant workers in the

Emirates are very unjust and the Government has not made any improvements in this regard.

8. The ODVV believes that laws that guarantee the human rights of foreign workers must be specified and through them their rights that can be protected by employees. Also the must set up a mechanism to report discriminatory treatment of migrant workers as opposed to domestic workers. This NGO believes that the strengthening of protection capacities of the living and working conditions of migrant workers is a necessity. Although in the first UPR the Emirates accepted a number of recommendations, while thanking the Government's efforts in this regard, further efforts are necessary to make.

### **Right to Life and Personal Security**

9. The Emirates' Government has still not responded to the requests of the Special Rapporteur on Torture who had expressed concern in 2005. Also in the Special Rapporteur asked a number of questions from the Government which have remained unanswered.

10. The ODVV believes the adoption of international conventions such as the Convention against Torture can be seen as the most basic move towards the eradication of torture.

11. Although the Rights of the Child Committee expressed concern not enough information about children's bad treatment that include collective punishment within the family, school and institutions; and sexual exploitation of children, but has still not received any replies.

12. The establishment of an independent human rights centre where human rights violations reports are prepared, and also as a centre for giving the Government advice on the improvement of human rights can to an extent solve the lack of answerability towards the aforementioned instances.

13. Unfortunately the Emirates' Government approach towards those that are forcefully trafficked, and if they are sexually exploited, and the government does not distinguish between prostitution and forced sexual exploitation, therefore the latter victims are not protected by the law. Although the Government has expressed concern over this issue, but to-date no action that is based on the distinction between prostitution and trafficking victims has been observed.

14. While asking the Persian Gulf State of United Arab Emirates to share its experiences for best action with other countries for the purpose of adoption of national laws, and international cooperation mechanisms for the apprehension of human traffickers, the ODVV recommends that victims of trafficking should be placed under special protection, and not be looked at as criminals.

### **Freedom of Expression and the Right to Peaceful Association and Right to Collective and Political Living**

15. In 2006 the Special Rapporteurs on Violence against Women, and the Sale of Children have established links and communication with the Emirates' Government.

16. The ODVV believes that a new law that guarantees the right to freedom of expression and association, can be a worthy help for the promotion of human rights and freedoms in this country.

### **Right to Employment, and Right to Fair and Good Working Conditions**

17. In 2008 the International Labour Organization expertise committee repeated its past concerns regarding the Emirates' Labour Law and called upon the Government to amend the law in such way that the concept of work for equal value be applied. But to-date these changes have not been made.

18. The Emirates' Government must also be commended, because it is one of the first Persian Gulf states that has appointed a woman as the Dean of the Persian Gulf Arabic University, as a Economy Minister, and Social Affairs Minister.

19. The ODVV commends the efforts of the Emirates' Government towards the promotion of women's rights and calls for the continuation of these efforts.

20. the ODVV also calls for the serious efforts of the Government to join international conventions such as The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the additional protocol to the International Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

### **Judicial Justice and Rule of Law**

21. While reforms within the Ministry of Juvenile Justice must be commended, it also must be said that the criminal responsibility age at being 7 is too low, and individuals under 18 are tried as adults. In this regard the Committee has recommended the Emirates' Government for children under 18's laws to be different to adults, and for them to be kept in different detention centres, and for them to receive skills training for their effective presence in society in the future. But it doesn't seem the Emirates Government has taken any constructive steps in this regard.

22. The ODVV urges the Emirates Government to amend the Juvenile Criminal Law and raise the criminal responsibility age to international standards.

23. The ODVV deems the UPR recommendations that have been accepted by the Emirates' Government as a positive step toward the promotion of human rights in the country.

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