



## **The National Council for Human Rights Progress in a Changing Reality**

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The National Council for Human Rights has been established as an independent national institution under Law no. 94 of 2003 and in accordance with the Paris Principles relevant to the status of national institutions. The Council has been presided over by Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali the former Secretary-General of the United Nations and the first Secretary-General of the International Organization of La Francophonie for nine years from 2004 to 2012.

Since August 2013, the NCHR has been headed by the prominent Egyptian human rights defender, Mohamed Fayek who was the head of the United Nations fact-finding mission in the Darfur Region of the Sudan. He also served as the Commissioner to the African Commission on Human Rights and the head of the Arab Organization for Human Rights, the first regional non-governmental human rights organization in Egypt, established in Cairo in 1983.

Moreover, the NCHR includes members of non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights, the issue that has effectively contributed to the advancement of the Council's role in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Since the January revolution, the NCHR has endeavored to promote human rights principles and succeeded in fulfilling its obligations in a turbulent context of number of prompt changing events ranging from the overthrowing of former President Mubarak's regime, the transfer of power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, and then the success of the



Muslim Brotherhood in assuming power over the Egyptian State, along with the use of violence against citizens and the siege of the Supreme Constitutional Court and the media production city, coupled with the attempts to dominate the judiciary and the police forces, and the immunization of the decisions of the former President Moursi by a presidential decree. Nevertheless of the aforementioned difficulties, the NCHR was able to fulfill its duties and promote human rights on two main fronts; they are the protection of human rights and the spread of human rights culture.

As part of the efforts to protect human rights, the NCHR has exerted great efforts in the monitoring and documentation of human rights violations, receiving complaints, checking out prisons, forming hearing committees, launching fact-finding missions and seeking to change human rights laws and monitoring elections.

As for the dissemination of the culture of human rights principles and values, the NCHR has collaborated with various media outlets, organized training workshops for media professionals, promoted drama production supporting human rights issues and developed educational curricula in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the sports youth centers.

The Study deals with all aspects of the National Council for Human Rights' performance. It discusses the principles and stances of the Council during the successive political events. The NCHR has used to adopt balanced discourse in the analysis of situations and to draw out well-defined recommendations. The Council has stood against terrorism in all its forms but insists on observing human rights and the rule of law while combating terrorism. Besides, it supports the rights to opinion and expression in media, intellectual works and drama, but equally stands against the assault on the privacy of citizens and the rhetoric of hatred, violent extremism and contempt of religions as well.

The NCHR has also a stronghold of the principles of equality and non-discrimination, either based on gender, religion or social background. It stands against any sort of violence, especially against women and children, and gives prominent attention to the most vulnerable groups; women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities through cooperating with specialized councils and committees such as the National Council for



Women, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration, and the National Council for the Rights of People with Disabilities.

Furthermore, the NCHR considers non-governmental organizations essential partners in its action. It has always endeavored to develop the laws regulating their activities, supporting their demands before the government, and signed dozens of cooperation protocols to carry out joint actions with human rights organizations. It also holds periodic meetings with civil society organizations representatives, inviting them to conferences and symposiums, to discuss relevant laws and to follow up the progress of the State in the field of human rights and the response to the recommendations coming out of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanisms and other mechanisms as well.

Although its recommendations are advisory and non-binding to the State, the NCHR believes that social advancement is the result of an accumulated effort, and therefore, the Council insists on issuing certain recommendations, underlining the importance of activating them, such as the promotion of the right to citizenship and the countering of female genital mutilation.

The NCHR also recognizes the importance of the international dimension, and is therefore keen to give the required attention to the international community and to be directly engaged in global networks such as the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, the four continental networks of human rights institutions, the Arab Network for Human Rights, in addition to the cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Mechanism and the African Special Rapporteur and the African Working Group. It also cooperates regularly with a great number of the United Nations organizations, among them are the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

In continuation of the efforts in the field of the promotion of human rights, the NCHR aspires to achieve the following:

- The development of a new national plan for human rights, keeping up



with the most recent events and challenges, after achieving the objectives of the previous operational strategies upon which the Council worked.

- The coordination between the NCHR and the State bodies to enhance their response to the complaints received by the Council, including the activation of the mechanism of the five-member committee, which was previously formed for this purpose and then stopped.